

Thorpe Bassett, but in reality she did not dwell on that. Like a child she turned to the thought of a little holiday on the morrow; Silvia's unpleasantly open rudeness had shaken her disagreeably. To keep her nerves in good order she determined she must occasionally separate herself from the monotony of her many domestic problems.

These same problems cropped up casually in the course of conversation at dinner that evening at Thorpe Bassett. There was only one guest; the girl with whom Silvia Ambrose had just been staying.

Isabel Matheson was a great favourite at Thorpe, indeed she was about the only person who was regarded as an intimate friend.

Mrs. Cheston's delicacy of health shut her away from social intercourse and amenities. It was rather a grievance in the neighbourhood that she did so little in the way of entertaining.

Now and then when John Cheston was home for a few days there would be perhaps a dinner or two, but new comers were never invited, the guests were always the same. Many people were inclined to be jealous of Miss Matheson's close friendship with Mrs. Cheston and some mothers openly declared she gave no other girl a chance.

They meant a chance of marrying John Cheston, the very good-looking young man who had come into such a big fortune when his father had died some years before.

If Isabel knew of these little whispers they did not trouble her—she was sensible and very happy, and never more happy than when she was at Thorpe.