No one, not even Mrs. Oakland herself, will deny that Miss Upham was fascinating. Opinion as to her claim to beauty differed, but all agreed that the brilliancy of her dark eyes was unsurpassed; and more than one hearer, under the spell of her bright glance, listening to those strange, romantic tales of her past experience, has confessed that there was something far above the commonplace in her clear-cut features. Afterwards, if he were acute, perhaps he might think her a little too bright; but in her presence there was something wonderfully magnetic. It may have been her small, slight figure that appealed to you,—she looked so young and dependent; or it may have been her sympathetic manner,—for she was as good a listener as talker, and always succeeded in performing that most difficult task of keeping still at the right time. Anyway, there must have been something prepossessing about her, for when she applied to Mrs. Oakland for a position as governess in her family, that lady accepted her at once, and felt at last that she had found the right person.

She did not regret her choice. Miss Upham proved everything, and even more, than she had expected. Under her instruction the children made what seemed to Mrs. Oakland the most phenomenal progress in their studies. In fact, she became so successful as a teacher that before long she found herself at the head of a small school, composed of the neighbors' children, who met daily at Mrs. Oakland's. Nor was the light of her intellect allowed to illuminate youthful minds alone. Mrs. Oakland soon discovered in her governess such an easy familiarity with the Gallic tongue, that she organized a French class among her friends, and Miss Upham kindly consented to act in the lucrative position of instructress. There is a distinction between a mere school-teacher and an "instructress" in French.

In the household Mrs. Oakland soon came to feel her new governess' services as invaluable. The children were never so unmanageable but that they would become instantly quieted at the prospect of one of Miss Upham's wonderful stories. To Mrs. Oakland herself,—a semi-invalid,—her cheerful presence, and quiet, winning manner were always welcome. Miss Upham would sit and talk to her by the hour, telling of old England and her life there. Mrs. Oakland's family had come from England, and a bond of sympathy was easily and naturally established. It was clear to her that Miss Upham was of gentle birth, and it was not long before the latter came to be regarded quite as one of the family. Mr. Oakland approved of her; the children adored her; and Mrs. Oakland relied on her. What further credentials did she need?

It is not to be wondered at, then, that when Miss Upham, appearing considerably excited, came into Mrs. Oakland's room one morning with an open letter in her hand, and explained that Mr. De Forest Vincent had written her from England, asking to renew the engagement with her which had been broken off some years before,—it is not to be wondered at, I say, that Mrs. Oakland was nearly as pleased over the event as if it had happened to her own daughter. For the moment she did not consider the probable loss of her governess. The latter further explained that, owing to certain eccentricities of Mr. Vincent's father, she had been obliged to abandon the hope of marrying him. Now, however, the old gentleman was dead, and De Forest had become master of Kenmere. He was, she added, a member of that family to which the Boston Vincents, those prominent leaders of the best society, belong, and a more distant relative of the equally fashionable De Forests. There could be no doubt in Mrs. Oakland's mind of Mr. Vincent's eligibility, and Miss Upham indulged in no unnecessary delay in accepting his offer.

She did not, however, allow her engage-