

“Ellen,” whispered Mr. Huntley, “would you have him, with all his gracelessness?”

Ellen seemed ready to fall, and her eyes filled. “Do not joke now, papa,” was all she said.

Hamish caught her hand, and took upon himself the task of soothing her. And Mr. Huntley relapsed into a smile, and did not hinder him.

But some one else was bursting into tears, as the sounds testified. It proved to be Lady Augusta Yorke. A few tears might well be excused to Mrs. Channing, on the occasion of parting with her ever-loving, ever-dutiful child, but what could Lady Augusta have to cry about?

Lady Augusta was excessively impulsive, as you have long ago learnt. The happiness of the Channing family, in their social relations to each other; the loving gentleness of Mr. and Mrs. Channing with their children; the thorough respect, affection, duty, rendered to them by the children in return—had struck her more than ever on this morning. She was contrasting the young Channings with her own boys and girls, and the contrast made her feel low-spirited. Thus she was just primed to go off, when the parting came with Constance, and the burst took place as she watched the carriage from the door. Had any one asked Lady Augusta why she cried, she would have been puzzled to state.

“Tell me!” she suddenly uttered, turning and seizing Mrs. Channing’s hands—“what makes the difference between your children and mine? My children were not born bad, any more than yours were; and yet, look at the trouble they give me! In what does it lie?”

“I think,” said Mrs. Channing quietly, and with some hesitation—for it was not pleasant to say anything which might tacitly reflect on the Lady Augusta—“that the difference in most children lies in the bringing up. Children turn out well or ill, as they are trained; and in accordance with this rule they will become our blessing or our grief.”

“Ah, yes, that must be it,” acquiesced Lady Augusta. “And yet—I don’t know,” she rejoined, doubtfully. “Do you believe that so very much lies in the training?”