

"Indeed," said Janetta, in distress, "you quite misunderstand Miss Adair, mamma Besides, it has not deprived me of my teaching: Miss Polchampton had told me that I might go to her sister's school at Worthing if I liked; and she only let me go yesterday because she became irritated at—at—some of the things that were said——"

"Yes, but I shall not let you go to Worthing," said Mr. Colwyn, with sudden decisiveness. "You shall not be exposed to insolence of this kind any longer. Miss Polehampton had no right to treat you as she did, and I shall write and tell her so."

"And if Janetta stays at home," said his wife complainingly, "what is to become of her career as a music-teacher? She can't get lessons here, and there's the expense: —— "

"I hope I can afford to keep my daughter as long as I am alive," said Mr. Colwyn with some vehemence. "There, don't be vexed, my dear child," and he laid his hand tenderly on Janetta's shoulder, "nobody blames you; and your friend erred perhaps from over-affection; but Miss Polehampton"—with energy—"is a vulgar, self-seeking, foolish old woman, and I won't have you enter into relations with her again."

And then he left the room, and Janetta, forcing back the tears in her eyes, did her best to smile when Georgie and Tiny hugged her simultaneously and Jinks beat a tattoo upon her knee.

"Well," said Mrs. Colwyn, lugubriously, "I hope everything will turn out for the best; but it is not at all nice, Janetta, to think that Miss Adair has been expelled for your sake, or that you are thrown out of work without a character, so to speak. I should think the Adairs would see that, and would make some compensation. If they don't offer to do so, your papa might suggest it——"

"I'm sure father would never suggest anything of the kind," Janetta flashed out; but before Mrs. Colwyn could protest, a diversion was effected by the entrance of the missing Nora, and all discussion was postponed to a more fitting moment.

For to look at Nora was to forget discussion. She was the eldest of the second Mrs. Colwyn's children—a girl just seventeen, taller than Janetta and thinner, with the thinness of immature girlhood, but with a fair skin and a mop of golden-brown hair, which curled so naturally that her younger brother's statement concerning those fair locks must surely have been a libel. She had a vivacious, narrow, little face, with large eyes like a child's—that is to say, they had the transparent look that one sees in some children's eyes, as if the color had been laid on in a single wash without any shadows. They were very pretty eyes, and gave light and expression to a set of rather small features, which might have been insignificant if they had belonged to an insignificant person. But Nora Colwyn was anything but insignificant.