

to unprovoked insult, or contemptuous conduct towards myself or my friends, you have judged rightly of my character. Not for one moment will I submit to either; and as Beauchamp cannot go to Castleton House to-night, I certainly shall not.

Then, what do you propose doing?  
Oh, whilst you and the ladies are scanning the beauties masculine and feminine in high life, I will take Beauchamp to the green-room, behind the scenes, in Covent Garden, and have a look at the beauties in low life, and finish up with a lobster supper.

This conversation having commenced after the dessert was placed on the table, Lady Malcolm now rose, leaving the gentlemen to finish their discussion, when Lord Malcolm, being to alter the two friends' determination, and beginning to lose his temper, proposed joining the ladies. Lady Malcolm had retired to dress; but Constance, taking Malcolm aside, began speaking to him in a low, earnest tone, stating her determination, after what had occurred, of not going to the ball.

'Pooh! nonsense, my dear,' exclaimed Malcolm; 'you must not adopt your brother's foolish crotchets; surely my wishes ought to be consulted now, as well as his, although I certainly shall ask Danby some explanation why he was not invited.'

'On my account,' said Beauchamp, who overheard these words, 'I must beg, Lord Malcolm, you will not even hint at an explanation, as I neither require, nor will I accept any Lord Danby and I understand each other quite well enough already; and now, my dear Constance, you must do violence to your own proper feelings, in taking your brother's part, by complying with my desire to accompany Lady Malcolm to the ball.'

'Indeed, William, I had much rather not go,' pleaded Constance; 'and Lady Malcolm has been kind enough to excuse me.'

'My dear girl,' replied Beauchamp, 'for Lady Malcolm's sake, who has, no doubt, accepted the invitation on your account and Blanche's, I must desire you will go; so not another word on the subject; saying which, he turned away and resumed his seat, and was immediately joined by Blanche.

'You cannot be offended with me, I hope, dear William, because I could not venture to ask Lady Malcolm to excuse my attending her to-night, as Constance did. She, as your sister, had a fair pretext to decline going.'

'But you, of course, had none,' added Beauchamp, 'not even to express one word in my favor, and left my friend Conyers to fight my battle alone.'

'Now you are unjust, William; for although fearing to be thought forward in giving utterance to my sentiments, I have felt the slight offered you more deeply than Constance, and shall resent it as firmly as yourself after this night, when I cannot possibly be rude to Lord Danby in his mother's house.'

'Of course not,' replied Beauchamp; 'and I doubt his arguments, like Lord Malcolm's, will weigh heaviest in the balance against mine, as your cousin, I see, is resolved to maintain his position by obtaining some excuse from Danby for not inviting me, which I am equally resolved not to accept. Exorted apologies of this sort make the matter ten times worse, and knowing this slight was purposely intended, Lord Danby and myself must remain for the future strangers to each other.'

'I shall not be influenced, William, by anything he or Charles may say, and shall leave you to judge, by my conduct towards him, whether I do not feel as deeply in your cause as Constance or Mr. Conyers.'

'There, now, my dear girl, run away to dress, or you will be very late, and keep Lady Malcolm waiting. Come, give me your hand; good night.'

'But where are you going?' she inquired, still holding his hand.

'With Conyers, to be sure; we must have our share of amusement as well as yourself.'

hatched and poor pooler, as your former has thought proper to do this evening, his presence can be no longer desirable.'

'I do not choose to be dictated to, Mr. Conyers, by you or any man, in the course I ought to pursue.'

'I have never ventured to dictate to your lordship since the time I took the liberty of giving you a few lessons in riding and other athletic exercises; and those, perhaps, are pool-pooled now as antiquated precepts.'

'I shall never forget your many acts of kindness to me when a boy, Mr. Conyers, or those of late years, replied Malcolm, considerably mollified.

'Very well, my lord; then if you will balance them against the attentions I have received from Lady Malcolm and yourself since my short stay in town, our account perhaps will stand nearly cancelled. And now, my lord, as you prefer new acquaintances to old faces, Beauchamp and myself propose returning home to-morrow.'

