

twentieth time to-day when a knock was given at the door, and at his master's bidding Billings the footman entered.

"Well, Billings, what is it?" asked Randall; "has Hobbs come from the post yet? where's the bag?"

"Not come yet, sir, but Mrs. Arderne wishes to see you, if you please, in the library."

With a nod of compliance, Randall dismissed the servant, and then, throwing away the stub of his cigar, went out into the hall and towards the library. He found Dorothy sitting at an *escritoire* or writing table,—the same article used by Gilbert's mother for the transacting of business,—with a long, narrow book of domestic accounts spread out before her. Randall recognized the book at once by its yellow pages for Abel Pilgrim's book of expenditures, for the major-domo always used paper drawn from the old store-room over the refectory, cutting it to the required dimensions and fitting it to the covers with his own hand. Modern account books, he was wont to say, always bothered him with their double and single lines, narrow spaces, and stubborn, inflexible backs. They might do very well for Scotch bagmen, but for his part, he would have nought to do with books that wanted to be held open with a carpenter's or blacksmith's vice.

Dorothy raised her eyes from the book as her husband entered. Except that she was a trifle more matronly in figure,—her closely-fitting grey dress allowing this to be clearly seen,—there was no great change apparent in her. From the first day of her home-coming she had in most things exercised absolute sway in the house, and the flash of her dark eye sufficiently indicated her imperious character. Provided his own, in some respects peculiar, tastes were not gainsayed or opposed, Randall was a yielding and compliant husband. One of his sayings,—no doubt picked up on shipboard,—was "Anything for a quiet life," and in everything pertaining to the domestic economy

he acted upon this principle. In one quarter only did Dorothy encounter opposition. She had, beginning with the kitchen, effected what she termed a thorough reform in the household, and all the domesticities had easily fallen into her system with the one exception of the house steward. With extraordinary doggedness Abel Pilgrim resented the slightest encroachment upon any one of those particular functions which he had come by long usage to regard as prerogatives, and when Dorothy indignantly complained to her husband that, since Abel was properly the butler, it was absurd for him to assume so much authority over all the other servants, out of doors as well as in the house, Randall gave her clearly and explicitly to understand that it was his pleasure to humor the old man.

"He is," he said, "a tried and trusty servant, as much a part of the Priory as the old gateway itself, and I can see no reason for interfering with him. Consider, Dolly, that my father first brought him here, and remember, too, that but for his ready recognition I might have had a long lawsuit to establish my claim. In his place, perhaps, another man would have been less outspoken at such a time."

"But he is so opinionated and at times downright sullen in his manner," returned Dorothy; "I declare he sometimes provokes me to threaten him. And he presumes too far when he makes Billings and the rest do his bidding, and he goes in and out just as he likes."

"He is too old a dog to learn new tricks, Dolly my dear, but he is honest and devoted to me. Confess now, little woman, that he takes a world of bother away from you by dealing with the tradesmen. Goodness only knows how much we save by that, for when it comes to victualling the ship and providing the stores your ship chandlers, butchers, and the rest are all a pack of rogues."

There was a good deal of sound sense in this, for Dorothy here felt her inexperience, so she merely replied: