

In all her thoughts of Percy there was comfort. He had loved her honestly and sincerely, and if his nature was really lower than her own, she was not likely to guess it. She had acted, in dismissing him, on a kind of distrust, she would have said, of human nature; more truly, of him; but even this distrust was so vague and so disguised that it never shadowed his character in her eyes. So, though she had parted from him, she took comfort in the thought of his love, and kept it in her heart to save herself from the overwhelming sense of degradation, which took possession of her in remembering why she had sent him away from her.

It was this feeling which, in spite of her courage and her pride, had brought to her face that look of real trouble of which Mrs. Bellairs had spoken. It was a look of which she was herself entirely unconscious, more like the effect of years of care, than like that of a sudden sorrow. With this change of expression on her face, and sobered, but cheerful and capable as ever in her ways and doings, Lucia made her preparations for leaving the place which was so dear and familiar to her.

Mrs. Costello's spirits had risen since their plans were settled. The burden which was new to Lucia