

the sofa of his patron and the chair of Lady Burnish, ready to turn to each, and to display his eloquence, if required, to the best advantage. An open letter lay before Lady Burnish, and was the subject of discussion. It had been addressed to her by Delamere, who wished her to use her influence, by breaking to his father, "that he wanted to give up entirely, at once and for ever, any present share or future advantage in and from the brewery. That he disliked the business—in fact, had conscientious scruples against it, and would wish instantly to withdraw from it."

Both Lady Burnish and her son treated the scruples Delamere alluded to, as the whims of a crotchety young man, tired of the pursuits in which he had engaged, and wanting change. That any conscience could find sin in that in which such enlightened persons saw it not, never for a moment occurred to them. Mr. Burnish was greatly hurt and offended that his son dreamed of giving up such advantage. Lady Burnish, with whom Delamere was a favorite, was mortified that he gave his half-brother and stepmother the triumph, which the latter at least would so much enjoy.

"You talk of duty," said Lady Burnish; "it is your duty to think of the interests of your family—to obey your father, and to respect the wishes of those who have brought you up."

"Certainly, my dear young friend!" urged Mr. Veering, in an oily voice. "Filial obedience is one of the many virtues one of your name ought never to be wanting in."

"I have every wish to show the honor and love I bear to my father and you—both," said Delamere, addressing Lady Burnish. "I hope it is equally the virtue of my family not to think by proxy, nor to act without thinking. I should, indeed, be unworthy of my father's name—nay, of the name of man, if I were false to my convictions. A higher duty than that I owe to any human being compels me to leave this business at once, and for ever. I want to be clear of it altogether."

"And how does your scrupulosity propose to keep up your position?—nay, how to live in any way as you have lived?" said Mr. Burnish, sarcastically.

"Sir! I have thought of the future. I am fond, as you know, of agricultural pursuits. The small portion I inherited from my mother I thought of investing in the purchase of land in Ireland, as our friends the Mitchells have done with success, and to settle there, and do the best I can, honestly and manfully."

"And you call this gratitude," said Mr. Burnish, in a grieved tone.

"Gratitude, my son," said Lady Burnish; "it's out of fashion, clean gone from this generation, being another instance of the outcome of new principles. Only last week I was hearing that the son of my most valued friend—whom to have known is my joy and pride, whose life was all excellence—that her son had disgraced his mother's honored name, by a career the most shameful. The Eastern Counties, where his connections are of the highest and best, rung with the fact—that his wife has returned to her friends, unable to live with him, and he, in a drunken freak, has eloped with a barnmaid of an inn! Gratitude, indeed!"

"Dear madam," said Delamere, "what I propose involves no moral wrong—nay, to me it involves a moral right. I wish to redeem a disgrace, not to perpetuate it!"

"Enough—enough, young sir! take your own way. I'm not here to bandy words with you," said his father, sternly; "but remember, I'm not to be trifled with. Take a week, a fortnight if you will, to decide. If you still continue these heroics—so be it. Go among the wild Irish or the Caffres, or where you will, I've done with you. Mother," he continued, "you must be tired after the journey and the agitations of the day; we will leave you."

On this hint, Delamere and Shafton rose to take leave. Lady Burnish dismissed them stiffly. Mr. Burnish waived his son and nephew off haughtily, and lingered a few minutes with his mother saying, "I see no hope; he seems bent on it."

"Leave him to us," said Lady Burnish, looking confidently towards the clergyman. With a sigh the father uttered the parting salutations of the night, and retired to the library, leaving Mr. Veering with his mother.

Long was the consultation between the two. Gabb's gossip had somehow reached the reverend tutor's ears, and when Lady Burnish summoned her maid, and went to her repose, she carried with her some new ideas as to the cause of Delamere's rebellion, as it was termed, and if possible, a greater contempt than before for the want of vigilance in her daughter-in-law.

Her ladyship breakfasted in her dressing-room the next morning, and had scarce concluded her meal, when she sent a message requesting the favor of Miss Alterton's presence. Mabel thought Lady Burnish would like to see the children, and she took them with her. As she entered the room, it struck her that her ladyship was more formal and stiff than ever. The little girls went up with a half-frightened look to kiss the cold cheek turned to them.

"I did not send for you, my dears," said the grandamma.

"I beg pardon, I thought your ladyship wished to see them," replied Mabel, astonished.

"By and bye, not now—go dears. I want to speak to Miss Alterton."

The children retired, and Mabel stood before Lady Burnish's easy

chair, embarrassed by her evident displeasure.

