

"No, of course not; still, I should like to hear what you have to say."

"Well, then, Bella, as for letting the servants go, you would be ready in a week's time to crawl on your hands and knees from the Terrace to Cold Spring to get them back again. It's altogether out of the question. Why don't you complete some of the work you have lying about here? I wish you had a little of my industry and zeal, dear; whatever I happen to be doing seems to be for the time the most interesting and valuable thing in the world. Finish your mirthful Dante over there, for instance; subdue his risible muscles."

"Is that all you have to say to me?" exclaimed Mrs. Forrester, with flashing eyes. "Is that the best advice you can offer to a perplexed and distracted mind, the best balm you can provide for a stung and tortured soul? Finish my mirthful Dante, indeed! Yes, I will finish him,—behold!"

She rose from her chair, snatched the portrait from the easel, stabbed an eraser several times through Dante's abnormally cheerful countenance, and, crumpling the paper, threw it into the blazing grate. Then she rang the bell, and when the servant appeared thrust into her hands the embryonic embroidery.

"There, Mary! cut the plush in two and give half of it to cook; it will make you each a lovely bonnet next fall. And take the silks too; I'll give you some pieces to-morrow, and you can begin a crazy quilt. Let it be your lifework."

Mary began to stammer her thanks, but Mrs. Forrester cut her short and dismissed her from the