'Everything will be very different now,' Miss Minchin went on. 'I suppose Miss Amelia has explained matters to you.'

'Yes,' answered Sara. 'My papa is dead. He left me no money. I am quite poor.'

'You are a beggar,' said Miss Minchin, her temper rising at the recollection of what all this meant. 'It appears that you have no relations and no home, and no one to take care of you.'

For a moment the thin, pale little face twitched, but Sara again said nothing.

'What are you staring at?' demanded Miss Minchin, sharply. 'Are you so stupid that you cannot understand? I tell you that you are quite alone in the world, and have no one to do anything for you, unless I choose to keep you here out of charity.'

'I understand,' answered Sara, in a low tone; and there was a sound as if she had gulped down something which rose in her throat. 'I understand.'

'That doll,' cried Miss Minchin, pointing to the splendid birthday gift seated near—'that ridiculous doll, with all her nonsensical, extravagant things—I actually paid the bill for her!'

Sara turned her head toward the chair.

'The Last Doll,' she said. 'The Last Doll.' And her little mournful voice had an odd sound.

'The Last Doll, indeed!' said Miss Minchin. 'And she is mine, not yours. Everything you own is mine.'

'Please take it away from me, then,' said Sara. 'I do not want it.'

If she had cried and sobbed and seemed frightened, Miss Minchin might almost have had more patience with her. She was a woman who liked to domineer and feel her power, and as she looked at Sara's pale little steadfast face and heard her proud little voice, she quite felt as if her might was being set at naught.

'Don't put on grand airs,' she said. 'The time for that sort of thing is past. You are not a princess any longer. Your carriage and your pony will be sent away—your maid will be dismissed. You will wear your oldest and plainest clothes—your extravagant ones are no longer suited to your station. You are like Becky—you must work for your living.'

To her surprise, a faint gleam of light came into the child's eyes—a shade of relief.

'Can I work?' she said. 'If I can work it will not matter so much. What can I do?'

'You can do anything you are told,' was the answer. 'You are a sharp child, and pick up things readily. If you make yourself useful I may let you stay here. You speak French well, and you can help with the younger children.'

'May I?' exclaimed Sara. 'Oh, please let me! I know I can teach them. I like them, and they like me.'

'Don't talk nonsense about people liking you,' said Miss Minchin. 'You will have to do more than teach the little ones. You will run errands and help in the kitchen as well as in the schoolroom. If you don't please me, you will be sent away. Remember that. Now go.'

Sara stood still just a moment, looking at her. In her young soul, she was thinking deep and strange things. Then she turned to leave the room.

'Stop!' said Miss Minchin. 'Don't you intend to thank me?'

Sara paused, and all the deep, strange thoughts surged up in her breast.

'What for?' she said.

'For my kindness to you,' replied Miss Minchin. 'For my kindness in giving you a home.'

Sara made two or three steps toward her. Her thin little chest heaved up and down, and she spoke in a strange un-childishly fierce way.

'You are not kind,' she said. 'You are NOT kind, and it is NOT a home.' And she had turned and run out of the room before Miss Minchin could stop her or do anything but stare after her with stony anger.

She went up the stairs slowly, but panting for breath and she held Emily tightly against her side.

'I wish she could talk,' she said to herself. 'If she could speak—if she could speak!'

She meant to go to her room and lie down on the tiger-skin, with her cheek upon the great cat's head, and look into the fire and think and think and think. But just before she reached the landing Miss Amelia came out of the door and closed it behind her, and stood before it, looking nervous and awkward. The truth was that she felt secretly ashamed of the thing she had been ordered to do.

'You—you are not to go in there,' she said.

'Not go in?' exclaimed Sara, and she fell back a pace.

'That is not your room now,' Miss Amelia answered, reddening a little.

Somehow, all at once, Sara understood. She realized that this was the beginning of the change Miss Minchin had spoken of.

'Where is my room?' she asked, hoping very much that her voice did not shake.

'You are to sleep in the attic next to Becky.'

Sara knew where it was. Becky had told her about it. She turned, and mounted up two flights of stairs. The last one was narrow, and covered with shabby strips of old carpet. She felt as if she were walking away and leaving far behind her the world in which that other child, who no longer seemed herself, had lived. This child, in her short, tight old frock, climbing the stairs to the attic, was quite a different creature.

When she reached the attic door and opened it, her heart gave a dreary little thump. Then she shut the door and stood against it and looked about her.

