

never to notice the coronet stamped on every link of the chain !

Mr. Douglas fastened it round her neck, with many a loving word and wish ; and it then being time to go to the house, took Brownie a circuitous route to it, telling her meanwhile just as much as he chose her to know of his family and himself.

Three weeks later, a postman left a letter at a house in Portland Square :

TO SIR HENRY DOUGLAS.

DEAR FATHER,—Your advice was so directly opposed to my own wishe:, that I disregarded it altogether. I am surprised that you should misunderstand such a beautiful character as my Brownie's and believe it mercenary. She married me knowing me to be poor. I rather like poverty.

Your loving son,

JAMES DOUGLAS.

The old gentleman who received this epistle, nearly went into a fit from intense rage. He called for pen and ink, and scrawled an answer :

TO JAMES DOUGLAS.

Abide by your wife and your poverty. Never attempt to extract a penny from me.

HENRY DOUGLAS.

James was not a rash man,—he chose poverty deliberately ; still he had not anticipated that his father would on that account be inimical to him. He had always lived on very happy terms with his father, and he had hoped that even when married the friendly relationship would be as close as ever, since he had shown his father that he did not mean to be dependent on him for a livelihood.

He often thought of the lonely old man who lived in such solitary state at Portland Square ; that thought was the only shadow that fell on the perfect bliss of that first year of his married life. Certainly, it was a pleasant thing to be poor, with such a charming little wife as Brownie. A man is rich or poor relatively to his wishes and expenses. James wisely left the expenditure of his salary to Brownie, who

found it ample enough to supply every comfort she believed to be necessary to life. She did not know that the World generally would be distressed to have its married daughters begin their household duties with the dire necessity for seeing that every penny was used to the best advantage. "Where ignorance is bliss," saith the old adage, "it is folly to be wise." Brownie revelled in the enjoyment she felt in the tiny home, all their own ; housekeeping came to her like a fairy gift, and she never wearied of its exigencies. James suddenly awoke from his share in this happy existence with a shock. Their little son was two months old before the thought occurred to him that there was a great change in Brownie. The starving process endured for so long a time in her youth, had sapped the well-springs of her life ; James saw with blank horror, the horror of despair, that there was a look in Brownie's face the hand of Death alone lays there. He saw, too, that the duties she loved so well were beginning to tell upon her slight strength, and that the step that used to rush up and down stairs like a bird on the wing, now lingered as if kept back by the breath that panted its way so painfully through her lips. Yet to all his enquiries, she would make a laughing answer,—she had not an idea that she had more than a passing weakness to fight against. James did not wait to see her grow worse ; he went straight to his old physician, Dr. Hall, and poured forth his trouble into his sympathizing ears.

"You ought to go and tell this story to your father," said Dr. Hall, as he rose to accompany James to see Brownie.

"It is the duty of every man to make his own way in the world," said James with readiness. "I intend to do so."

"But," said Dr. Hall, "life is very complex ; your father ages fast for want of young folks at his fireside ; it is giving more to him to make him genial