

"Did they send you away from school for being naughty?" she asked, with a grave look into Janetta's face.

A chuckle from Joey, and a giggle from Georgie, were instantly repressed by Mr. Colwyn's frown and Mrs. Colwyn's acid remonstrance.

"What are you thinking of, children? Sister is never naughty. We do not yet quite understand why she has left Miss Polehampton's so suddenly, but of course she has some good reason. She'll explain it, no doubt, to her papa and me. Miss Polehampton has been a great deal put out about it all, and has written a long letter to your papa, Janetta; and, indeed, it seems to me as if it would have been more becoming if you had kept to your own place and not tried to make friends with those above you——"

"Who are those above her, I should like to know?" broke in the grey-haired surgeon with some heat. "My Janet's as good as the best of them any day. The Adairs are not such grand people as Miss Polehampton makes out—I never heard of such insulting distinctions!"

"Fancy Janetta being sent away—regularly expelled!" muttered Joey, with another chuckle.

"You are very unkind to talk in that way!" said Janetta, addressing him, because at that moment she could not bear to look at Mr. Colwyn. "It was not that that made Miss Polehampton angry. It was what she called insubordination. Miss Adair did not like to see me having meals at a side-table—though I didn't mind one single bit—and she left her own place and sat by me—and then Miss Polehampton was vexed—and everything followed naturally. It was not just my being friends with Miss Adair that made her send me away."

"It seems to me," said Mr. Colwyn, "that Miss Adair was very inconsiderate."

"It was all her love and friendship, father," pleaded Janetta. "And she had always had her own way: and of course she did not think that Miss Polchampton really meant——"

Her weak little excuses were cut short by a scornful laugh from her stepmother.

"It's easy to see that you have been made a cat's-paw of, Janetta," she said. "Miss Adair was tired of school, and took the opportunity of making a to-do about you, so as to provoke the schoolmistress and get sent away. It does not matter to her, of course: *she* hasn't got her living to earn. And if you lose your teaching, and Miss Polehampton's recommendations by it, it doesn't affect her. Oh, I understand these fine ladies and their ways."