

LENA RIVERS

At the door they met Durward, who, as he took Lena's hand, said, "It is well you remembered your promise, for I was about starting after you."

"Oh, hang it all! mother, I can't always be bothered with a girl; I'm not a woman, I'm a man."

"What shall I do?" said Lena, unconsciously and half aloud.

"Stay with me," answered Durward, drawing her hand further within his arm, and bending upon her a look of admiration which she could not mistake.

Several times they passed and re-passed Mrs. Graham, who was highly incensed at her son's proceedings, and at last actually asked him "if he did not intend noticing any one except Miss Rivers," adding, as an apology for her rudeness, (for Mrs. Graham prided herself upon being very polite in her own house.)

"But her efforts were all in vain. John Jr. was incorrigible, silly whispering to Nellie that he had no idea of leaving a medicine chest."

"Let her stay at home, then," was John Jr.'s answer, as he led Nellie towards the supper room, where the company were just then entering.

"Where?" asked Lena, looking around. "Why, there," continued John, pointing to the parlor, "where you noticed with what parental solicitude mother watches over her?"

"I saw them together," answered Lena, "and I thought it very kind in my aunt, for no one else seemed to notice me, and I felt sorry for her. She is going home with us, I believe."

answer, which was, "that on account of her ill health, she seldom enjoyed any thing of the kind."

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"Behave, can't you?" said Lena, at the same time continuing, "No, I don't suppose Mabel is dying for you at all. All of us girls like to receive attention from you gentlemen, and she's not an exception."

"I'll warrant you," returned Lena, who really had no idea that Mabel cared in particular for her cousin, and studied with the rest of her interest, she started to leave the room.

"Perhaps not," returned John Jr., "but she can at least keep her miserable feelings to herself. Nobody wants to be soiled with her."

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