

THE WIZARD'S SON



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BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE Methvens occupied a little house in the outskirts of a little town where there was not very much going on of any description, and still less which they could take any share in, being, as they were, poor and unable to make any effective response to the civilities shown to them. The family consisted of three persons—the mother, who was a widow with one son; the son himself, who was a young man of three or four and twenty; and a distant cousin of Mrs. Methven's, who lived with her, having no other home. It was not a very happy household. The mother had a limited income and an anxious temper; the son a somewhat volatile and indolent disposition, and no ambition at all as to his future, nor anxiety as to what was going to happen to him in life. This, as may be supposed, was enough to introduce many uneasy elements into their joint existence; and the third of the party, Miss Merivale, was not of the class of the peacemakers to whom Scripture allots a special blessing. She had no amiable glamour in her eyes, but saw her friends' imperfections with a clearness of sight which is little conducive to that happy progress of affairs which is called "getting on." The Methvens were sufficiently proud to keep their difficulties out of the public eye, but on very many occasions, unfortunately, it had become very plain to themselves that they did not "get on." It was not any want of love. Mrs. Methven was herself aware, and her friends were in the constant habit of saying, that she had sacrificed everything for Walter.