

CHAPTER XV BREAKERS AHEAD

GOING into the Shaws' one evening, Polly found Maud sitting on the stairs, with a troubled face.

"Oh, Polly, I 'm so glad you 've come!" cried the little girl, running to hug her.

"What's the matter, deary?"

"I don't know; something dreadful must have happened, for mamma and Fan are crying together upstairs, papa is shut up in the library, and Tom is raging round like a bear, in the dining-room."

"I guess it is n't anything very bad. Perhaps mamma is sicker than usual, or papa worried about business, or Tom in some new scrape. Don't look so frightened, Maudie, but come into the parlor and see what I 've got for you," said Polly, feeling that there was trouble of some sort in the air, but trying to cheer the child, for her little face was full of a sorrowful anxiety, that went to Polly's heart.

"I don't think I can like anything till I know what the matter is," answered Maud. "It 's something horrid, I 'm sure, for when papa came home, he went up to mamma's room, and talked ever so long, and mamma cried very loud, and when I tried to go in, Fan would n't let me, and she looked scared and strange. I wanted to go to papa when he came down, but the door was locked, and he said, 'Not now, my little girl,' and then I sat here waiting to see what would happen, and Tom came home. But when I ran to tell him, he said, 'Go away, and don't bother,' and just took me by the shoulders and put me out. Oh, dear! everything is so queer and horrid, I don't know what to do."

Maud began to cry, and Polly sat down on the stairs beside her, trying to comfort her, while her own thoughts were full of a vague fear. All at once the dining-room door opened, and Tom's head appeared. A single glance showed Polly that something was the matter, for the care and elegance which usually marked his appearance were entirely wanting. His tie was under one ear, his hair in a toss, the cherished moustache had a neglected air, and his face an expression both excited, ashamed, and distressed; even his

voice betrayed disturbance, for instead of the affable greeting he usually bestowed upon the young lady, he seemed to have fallen back into the bluff tone of his boyish days, and all he said was, "Hullo, Polly."

"How do you do?" answered Polly.

"I 'm in a devil of a mess, thank you; send that chicken up stairs, and come in and hear about it." he said, as if he had been longing to tell some one, and welcomed prudent Polly as a special providence.

"Go up, deary, and amuse yourself with this book, and these ginger snaps that I made for you, there 's a good child," whispered Polly, as Maud rubbed away her tears, and stared at Tom with round, inquisitive eyes.

"You 'll tell me all about it, by and by, won't you?" she whispered, preparing to obey.

"If I may," answered Polly.

Maud departed with unexpected docility, and Polly went into the dining-room, where Tom was wandering about in a restless way. If he had been "raging like a bear," Polly would n't have cared, she was so pleased that he wanted her, and so glad to be a confidante, as she used to be in the happy old days, that she would joyfully have faced a much more formidable person than reckless Tom.

"Now, then, what is it?" she said, coming straight to the point.

"Guess."

"You 've killed your horse racing."

"Worse than that."

"You are suspended again."

"Worse than that."

"Trix has run away with somebody," cried Polly, with a gasp.

"Worse still."

"Oh, Tom, you have n't horse whipped or shot any one?"

"Came pretty near blowing my own brains out but you see I didn't."

"I can't guess; tell me, quick."

"Well, I 'm expelled."

Tom paused on the rug as he gave the answer, and looked at Polly to see how she took it. To his surprise she seemed almost relieved, and after a minute silence, said, soberly, "That 's bad, very bad; but it might have been worse."

"It is worse;" and Tom walked away again with a despairing sort of groan.

"Don't knock the chairs about, but come and sit down, and tell me quietly."

"Can't do it."

"Well, go on, then. Are you truly expelled? Can't it be made up? What did you do?"

"It 's a true bill this time. I just had a row with the Chapel watchman, and knocked him down. If it was a first offence, I might have got off; but you see I 've had no end of narrow escapes, and this was my last chance; I 've lost it, and now there 'll be the dickens to pay. I knew it was all up with me, so I did n't wait to be turned out, but just took myself off."

"What will your father say?"

"It will come hard on the governor, but the worst of it is " there Tom stopped, and stood a minute in the middle of the room with his head down, as if he did n't find it easy to tell even kind little Polly. Then out came the truth all in a breath, just as he used to bolt out his boyish misdemeanors, and then back up against the wall ready to take the consequences.

