

And down the stair sped Eileen, to welcome the unexpected visitor.

Aunt Penelope Page was stepsister to Eileen's father, and was very much older than he. So wide a gulf of years, indeed, lay between them that she had been more of a mother than a sister to the young barrister. Eileen was her godchild. It was only on her account that Aunt Pen occasionally partook of Lady Althorp's hospitality. Both ladies entertained strong feelings of mutual dislike; but as each knew the other to be an enemy worthy of her steel, they lived on terms of armed neutrality.

'O Aunt Pen, what a delightful surprise!' cried Eileen, bestowing a warm hug on the little old lady. 'And how fine you are to-night! Are you going to the ball?'

For Aunt Pen was arrayed in black satin, adorned with some old family lace and jewellery.

'There, there, child! You'll crush me. Of course I'm going to the ball. And so are you. Morris' (this to Lady Althorp's maid), 'be good enough to bring up that box to Miss Darcy's room. Now, Eileen my dear, run up before me!'

'But, Aunt Pen, you're surely not in earnest! What would Lady Althorp say?'

'Leave all that to me, my dear! And instead of talking, begin to dress. We've no time to lose.'

'But I have no dress, Aunt Pen!'

'I have seen to that. Morris, open that box, please!'

The dress-box was opened, and, with exclamations of rapture, the maid drew forth an exquisite toilette of soft, cloudlike chiffon.

'Now, my dear, don't tell me you have no dress. Not another word! Get ready as fast as you can. Perhaps Morris will help?'

With the maid's willing aid the toilette was arranged in an incredibly short space of time; and Eileen, a vision of girlish beauty, followed her aunt to the ball door. Here a new surprise confronted her: for, instead of the old lady's little pony trap, there awaited them a perfectly appointed brougham, drawn by a pair of magnificent bays.

'Get in, child—get in quickly!' commanded Aunt Pen.

Eileen, half dazed, obeyed. Morris tucked the fleecy white skirts scientifically about the dainty little satin shoes, the coachman whipped up the horses, and they were off.

'Now, auntie, dear, will you please explain all this mystery?' began Eileen, as soon as they were fairly started.

'Where has this carriage come from?'

'It has come from the Darramore stables, if you must needs know,' replied that lady. 'Lord Glenult was greatly distressed when he discovered that the Lismona house party was not complete; and your uncle was furious when he found you hadn't appeared; so I came to the rescue. There now! Don't ask any more questions. You're really getting on my nerves.'

As Aunt Pen had never been heard to mention 'nerves' before, always asserting that she 'despised such things,' Eileen felt there was something inexplicable about the whole proceeding.

'O, Aunt Pen,' she burst out, after a short silence, 'do you know that I feel just like Cinderella to-night? You are the dear, kind fairy godmother, with her lovely gifts. Did I ever think I should have such a dress as this? Then this fine carriage, and the ball?'

'You forget the stepmother and stepsisters,' said Aunt Pen. 'And what about the Prince?'

'The Prince?' Eileen laughed happily. 'Oh, the Prince is all right. He's Max. Ah, if only he were there to-night!'

'Well, keep on wishing, my dear! One never can tell what's going to happen.'

And, truly, after the occurrence of this night, Eileen felt she could never call that statement in question.

Here they were at Darramore—beautiful Darramore, lovelier than ever in the witchery of the moonlight. Eileen thought of the morning her uncle and Max had persuaded her to go and look over the grounds with them. The owner would only be delighted to have them do so, Sir George assured her. What a happy morning they had spent! She remembered Max's saying: 'What if I had such a place as this to bring you to, Eileen?' And she colored softly as she thought of her reply: 'I'd rather go to whatever little home you can give me, Max, than reign at Darramore without you.'

With a well-executed curve, the carriage drew up. They had reached their destination. And through the open doors a flood of light poured out on the broad sweep in front of the house. In a few moments more they found themselves mounting a noble flight of stairs, at the head of which a lady and gentleman, evidently the host and hostess, were waiting to receive them. Lord Glenult, as Eileen conjectured the former to be, was at the moment speaking to some one behind him. His face was turned from them.

'That's Mrs. Ashlyn, a distant relative of the family,' remarked Aunt Pen, under shelter of the gorgeous footman who preceded them. 'She is acting as hostess to-night.—This is my niece, Eileen,' she continued, as, having reached the top of the stairs, she presented Eileen to the gracious-looking lady.

