

## QUOTATION

### ANN BRONTE ON DEALING WITH TEMPTATION

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...They both partook of the cake, but obstinately refused the wine, in spite of their hostess's hospitable attempts to force it upon them. Arthur, especially, shrank from the ruby nectar as if in terror and disgust, and was ready to cry when urged to take it.

"Never mind, Arthur," said his mamma, "Mrs Markham thinks it will do you good, as you were tired with your walk; but she will not oblige you to take it; - I dare say you will do very well without. He detests the very sight of wine," she added, "and the smell of it almost makes him sick. I have been accustomed to make him swallow a little wine or weak spirits-and-water, by way of medicine when he was sick, and, in fact, I have done what I could to make him hate them."

Everybody laughed, except the young widow and her son.

"Well, Mrs Graham," said my mother, wiping the tears of merriment from her bright, blue eyes - "well, you surprise me! I really gave you credit for having more sense- The poor child will be the veriest milk-sop that ever was sopped! Only think what a man you will make of him, if you persist in -"

"I think it a very excellent plan," interrupted Mrs Graham with imperturbable gravity. "By that means I hope to save him from one degrading vice at least. I wish I could render the incentives to every other equally innoxious in this case."

"But by such means," said I, "you will never render him virtuous. - What is it that constitutes virtue, Mrs Graham? Is it the circumstance of being able and willing to resist temptation; or that of having no temptations to resist? - Is he a strong man that overcomes great obstacles and performs surprising achievements, though by dint of great muscular exertion, and at the risk of some subsequent fatigue, or he that sits in his chair all day, with nothing to do more laborious than stirring the fire, and carrying his food to his mouth? If you would have your son to walk honourably through the world, you must not attempt to clear the stones from his path, but teach him to walk firmly over them - not insist upon leading him by the hand, but let him learn to go alone."

"I will lead him by the hand, Mr Markham, till he has strength to go alone; and I will clear as many stones from his path as I can, and teach him to avoid the *rest* - or walk firmly over them, as you say; - for when I have done my utmost, in the way of clearance, there will still be plenty left to exercise all the agility, steadiness, and circumspection he will ever have. - It is all very well to talk about noble resistance, and trials of virtue; but for fifty - or five hundred men that have yielded to temptation, show me one that has had virtue to resist. And why should I take it for granted that my son will be one in a thousand? - and not rather prepare for the worst, and suppose he will be like his - like the rest of mankind, unless I take care to prevent it?"

"You are very complimentary to all of us," I observed.

"I know nothing about *you* - I speak of those I do know - and when I see the whole race of mankind (with a few rare exceptions) stumbling and blundering along the path of life, sinking into every pitfall, and breaking their shins over every impediment that lies in their way, shall I not use all the means in my power to ensure for him, a smoother and safer passage?"

"Yes, but the surest means will be to endeavour to fortify him *against* temptation, not to remove it out of his way."

"I will do both, Mr Markham. ..."

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