"I owe an awful lot of money that the governor don't know about."

"Oh, Tom, how could you?"

"I 've been an extravagant rascal, I know it, and I 'm thundering sorry, but that don't help a fellow, I 've got to tell the dear old buffer, and there 's where it cuts."

At another time Polly would have laughed at the contrast between Tom's face and his language, but there was a sincere remorse, which made even the dreadful word "buffer" rather touching than otherwise.

"He will be very angry, I dare say; but he 'll help you, won't he? He always does, Fansays."

"That 's the worst of it, you see. He 's paid up so often, that the last time he said his patience could n't stand it, nor his pocket either, and if I got into any more scrapes of that sort, I must get out as I could. I meant to be as steady as Bunker Hill Monument; but here I am again, worse than ever, for last quarter I did n't say anything to father, he was so bothered by the loss of those ships just then, so things have mounted up confoundedly."

"What have you done with all your money?"

"Hanged if I know."

"Can't you pay it anyway?"

"Don't see how, as I have n't a cent of my own, and no way of getting it,

unless I try gambling."

"Oh, mercy, no! Sell your horse," cried Polly, after a minute of deep meditation.

"I have; but he did n't bring half I gave for him. I lamed him last winter, and the beggar won't get over it.

"And that did n't pay up the debts?"

"Only about a half of 'em."

"Why, Tom, how much do you owe?"

"I have dodged figuring it up till yesterday; then things were so desperate, I thought I might as well face the truth, so I overhauled my accounts, and there 's the result."

Tom threw a blotted, crumpled paper into Polly's lap, and tramped up and down again, faster than ever. Polly took one look at the total and clasped her hands, for to her inexperienced eyes it looked appalling.

"Tidy little sum, is n't it?" asked Tom, who could n't bear the silence, or the startled, grieved look in Polly's eyes.

"It 's awful! I don't wonder you dread telling your father."

"I 'd rather be shot. I say, Polly, suppose we break it to him easy!" added Tom, after another turn.

"How do you mean?"

"Why, suppose Fan, or, better still, you go and sort of pave the way. I can't bear to come down on him with the whole truth at

once."

"So you 'd like to have me go and tell him for you?" Polly's lip curled a little as she said that, and she gave Tom a look that would have shown him how blue eyes can flash, if he had seen it. But he was at the window, and did n't turn, as he said slowly, "Well, you see, he 's so fond of you; we all confide in you; and you are so like one of the family, that it seems quite natural. Just tell him I 'm expelled, you know, and as much more as you like; then I 'll come in, and we 'll have it out."

Polly rose and went to the door without a word. In doing so, Tom caught a glimpse of her face, and said, hastily, "Don't you think it would be a good plan?"

"No, I don't."

"Why not? Don't you think he 'd rather have it told him nicely by you, than blurted out as I always do blurt things?"

"I know he 'd rather have his son go to him and tell the truth, like a man, instead of sending a girl to do what he is afraid to do himself."

If Polly had suddenly boxed his ears, Tom could n't have looked more taken aback than by that burst. He looked at her excited face, seemed to understand the meaning of it, and remembered all at once that he was trying to hide behind a girl. He turned scarlet, said shortly, "Come back, Polly," and walked straight out of the room, looking as if going to instant execution, for poor Tom had been taught to fear his father, and had not entirely outgrown the dread.

Polly sat down, looking both satisfied and troubled. "I hope I did right," she said to herself, "I could n't bear to have him shirk and seem cowardly. He is n't, only he did n't think how it seemed to me, and I don't wonder he was a little afraid, Mr. Shaw is so severe with the poor fellow. Oh, dear, what should we do if Will got into such scrapes. Thank goodness, he 's poor, and can't; I 'm so glad of that!"

Then she sat silent beside the half-open door, hearing the murmur of Tom's

voice across the hall, and hoping, with all her heart, that he would n't have a very hard time. He seemed to tell his story rapidly and steadily, without interruption, to the end; then Polly heard Mr. Shaw's deeper voice say a few words, at which Tom uttered a loud exclamation, as if taken by surprise. Polly could n't distinguish a word, so she kept her seat, wondering anxiously what was going on between the two men. A sudden pause seemed to follow Tom's ejaculation, then Mr. Shaw talked a long time in a low, earnest tone, so different from the angry one Polly had expected to hear, that it made her nervous, for Mr. Shaw usually "blew Tom up first, and forgave him afterward," as Maud said. Presently Tom's voice was heard, apparently asking eager questions, to which brief replies were given. Then a dead silence fell upon the room, and nothing was heard but the spring rain softly falling out of doors. All of a sudden she heard a movement, and Tom's voice say audibly, "Let me bring Polly;" and he appeared, looking so pale and miserable that Polly was frightened.

