

did not take her from her own people nor from her beloved school and studies ; and Mrs. Leland was always on her side in regarding the office of future schoolmistress as an honourable and suitable one for her, if no nearer and dearer claim upon her should in course of time be made. Di, of course, was quite certain that *she* should never marry, and no rival in her heart to Mrs. Leland and Miss Hilton had ever for a moment appeared. She had one of the self-reliant natures well fitted to fight the battle of life alone, and Mrs. Leland thought it quite probable she would end by attaining the zenith of her ambition—a well-worked and high-class school of her own.

A few weeks before the wedding Olga came of age, and upon the afternoon of that day Oswald was summoned to a private conference with the Baroness and Giles Leland, who had of late undertaken the business arrangements of his kinswomen.

Whilst Oswald was gone, Frank sat strumming upon his banjo, his favourite tune for the nonce appearing to be, "Oh, what a surprise !" which he kept twanging in various keys, softly enunciating the words of the refrain to himself with every inflection of emphasis.

At last Damaris, who had long entertained suspicions of her own, looked up from her stitching