

**B. F. SCHWEIER,**  
BY MARY ORAHAM, AUTHOR OF  
MARGARET REIDSON, etc.  
CHAPTER I.  
The old lady looked up from her knitting and smiled to herself in perfect content. Her bright glance passed from one to the other of the young people, and then returned to her knitting, which resembled Penelope's weaving in being ripped out many times and done over again. At last, however, she had come to a clear place, where there was no narrowing, no "drop one, knit two together, throw the thread over etc.," but plain straight knitting which she could do almost as well as if no interesting couple were engrossing all her thoughts.

Everything was turning out admirably; the two young people taken to each other at once, and she was setting the rest of it for them in her own mind. The engagement should be a short one; Harry's prospects were never increasing, his wife had said would never begin, until he had married and settled down. As for Fredericka, what could be better for her than to thus early provided with a home of her own?

The young girl was a niece of Mrs. Derrickson's deceased husband, while Harry Frazier, the old lady's only remaining blood relation, was grandson to her well-beloved brother Henry, who had lost his life years before in the service of his country, and whose son and grandson had inherited and inherited the full meed of love and authority which Mrs. Derrickson had once bestowed upon him.

Frederika had spent most of her young life in boarding school. Ever since she could remember, she had heard of a stately old lady whom her father called Madame Derrickson, whom her mother always mentioned with some affection and much respect as Aunt Fredericka.

She had known that her aunt was in reduced circumstances, and that she would have been much to provide for her from that quarter.

Years had passed; the expenses of her education had been paid by her grandfather Smith until he died. His estate had dwindled up by debts and lawyer's fees, and nothing was left for the young girl, but a pretty fair education, with which to make her way.

She had just finished the course marked out for her in Madame Bocher's fashionable school, and that lady gave her every reason to believe that she would be no difficulty in obtaining a situation where she might impart to others, those accomplishments which were now all she had to depend upon.

Her little stock of pocket-money was well exhausted in advertising and answering advertisements. Madame was beginning to grow impatient. It would not be long before she would be on her feet, but—reilly—when so many out-bids were waiting for vacancies, the difficulty in keeping Madame Smith's name before the season must be very apparent.

Frederika comprehended, but her courage did not yet fall. She had a young and high spirited, and she thought something would "turn up," though she did not intend to wait for it to do so, but would go out and diligently search for it.

One day about the middle of February when her hopes were beginning to lose that bright tinge which had hitherto distinguished them, word was brought her that Madame Bocher was to see her in her reception room. She found the principal in close confabulation with a handsome old lady, whom the hopeful girl recognized as the grandmother of some future charge of her own.

On a motion from Madame, Fredericka sat down at a little distance, and soon saw the old lady with a pair of bright brown eyes, determined to read her through. Soon however, the young girl saw an opportunity as the lady resumed her conversation with Madame.

There was something which both attracted and repelled her in the old lady. Her fine features, her clear eyes, her determined will, and to anyone who might oppose it! While her sparkling eye bore evidence quite contradictory, being indicative of geniality, kindness, and a strong sense of humor.

Her manners were not calculated to give any more decided an impression of her character, being a mixture of frankness and reserve, humor and laughter, which formed a thin veil for the strong will which was an unmistakable characteristic.

"Well," thought Fredericka, after having puzzled some time over the character of her future patron, "There is one thing certain; be you nice, or be you disagreeable, you are surely rich and can afford to pay me as much as you like for all I shall have to do or endure," and she cast a second glance at the elegant velvet cloak with its harmonious accompaniments, that hung there, and seeing else could have been appropriate for the stately old lady who wore them.

Her meditations were interrupted by Madame, who in a softer tone than she had used to her for some time asked her to go upstairs and bring down her Roll Book.

When she returned from this welcome errand, she found the old lady standing up, and apparently about to take her departure.

Madam took the Roll Book, smiling sweet thanks, and went to her school room, leaving the two alone together, without ever the ceremony of an introduction.

"As you see all Derrickson, and I not one bit Smith except in name, you can come to me with me." Thus the old lady spoke to the astonished girl.

"Why," she exclaimed, "I was, she thought to herself, as she opened her eyes lazily needing the dream to remind her that she had an unpleasant task to fulfil."

Her aunt was already stirring about in the next room, and Fredericka, who could sleep no longer, resolved to follow her good example of early rising.

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Frederika followed her, determined to settle the question then and there.

"Aunt," she began, "I have no desire to be disrespectful, or to do anything contrary to your wishes, but conscience coincides with my feelings about this, and I feel that it is my duty to try and find something to do."

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