

Lady Snowdon, my aunt. Happily she's as clever as she thinks she is, else she would not be endurable. The man who is trying to make love to the dark-haired woman next him is that odious Sir Roderick Harborough. His wife is an admirable woman, and yet he has three establishments. I'll tell you some more afterwards. Let us listen to what the Bishop is saying."

It seemed that by this time the general circulation of topics had brought to the Bishop the story of the lady who had lapsed from sobriety, and that he was wrapping her reputation in the mantle of episcopal charity. "In a case like hers," he was saying to the whole table, "one should be very cautious in judging. Her father, her grandfather, three of her four uncles—all had the same failing. One may venture to call it in her case not a fault but a physical malady."

"Quite right," said Sir Roderick. "I knew them all—every one of 'em—capital fellows, except—well—except for this":—and he delicately emphasised his meaning by raising a glass of champagne a trifle higher than was necessary before he proceeded to drink it. "It's not her fault—not her fault at all. Eh, what?" he exclaimed, suddenly leaning forward. "What's that you're saying, Rupert? Do I hear you saying you'd have Marcus down here to stay with you? Why, I tell you, Jack Hereford saw the cards in his hand. God bless my soul! you'll be having Mrs. Masters next—is that the she-devil's name?—who crippled her child by beating it."

"I think," replied Glanville, "we are probably much too hard on her. For all we know, the child was exceedingly irritating; and I'm sure, from her pictures, that the mother must naturally have a bad temper."

In spite of the deference due from guests to a host, this utterance of Glanville's was received with a murmur of surprised remonstrance; whilst Sir Roderick pulled his moustache by one of its waxen ends and dragged a fold of his throat through the points of his collar in indignation.

"How do you know," said Mrs. Jeffries, her cheeks growing