

lady recognising calmly, and without either false pride or false shame, that though a lady, she was also a governess—a paid servant, discharging her duties like the rest; the other lady receiving and appreciating those services as a lady should. Therefore, nothing was lost, and much gained on both sides. Miss Thelluson had been two years in the family, and it seemed tacitly understood that she was to remain until the young ladies' education was finished. Thus suddenly to desert her post looked almost like ingratitude—a vice abhorrent in all shapes to Hannah Thelluson.

It was with a hesitating step, and a heart beating much faster than its wont—this poor heart, strangely stilled down now from its youthful impulsiveness—that she knocked at the door of the morning-room where her pupils' mother, young and beautiful, happy and beloved, spent the forenoon in the elegant employments that she called duties, and which befitted her lot in life—a lot as different from that of her governess as it is possible to conceive. The two women were wide apart as the poles—in character, circumstances, destiny: yet both being good women, they had a respect, and even liking for one another. Hannah admired the countess excessively, and Lady Dunsmore always had for her governess a smile as pleasant as that she bestowed on the best "society."

"Good-morning, Miss Thelluson! Pray sit down. I hope nothing is amiss in the school-room? Mary seems working more diligently of late. Georgy and Blanche are not more troublesome to you than usual?"

"Indeed, I have no fault to find with either Lady Blanche or Lady Georgina, and Lady Mary is as good a girl as she can be," returned Hannah warmly, half amused at herself for noticing what a week ago she would have accepted as too natural a fact to be observed at all,—that it never occurred to her pupils' mamma to suppose she could have any interest beyond Lady Mary, Lady Georgina, and Lady Blanche. That their governess should have a separate existence of her own, or any personal affairs to communicate, seemed quite impossible. "Have you ten minutes to throw away, Lady Dunsmore?" continued she. "May I have a word with you about myself and my own concerns?"

"Certainly; nothing could give me greater pleasure;" and then with that sweet, courteous grace she had—it might be only outside good-breeding, and yet, as it never failed her, and all outside things do fail sometimes, I think it must rather have been from her kindly heart—the countess settled herself to listen. But first she cast a slight sidelong glance of observation and inquiry. Was it possible that Miss Thelluson was going to be married?

But no love story was indicated by the grave, quiet, dignified manner of the governess,

"You are aware, I think," she said. "that my only sister died six months ago."

"Ah, I was sorry to hear it! Was she married?"

"Yes."

"Of course! I remember now. She died at her confinement, and the dear little baby also?"