

trample upon their poorer brethren. I had no option but to do as the Bishop dictated ; and to tie myself down in the midst of a commercial and low-born population of whom my natural gifts and acquired accomplishments will alike be thrown away."

"It would certainly have been a mistake to offend the dear Bishop," said Mrs. Higginson. "In fact, I think it is always a mistake to offend those who are in a higher social position than ourselves. They so often can be of use to us ; and, even if they cannot, it is always pleasant to be on bowing terms with them, and seems to confer a distinction and dignity upon us."

"Yes ; it would have been a mistake to offend the Bishop. His lordship and Mr. Forrester knew that well enough. They had me in a cleft stick. But I ought to have known better than to expect anything different, since misfortune and ill-luck have dogged my footsteps ever since I was born. It is time I made up my mind to it, and realised that bitterness is to be my portion all the days of my life ; but it is hard to give up hope, even when one is turned forty, and particularly when one sees that one's ill-luck is in no way one's own fault, but is all the doing of some malignant and adverse Power. If I felt that I deserved misfortune, I should submit to it more gracefully ; but as it is, I admit that I rebel."

And so Theophilus continued to grumble after his kind, and would so continue till the end of the chapter, human nature not being alterable by circumstances. We are all very fond of saying "If this," and "If the other," we should be saints and angels and the like, forgetting that there is no such word as "if" in the vocabulary of Heaven. He who is discontented will be discontented still, though Fate and Fortune lavish their gifts at his feet ; while he who is righteous will be righteous still, though the Powers of darkness array themselves against him.