Yes, this was another world. The room had a slanting roof and was whitewashed. The whitewash was dingy and had fallen off in places. There was a rusty grate, an old iron bedstead, and a hard bed covered with a faded coverlet. Some pieces of furniture too much worn to be used downstairs had been sent up. Under the skylight in the roof, which showed nothing but an oblong piece of dull gray sky, there stood an old battered red footstool. Sara went to it and sat down. She seldom cried. She did not cry now. She laid Emily across her knees and put her face down upon her and her arms around her, and sat there, her little black head resting on the black draperies, not saying one word, not making one sound.

And as she sat in this silence there came a low tap at the door—such a low, humble one that she did not at first hear it, and, indeed, was not roused until the door was timidly pushed open and a poor tear-smeared face appeared peeping round it. It was Becky's face, and Becky had been crying furtively for hours and rubbing her eyes with her kitchen apron until she looked strange indeed.

'Oh, miss,' she said under her breath. 'Might I—would you allow me—jest to come in?'

Sara lifted her head and looked at her. She tried to begin a smile, and somehow she could not. Suddenly—and it was all through the loving

them or to be alive to anything but just what I was saying. It made me feel quite queer not to be answered; and when you tell anything sudden and strange, you expect people will say SOMETHING—whatever it is.'

Nobody but Sara herself ever knew what had happened in her room after she had run upstairs and locked her door. In fact, she herself scarcely remembered anything but that she walked up and down, saying over and over again to herself in a voice which did not seem her own, 'My papa is dead! My papa is dead!'

Once she stopped before Emily, who sat watching her from her chair, and cried out wildly, 'Emily! Do you hear? Do you hear—papa is dead? He is dead in India—thousands of miles away.'

When she came into Miss Minchin's sitting room in answer to her summons, her face was white and her eyes had dark rings around them. Her mouth was set as if she did not wish it to reveal what she had suffered and was suffering. She did not look in the least like the rose-coloured butterfly child who had flown about from one of her treasures to the other in the decorated schoolroom. She looked instead a strange, desolate, almost grotesque little figure.

She had put on, without Mariette's help, the cast-aside black-velvet frock. It was too short and tight, and her slender legs looked long and thin, showing themselves from beneath the brief skirt. As she had not found a piece of black ribbon, her short, thick, black hair tumbled loosely about her face and contrasted strongly with its pallor. She held Emily tightly in one arm, and Emily was swathed in a piece of black material.

'Put down your doll,' said Miss Minchin. 'What do you mean by bringing her here?'

'No,' Sara answered. 'I will not put her down. She is all I have. My papa gave her to me.'

She had always made Miss Minchin feel secretly uncomfortable, and she did so now. She did not speak with rudeness so much as with a cold steadiness with which Miss Minchin felt it difficult to cope—perhaps because she knew she was doing a heartless and inhuman thing.

'You will have no time for dolls in future,' she said. 'You will have to work and improve yourself and make yourself useful.'

Sara kept her big, strange eyes fixed on her, and said not a word.

Oh,' breaking out afresh, 'poor little Miss Sara, mum—that was called a princess.'

Somehow, she made Miss Minchin feel more angry than ever. That the very scullery maid should range herself on the side of this child—whom she realized more fully than ever that she had never liked—was too much. She actually stamped her foot.

'No—certainly not,' she said. 'She will wait on herself, and on other people, too. Leave the room this instant, or you'll leave your place.'

Becky threw her apron over her head and fled. She ran out of the room and down the steps into the scullery, and there she sat down among her pots and kettles, and wept as if her heart would break.

'It's exactly like the ones in the stories,' she wailed. 'Them pore princess ones that was drove into the world.'

Miss Minchin had never looked quite so still and hard as she did when Sara came to her, a few hours later, in response to a message she had sent her.

Even by that time it seemed to Sara as if the birthday party had either been a dream or a thing which had happened years ago, and had happened in the life of quite another little girl.

Every sign of the festivities had been swept away; the holly had been removed from the schoolroom walls, and the forms and desks put back into their places. Miss Minchin's sitting room looked as it always did—all traces of the feast were gone, and Miss Minchin had resumed her usual dress. The pupils had been ordered to lay aside their party frocks; and this having been done, they had returned to the schoolroom and huddled together in groups, whispering and talking excitedly.

