

A MONSTROUS WRONG!

CHAPTER XI. A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

The question of John Redburn, abrupt and harsh, delivered in a manner full of anger and threatening, amazed Dolores. She looked from him to the two women. The elder Mrs. Redburn was cold and stern and implacable, appearing to have no interest in the matter whatsoever. The younger Mrs. Redburn looked excited and expectant, and regarded the girl with a scornful gaze, in which was mingled contempt. Dolores felt that she was in some way "a prisoner at the bar," and that these three were her judges, bent upon imposing upon her the extreme penalty of the law.

"It seems to me that I ought to know it also," interposed Dolores, calmly. "If you do not tell me, I shall ask him." Mary Redburn raised her eyes in a shocked expression. "Tell her the truth, John," she exclaimed. "She will have pride enough to keep it to herself." "It is about my parents?" "Your parents?" repeated John Redburn. "Who were your parents? Who was your father? That is what we would like to know."

"The significance of his tone brought the blood swiftly to the girl's cheeks," she thought. "It was your cousin, perhaps," she suggested. "Mary Redburn's lips curled. 'You had no father, girl!' she exclaimed. 'Do you understand now? You have no right to any name. You are a born outcast.'"

"I have been to Beech Lane," answered Dolores, in a straightforward manner, but somewhat wondrously. "Who was with you?" "A swift smile manifested to the girl's brow. For a moment she was embarrassed. It was not easy to drag forth her precious secret to the judicial eyes of her enemies, for the attitude of the Redburns was unmistakably hostile. But a sneer on Mary Redburn's lips aroused her spirit. These people must have heard that she had been in Beech Lane, and that she was a young man. Dared they think ill of her? She threw her proud little head up haughtily. The lovely dark face had grown quite pale, but the velvet black eyes gleamed and glowed like great dusky stars.

"Sir Basil Nugent was with me," she answered, fearlessly. "He is a young baronet who has been visiting at St. Harrah's Place."

"Why should I not?" cried the girl hotly. "He is my promised husband. It is coming in the morning to Uncle John's consent."

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