

"I do wish you would discontinue those sea-phrases of yours, Randall; you are always using them. Only the other day Eliza told me that that odious Askwith said to you were a jolly fellow, just like one of Marryatt's reefers, but he supposed that marriage would spoil you."

"Well, Dolly, that was meant for a compliment, for Askwith pretends to like sailors. He wanted to go 'lves with me in a yacht a little before we were married, but I said no, my seafaring days were over and done with."

In saying this Randall spoke sincerely, for, slow and monotonous as he sometimes found it when the weather kept him at home, he was beginning to appreciate his new life, and Dorothy, however she might complain at times, had plenty of reason for believing that her husband would develop into what is known as a good society man. Finding him so attached to Pilgrim, she made up her mind to endure the latter until such time as he could be induced to retire on his savings, with perhaps a small pension; but nevertheless there were many occasions when Abel's presumption, as she called it, tempted her to abandon this resolution.

"Well, Dolly," said Randall, as their looks met, "you sent for me just now. What is it, some perplexity in Abel's book?"

"It is the man himself," she answered, "he persists in using these wretched slips of paper, but that's not it. There is an old Chippendale cabinet up in the lumber room to which I have taken a fancy. He acknowledges that it was here before he came, but says the keys cannot be found. I sent Billings this morning to force the lock, but Pilgrim ordered him down again. I had him in here just a few minutes ago, and he most unblushingly and impertinently told me that the cabinet was his own private property,—a gift from the old squire, he said. Now, Randall, I insist upon it that this man's position here must be defined at once. I insist upon it. He grows bolder every day, and while your

consideration for him is creditable to your feelings and all that, I am resolved that he shall learn his proper place as a servant."

There are some constitutions over whom an excess of electricity in the atmosphere exerts extraordinary influence, urging them in some cases almost beyond the limits of responsibility. When married persons are thus affected their condition, perhaps because of their more numerous vexations and obligations, is always worse than that of single ones: it may be that there are other reasons assignable pertaining to those troubles in the flesh indicated by St. Paul. At all events Dorothy had a splitting headache, and Randall, by no means ignorant of woman's ways, was quick to see that she was in no mood for contradiction. He was on the point of returning the soft answer which averteth anger when Billings appeared with the post-bag.

"Train thirteen minutes late, sir," he said, "and Hobbs says as 'ow 'e met Muster Pilgrim on the road and 'e unlocked the bag, 'e did, fur 'is own letters, and that's w'y 'e come to be so long."

While the boy was speaking Randall was fumbling with the key of the post-bag. He evidently did not care to meet his wife's eye, while on her part Dorothy found it hard to restrain herself until Billings had left the library. Scarcely was the door shut behind him when she started from her seat and approached her husband, her black eyes snapping with wrathfulness.

"Was ever the like known?" she cried, stamping her foot, "was ever such audacity seen as this? He has his own key to his master's letter bag, and he dares to ransack it for his own paltry business before we are permitted to see it. Randall Arderne, will you allow this? are you afraid of this old man that he dares to take such a liberty?"

As though in sympathy with her fury,—for she even trembled with rage,—a forked bolt of red lightning divided the outer darkness, and almost without appreciable interval a fearful peal of thunder shook the old house to its foundations. Shrinking