"Go and say something to him; I can't; poor old father, if I 'd only known," and to Polly's utter dismay, Tom threw himself into a chair, and laid his head down on the table, as if he had got a blow that was too much for him.

"Oh, Tom, what is it?" cried Polly, hurrying to him, full of fears she dared not speak.

Without looking up, Tom answered, in a smothered voice, "Failed; all gone to smash; and to-morrow every one will know it."

Polly held on to the back of Tom's chair, for a minute, for the news took her breath away, and she felt as if the world was coming to an end, "failed" was such a vaguely dreadful word to her.

"Is it very bad?" she asked, softly, feeling as if anything was better than to stand still and see Tom so wretched.

"Yes; he means to give up everything. He 's done his best; but it can't be staved off any longer, and it 's all up with him."

"Oh, I wish I had a million to give him!" cried Polly, clasping her hands, with the tears running down her cheeks. "How does he bear it, Tom?"

"Like a man, Polly; and I 'm proud of him," said Tom, looking up, all red and excited with the emotions he was trying to keep under. "Everything has been against him, and he has fought all alone to stand the pressure, but it 's too much for him, and he 's given in. It's an honorable failure, mind you, and no one can say a word against him. I 'd like to see 'em try it!" and Tom clenched his hands, as if it would be an immense relief to him to thrash half a dozen aspersers of his father's honest name.

"Of course they can't! This is what poor Maud troubled about. He had told your mother and Fan before you came, and that is why they are so unhappy, I suppose."

"They are safe enough. Father has n't touched mother's money; he'could n't rob his girls,' he said, and that 's all safe for 'em. Is n't he a trump, Polly?" And Tom's face shone with pride, even while his lips would twitch with a tenderer feeling.

"If I could only do anything to help," cried Polly, oppressed with her own powerlessness.

"You can. Go and be good to him; you know how; he needs it enough, all alone there. I can't do it, for I 'm only a curse instead of a comfort to him."

"How did he take your news?" asked Polly, who, for a time, had forgotten the lesser trouble in the greater.

"Like a lamb; for when I 'd done, he only said, 'My poor lad, we must bear with one another.' and then told his story."

"I 'm glad he was kind," began Polly, in a soothing tone; but Tom cried out, remorsefully, "That 's what knocks me over! Just when I ought to be a pride and a prop to him, I bring him my debts and disgrace, and he never says a word of blame. It 's no use, I can't stand it!" and Tom's head went down again with something very like a sob, that would come in spite of manful efforts to keep it back, for the poor fellow had the warmest heart that ever was, and all the fine waistcoats outside could n't spoil it.

That sound gave Polly more pain than the news of a dozen failures and expulsions, and it was as impossible for her to resist putting her hand tenderly on the bent head, as it was for her to help noticing with pleasure how brown the little curls were growing, and how soft they were. In spite of her sorrow, she enjoyed that minute very much, for she was a born consoler, and, it is hardly necessary for me to add, loved this reprehensible Tom with all her heart. It was a very foolish thing for her to do, she quite agreed to that; she could n't understand it, explain it, or help it; she only felt that she did care for him very much, in spite of his faults, his indifference, and his engagement. You see, she learned to love him one summer, when he made them a visit. That was before Trix caught him; and when she heard that piece of news, Polly could n't unlove him all at once, though she tried very hard, as was her duty. That engagement was such a farce, that she never had much faith in it, so she put her love away in a corner of her heart, and tried to forget it, hoping it would either die, or have a right to live. It didn't make her very miserable, because patience, work, and common-sense lent her a hand, and hope would keep popping up its bright face from the bottom of her Pandora-box of troubles. Now and then, when any one said Trix would n't jilt Tom, or that Tom did care for Trix more than he should, Polly had a pang, and thought she could n't possibly bear it. But she always found she could, and so came to the conclusion that it was a merciful provision of nature that girls' hearts could stand so much, and their appetites continue good, when unrequited love was starving.