'Tell Sara to come to my room,' Miss Minchin had said to her sister. 'And explain to her clearly that I will have no crying or unpleasant scenes.'

'Sister,' replied Miss Amelia, 'she is the strangest child I ever saw. She has actually made no fuss at all. You remember she made none when Captain Crewe went back to India. When I told her what had happened, she just stood quite still and looked at me without making a sound. Her eyes seemed to get bigger and bigger, and she went quite pale. When I had finished, she still stood staring for a few seconds, and then her chin began to shake, and she turned round and ran out of the room and upstairs. Several of the other children began to cry, but she did not seem to hear

mournfulness of Becky's streaming eyes—her face looked more like a child's not so much too old for her years. She held out her hand and gave a little sob.

'Oh, Becky,' she said. 'I told you we were just the same—only two little girls—just two little girls. You see how true it is. There's no difference now. I'm not a princess anymore.'

Becky ran to her and caught her hand, and hugged it to her breast, kneeling beside her and sobbing with love and pain.

'Yes, miss, you are,' she cried, and her words were all broken. 'Whats'ever 'appens to you—whats'ever—you'd be a princess all the same—an' nothin' couldn't make you nothin' different.'

comment. Miss Minchin walked across the room. She spoke to herself aloud without knowing that she was doing it. During the last year the story of the diamond mines had suggested all sorts of possibilities to her. Even proprietors of seminaries might make fortunes in stocks, with the aid of owners of mines. And now, instead of looking forward to gains, she was left to look back upon losses.

'The Princess Sara, indeed!' she said. 'The child has been pampered as if she were a QUEEN.' She was sweeping angrily past the corner table as she said it, and the next moment she started at the sound of a loud, sobbing sniff which issued from under the cover.

'What is that!' she exclaimed angrily. The loud, sobbing sniff was heard again, and she stooped and raised the hanging folds of the table cover.

'How DARE you!' she cried out. 'How dare you! Come out immediately!'

It was poor Becky who crawled out, and her cap was knocked on one side, and her face was red with repressed crying.

'If you please, 'm—it's me, mum,' she explained. 'I know I hadn't ought to. But I was lookin' at the doll, mum—an' I was frightened when you come in—an' slipped under the table.'

'You have been there all the time, listening,' said Miss Minchin.

'No, mum,' Becky protested, bobbing curtsies. 'Not listenin'—I thought I could slip out without your noticin', but I couldn't an' I had to stay. But I didn't listen, mum—I wouldn't for nothin'. But I couldn't help hearin'.'

Suddenly it seemed almost as if she lost all fear of the awful lady before her. She burst into fresh tears.

'Oh, please, 'm,' she said; 'I dare say you'll give me warnin', mum—but I'm so sorry for poor Miss Sara—I'm so sorry!'

'Leave the room!' ordered Miss Minchin.

Becky curtsied again, the tears openly streaming down her cheeks.

'Yes, 'm; I will, 'm,' she said, trembling; 'but oh, I just wanted to arst you: Miss Sara—she's been such a rich young lady, an' she's been waited on, 'and and foot; an' what will she do now, mum, without no maid? If—if, oh please, would you let me wait on her after I've done my pots an' kettles? I'd do 'em that quick—if you'd let me wait on her now she's poor.

'Where is Sara Crewe?'

Miss Amelia was bewildered.

'Sara!' she stammered. 'Why, she's with the children in your room, of course.'

'Has she a black frock in her sumptuous wardrobe?'—in bitter irony.

'A black frock?' Miss Amelia stammered again. 'A BLACK one?'

'She has frocks of every other colour. Has she a black one?'

Miss Amelia began to turn pale.

'No—ye-es!' she said. 'But it is too short for her. She has only the old black velvet, and she has outgrown it.'

'Go and tell her to take off that preposterous pink silk gauze, and put the black one on, whether it is too short or not. She has done with finery!'

Then Miss Amelia began to wring her fat hands and cry.

'Oh, sister!' she sniffed. 'Oh, sister! What CAN have happened?'

Miss Minchin wasted no words.

'Captain Crewe is dead,' she said. 'He has died without a penny. That spoiled, pampered, fanciful child is left a pauper on my hands.'

Miss Amelia sat down quite heavily in the nearest chair.

'Hundreds of pounds have I spent on nonsense for her. And I shall never see a penny of it. Put a stop to this ridiculous party of hers. Go and make her change her frock at once.'

