

"What else? Isn't that enough? That I love you dearly, and want you to be my wife."

This was earnest with a vengeance. I felt it was getting serious, and must be stopped at once.

"Hush!" I said. "Do you remember who you are, and whom you are speaking to?"

"I am Robert Knollys, and you are the dearest, best ——"

"You are the only son of General Knollys, of Thornhaugh, and I am your sisters' governess."

"What difference does that make to me?"

"It makes much to me," I said. "I do not forget that I am a dependent in your father's house, and that by encouraging or allowing you so to address me, I should deeply wrong those who trust me. You, by uttering such words as you have just spoken, have shown that you forget what is due both to your parents and to me."

"You don't mean ——"

"I do mean that I cannot listen to you any longer. You are far too young" (a poisoned shaft, I knew,) "to offer marriage to any woman without the consent of your parents; and least of all should you have selected me, who am so dependent on their good will, for the object of attentions which could but injure in their estimation did I permit them, or offend you, did I reject. I have several times been much amazed. Let me beg that you will cease your attentions now."

"But, Grace ——"

"If you profess to care so much about me, surely you may grant the only favour I ask?"

"It's too hard," he muttered. "Is the governor the only reason you have for not liking me better?"

"By no means," I answered cheerfully. "I have reasons which would in any case cause me to act the same."

"And is there no hope for me?" very dolorously.

"Not in that way. I should be sorry to deprive you of *all* hope. Now will you allow me to go back to Schuloff and Brinley Richards?"

"You're as hard as a stone, and as cold," he said, as he prepared to depart. "But you can't prevent my loving you!" The gloomy triumph with which this was said so amused me, that I with difficulty repressed a smile. I was heartily glad when I saw him go, but his visit had disturbed me. I thought of another day when ——. I did not return to Schuloff, but spent the rest of the afternoon musing over two old letters which lie in a corner of my writing desk, ——. "What in the world brought Robert's letter here?" said Clara, taking one up from the floor.