Now, she could not help yearning over this faulty, well-beloved scapegrace Tom, or help thinking, with a little thrill of hope, "If Trix only cared for his money, she may cast him off now he 's lost it; but I 'll love him all the better because he 's poor." With this feeling warm at her heart, I don't wonder that Polly's hand had a soothing effect, and that after a heave or two, Tom's shoulders were quiet, and certain smothered sniffs suggested that he would be all right again, if he could only wipe his eyes without any one's seeing him do it.

Polly seemed to divine his wish, and tucking a little, clean handkerchief into one of his half-open hands, she said, "I 'm going to your father, now," and with a farewell smooth, so comforting that Tom wished she 'd do it again, she went away.

As she paused a minute in the hall to steady herself, Maud called her from above, and thinking that the women might need her more than the men, she ran up to find Fanny waiting for her in her own room.

"Mamma's asleep, quite worn out, poor dear, so we can talk in here without troubling her," said Fanny, receiving her friend so quietly, that Polly was amazed.

"Let me come, too, I won't make any fuss; it 's so dreadful to be shut out everywhere, and have people crying and talking, and locked up, and I not know what it means," said Maud, beseechingly.

"You do know, now; I 've told her, Polly," said Fan, as they sat down together, and Maud perched herself on the bed, so that she might retire among the pillows if her feelings were too much for her.

"I 'm glad you take it so well, dear; I was afraid it might upset you," said Polly, seeing now that in spite of her quiet manner, Fan's eyes had an excited look, and her cheeks a feverish color.

"I shall groan and moan by and by, I dare say, but at first it sort of dazed me, and now it begins to excite me. I ought to be full of sorrow for poor papa, and I am truly sorry, but, wicked as it may seem, it 's a fact, Polly, that I 'm half glad it 's happened, for it takes me out of myself, and gives me something to do."

Fanny's eyes fell and her color rose as she spoke, but Polly understood why she wanted to forget herself, and put her arm round her with a more tender sympathy than Fanny guessed.

"Perhaps things are not as bad as they seem; I don't know much about such matters, but I 've seen people who have failed, and the seemed just as comfortable as before," said Polly.

"It won't be so with us, for papa means to give up everything, and not have a word said against him. Mamma's little property is settled upon her, and has n't been risked. That touched her so much! She dreads poverty even more than I do, but she begged him to take it if it would help him. That pleased him, but he said nothing would induce him to do it, for it would n't help much, and was hardly enough to keep her comfortable."

"Do you know what he means to do?" asked Polly, anxiously.

"He said his plans were not made, but he meant to go into the little house that belonged to grandma, as soon as he could, for it was n't honest for a bankrupt to keep up an establishment like this."

"I shan't mind that at all, I like the little house 'cause it 's got a garden, and there 's a cunning room with a three-cornered closet in it that I always wanted. If that 's all, I don't think bankrupting is so very bad," said Maud, taking a cheerful view of things.

"Ah, just wait till the carriage goes and the nice clothes and the servants, and we have to scratch along as we can. You 'll change your mind then, poor child," said Fanny, whose ideas of failure were decidedly tragical.

"Will they take all my things away?" cried Maud, in dismay.

"I dare say; I don't know what we are allowed to keep; but not much, I fancy," and Fan looked as if strung up to sacrifice everything she possessed.

"They shan't have my new ear-rings, I 'll hide 'em, and my best dress, and my gold smelling bottle. Oh, oh, oh! I think it 's mean to take a little girl's things away!" And Maud dived among the pillows to smother a wail of anguish at the prospect of being bereft of her treasures.

Polly soon lured her out again, by assurances that she would n't be utterly despoiled, and promises to try and soften the hard hearts of her father's creditors, if the ear-rings and the smelling-bottle were attached.

"I wonder if we shall be able to keep one servant, just till we learn how to do the work," said Fanny, looking at her white hands, with a sigh.

But Maud clapped hers, and gave a joyful bounce, as she cried, "Now I can learn to cook! I love so to beat eggs! I 'll have an apron, with a bib to it, like Polly's, and a feather duster, and sweep the stairs, maybe, with my head tied up, like Katy. Oh, what fun!"

"Don't laugh at her, or discourage her; let her find comfort in bibs and dust-pans, if she can," whispered Polly to Fan, while Maud took a joyful "header" among the pillows, and came up smiling and blowzy, for she loved house-work, and often got lectured for stolen visits to the kitchen, and surreptitious sweepings and dustings when the coast was clear.

