

But the warming aspect of the lights did not fall so warmly upon Edwin's eyes, as he had expected they would have done. His heart that had beat so high with his hope that day, sank a little in the immediate prospect of the unknown—though desired—that lay so directly before him.

In one short minute further, would not the decision, the fixed destiny of his life, to which he was alone unknowing, be made known to him. On the momentary edge he stood and feared. Life-long happiness, or life-long misery, as it seemed to him, to be revealed in one short minute's space.

"Is it to be as I hope, I wonder? Does a welcome await my coming, or are my steps still to be dogged with wretchedness?"

There was no time, however, for his fears, no time for his anxious forebodings.

Barney dashed up to the door, drew up his animals with a jerk, and Edwin Vance stood again on the well-known verandah at Lake Mordaunt.

Ere he had time to ring the bell, or even recall his scattered thoughts from dire confusion, the door opened, and Mr. Mordaunt stood before him.

"How do you do, Edwin?" he said, holding out his hand. "We have been expecting you. Come in. I am very glad to meet you again as we meet to-day."

"Oh! you are there, are you, Edwin?" said Mr. Horton, as he entered the hall. "I thought you would find your way up. How did you enjoy your visit to Hopetown?"

"I received your vexatious note, and came, as you see, Mr. Horton," was all Edwin's reply.

"Vexatious, eh? You will not think so long. Take off your overcoat, and tidy yourself up a little, there is some one in the drawing room," answered Mr. Horton, helping him, and in another minute he found himself ushered into the apartment where "some one" awaited him.

Mrs. Mordaunt, the mother of his Ethel, and now no longer