"My dear," said poor William, "I only echoed the opinions of wiser men than myself."

"And very wise you are," said Emma; "your wisdom has lost you eighty guineas a-year; and I might have had a satin dress and a shawl and bonnet."

"My love," began Harding.

"Don't *love* me," retorted his wife. "What had you to do with who was hung and who wasn't? Eighty guineas a-year, and now you haven't eighty farthings, and people will be hung just the same. You have done a fine thing for yourself, upon my word"

"Beccaria," said William, "was of opinion——"

"Oh, don't talk to me of your Beccarias; send to them for eighty guineas a-year, and see what they will say. You are always picking up some fine name or other, but send to any one of them and ask them for a shilling."

"But my love," pleaded poor William.

"I am not your love, Mr. Harding," rejoined the young wife, majestically. "I might have gone to Mrs. Peasnip's next party—you may be sure she will invite us, and a pretty figure I should cut in a cotton gown, and my silk one is worn out, as you observed—but your absurd notions, Mr. Harding, will blight my prospects everywhere; and I declare that Julia Copperbolt passed me in the street only last Monday was a week, and it was only because you talked so stupidly about every man's having a right to vote—as if every man wanted a vote, and as if I wanted one; and if I'm only a woman haven't I as much right as a man? And it was only because you talked so like a fool—and I could see with half an eye what a fool you were—that Julia Copperbolt turned her head, and looked right into the baker's shop that we were passing, because she wouldn't acknowledge me."

"My dear Emma," began Harding.

"Mr. Harding, sir, your Emma—yes, ill-luck to her, she is your Emma—is not dear to you. Her purse at this moment holds nine shillings; that is all, Mr. Harding—that is all, Mr. Harding, that your Emma's purse holds; and this night you might have been engaged upon eighty guineas a-year, which," addded Mrs. Harding, snapping her little fingers contemptuously, "you have flung away."

"But, my love," said Harding, "it isn't my fault if this Mr. Duncan is so absurd as to believe that I can't teach his children Latin and Greek and Algebra, without thinking just as he does."

"A man who has his bread to earn," observed the young wife, "has no business to think at all. It is a luxury, Mr. Harding, which he can't afford."

She sank into a chair, and burst into a paroxysm of tears.

What was poor Harding to do? This was the first scene that had occurred since their marriage. All had gone on so smoothly hitherto. But it was a sad disappointment, and William felt for the poor girl—she was but a girl, whose heart had sunk under it.

The next morning, as he was about to quit the house, the landlady accosted him in the passage.

"If you could settle my little matter, sir," she said—she well knew that he could not; "I'm sure that I wouldn't have troubled you, but I have a bill myself to meet to-day, and where can we go for money, as my dear late husband used to say, but where 'tis owing?"

"You must give me till to-morrow, Mrs. Brandywine," said Harding.

"If you could do it to-day, sir," urged the woman, who had overheard the conversation of the previous night, and knew that only nine shillings was left in Mrs. Harding's purse, of which elevenpence-halfpenny went that morning for a [illegible] and butter.

"Upon my word I couldn't," answered Harding.

"Because, if you remember, sir, the agreement, when I consented to let you the apartments, was punctuality—you must recollect that, and the week is three days over, which is irregular."

Poor Harding, with dismay upon his countenance, backed towards the door.

"And if you could make it convenient to suit yourself with other lodgings in a week, I should be obliged, Mr. Harding."

"Very well, Mrs. Brandywine, I will," said William, escaping into the street.

When he returned home he was afraid to meet his wife. He felt like a guilty man, because Mr. Duncan had rejected his services. But she met him kindly, and told him that she had paid the week's rent, and had money enough to last them a month longer.

"You have, Emma?" cried Harding, astonished.

"Don't scold me," she continued, looking into his face with a sweet smile, "I—bend your ear lower, William—I pawned my gold earrings during your absence. But we must seek a cheaper lodging, William dear—we must have only one room. And indeed, I shall not fret. You don't know how brave I can be, for all my foolishness last night."

He caught her to his breast and kissed her. He knew not till that moment how dear she was.

It was the time immediately preceding the passing of the Reform Bill. England was convulsed to the remotest extremities and London was especially agitated. The news had gone abroad that the iron railings in front of the houses in the suburbs had been forcibly torn up, and that the men in the manufacturing districts, and the Cornish miners, were preparing to march to the metropolis. Pawnbrokers, it was said, had experienced a run upon their establishments for second-hand guns and pistols. The crowd that was daily congregated in Parliament street, and in the vicinity of both Houses, was so great, that members with difficulty reached the Senate. Meetings of the working classes, and of Reformers generally, were everywhere held. Openly in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the eloquence of the orators electrified the multitude.

"You will join us to-night, Harding," said one of the popular speakers, who visited him that afternoon.

He dared not reply that he was engaged, for that would be a lie, and he was ashamed to confess that his defection must be attributed to his wife's influence.

"I will attend if I can," he contented himself with saying.

"How! are you growing lukewarm, Harding?" said the other, reproachfully.

"I am not, indeed," replied Harding, stung by the accents of his friend. "And to convince you that I am as earnest as ever in the cause, I will join you to-night and speak bolder things than any of you."

He returned from that meeting with elated spirits. His speech had gained him the notice of a member of Parliament, who was present on the platform, and who made him his secretary, there and then. With the first quarter's salary his wife was to have—it was a bargain between them—a new satin dress, and a suitable shawl and bonnet. The behavior of Julia Copperbolt no longer preyed upon her mind, and she looked forward to Mrs. Peasnip's party with a stout heart.

But what hope is there of human nature? The member of Parliament had sundry conferences with an influential statesman, and voted against the Reform Bill at the next division. He wrote a very polite note to Harding, declining his future services, and enclosing a check for five pounds.

"We have made a mistake," ran the note. "We cannot get reform in the present state of the nation, without revolution and subsequent anarchy, and to this I cannot consent, or be a party. Perhaps in thirty or forty years the country will be prepared for the change. In the meantime, my dear young friend, I should recommend you to moderate your political opinions. Take the good with the bad, and ours is a glorious constitution."

Harding sat dismayed. His wife read the note many times.

"Well, William," she said, at last, "You must follow Mr. Weathervane's advice; you must moderate your opinions. You ain't rich enough to have opinions. Oh, you're going to be cross, I can see. Poor me must never speak a word. But I will think as I like, and that's all about it."

He pooh-poohed her gently, and with a faint attempt at pleasantry, reminded her of a favorite apophthegm of her own about the good fish that the sea always contained.

"But they won't come to your net, William," she replied, "while you go on as you do. What are Gatton and old Sarum to you?"

The fish in the sea seemed indeed to shun William Harding, for not an advertisement did he answer that produced him anything—not a situation that he sought for, did he get. The winter was coming on, too, and the strange fowl that