

House at the next general election. What do you think of him?"

"To me," replied Gilbert, "he was the meeting; his convictions shine in his eyes. At first I took him for a firebrand, but he has other and better qualities. If I felt as he does,—I mean if I realized the evils of our social system as he does,—I should kill myself in despair."

"Ah!" said the editor, "he told you landlords some rather unpleasant truths, I fancy."

"He did," assented Gilbert, "and gave us good advice. But what would he do in our position except go with the stream?"

"Go with the stream! ah, if you only knew enough to do that you would remain *beati possidentes* for ever. But you must excuse me just now, Arderne,—what would London do without my editorial to-morrow? If you drop in at the office about five, say on Thursday, we will dine together at the club. Sure to find Blunt there, he lives in the place almost. Well, ta-ta!" and the influential journalist, capricious and shallow product of a meretricious, huckstering generation, went off trippingly down the street.

The Ardernes had been in town nearly three weeks, during which Gilbert had been dull and at times splenetic. Holding his mother in great love and veneration, he had, nevertheless, protested against her treatment of Amy, and by way of marking his displeasure with Dorothy Teulon he had left Norfolk without paying her the slightest attention. Stung to the quick by this disrespect Dorothy, before leaving Withington, had given sundry sly hints among her acquaintances respecting Gilbert's infatuation for one whom she termed a mere lady's companion and an adventuress, hints which spread so rapidly and so widely that good Mr. Summerford, with whom Amy was a prime favorite, had thought it proper to write to Mrs. Arderne for a general denial of the growing rumor. Fortified with this,—for Gilbert's mother immediately authorized the rector to contradict such gossip in the strongest terms,

—Mr. Summerford left his hermitage, the rectory, and his antiquarian researches and spent much time in repairing the mischief caused by Dorothy's tongue. To Eliza Teulon, in Wimpole Street, Mrs. Arderne wrote complaining sharply of Dorothy's want of consideration and hinting broadly that, under the circumstances, she did not care to meet that young lady. As luck would have it Dr. Teulon and Gilbert met face to face the next day in Jermyn Street, and the former, beginning to excuse Dorothy's giddiness, as he called it, contrived to make our hero acquainted with the whole matter. That same evening something very like a scene took place between Mrs. Arderne and her son, the nearest approach to a quarrel they had ever known. It was the day of the great demonstration in St. James' Hall, and Gilbert, vexed with his mother, himself, and with Dorothy, had gone out without any definite purpose. As for his mother, assured from his own mouth that he so loved Amy Varcoe that he could willingly sacrifice position and wealth for her sake, she resolved to resume the style of living which had been discontinued at her husband's death. Now that Gilbert was in law a man and an affluent member of the great squirearchy of England it was his duty to live up to his position, perhaps to go into politics,—although she very much doubted if so confirmed a cynic and so headstrong an individualist could be taught to repeat the shibboleth of party. However this might be, he was still *im werden*, in the formative era, and she felt assured that as new interests and habits developed his boyish passion would abate. It was a fortunate thing that during her widowhood she had not so far withdrawn from society as to neglect its *convenances*; she had only, as it were, to put away her sackcloth and ashes to resume at once her former place in the social world.

Having thus made up her mind, Mrs. Arderne prepared to combat her son's objections, but to her extreme satisfaction he interposed none,—on the contrary his