'I?' panted Miss Amelia. 'M-must I go and tell her now?'

'This moment!' was the fierce answer. 'Don't sit staring like a goose. Go!'

Poor Miss Amelia was accustomed to being called a goose. She knew, in fact, that she was rather a goose, and that it was left to geese to do a great many disagreeable things. It was a somewhat embarrassing thing to go into the midst of a room full of delighted children, and tell the giver of the feast that she had suddenly been transformed into a little beggar, and must go upstairs and put on an old black frock which was too small for her. But the thing must be done. This was evidently not the time when questions might be asked.

She rubbed her eyes with her handkerchief until they looked quite red. After which she got up and went out of the room, without venturing to say another word. When her older sister looked and spoke as she had done just now, the wisest course to pursue was to obey orders without any

Chapter 8

In the Attic

THE first night she spent in her attic was a thing Sara never forgot. During its passing she lived through a wild, unchildlike woe of which she never spoke to anyone about her. There was no one who would have understood. It was, indeed, well for her that as she lay awake in the darkness her mind was forcibly distracted, now and then, by the strangeness of her surroundings. It was, perhaps, well for her that she was reminded by her small body of material things. If this had not been so, the anguish of her young mind might have been too great for a child to bear. But, really, while the night was passing she scarcely knew that she had a body at all or remembered any other thing than one.

'My papa is dead!' she kept whispering to herself. 'My papa is dead!'

It was not until long afterward that she realized that her bed had been so hard that she turned over and over in it to find a place to rest, that the darkness seemed more intense than any she had ever known, and that the wind howled over the roof among the chimneys like something which wailed aloud. Then there was something worse. This was certain scufflings and scratchings and squeakings in the walls and behind the skirting boards. She knew what they meant, because Becky had described them. They meant rats and mice who were either fighting with each other or playing together. Once or twice she even heard sharp-toed feet scurrying across the floor, and she remembered in those after days, when she recalled things, that when first she heard them she started up in bed

and sat trembling, and when she lay down again covered her head with the bedclothes.

The change in her life did not come about gradually, but was made all at once.

'She must begin as she is to go on,' Miss Minchin said to Miss Amelia. 'She must be taught at once what she is to expect.'

Mariette had left the house the next morning. The glimpse Sara caught of her sitting room, as she passed its open door, showed her that everything had been changed. Her ornaments and luxuries had been removed, and a bed had been placed in a corner to transform it into a new pupil's bedroom.

When she went down to breakfast she saw that her seat at Miss Minchin's side was occupied by Lavinia, and Miss Minchin spoke to her coldly.

'You will begin your new duties, Sara,' she said, 'by taking your seat with the younger children at a smaller table. You must keep them quiet, and see that they behave well and do not waste their food. You ought to have been down earlier. Lottie has already upset her tea.'

That was the beginning, and from day to day the duties given to her were added to. She taught the younger children French and heard their other lessons, and these were the least of her labours. It was found that she could be made use of in numberless directions. She could be sent on errands at any time and in all weathers. She could be told to do things other people neglected. The cook and the housemaids took their tone from Miss Minchin, and rather enjoyed ordering about the 'young one' who had been made so much fuss over for so long. They were not servants of the best class, and had neither good manners nor good tempers, and it was frequently convenient to have at hand someone on whom blame could be laid.

During the first month or two, Sara thought that her willingness to do things as well as she could, and her silence under reproof, might soften those who drove her so hard. In her proud little heart she wanted them to see that she was trying to earn her living and not accepting charity. But the time came when she saw that no one was softened at all; and the more willing she was to do as she was told, the more domineering and exacting careless housemaids became, and the more ready a scolding cook was to blame her.

'I have nothing to do with that, madam,' he said uninterestedly. 'Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible. Very sorry the thing has happened, of course.'

'If you think she is to be foisted off on me, you are greatly mistaken,' Miss Minchin gasped. 'I have been robbed and cheated; I will turn her into the street!'

If she had not been so furious, she would have been too discreet to say quite so much. She saw herself burdened with an extravagantly brought-up child whom she had always resented, and she lost all self-control.

Mr Barrow undisturbedly moved toward the door.

'I wouldn't do that, madam,' he commented; 'it wouldn't look well. Unpleasant story to get about in connection with the establishment. Pupil bundled out penniless and without friends.'

He was a clever business man, and he knew what he was saying. He also knew that Miss Minchin was a business woman, and would be shrewd enough to see the truth. She could not afford to do a thing which would make people speak of her as cruel and hard-hearted.

'Better keep her and make use of her,' he added. 'She's a clever child, I believe. You can get a good deal out of her as she grows older.'

'I will get a good deal out of her before she grows older!' exclaimed Miss Minchin.

'I am sure you will, ma'am,' said Mr Barrow, with a little sinister smile. 'I am sure you will. Good morning!'

He bowed himself out and closed the door, and it must be confessed that Miss Minchin stood for a few moments and glared at it. What he had said was quite true. She knew it. She had absolutely no redress. Her show pupil had melted into nothingness, leaving only a friendless, beggared little girl. Such money as she herself had advanced was lost and could not be regained.

And as she stood there breathless under her sense of injury, there fell upon her ears a burst of gay voices from her own sacred room, which had actually been given up to the feast. She could at least stop this.

But as she started toward the door it was opened by Miss Amelia, who, when she caught sight of the changed, angry face, fell back a step in alarm.

'What IS the matter, sister?' she ejaculated.

Miss Minchin's voice was almost fierce when she answered:

Mr Barrow was a shrewd businessman, and felt it as well to make his own freedom from responsibility quite clear without any delay.

'She is certainly left a beggar,' he replied. 'And she is certainly left on your hands, ma'am—as she hasn't a relation in the world that we know of.'

Miss Minchin started forward. She looked as if she was going to open the door and rush out of the room to stop the festivities going on joyfully and rather noisily that moment over the refreshments.

'It is monstrous!' she said. 'She's in my sitting room at this moment, dressed in silk gauze and lace petticoats, giving a party at my expense.'

'She's giving it at your expense, madam, if she's giving it,' said Mr Barrow, calmly. 'Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible for anything. There never was a cleaner sweep made of a man's fortune. Captain Crewe died without paying OUR last bill—and it was a big one.'

Miss Minchin turned back from the door in increased indignation. This was worse than anyone could have dreamed of its being.

'That is what has happened to me!' she cried. 'I was always so sure of his payments that I went to all sorts of ridiculous expenses for the child. I paid the bills for that ridiculous doll and her ridiculous fantastic wardrobe. The child was to have anything she wanted. She has a carriage and a pony and a maid, and I've paid for all of them since the last cheque came.'

Mr Barrow evidently did not intend to remain to listen to the story of Miss Minchin's grievances after he had made the position of his firm clear and related the mere dry facts. He did not feel any particular sympathy for irate keepers of boarding schools.

'You had better not pay for anything more, ma'am,' he remarked, 'unless you want to make presents to the young lady. No one will remember you. She hasn't a brass farthing to call her own.'

'But what am I to do?' demanded Miss Minchin, as if she felt it entirely his duty to make the matter right. 'What am I to do?'

'There isn't anything to do,' said Mr Barrow, folding up his eyeglasses and slipping them into his pocket. 'Captain Crewe is dead. The child is left a pauper. Nobody is responsible for her but you.'

'I am not responsible for her, and I refuse to be made responsible!'

Miss Minchin became quite white with rage.

Mr Barrow turned to go.

If she had been older, Miss Minchin would have given her the bigger girls to teach and saved money by dismissing an instructress; but while she remained and looked like a child, she could be made more useful as a sort of little superior errand girl and maid of all work. An ordinary errand boy would not have been so clever and reliable. Sara could be trusted with difficult commissions and complicated messages. She could even go and pay bills, and she combined with this the ability to dust a room well and to set things in order.

Her own lessons became things of the past. She was taught nothing, and only after long and busy days spent in running here and there at everybody's orders was she grudgingly allowed to go into the deserted schoolroom, with a pile of old books, and study alone at night.

'If I do not remind myself of the things I have learned, perhaps I may forget them,' she said to herself. 'I am almost a scullery maid, and if I am a scullery maid who knows nothing, I shall be like poor Becky. I wonder if I could QUITE forget and begin to drop my H's and not remember that Henry the Eighth had six wives.'

One of the most curious things in her new existence was her changed position among the pupils. Instead of being a sort of small royal personage among them, she no longer seemed to be one of their number at all. She was kept so constantly at work that she scarcely ever had an opportunity of speaking to any of them, and she could not avoid seeing that Miss Minchin preferred that she should live a life apart from that of the occupants of the schoolroom.