"Mamma is so feeble, I shall have to keep house, I suppose, and you must show me how, Polly," said Fan.

"Good practice, ma'am, as you 'll find out some day," answered Polly, laughing significantly.

Fanny smiled, then grew both grave and sad. "This changes everything; the old set will drop me, as we did the Mertons when their father failed, and my 'prospects,' as we say, are quite ruined."

"I don't believe it; your real friends won't drop you, and you 'll find out which the true ones are now. I know one friend who will be kinder than ever."

"Oh, Polly, do you think so?" and Fanny's eyes softened with sudden tears.

"I know who she means," cried Maud, always eager to find out things. "It 's herself; Polly won't mind if we are poor, 'cause she likes beggars."

"Is that who you meant?" asked Fan, wistfully.

"No, it 's a much better and dearer friend than I am," said Polly, pinching Fanny's cheek, as it reddened prettily under her eyes. "You 'll never guess, Maud, so I would n't try, but be planning what you will put in your cunning, three-cornered closet, when you get it."

Having got rid of "Miss Paulina Pry," as Tom called Maud, who was immediately absorbed by her cupboard, the older girls soberly discussed the sudden change which had come, and Polly was surprised to see what unexpected strength and sense Fanny showed. Polly was too unconscious of the change which love had made in herself to understand at first the cause of her friend's new patience and fortitude; but she rejoiced over it, and felt

that her prophecy would yet be fulfilled. Presently Maud emerged from her new closet, bringing a somewhat startling idea with her.

"Do bankrupting men" (Maud liked that new word) "always have fits?"

"Mercy, no! What put that into your head, child?" cried Polly.

"Why, Mr. Merton did; and I was thinking perhaps papa had got one down there, and it kind of frightened me."

"Mr. Merton's was a bad, disgraceful failure, and I don't wonder he had a fit. Ours is n't, and papa won't do anything of that sort, you may be sure," said Fanny, with as proud an air as if "our failure" was rather an honor than otherwise.

"Don't you think you and Maud had better go down and see him?" asked Polly.

"Perhaps he would n't like it; and I don't know what to say, either," began Fan; but Polly said, eagerly, "I know he would like it. Never mind what you say; just go, and show him that you don't doubt or blame him for this, but love him all the more, and are ready and glad to help him bear the trouble."

"I 'm going, I ain't afraid; I 'll just hug him, and say I 'm ever so glad we are going to the little house," cried Maud, scrambling off the bed, and running down stairs.

"Come with me, Polly, and tell me what to do," said Fanny, drawing her friend after her.

"You 'll know what to do when you see him, better than I can tell you," answered Polly, readily yielding, for she knew they considered her "quite one of the family," as Tom said.

At the study door they found Maud, whose courage had given out, for Mr. Merton's fit rather haunted her. Polly opened the door; and the minute

Fanny saw her father, she did know what to do. The fire was low, the gas dim, and Mr. Shaw was sitting in his easy-chair, his gray head in both his hands, looking lonely, old, and bowed down with care. Fanny gave Polly one look, then went and took the gray head in both her arms, saying, with a tender quiver in her voice, "Father dear, we 've come to help you bear it"

Mr. Shaw looked up, and seeing in his daughter's face something that never had been there before, put his arm about her, and leaned his tired head against her, as if, when least expected, he had found the consolation he most needed. In that minute, Fanny felt, with mingled joy and self-reproach, what a daughter might be to her father; and Polly, thinking of feeble, selfish Mrs. Shaw, asleep up stairs, saw with sudden clearness what a wife should be to her husband, a helpmeet, not a burden. Touched by these unusual demonstrations, Maud crept quietly to her father's knee, and whispered, with a great tear shining on her little pug nose, "Papa, we don't mind it much, and I 'm going to help Fan keep house for you; I 'd like to do it, truly."

Mr. Shaw's other arm went round the child, and for a minute no one said anything, for Polly had slipped behind his chair, that nothing should disturb the three, who were learning from misfortune how much they loved one another. Presently Mr. Shaw steadied himself and asked, "Where is my other daughter, where 's my Polly?"

She was there at once; gave him one of the quiet kisses that had more than usual tenderness in it, for she loved to hear him say "my other daughter," and then she whispered, "Don't you want Tom, too?"

