

"Yes, at number ten, Gwynne Street," said Janetta, suddenly starting and feeling a little uncomfortable. The coachman evidently knew the address already, for at that moment he turned the horse's heads to the left, and the carriage rolled down a narrow side-street, where the tall red brick houses had a mean and shabby aspect, and seemed as if constructed to keep out sun and air as much as possible.

Janetta always felt the closeness and the shabbiness a little when she first came home, even from school, but when she came from Helmsley Court they struck her with redoubled force. She had never thought before how dull the street was, nor noticed that the railings were broken down in front of the door with the brass-plate that bore her father's name, nor that the window-curtains were torn and the windows sadly in need of washing. The little flight of stone steps that led from the iron gate to the door was also very dirty; and the servant girl, whose head appeared against the area railings as the carriage drove up, was more untidy, more unkempt, in appearance than ever Janetta could have expected. "We can't be rich, but we might be clean!" she said to herself in a subdued frenzy of impatience, as she fancied (quite unjustly) that she saw a faint smile pass over Lady Caroline's delicate, impassive face. "No wonder she thinks me an unfit friend for dear Margaret. But—oh, there is my dear, darling father! Well, nobody can say anything against him at any rate!" And Janetta's face beamed with sudden joy as she saw Mr. Colwyn coming down the dirty steps to the rickety little iron gate, and Lady Caroline, who knew the surgeon by sight, nodded to him with friendly condescension.

"How are you, Mr. Colwyn?" she said, graciously. "I have brought your daughter home, you see, and I hope you will not scold her for what has been my daughters fault—not yours's."

"I am very glad to see Janetta, under any circumstances," said Mr. Colwyn, gravely, as he raised his hat. He was a tall spare man, in a shabby coat, with a careworn aspect, and kindly, melancholy eyes. Janetta noticed with a pang that his hair was greyer than it had been when last she went back to school.

"We shall be glad to see her again at Helmsley Court," said Lady Caroline. "No, I won't get out, thank you. I have to get back to tea. Your daughter's box is in front. I was to tell you from Miss Polehampton, Mr. Colwyn, that her friend at Worthing would be glad of Miss Colwyn's services after the holidays."

"I am much obliged to your ladyship," said Mr. Colwyn, with grave formality. "I am not sure that I shall let my daughter go."

"Won't you? Oh, but she ought to have all possible advantages! And can you tell me, Mr. Colwyn, by any chance, *who* are the people whom we passed on the road to Beaminster—an oldish lady in black and a young man with very dark hair and eyes? They had B on their luggage, I believe."