

Despite our narrow means we were very happy. We often had hard work to make the two ends meet, but love like ours soon lightened toil and sweetened privation. We never discussed the past. Her broken confession to me on the day when she was to be his wife was sufficient to acquaint me with everything; how the glamour of his wealth had made her false to me, and the poverty of those she loved had determined her choice, until the truth of her nature had at the last moment conquered.

But now comes the saddest portion of my story.

One day, a few months after we had been married, we met your father. For your sake, daughter, I cannot dilate on the scene that ensued. He vilified us, upbraided us, cursed us, and would not permit me to explain anything to him. And his cruel language cruelly wounded the feelings of my darling.

On her account I almost hated him, for after that dreadful interview my wife was never like her usual self, for his reproaches evidently had sunk deeply into a nature over-sensitive and highly wrought. By degrees her health failed her and—for I cannot linger on those days of trouble—after Angela was born she pined away and left me alone in the world, my daughter, her almost living image, being my only remaining solace and joy. And the shock to my own nerves, the affliction which seemed to rend my soul affected me to such a degree as to completely impair my physical vision. Yes, Medora, it drove me frantic!—it made me blind! My brief dream of happiness was rudely snapped. The common objects of earth now are always dark to me, and I can only discern the beauty of Angela's love and devotion and your affection, daughter."

I pressed his hand fervently to give him strength; he returned the pressure and continued:

"You know now how the mention of your name on the day of your first introduction acutely affected me. It was like probing into a wound almost healed. And afterwards, it seemed unaccountably strange to me, that the son of the man who hated me should woo the daughter of her, the cause of it, and stranger still, that you should have been the aid and abettor of it all. At first I refused consent to the marriage, afterwards I reluctantly gave it. When the happy couple did not return home on the day of the ceremony, the idea that some unknown calamity had

arisen from the union caused my illness. But you tell me they will be here soon and so all will be well."

VIII.

At last then, I knew all. The mystery of my father's conduct was explained and I could even make excuses for him. He judged like we all do, from appearances only. He had known all, surely he would never have nursed any enmity against those whom he considered had deeply wronged him; and by some strange fatality, I was the unconscious instrument of renewing happily with different results the love of the second generation. But as long as there was cherished strife and vindictiveness between my father and her's I felt that I had not completely fulfilled my task. My bounden duty was now evident—I must make peace between them at all hazards. But in the mean time, the love I had fostered and brought to a happy climax, had made me a culprit. It had caused my escapade. I therefore had to claim indulgence for myself and then I had to intercede for all the parties concerned. It was certainly a difficult task.

At the end of two weeks, Mr. and Mrs. Arlford, radiant in health and happiness, returned home on the same day I quietly entered my own abode.

My father was not in—I waited his arrival with an anxiety I cannot describe.

At first he would not speak or listen to me. After a while, I called to my aid all those womanly sweet resources that I could think of. I humoured, smiled, entreated, and finally secured his attention. I first discovered why he had publicly advertised for me. The reason was clear. My note had never reached him. The forgetful servant in the busy, anxious time of Mr. Vinesly's illness had forgotten to deliver it. After I had received pardon for running away, I mustered courage to tell him of his son's marriage, but with proper tact I did not then mention the *name* of his bride. He was astonished; but on my assuring him that she was in every way worthy of him, he actually expressed a desire to see them immediately.

I promised soon to give him this pleasure. But how was I now to continue my narrative?

I adopted the usual safe method. I told him his own love story without mentioning names. I excused her and exonerated her lover.

When I had proceeded as far as their