'Stay, Conyers,' as he was rising to leave the room, 'I cannot part thus with one who has been to me like an elder brother. What would you have me do?'

'Nothing, my lord. You know as well as myself what you ought to do; and if you have that respect and regard for Will Beauchamp and his sister which you profess, you know perfectly well what your behavior should be to any man who had dared to pass a premeditated slight upon your future brother-in-law; and now, Mrs. Gordon,' said Conyers, shaking her by the hand, 'I must wish you good-bye, and beg you to thank Lady Malcolm for all her kindness and hospitality, with which he hastily left the room, exclaiming, 'Come, Beauchamp, I will wait two minutes for you in the hall.'

Beauchamp rose quickly, and, taking Aunt Gordon's hand, said—

'I shall call to-morrow at twelve to see Lady Malcolm, and wish Constance good-bye before I leave town.'

'And won't you wish me good-night?' asked Malcolm, as he was turning towards the door.

'Yes, Malcolm,' offering his hand, 'I do wish you a good-night, and regret I have been the cause of this unpleasant difference between you and Conyers; but I feel assured that no man of feeling could act otherwise than I propose to do.'

'Then I shall see you at twelve to-morrow?' added Malcolm.

'I shall call here at that hour,' was the reply, as he ran down-stairs to join his friend.

Mrs. Gordon, overcome by emotion, had quietly left the room; and Lord Malcolm was pacing up and down, in no enviable mood, when his mother entered, and, observing her son's disordered looks, asked what had annoyed him so dreadfully.

'I am vexed to the soul, my dear mother, for having quarrelled with Conyers about such a foolish piece of business as going to this confounded ball—in short, he is right, and I am wrong; but I cannot bear the idea of being dictated to.'

'Of course not, Charles—no one likes that, even from their oldest friends—yet there is no reason why you should go at all, or Constance—Blanche and myself will be sufficient.'

'We are all in the same boat, my dear mother, according to Bob Conyers' opinion; but as I wish to ascertain from Danby whether he really did intend this omission of Beauchamp as a meditated slight (which, in common fairness, I ought to do before espousing his cause), I will accompany you there for half an hour or so, being fully resolved, if the case is as I now fear, to leave again directly.'

'Very well, Charles, then I shall do the same, and order the carriage in an hour exactly from the time we are set down at Castleton House.'

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gordon had communicated what had passed to Constance and Blanche, which caused their tears to fall fast.

'Don't vex yourselves, my dears, any more, or you will look wretched to-night, although it is very provoking in Charles, who

left by the other door.'

'Oh, indeed, Malcolm, it was quite an oversight of my own in not sending Mr. Beauchamp a card for the occasion; but, from his almost living in Grosvenor Square, I thought he would consider himself included in the invitation to your family.'

'Would you have presented yourself at any house, where you were almost a stranger to the heads of the family, on such an implied invitation?'

'Why, I scarcely know, Malcolm.'

'Then I can tell you that Beauchamp is quite as proud as yourself; and having overheard you ask Conyers and Melville, he, of course, concluded he was purposely excluded.'

'Oh, quite an oversight, Malcolm! I am sorry he should take offence; but our rooms are not spacious enough to contain all our country acquaintances.'

'Depend upon it, my lord,' replied Malcolm, nettled by this confirmation of Beauchamp's well-grounded deductions, 'they will never be large enough to contain Will Beauchamp; with which he turned away; and seeking Blanche, who was dancing, whispered, 'Beauchamp is right. We shall leave as soon as the carriage arrives; so sit with my mother after this quadrille, and I will join you directly it is announced.'

Lord Danby muttered to himself, 'Confound that Beauchamp! he is ever in the way somewhere, and I suspect it is all true about his engagement to Miss Douglas; but I will find it out;' and hovering near her, he again renewed his suit for the next dance, which was again declined. 'How have I been so unfortunate as to incur your displeasure, Miss Douglas? Is it because I omitted to invite Mr. Beauchamp to the ball, which I fear is the case from my lord's jealousy which I have been telling me?'

