

against your husband! Can you fancy Lance so forgetting himself as to complain of you, either to your mother or his?"

Sidonie sat rebuked, and struggled hard to recover her composure.

When she could speak she said, humbly.

"You are right, I have acted too hastily in coming to you without his knowledge, but as I am here, please advise me, for I am not keeping my housekeeping expenses within the sum which Lance considers he can afford. You are more experienced than I. Tell me where my fault is, and I will be very grateful and do my best to mend it."

A little questioning put the elder lady in possession of all the facts, and the book was opened on her knee. While she ran her eye down the items, Sidonie sat and cried quietly, for she had not yet forgiven Lance, nor reconciled herself to the prospect of having her weekly summings-up rendered a species of small martyrdom by continual criticisms and rebukes.

"A very clear page," commented Mrs. Mynford, "and for one so young a housekeeper, a very creditable one; but I certainly should not allow fresh butter in the kitchen, nor use new-laid eggs for the puddings."

"Then you are tolerably well satisfied with me, and Lance grumbled without a cause? I was sure of it!" exclaimed Sidonie, wiping away her tears.

"Stop a minute," said her mother-in-law, "you have not heard me out. I was going to add that your handwriting reflects great credit on your governor; but your arithmetic—well, it certainly might be improved, and to your own advantage."

Sidonie reddened.

"Dear Mrs. Mynford, I reckoned up the items three times, and always brought them to the same amount exactly. See here—three and five are eight, and seven are—"

But a hand was laid on her's, and she was checked in her eager adding up.

"Before you go any farther, suppose you explain these items," and Mrs. Mynford read aloud:

"Paid chimney-sweep £2 6s. A very expensive chimney, Sidonie. And a little lower down is this startling announcement: Paid greengrocer's account, £5. Have you been living on pineapples at a guinea each, and peaches at ten shillings per dozen?"

"I don't understand," murmured the perplexed housekeeper. "Oh, yes, I do. What absurd mistakes I have made! I have put the figures in the wrong rows. The chimney should be half-a-crown, and the greengrocer five shillings, instead of pounds."

"Just what I expected, you very unpractised book-keeper! Now dab your eyes with this rosewater, drink the tea I have rung for, and then go home in the cab Martha shall fetch for you, and if Lance has a good laugh at your expense, forgive him."

It was the best of counsel, and Sidonie followed it implicitly.

She found Lance pacing the drawing-room in a very perturbed state of mind, angry with his young wife for her flight, and hesitating whether to follow or leave her to herself till she sued for a reconciliation.

She had been to his mother, not to her own. On hearing this his brow began to clear; a little explanation did the rest.

Sidonie is now the clever managing head of a large family, in which neither waste nor niggardliness are ever known, and if her husband loves to tease her sometimes by asking if she has forgotten the trials and troubles of her first summing up, she bears it good-humoredly.

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