

the mantel, now pausing to look out of the window and now fidgeting with the magazines on the table.

"Is there anything the matter?" she asked, at length, looking up from her book with a mild curiosity.

Mr. Archland still hesitated. He felt that he would get but little help or sympathy from her, and yet he felt constrained to speak.

"The fact of the matter is, my dear, that I have grown a little curious about your religion," he began, plunging into the middle of his subject through sheer inability to approach it more dexterously. "I feel inclined to — to — in short to study it up a bit."

"Oh!" ejaculated the lady, blankly. She could think of nothing else to say.

"Yes; I am going to study it up a bit," reiterated Mr. Archland; "and I thought that you might be able to assist me."

"Good gracious, Henry! what has put such a thing into your head?" asked his wife, pettishly. "I'm sure I should be of no use to you at all in the matter. I never *could* remember my catechism from one Sunday to the next. Perhaps you had better ask mother; she can give you chapter and verse for everything."

"But surely you know something about it yourself?" he asked suggestively.

"Oh, of course," vaguely, "but in a general sort of way, you know. I'm sure you'd better ask mother about it."

Mr. Archland said no more, but he resolved privately not to let the matter drop. The idea of seeking information from his wife's mother was repugnant to him; not because he was not on the best of terms with that lady, but because he shrank from exposing his innermost thoughts to anyone if he could help it. Curiously enough, it did not occur to him to consult a Catholic priest. Perhaps some relics of the prejudices implanted by his parents still lingered in his mind.