happy. Almost every post brought a square-shaped envelope from the country, and, also, almost every post carried one back. And thus we find him at the opening of our story, leading his old careless life, but made brighter and better by the knowledge that there was one good, true woman who loved him, and whose love was worthy the guarding. We left him riding rapidly toward his hotel, after reading the message which seemed to have contained such startling news. As he rode along he reopened it, and read it a second time.

To Mr. John Darcy, Royal Club, City:

Dear Sir,—I have taken the liberty to call at your apartments for you, as I wish your help in a very urgent matter. Not finding you, I send you this message, which the people here say will reach you at your club. Please come at once. I am in serious trouble. I have come from Egypt to see you. I will await you at your hotel.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Cordella Darcy.

"Mrs. Cordella Darcy!" Great heavens! what could it mean? Cordella was not married! How then could this woman—— But the note said that she had come from Egypt, and Cordella was in Egypt! "I am in serious trouble." There was some awful mystery, and Jack's heart sank within him as the thought flashed across his mind. The moment the cab stopped he sprang to the pavement, and, hastily paying the driver, he hurried into the hotel.

On the landing he met a servant. "There is company in your parlor, sir," she said; but without answering her he hurried on. A moment later he stood in the open doorway. What he saw was this: In a chair near the window sat a small figure dressed in plainest black, with a heavy black veil thrown back over a little bonnet. The face, turned to the window, was away from him, and he could not see it. In the bow-window, half hidden by the heavy curtains, stood a golden-haired little girl, her attention absorbed in watching the sights in the busy street below. What a beautiful little head it was, Darcy thought to himself, as he stood unobserved, and what a glorious lot of golden hair! Instinctively he glanced at the figure in black; her hair was dark. Then he stepped into the room, and both occupants turned round simultaneously.

Then Darcy experienced two distinct surprises. The child was wondrously beautiful. The great eyes were deepest blue; the nose, a decidedly saucy one, and the little mouth, set in a circle of dimples, added winning sweetness to the whole face, which, in its heavy framework of wavy golden hair, made Darcy think of the little elves he had seen in fairy picture-books; and it was a very sweet face which the little black figure turned to him, but how inexpressibly sad! The eyes, which he saw were like the child's, seemed to speak of some great, overshadowing sorrow; and the face, pale and pinched as it was with great suffering, had evidently been very beautiful. Now, its very sadness and sweetness touched Darcy's heart instantly. As she discovered him she arose to her feet, in spite of his quickly indicated protest.

"You are Mr. Darcy?" she asked, in a low tone; and Darcy, as he bowed acquiescence, mentally told himself that her voice was as sweet and sad as her face. He felt instinctively that she was a lady. "Allow me to introduce myself," she continued; "I am Mrs. Cordella Darcy, as you have probably learned from my note."

Jack looked at her almost incredulously. "I do not think I understand," he finally said. "My brother has never informed us that he had married,—and, you must pardon me,—but a man of his position and title would scarcely take such a step without acquainting those who would naturally be interested with the fact."

An indescribable look of pain came over the pale little face, and she seemed to catch her breath quickly, as she answered: "I know, I know," she said, "all that you would say has been said before. But it is a long story, and you cannot judge justly until you have heard it. I am too ill"—here her voice grew pleading in its tone—"to defend myself or him, now. I need a friend and encourage-