

an austere woman of sixty, with a frowning, dejected face, and the tones of her voice came harsh and grating, like the echo of a stone wall. In her answers she was laconic almost to insolence.

"Who is this creature?" cried Macfarlane.

"Mrs. Wilderspinn, where the curate lodges."

"What does she want?"

"She only means to tell you that Master Harry is courting Miss Loder, and she saw them at it."

"Courting Miss Loder!" said the miser, aghast at news so antagonistic to his wishes.

"Yes," croaked the housekeeper, "Master Harold takes after his mother, and has none of his father's prudence."

Hastily dismissing the two crones, after having made Mrs. Wilderspinn promise that if she saw any more billing and cooing on the part of the young couple, she would let him know, Mr. Macfarlane settled himself once more in his chair for reflection.

For a time his looks wore a puzzled and harassed exterior, but by-and-by the grin that turned into a sneer came back to his features, and he seemed to solace himself in his trouble.

"I must send him away for a month or two to London for a change of scene; he shall forget all about this young person; if I offer decided opposition, the idiot will think himself a martyr, and marry the girl in spite of me. No, he shall go away and forget her, and then, leave me to get rid of the parson and his confounded petticoats."

And so it was arranged that Harold should go on a visit for the first time to an aunt then residing in Bayswater.

A few days sufficed to make the necessary preparations, and on the eve of his departure Harold found himself in his father's presence in the library.

"Now about to-morrow," said the father, "you are going for the first time to leave home and get into the way of temptation. Remember my words; money is the great source of all the comforts of this life; with money you can command the respect, nay, the very adoration of all men; if you have it, the proud and insolent will bow down before you; with it you can buy the love of sweetheart, the affection of wife, and the admiration of friends. There is nothing in the wide world you cannot buy for money."

"And how much of the precious treasure do you intend to give me?" was the pertinent question of the stripling.

"How much? Ah, there it is. Now, Harold, do you think you can take care of it, keep it, look at it day after day, handle the golden, shining sovereigns, and not want to spend them?"

"I do not know. You have kept me so short all my life, that I cannot tell what I may do with it when I have any."

"Well, we will try you; here are twenty pounds; more I cannot spare; let us see how you manage your first fortune. Why, God bless the boy, he's not astonished,—he handles them as if they were coppers,—and puts them into his pockets without counting them. Oh, Harold, Harold, I fear all my precepts are lost upon you."