

of to Lady Winnifred St. Ayvas, to whom he only willed a handsome legacy—the bulk of his large fortune, her ladyship grew quite hysterical. She was decidedly upset, and very much out of humor for some time after.

"Such a horrible deception that woman has practised all these years! Is it not preposterous, my dear?" she exclaimed, addressing Lady Winnifred, and speaking of the deceased woman whom, so very short a time previous she had been wont to address "dearest Mrs. Chessom" and "my dear friend." "An unheard of thing, really; and the most wicked part of it all was giving to her friend's children the birthright of old Mr. Chessom's grandchildren. What a blessing that Jarvis and Glencora have had a fortune bequeathed them. It would have been a dreadful shock to have fallen from so magnificent a position to real poverty, especially now that Jarvis is blind; but, of course, their fortune is trifling compared with what will fall to Leigh Chessom's children from their grandfather, not to mention the immense wealth which their father possesses. It is the most startling affair I ever heard of. Dear me, I wonder will that woman ever be able to rest in her grave after all the dreadful things she has been guilty of? Of course, she would never in the world have repented and confessed; and had she not been forced to acknowledge, why, of course, the real heirs would always have been deprived of their rights."

Her daughter answered calmly:

"I am glad that the real heirs are no longer deprived of their rights. I fancy," she added, with a touch of satirical contempt, such as she rarely evinced, "that this sudden change in the order of things will occasion a wonderful revolution in the feelings and sympathies of Mr. Chessom's friends. One can picture it all without difficulty—the hosts of smiles, and bows, and painfully pressing invitations. Sweet little Mabel,—the looked-down upon dependent—will be a reigning belle, the recipient of numberless offers from numberless swains, who will eagerly fling the titles which they are unable to keep at her feet, beseeching for that pretty little hand of hers. And her brother—oh, he will be speedily metamorphosed from the penniless, dishonored clerk into the most eligible match in Twickenham. Shall I angle for him now, mamma?"

Her ladyship visibly winced, and answered dryly, with a heightening of color beneath her rouge:

"Angle? Really, I should hope that my daughter would never forget her dignity so far as to condescend to angle for any man."

The lady glanced furtively at her daughter.

"If he loves you as devotedly as he professed a short time since," she added, "he will, no doubt, again sue for your hand."

"And provided he does so, now that he is rich enough to pay for his bride, I may accept him. I suppose," Winnifred asked quietly.

"Now that his position is such as to warrant his asking, if he chooses, for your hand in marriage, I should not withhold my consent, were he to do so," her mother calmly told her.

Winnifred picked up the embroidery which she had let fall in her lap, with a feeling, inspired by her mamma's words, that was akin to angry disgust. It was so much in the language of slang—like handing her over to the highest bidder.

"The young man has also been fully exasperated from the charge of taking that paltry sum of money—six hundred pounds, wasn't it?—by his father's undeniably proving that the identical bank notes which were missing were paid by somebody, whose name is not mentioned, to a fast young scion of a broken-down family—I am so stupid as to forget the name—for the cancelling of a gambling debt in London, on a certain day upon which it was known throughout the whole banking house that Ernest Chessom was on a business trip here to Islington. Very absurd of old Mr. Chessom to suspect him at all. I very much wonder that he did not—as I am inclined to do suspect Jarvis of abstracting the amount from the first."

"But why do you suspect Jarvis?" queried Winnifred.

"I don't think there could have been anyone else to take the money, is my reason for suspecting him, though I would not, for worlds, mention my suspicions abroad; besides, would it not be much easier to suspect Jarvis, who is—or rather was—wild, and drank, and, I have understood, sometimes gambled heavily, than Ernest, who is so steady and honorable."

"But mamma, I thought that this young man, who has passed for so long