

and do not speak to him, you blundering old donkey," was all the reply he got, as Frank's anger had risen again. So without another word the unwelcome visitor withdrew.

As soon as Mr. Henderson was seated in his private office the next morning, the door opened and Dobson entered. "Good morning, Dobson," Mr. Henderson said in his kind, gentlemanly manner. "Anything special this morning?"

"Yes, Mr. Henderson, I am obliged to speak to you upon a very disagreeable subject, and it is better to get it over as quickly as possible. You know young Lambert, your shop-walker?"

Mr. Henderson inclined his head. It was not necessary to speak, and Dobson evidently desired no interruption.

"He is to be married in a few weeks, but unfortunately your son has met and become attracted by the young lady, and is very likely to break up the engagement unless you prevent him. I spoke to him last night, but he would not listen. You can influence him, and you must tell him that it cannot be. This letter shows that I am not mistaken in what I am saying," and Frank's letter was in his father's hand.

Mr. Henderson read it through twice.

"It is a manly, outspoken letter, Dobson. Perhaps we should not interfere. She might be happier with him. It might be better for them both. I would not like to stand in the way of the welfare of my boy. I do not think he would choose foolishly. Do you know the young lady? Who is she?"

"Do not ask me, Mr. Henderson. I cannot tell you. Just use your influence with your son, for it must not be," and large drops stood on Dobson's forehead.

"I see what you mean," Mr. Henderson said kindly. "You are thinking of young Lambert. It certainly is hard upon him. But I cannot act in the dark regarding the matter. If you will tell me no more I must call upon the young lady."

Dobson was almost livid. "You do not understand," he gasped. "I am not thinking about young Lambert."

"Then what do you mean? You are acting very strangely. Who is the young lady?"

Mr. Henderson spoke almost coldly,

looking steadily at Dobson, whose eyes were on the floor, as he almost whispered: "I would give ten years of my life rather than tell you, but she is Mary Miller's daughter."

Mr. Henderson stood as if turned to stone. His face was awful to behold.

"You do not mean? You cannot possibly mean that," he burst forth in thick, muffled tones, but one look at Dobson's strained, pitying face showed plainly that the thing he feared was exactly what Dobson did mean.

"How has she lived?" he asked again, and the reply came quietly:

"She lives with her aunt, a sister of her mother's, and she has been well educated."

"By you? I understand all now. This is why you have gone through life looking like a tramp, and allowing all the clerks to call you a miser. Even I myself thought that when your salary was advanced you might have bought a new coat. It was not fair, Dobson. You might have let me help," and the tone was very bitter.

"How could I know you wished to help? And it would only have caused pain to bring the matter up; do not grudge me the pleasure of taking care of her. It was all I had to live for."

The faint complaint slipped from him almost unconsciously, and Mr. Henderson's tone was very tender as he said: "Yes, thanks to me, your life has been one long martyrdom, while I have lived off the fat of the land. But in one respect you had the easier part. You have been spared remorse, which is the worst punishment life can hold."

The silence which followed was difficult to break, but at last Dobson spoke with an effort. "You will see your son?"

"I will send for him immediately."

Frank Henderson was in his father's office in less than half an hour. The summons had been peremptory, and he had responded to it immediately. Mr. Henderson seemed to have aged during the past twenty-four hours. His voice even seemed changed, as rising he extended a piece of paper towards Frank saying: "This is, I believe, your letter?"

The change in his father had softened Frank, but the sight of the letter again