'I have informed you, my lord, that Lady Malcolm has ordered the carriage to come, and my cousin begged me to remain with his mother until it arrives, and then to accept another partner.'

'And I can answer,' replied Lord Ayrshire, 'that she has refused a second dance to others since we have been engaged in this quadrille.'

'Then may I hope for the honor of your hand, persisted Lord Danby, 'for the first dance to-morrow night at Lady Grosvenor's, to which, I believe, you are going?'

'It is not yet decided whether we shall be there or not,' replied Blanche; 'but I do not make engagements of this kind before-hand.'

The quadrille being finished, Lord Ayrshire conducted her to Lady Malcolm, where being again solicited for another dance by Lord Henry Baynton, she made the same excuse.

'Oh, my dear,' said Lady Malcolm, 'if you wish to dance again, I can wait till the next quadrille is over.'

'Charles desired I would not engage myself in another,' she replied; 'and I think I see him coming to announce the carriage, which was the case.'

On their return to Grosvenor Square, Mrs. Gordon had not retired; and when his mother went up to her room, Lord Malcolm said, 'Beauchamp and Conyers have judged rightly; there can be no doubt now, from what Danby let fall, of the slight being premeditated.'

'So we all thought, Charles; and I only regret you should have allowed your temper to get the ascendancy over your judgement, by ridiculing your friends' opinions.'

'You know I hate dictation!' he replied.

'Yet invariably practise it, Charles.'

'How so, aunt?'

'I have observed with deep sorrow your frequent attempts of late to throw discredit or contempt on almost every opinion expressed by William Beauchamp, and your ridicule of his honorable and religious principles; in short, since his arrival in town, your object appears to have been to make him feel the distinction between Lord Malcolm and Mr. Beauchamp. Now, however quietly he has borne outwardly your taunts and sarcasms, it is impossible that he does not feel acutely, although it has not been expressed

entrusted its keeping, but not to me!'

'And it has ceased, therefore,' rejoined Mrs. Gordon, 'to be a wonder, that a woman can keep a secret!'

'Yet I have kept one secret inviolably!' added Malcolm.

'Yes, Charles, you have; although poor Blanche has often trembled when its disclosure appeared hovering on your lips.'

'My toily and thoughtlessness have been sufficiently punished now, dear aunt, to forbid a repetition of that badinage which has caused terror to my cousin, and misery of heart to my friend. Will you forgive me, dear Blanche, for the anxiety I have so thoughtlessly caused you?'

'Indeed I do, dear Charles,' taking his proffered hand, 'with all my heart.'

'Thank you, my dear girl; it shall never be repeated; and can you forgive me also my unjust, unpardonable conduct to that noble-minded, generous fellow, who, of all men I have ever yet known, is alone deserving of your love?'

'Willingly, most willingly, dear Charles, do I forgive all that needs forgiveness from me!'

'And now, dear Aunt Gordon, I thank you most heartily for removing the veil from my eyes, and showing me the many faults I possess.'

'Not many, Charles, I am happy to say; only learn henceforth to respect the feelings and opinions of others, if you wish them to respect yours.'

'Let my future conduct prove the deep contrition I feel for the injustice I have done my friends; and now, aunt,' ringing the bell, 'I will order up some wine and water for these dear girls, who have been worried enough to-night, and then we will all retire to rest.'

The next day Beauchamp kept his appointment with Mrs. Gordon, and arriving at Grosvenor Square about twelve o'clock, was ushered into the drawing-room, where Lady Malcolm was sitting with her son, Mrs. Gordon, and the two girls. After shaking hands with all, he approached Lady Malcolm again.

'I could not leave London, dear Lady Malcolm, without expressing in person my grateful thanks for your most friendly and hospitable reception of myself, and your numerous acts of kindness to my dear sister; for which she and ever shall feel, most deeply obliged.'

'But what is the cause of your leaving us so suddenly, William?'

