

The next thing was a kind, motherly letter from Mrs. Errol, inviting her boy's friend and his sisters to accompany him home, and spend a few weeks with her in the pleasant little South-coast village where she lived. To this letter Errol added all the persuasive eloquence of which he was master, and finally succeeded in inducing Mildred to accept the invitation.

Ericson, whose time was fully occupied just then, promised to run down for a week while they were there. The reserve between him and Mildred had completely disappeared; so much so, that she wondered it had ever existed.

"Have I been mistaking Dr. Ericson's character? or is he really so much changed?" she asked Errol one day. "I never thought I should like him as I do now!"

"I used to tell you you did him injustice," replied Charlie; "but he is certainly wonderfully altered. I am so glad you like him. Do you remember a conversation we had about him once—the night I came to tell you of his accident? I told you then you did not know the best of him; he never appeared to advantage before you, and I can quite understand why now. I should have felt and acted just the same."

"Why?" asked Mildred.

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you—I am sure Ericson won't mind, though. The fact was he could not help feeling that you blamed him for your brother's peculiar theories, and that annoyed him beyond measure."

"I did blame him; I could not help it!" said Mildred. "How could I, Mr. Errol?"

"Nay, I am not blaming you; it was the most natural thing in the world for you to do, and no one sees that more plainly than Ericson himself. And to a certain extent you were right: he did influence James, more than either of them are aware, perhaps."

The following week found them at Sedley, and, as Errol had predicted, his mother immediately fell in love with Mildred, and made much of her.

"God has given me no daughter of my own," she said to her son, "so I shall adopt your Mildred."

And Charlie smiled, well pleased that it should be so without any words of his. Day by day he watched the growing intimacy between the two, and welcomed every sign of increasing trust