Eileen, a little surprised at the informality of the introduction, was still more surprised at the great cordiality of her reception. Mrs. Ashlyn took both her hands in a warm clasp, and in the kindest manner welcomed Eileen to Darramore.

'No introduction is needed here,' she added, with an arch smile, as Lord Glenult, turning round, faced his fair young guest.

For an instant Eileen could only gasp as, almost doubting the evidence of her senses, she saw who stood before her. It was Max Jeffries—Max, with the humorous gleam in those steadfast gray eyes of his!

'Eileen!' he said, coming forward quickly and taking her hand. 'Before you begin to scold me, listen for a few minutes.'

Mechanically she allowed him to lead her to a recess overshadowed by palms, contrived for the benefit of those who wished to sit out dances.

'O Max,' she exclaimed, 'what does all this mean? I feel bewildered.'

'My dear little girl! Well, you'll understand everything in a few minutes. You know there was great trouble in making out the late Lord Glenult's heir. I was the person, living in one of the Western States of America, and having no idea that the inheritance should ever come to me. One of the first things I learned was that the estate was grievously mismanaged, and the tenantry very badly treated. I became most anxious to see for myself how far this information was correct. Your uncle, a college chum of my father's, made the matter easy for me. As I was quite unknown in this part of the world, when Sir George introduced me under my second name no one guessed my identity.'

'No, indeed!' murmured Eileen, conscious what a vast difference such a knowledge would have made in his reception at Lismona.

'Well, later on, your Aunt Penelope was admitted to our secret—'

'You never told me!' interrupted Eileen, reproachfully.

'Sweetheart, I wanted to present you with Darramore at its brightest. And 'twas so sweet to realise that it was as plain Max Jeffries you cared for me, that I put off making myself known till the last moment. You may imagine my feelings when I found you hadn't come to-night. But Heaven bless your Aunt Penelope! She rose to the occasion. It seems she foresaw such a thing might happen, and made provision for it.'

'Ah!' said Eileen (a long, comprehensive 'Ah!'); 'I see it all now.'

'And I know you will help me, dear, to set things right at Darramore—to make our poor people comfortable and happy.'

'Yes, Max, indeed I will, with the help of God.'

For a moment they stood, with hands clasped, looking in spirit down the bright vista of happy years opening before them. Then Lord Glenult said:

'I think we had better make our appearance in the ballroom now. People will be wondering what has become of us.'

They emerged from the little recess, and found that Mrs. Ashlyn had returned to her duties as hostess. Aunt Penelope was seated not far away, awaiting them. She rose as they approached.

'O Aunt Pen,' cried Eileen, taking both her hands, 'everything, even the Prince, has come to-night to your little Cinderella!'—*Ire Maria.*

Deaf and Dumb Institution, Waratah, N.S.W.

We have received the fifth biennial report of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, Waratah, New South Wales, which is conducted by the Dominican Nuns. The years 1909 and 1910 have been marked with great progress, especially in the increase of pupils. During that period thirteen girls and seven boys joined the school ranks; seven girls and seven boys were admitted to the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, whilst five boys and five girls were confirmed. The expenditure for the two years amounted to £2419 18s 2d, whilst the receipts were £4623 6s 10d. The balance sheet of the building fund account shows that the balance of debt at December 31, 1910, was £2474 12s 10d, as against £4683 1s 7d, at December 31, 1908. The number of deaf and dumb mutes on the roll numbered 63. Pupils are taken from the different States. Since 1875, 102 have come from New South Wales, 20 from Victoria, 18 from Queensland, 2 from Western Australia, 8 from Tasmania, 7 from New Zealand, and one from New Caledonia.

Messrs. Dwan Bros., Willis street, Wellington, report having sold the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Princess Theatre Hotel, Wellington; Mr. Berti's interest in the lease, goodwill, etc., of the Star Hotel, Addington; Mr. Guthrie's interest in the lease, goodwill, etc., of the Methven Hotel, Methven; Mrs. Manson's interest in the Ship Hotel, The Port, Nelson; the Telegraph Hotel, Otaki; Mr. Hammond's interest in the lease and furniture of the Hunterville Hotel; Mr. Richard Turnbull's interest in the Occidental Hotel, Palmerston North; the lease, etc., of the Evening Star Hotel, Sydney; the lease, etc., of the Tuggerah Lakes Hotel, Sydney.