

CHAPTER II.

The Mysterious Letter.

"Here are a few of the unpleasantest words
That ever blotted paper."

—*Shakespeare.*

THE little canary warbled cheerfully in the library as Aunt Hawkins rose from her chair to stir the fire in the grate. It was a cold evening without. The winds were blowing wildly over the hills—rather an unexpected change from the warm, peaceful afternoon. The skies were filled with gray clouds, and, here and there in the blue, the tranquil stars could be seen sentinelling the glad hours of approaching night.

Aunt Hawkins felt rather chilly as she sat near the table sewing. In her hurry to finish her little task she had forgotten to add more fuel to the fire. A few feet away, book in hand, sat Muriel, dreaming of the little silken-haired heroine whose stormy career she was following through the interesting chapters.

The library was the most inviting room in Bleur House. On the three sides of the room stood rows of bookshelves, filled with the volumes that William Gravenor had collected in his lifetime. On the other side two large windows looked out into the