

and entirely exacting no maintenance making neither excuse nor accusation.

It necessarily followed that she must earn her own bread; and she must immediately seek a position that would place her fair fame above suspicion both now and at any future time.

This is how I planned it.  
I had a sister, a well-jointed widow with a large family. I proposed to place my poor friend with her as a governess. Mrs. Mercliston eagerly assented. She had been in the habit of doing so in her youth so that the duty would be easy, and she could fulfill it well.

"And oh!" she cried, while the tears ran down her face, "I shall be in a household, a home among children. Perhaps the little things will love me."

Poor desolate soul!—  
I will not detail the many evening lectures that were required to bring my husband to my own way of thinking. For one thing he inexorably held out and finally I agreed with him that Dr. Mercliston should be openly and honorably informed of his wife's intended departure.

She wrote to him herself in our house. James and I both read the letter. It was as follows:

"DEAR HUSBAND,—Forgive my addressing you against your implied desire. Evering is asking one more, and for the last time, what have I done to you? Why are you estranged from me? I can no longer sustain the life I lead. I desire to leave you. I am going to be a governess, as I was before we were married. Already all plans are formed, but I could not part from you without this forwarding and farewell."

"Your wife," BARBARA.  
This—the last and most carefully even coldly worded, of the many letters she wrote and tore up—was left, to avoid remarks, by my own servant at Dr. Mercliston's door.

On the evening of that day Mrs. Mercliston came to my house. She looked white and shivering but not with the cold. Her poor blue eyes so warm and kind had a frosty glitter in them that was strange and sad.

"No answer," she kept repeating; "no answer—none, none. Now I must go."  
I replied that every thing was ready; our gig would be at the door in a minute; it was a bright moonlight night and I myself would accompany her to my sister's house.

"It is not far—not so very far, Mrs. Rivers? Not so far but that I can always hear of him or of—he should be ill at any time—"

"You can go home at once—"

"Home!" she echoed piteously. Then as if stung into one desperate effort, the last struggle of her tender and feeble nature, she sprang into the gig. I followed her.

I was scarcely seated reins in hand for I was determined that no other than myself should have the credit of eloping with Mrs. Mercliston, than I felt on my right arm a grasp like a vice.

"Mrs. Rivers, whom have you there? Is it my wife?"  
"Yes, Dr. Mercliston," I cried, not in the least frightened by the look and tone; "yes, it is your wife. I am taking her to where she will live in peace and not be killed by inches any longer. Stand aside; let me drive on."

"In one moment. Pardon me;" he passed in front of the horse to the other side. "Barbara! Is that you, Barbara!"

No words could describe the ineffable tenderness, the longing anguish of that voice. No wonder that it made her grasp my arm and cry wildly on me to stop.

"It is not ten minutes since I received your letter. Barbara, grant me one word in the presence of this lady, by whose advice you are leaving your husband."

"By whose advice did you forsake your wife, Dr. Mercliston?" I began, boldly; but by the carriage-lamp I caught sight of his face, and it seemed like that of a man literally dying—dying of despair. "Mrs. Mercliston, suppose we re-center my house for a while. Doctor, will you lift your wife down? She has fainted."

So the poor lady was seated in my parlor, I by her side. Dr. Mercliston stood opposite, watching us both. He was neither violent nor reproachful, but perfectly silent. Nevertheless, I felt somewhat uncomfortable, and glad from my heart that James was safe ten miles off, and that I alone had been mixed up with this affair.

"She is better now, Mrs. Rivers. I may speak?"

"Speak, sir."  
"I will pass over my present trying position. Of course, I perceive—in fact, I was already aware—that Mrs. Mercliston has acquainted you with our sad, inevitable estrangement."

"Why inevitable? When there has been no quarrel on either side? When cruel as you have been to her, she has never breathed a word to your discredit?" (He groaned.) "When, as I understand you have not the shadow of blame to urge against her?"

"Before Heaven, none. Have I not declared this, and will I not declare it before all the world? She knows I will."

"Then why, my dear sir, in the name of all that is good and honorable—may, even in the name of common sense, why is your estrangement inevitable?"

He seemed to cower and shudder as before some inexpressible dread; once he glanced wildly round the room, as if with the vague idea of escaping. Finally, he forced himself to speak with a smile that was most painful to witness.

"Mrs. Rivers, even though a lady asks me, I can not answer that question."  
"Can you if your wife herself asks it? I will leave you together."

As I rose to go, Dr. Mercliston interposed. The cold sweat stood on his brow; he looked—yes, I thought so at the moment—like a possessed man struggling with his inward demon.

"For God's sake, no! For the love of meary, no! Stay by her: take care of her. I will speak in your presence; I will not detain you long."  
"You had better not. See," for the poor wife was again insensible. Dr. Mercliston rushed to her side; he chafed her hands; he fell on his knees before her; but as she opened her eyes he crept away and, put the room's length between them.

"Now may I speak? You wished to leave me, Barbara. To go whither?"

I told him, concealing nothing; he seemed greatly shocked.  
"Mrs. Rivers," he said at length, "such a scheme is impossible. I will never consent to it. If she desires, she shall leave my house, for yours or any other. She shall have any luxuries she pleases; she shall be as free from me as if I were dead and she a widow. But that my wife should quit the shelter of my roof to earn her daily bread—I never will allow it."

From this decision there was no appeal. The wife evidently desired none. To be continued.

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The system of Money Order Interchange with Nova Scotia, therefore, will include from the above-aid date, the United Kingdom, Canada, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

For particulars, see Notices, at the various Money Order Offices of the Provinces.  
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