"My daughter, Mrs. Burnish tells me," said her ladyship, "that she has found you very useful, Miss Alterton, and I heard something to the same effect from Mrs. Basil in her letters, who told me of your kindness to the poor women in the penitentiary. But I fear that your duties as the governess of my grand-daughters, must have been interfered with by having other tasks imposed."

"My time, madam, has indeed been fully occupied, but I think you will find my pupils have not suffered."

"Umph! we shall see. I do not blame you for helping an invalid, like my daughter-in-law, who cannot, it seems, 'look well to the ways of her household;' but if these matters have taken you out of the schoolroom and thrown you in the way of intercourse or intimacy with the family beyond your duties, I shall certainly deplore it."

"Pardon me! I really am unable to understand your ladyship."

"Pray, do you read in the library at an early hour, Miss Alterton," said Lady Burnish, dryly.

"No. I have taken books from thence at an early hour."

"When my grandson, Mr. Delamere, has been there?"

"Yes, by accident, I once saw Mr. Delamere Burnish there," said Mabel, turning first pale and then red.

"By accident! yes, surely! and also by accident he has shared your evening walks," continued Lady Burnish, elevating her eye-glass, and fixing her penetrating glance, full upon the agitated girl.

"Was this right?" she continued in the same hard, dry voice, "or reputable in a modest young lady, engaged as an instructress in this house?"

These words, and the consciousness that she had acted uprightly, immediately restored Mabel's composure, and she answered,—

"I'm no prevaricator, madam! I repeat, by accident I once met your grandson in the library. By design he may have joined the evening walk of his sisters. I could not prevent that, but I avoided it—and more, I told him I disapproved of it."

"Oh! then it came to a declaration, did it? and you have the cool assurance to tell me so."

"To tell him, my lady! what I now repeat to you—that I would not listen to him; though, I might have added, that I honored his character, and respected the frank sincerity and purity of his intentions: and felt proud—yes, madam, with all respect to you, proud of his esteem."

"A likely story, truly," said Lady Burnish, with cold scorn. "That he, the heir to great wealth, the eldest son of an influential family, made honorable offers to you, and you rejected him. You! whom, contrary to some misgivings I had, we took, knowing your father was in a low trade—a publican's daughter! let me tell you, young woman you were greatly raised when you were allowed to enter this family in a genteel position; and you have taken advantage of the unfortunately weak mind of my daughter—crept into her confidence (for you knew, it seems, of the wretched lunatic's return), in order to have the opportunity of trying your arts on Delamere Burnish."

Mabel disdained to justify herself by blaming Mrs. Burnish as to the confidence which she had never sought; and she was, moreover, mute for an instant with astonishment, and the necessity of putting a strong curb on her indignation after the insulting speech she had heard.

Lady Burnish took her silence for conscious guilt, and added severely,

"You will return to Miss Germaine's unless you prefer your father's house, this day, Miss Alterton. I am sorry, very sorry, to see so much talent and so many advantages marred by a want of decorum and ingenuousness. In consideration of my daughter not being blameless in this affair, I shall simply inform Miss Germaine that you do not suit us, and not enter into particulars. A check for your services is in that envelope. You may retire."

"Permit me, madam, a few minutes. My respect for your age has kept me silent during your unjust and cruel remarks. I know as well as your ladyship my father's business, and deplore it. I need not have entered upon a situation if I would have lived on the gains of such a trade, and let me add, as a proof of that ingenuousness which your ladyship doubts, that what I would not do to please a kind good father, I would not do to please a lover. 'This family, this house,' she proceeded, her form dilating as she spoke, 'are as much supported by the proceeds of iniquity as my father's, only on a larger scale. Not to be the wife of any man, if I broke my heart in the struggle, would I have wealth derived from such a source.'

"Not so warm," said Lady Burnish, half-apolgetically, her own strong nature compelled to listen and approve; "not so warm. If we are rich, we nobly spend our riches. My son, Miss Alterton, has been called the 'good Samaritan of the age.'"

A more unfortunate speech could not have been uttered. With the remembrance of the poor maniac's delirious words ringing in her ears, Mabel lifted her hand reverently, and said, "Hush! do not profane that phrase, my lady, or I shall be ready to ask, as that broken-hearted Mr. Boon did the other evening, 'Whether you think the good Samaritan employed and paid the thieves, lived on the spoils, and compounded with his conscience by a little tenderness to the plundered?'"

(To be Continued.)