

smote himself on the breast—"her good name will be rea—rea—" his intention was to say rehabilitated, but this design was too ambitious for his powers—"her good name," he said, "would be resuscitated."

"I don't think she would be moved by any consideration of that kind, papa; but perhaps she might like to come to Woolwich, if you gave her an invitation."

"I will, my girl, I will. You see, if Landon and she were to come to a split, it is most important that you should keep on the old footing with her. She will be always, as I happen to know, independent of her husband; and she will be under great obligations to us for the countenance which we shall have afforded her."

"I don't think Ella stands in need of that, papa," said Gracie, smiling; the contrast between her present residence and Officers' Quarters, letter Z, as also between the classes of society that frequented them, striking her very forcibly, and tickling her dormant sense of humour.

"By jingo, but you'll find she does," cried the commissary, emptying the decanter. "Mark my words, that girl's in a hole. I didn't tell her, of course, but I happened to say a word or two to Landon, in a jocular manner, about his ducking Whymper-Hobson in Virginia Water—we know all about that at Woolwich of course—and he didn't like it at all, I can tell you. If everything had been on the square—I mean as to his marriage—why should he have been so sore about it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, papa. I don't think he is very good-tempered."

"No—and yet one had need to be in this world. Things happen to put one out enough. The idea of our letting slip fifty thousand pounds, for example—fifty thousand pounds!—just for want of a little early information respecting that young Whymper."

"But how did you let it slip, papa?"

"Why—of course, if we had known that his uncle was going to leave him all that money, I should have made a point of being civil to him. Why, you might have been Mrs. Whymper-Hobson by this time."

In other days, perhaps, Gracie would have returned some answer of dutiful regret, but since she had known Hugh Darall she was no longer ductile as regarded the matrimonial schemes chalked out for her by her astute but unsentimental parent. She had been submissive to her father's will in many things during her mother's lifetime, out of her exceeding love towards her, but now that she was dead—and out of harm's way as respected her lord and master—Gracie's character, though perhaps unconsciously to herself, was asserting its independence. Its native bent had been always towards what was right, though the iron pressure of necessity had sometimes warped it. Although this reference to Whymper-Hobson was a mere vain regret upon her father's part, and his scheme