'I will save Beauchamp the necessity of an evasive and indirect reply to your question, my dear mother,' interposed Malcolm, 'by stating plainly that I am the cause of his leaving town so unexpectedly; what has possessed me, I know not; but I am now fully sensible that my overbearing behavior to him, of late, has been such as to disgust any man of less command of temper, and less depth of feeling, than him to whose friendship I have, by my foolishly bantering and obstinacy, irrevocably forfeited all claim.'

'From the time,' said Beauchamp, offering Malcolm his hand, 'let the past be buried in oblivion, and I trust, for the future, we may be as friends to each other.'

'As a proof, then, of your forgiveness, Beauchamp, will you consent to remain? Under my present bitter and reproachful feelings it could be the greatest consolation and favor you could bestow.'

'I do not put in question the sincerity of my forgiveness, or my willingness to oblige you, Malcolm; but after due consideration last night, I have decided to leave London, and have written to my father to tell him he may expect me to-morrow evening.'

'Will nothing induce you to alter that determination, Beauchamp?'

'Nothing that you can now urge, my dear Malcolm; it is for our future happiness that I am thus resolved.'

'Enough' said Malcolm, rising, and scarcely able to suppress his emotion, 'I felt it must come to this; but will you see me in my own room a few minutes before you leave the house?'

ply; 'but I have promised your mother to return at the end of a fortnight, if she sends me an invitation; but really now I must spend a few days with my father, who has been so long solitary in the country; so good-bye, my dear Malcolm, and take care of those two warm-hearted, affectionate girls, for my sake. They have had too much gaiety lately; and if you will oblige me, do not let them go to more than two or three parties in the week—indeed, they cannot stand this unceasing round of dissipation. Am I asking too great a favor, or will it offend Lady Malcolm, to decline some invitations for them on my account?'

'My dear fellow, the three parties a week shall be strictly attended to,' replied Lord Malcolm, 'if I offend all London. The three parties a week shall not be exceeded—there is my hand upon it.'

'Many thanks, Malcolm, for your promise, and I hope you will now walk with me to the stables, as I purpose riding home with Conyers, who has, I fear, been kept waiting there a long time.'

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

After having made up his difference with Conyers, and seen the two friends in their saddles, Malcolm returned to Grosvenor Square, and found his mother alone, Mrs. Gordon having taken the two girls for a quiet drive in the country.

'Beauchamp, my dear mother, has commissioned me to entrust two secrets to your keeping—one being considered of too little moment for any woman to preserve. The first is, that he is heir presumptive to an earldom—the other, that he is in love with Blanche, and she with him.'

'The latter, Charles, I have long suspected; but the former I am surprised to hear, although well aware that the Beauchamps are of a very old and high family.'

After a full explanation on these points, Malcolm added, 'Now, my dear mother, Beauchamp being, as you may suppose, very anxious about the well-being of our two precious girls, has exacted from me a promise that they shall not be overbaked by too much hot air, i. e., over-crowded rooms, which he says has made them look like drooping flowers of the valley, instead of roses, so that they are to be restricted to three balls or parties a week for the future, until he returns; and as Beauchamp's ideas are always right, and mine always wrong, his instructions to me on this point shall be religiously observed to the letter, if I am obliged to lock them up in their rooms the alternate three nights. This being resolved on, your ladyship must make your selection accordingly from that basket of cards, as the number, three per week, is not to be exceeded.'

'Well, Charles, upon the whole this is very agreeable news, and I am delighted with the bright prospect opening to William Beauchamp, which will improve Constance's position very materially; but I fear Mrs. Harcourt will not be pleased with Blanche's choice, although, from my great partiality to William, she will find a most firm advocate in me.'

'That's right, my dear mother; but bear in mind, this is to be a secret still to all; not a word to Mrs. Harcourt or a breathing soul, until Beauchamp gives us permission to divulge it.'

'Don't fear me, Charles; it shall be strictly observed.'

Soon after, Mrs. Gordon and the girls returned, when Malcolm acquainted them before they ascended to the drawing-room, with the communication he had made to his mother by Beauchamp's desire.

'William has acted most wisely and properly,' replied Mrs. Gordon; 'and now, Charles, you see his confidence in you is replaced.'

To be Continued.

A game-cock was recently sold in England for \$502.