"Of course I do; where is the poor fellow?"

"I 'll bring him;" and Polly departed with most obliging alacrity.

But in the hall she paused a minute to peep into the glass and see if she was all right, for somehow she was more anxious to look neat and pretty to Tom in his hour of trouble than she had ever been in his prosperous days. In lifting her arms to perk up the bow at her throat she knocked a hat off the bracket. Now, a shiny black beaver is not an object exactly calculated to inspire tender or romantic sentiments, one would fancy, but that particular "stove pipe" seemed to touch Polly to the heart, for she caught it up, as if its fall suggested a greater one, smoothed out a slight dint, as if it

was symbolical of the hard knocks its owner's head was now in danger of receiving, and stood looking at it with as much pity and respect, as if it had been the crown of a disinherited prince. Girls will do such foolish little things, and though we laugh at them, I think we like them the better for it, after all.

Richard was himself again when Polly entered, for the handkerchief had disappeared, his head was erect, his face was steady, and his whole air had a dogged composure which seemed to say to fate, "Hit away, I'm ready." He did not hear Polly come in, for he was looking fixedly at the fire with eyes that evidently saw a very different future there from that which it used to show him; but when she said, "Tom, dear, your father wants you," he got up at once, held out his hand to her, saying, "Come too, we can't get on without you," and took her back into the study with him.

Then they had a long talk, for the family troubles seemed to warm and strengthen the family affection and confidence, and as the young people listened while Mr. Shaw told them as much of his business perplexities as they could understand, every one of them blamed him or herself for going on so gayly and blindly, while the storm was gathering, and the poor man was left to meet it all alone. Now, however, the thunder-clap had come, and after the first alarm, finding they were not killed, they began to discover a certain half-anxious, half-pleasant excitement in talking it over encouraging one another, and feeling unusually friendly, as people do when a sudden shower drives two or three to the shelter of one umbrella.

It was a sober talk, but not all sad, for Mr. Shaw felt inexpressibly comforted by his children's unexpected sympathy, and they, trying to take the downfall cheerfully for his sake, found it easier to bear themselves. They even laughed occasionally, for the girls, in their ignorance, asked queer questions; Tom made ludicrously unbusiness-like propositions; and Maud gave them one hearty peal, that did a world of good, by pensively remarking, when the plans for the future had been explained to her, "I'm so relieved; for when papa said we must give up everything, and mamma called us all beggars, I did think I'd got to go round asking for cold vittles, with a big basket, and an old shawl over my head. I said once I'd like that, but I'm afraid I should n't, for I can't bear Indian cake and cold potatoes, that's what the poor children always seem to get, and I should hate to have Grace and the rest see me scuffling round the back gates."

"My little girl shall never come to that, if I can help it," said Mr. Shaw, holding her close, with a look that made Maud add, as she laid her cheek against his own, "But I 'd do it, father, if you asked me to, for I truly want to help."

"So do I!" cried Fanny, wondering at the same minute how it would seem to wear turned silks, and clean her gloves.

Tom said nothing, but drew toward him a paper of figures which his father had drawn up, and speedily reduced himself to the verge of distraction by trying to understand them, in his ardent desire to prove his willingness to put his shoulder to the wheel.

"We shall pull through, children, so don't borrow trouble, only be ready for discomforts and annoyances. Put your pride in your pockets, and remember poverty is n't disgraceful, but dishonesty is."

Polly had always loved kind Mr. Shaw, but now she respected him heartily, and felt that she had not done him justice when she sometimes thought that he only cared for making money.

"I should n't wonder if this was a good thing for the whole family, though it don't look so. Mrs. Shaw will take it the hardest, but it may stir her up, so she will forget her nerves, and be as busy and happy as mother is," said Polly to herself, in a ²⁴²hopeful mood, for poverty was an

old friend, and she had learned long ago not to fear it, but to take its bitter and its sweet, and make the best of both.

When they parted for the night, Polly slipped away first, to leave them free, yet could n't help lingering outside to see how tenderly the girls parted from their father. Tom had n't a word to say for himself, for men don't kiss, caress, or cry when they feel most, and all he could do to express his sympathy and penitence, was to wring his father's hand with a face full of respect, regret, and affection, and then bolt up stairs as if the furies were after him, as they were, in a mild and modern form.