

generous and she would have wanted to send more money to Silvia than the girl asks for, and that I feel might do harm."

"Great harm!" said Olivia Mary in her quiet way.

She was scanning the letter, that badly written, badly spelt letter, and within her heart there was a strange riot of feeling. Back to her memory came visions of long ago, of a girl's wild passionate nature, a lonely girl shut off as it were from those influences which are as necessary to the young as food and air and light: just such a girl in one sense as Silvia Ambrose, needing so much protective care, so much understanding!

"Twenty pounds," she said. "That is a good deal of money, Belle!"

"Yes; of course I can get it if I ask father for it; my own allowance is not very big; but you see I don't know what Silvia wants this money for. Of course, I know she fretted terribly about being shabby when she was with us; and perhaps that is it. Perhaps she wants to get some clothes . . . but—well, I can't believe that Mrs. Ambrose would make any difficulty about that. She is always so charmingly dressed herself."

"It is not a question of clothes," said Mrs. Cheston. "There is something else. Belle dear, I don't think you must send this money."

"That is just what I feel myself," Isabel said half eagerly. She sat down on the hearthrug near the fire. "And yet," she added, "I hate refusing the child. I want her to feel I'm really her friend. In a sense too I feel touched that she should want me to do this,