

the obligation, but a sad, pleading little face, and with the vision of this face came to his ears the sentence. "No, dear, it's for father's honour."

The debate in Mr. Sterling's mind was over. Taking up a pen, he wrote across the face of Mr. Granger's note the word "Cancelled," and then handed it to the widow.

"What does this mean?" she asked, looking bewildered.

"It means," said Mr. Sterling, "that I hold no obligations against your husband."

Some moments went by ere Mrs. Granger's thoughts became clear enough to comprehend it all. Then she replied, as she reached back the note, "I thank you for your generous kindness, but he left his honour in my keeping, and I must maintain it spotless."

"That you have already done," answered Mr. Sterling, speaking through emotions that were new to him. "It is white as snow!"

Then he thrust back upon her the eight pounds she had just paid him.

"No, Mr. Sterling," the widow said.

"It shall be as I will," was the response. "I would rather touch fire than your money. Every sovereign would burn upon my conscience like living coals!"

"But keep this last payment," urged the widow. "I shall feel better if you do, sir."

"No, madam! would you throw fire upon my conscience? Your husband's honour never had a stain. All men knew him to be pure and upright. When God took him He assumed his earthly debts, and did not leave upon you the heavy burden of their payment. But He left with you another and most sacred obligation, which you have overlooked in part."

"What?" asked the widow, in an almost startled voice.

"To minister to the wants of your children, whom you have pinched and denied in their tender years, giving of their meat to cancel an obligation which death had paid. And you have made me a party in the wrong to them. Ah, madam!"—Mr. Sterling's voice softened very much—"If we could all see right at the right time, and do right at the right time, how much of wrong and suffering might be saved! I honour your true-hearted self-devotion, but I shall be no party to its continuance. As it is, I am your debtor in the sum of twenty pounds, and will repay it my own way and time."

Mr. Sterling made good his word. Under Providence, this circumstance was the means of breaking the hard crust of selfishness and cupidity which had formed around his heart. He was not only generous to the widow in after years, but a doer of many deeds of kindness and humanity to which he had been in other times a stranger.

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