

face visibly softened, and it was no icy finger tips which touched his this time, but a warm and kindly clasp, which told that she was genuinely glad to see him.

"Welcome back to England, Richard," she said, heartily, and, moved by a sudden impulse, Richard stooped from his tall height and touched with his lips the brow of Frances' mother. Then he turned to receive the true welcome of the kind-hearted pair who had withdrawn over to the window recess, not caring to intrude till the first greetings were over. In her new kindness Mrs. Kendal had a warm and pleasant welcome too for Mary Osborne, and she looked at her approvingly, thinking her not only an exceedingly graceful and lady-like, but a very pretty woman.

The dinner that evening was a very pleasant meal, because the spirit of loving-kindness presided at the board. The old Earl would nod, in a very satisfied manner, every time his eyes rested on the face of his favourite niece, and that was very often indeed. It was all right with her now. She wore grey, an exquisite combination of silk and lace, and a great bunch of Christmas roses resting among the glossy leaves at her throat. She wore no ornament; no article of jewellery but her wedding-ring.

Richard, in his faultless evening attire, looked every inch a gentleman, and they were a handsome well-matched pair. Mary, too, looked rarely well. Her dress was a mourning silk, with delicate lace at throat and wrists; her ornaments a necklace of jet, set with pearls. Harry found it difficult to