

things of life, not to have the worst side of human nature held to my eyes till everything else is blotted out."

Dr. Gresham ran his fingers through his hair, making it stand on end, while looking the picture of puzzled irritation. When Hugh stopped for want of breath his host ree and poked the fire savagely, as if he felt that things were wrong somewhere, and that lump of coal might be responsible for the muddle.

"On what terms did you leave your father?" he asked, as he put the poker down.

"I told him plainly that he should have brought me up differently if he intended me to follow his business; that I could not do so now, and if he would not help me I must strike out for myself, sink or swim. I thanked him for what he had done for me in the past, then I wanted to shake hands with him, but he swore at me, so I came away. Poor father! It is rough on him in one way, but he has no right to mar my life."

"None whatever!" burst out the doctor, feeling he had done all that duty required of him, and that now he was at liberty to speak his own sentiments. "Now, what are your plans?"

"I have written to a man I know in London to hire a room for me, and we shall chum together. I have plenty of money to last for several months if necessary while I am looking out for something. I shall leave here to-morrow evening, after I have seen Marjorie again."

The doctor frowned at the mention of Marjorie.

"Well, well, since you are determined, why it is no use wasting more time in argument, so I suppose I had better do what I can to help you. Only, whatever happens, always remember I warned you against putting faith in a woman, and advised you to stick to your father and the making of money."

"All right," said Hugh; "I will remember that you made great preparations for the chance of saying 'I told you so.'"

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Durant was a highly-respected solicitor in Draybridge Urbane, suave, courteous to everyone, he was one of those men who never make an enemy, not even of the humblest person, "for you never know whether it may be in their power one day to retaliate," he used to say; "and a pin will kill a man if thrust in the right place."

When Marjorie, the fourth daughter, announced her intention of marrying Hugh Borthwick as soon as he could keep her without being dependent upon his father, there was great consternation in the family. Hugh had gone to Mr. Durant at his office, and that gentleman had hardly presence of mind enough to remember his own maxim, and to keep from ordering the young man out. However, he controlled himself and said he was much astonished, which he really was, but must see his daughter before saying anything one way or the other, with which Hugh found himself politely bowed out.

That evening Mr. and Mrs. Durant took counsel together, and decided that nothing would be so foolish as to make martyrs of the young people.

"Tell him that if he can make four hundred a year away from his disreputable old father we will give our consent," said Mrs. Durant, "and put him upon his honor not to ask Marjorie to make any promises until he is in a fair way to fulfill our conditions."

"All right," said her husband; "but what about Marjorie?"

"I can manage her so long as she has no reason to think herself a victim; then she would be as obstinate as a mule. Although there must be no engagement, they may write friendly letters occasionally—that will satisfy Marjorie; and if anyone eligible comes forward who is tolerably good-looking and amusing, I don't suppose I shall have any difficulty with her."

"Eligibles so rarely are good-looking and amusing. Now look at this fellow: personally he is everything one could desire, but he hasn't a penny, and is saddled with an objectionable father into the bargain," grumbled Mr. Durant. "And if nobody else does turn up?"

"In that case, if Hugh Borthwick can keep her comfortably, why she can fall back upon him. I like the young fellow, and people with eight daughters to marry must not be too ready at saying no," answered Mrs. Durant dryly.

In happy ignorance of this conversation, Hugh and Marjorie were quite satisfied with the arrangement, and gave the required pledge without hesitation.

Hugh had first met Marjorie at a studio where they attended a painting-class. A friendship founded on the interest they took in their work sprang up between them, and shortly after they were introduced to each other in an orthodox manner at the house of a mutual friend. Friendship ripened into love; on Borthwick's side of a deep, earnest nature. Mrs. Durant was wise. Had she violently opposed Hugh's suit Marjorie would have imagined herself a persecuted heroine, and, by dint of posing as one to injudicious friends, would have ended by being as devoted to Hugh as Hugh was to her. As it was, Marjorie continued to be more in love with her own pretty person than with anyone else, and as she and Hugh could even write to each other without any difficulty, why the whole affair became dreadfully commonplace; indeed, after a few months she began to think that a lover in London is not much use when one is living in Draybridge. She had also made some charming new friends, and her letters to Hugh grew fewer and shorter. This being the case Hugh took it into his head that Marjorie was not well, or was being cruelly treated for his sake, and as he was bound to abstain from writing love letters, he screwed up his courage to ask Dr. Gresham to see Marjorie, and give him a full and faithful report of how things were going with her.

A smile broke over the doctor's face as he read his favourite's petition.

(To be continued.)

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