'I will not have her forming intimacies and talking to the other children,' that lady said. 'Girls like a grievance, and if she begins to tell romantic stories about herself, she will become an ill-used heroine, and parents will be given a wrong impression. It is better that she should live a separate life—one suited to her circumstances. I am giving her a home, and that is more than she has any right to expect from me.'

Sara did not expect much, and was far too proud to try to continue to be intimate with girls who evidently felt rather awkward and uncertain about her. The fact was that Miss Minchin's pupils were a set of dull, matter-of-fact young people. They were accustomed to being rich and comfortable, and as Sara's frocks grew shorter and shabbier and queerer-looking, and it became an established fact that she wore shoes with holes

in them and was sent out to buy groceries and carry them through the streets in a basket on her arm when the cook wanted them in a hurry, they felt rather as if, when they spoke to her, they were addressing an under servant.

'To think that she was the girl with the diamond mines,' Lavinia commented. 'She does look an object. And she's queerer than ever. I never liked her much, but I can't bear that way she has now of looking at people without speaking—just as if she was finding them out.'

'I am,' said Sara, promptly, when she heard of this. 'That's what I look at some people for. I like to know about them. I think them over afterward.'

The truth was that she had saved herself annoyance several times by keeping her eye on Lavinia, who was quite ready to make mischief, and would have been rather pleased to have made it for the ex-show pupil.

Sara never made any mischief herself, or interfered with anyone. She worked like a drudge; she tramped through the wet streets, carrying parcels and baskets; she laboured with the childish inattention of the little ones' French lessons; as she became shabbier and more forlorn-looking, she was told that she had better take her meals downstairs; she was treated as if she was nobody's concern, and her heart grew proud and sore, but she never told anyone what she felt.

'Soldiers don't complain,' she would say between her small, shut teeth, 'I am not going to do it; I will pretend this is part of a war.'

But there were hours when her child heart might almost have broken with loneliness but for three people.

The first, it must be owned, was Becky—just Becky. Throughout all that first night spent in the garret, she had felt a vague comfort in knowing that on the other side of the wall in which the rats scuffled and squeaked there was another young human creature. And during the nights that followed the sense of comfort grew. They had little chance to speak to each other during the day. Each had her own tasks to perform, and any attempt at conversation would have been regarded as a tendency to loiter and lose time. 'Don't mind me, miss,' Becky whispered during the first morning, 'if I don't say nothin' polite. Some un'd be down on us if I did. I MEANS "please" an' "thank you" an' "beg pardon," but I dassn't to take time to say it.'

'Any diamond mines?' ejaculated Miss Minchin, catching at the back of a chair and feeling as if a splendid dream was fading away from her.

'Diamond mines spell ruin oftener than they spell wealth,' said Mr Barrow. 'When a man is in the hands of a very dear friend and is not a businessman himself, he had better steer clear of the dear friend's diamond mines, or gold mines, or any other kind of mines dear friends want his money to put into. The late Captain Crewe— '

Here Miss Minchin stopped him with a gasp.

'The LATE Captain Crewe!' she cried out. 'The LATE! You don't come to tell me that Captain Crewe is— '

'He's dead, ma'am,' Mr Barrow answered with jerky brusqueness. 'Died of jungle fever and business troubles combined. The jungle fever might not have killed him if he had not been driven mad by the business troubles, and the business troubles might not have put an end to him if the jungle fever had not assisted. Captain Crewe is dead!'

Miss Minchin dropped into her chair again. The words he had spoken filled her with alarm.

'What WERE his business troubles?' she said. 'What WERE they?'

'Diamond mines,' answered Mr Barrow, 'and dear friends—and ruin.'

Miss Minchin lost her breath.

'Ruin!' she gasped out.

'Lost every penny. That young man had too much money. The dear friend was mad on the subject of the diamond mine. He put all his own money into it, and all Captain Crewe's. Then the dear friend ran away—Captain Crewe was already stricken with fever when the news came. The shock was too much for him. He died delirious, raving about his little girl—and didn't leave a penny.'

Now Miss Minchin understood, and never had she received such a blow in her life. Her show pupil, her show patron, swept away from the Select Seminary at one blow. She felt as if she had been outraged and robbed, and that Captain Crewe and Sara and Mr Barrow were equally to blame.

'Do you mean to tell me,' she cried out, 'that he left NOTHING! That Sara will have no fortune! That the child is a beggar! That she is left on my hands a little pauper instead of an heiress?'