

"Do you know of any one, daughter, whose character more justifies him in doing so? If you do, I shall not hesitate to ask Mr. Bartram to act as substitute until some one else can be found."

Then Eleanor's eyes took a very different expression, and she began to devote herself intensely to her sewing.

"If you are very sure," said Bartram, "that your husband is not at home, I must see him elsewhere, I suppose. Good day. Ah! I beg pardon; I did not notice—I was not aware that it was you, Miss Kimper. I hope if you see your father to-day you will tell him the good work that he began is progressing finely, and that you saw me in search to-day of Judge Prency to help him on with his efforts down at the church."

And then, with another bow, Bartram left the room.

If poor Jane could have been conscious of the look that Eleanor bent upon her at that instant she certainly would have been inclined to leave the room and never enter it again. But she knew nothing of it, and the work went on amid oppressive silence.

Mrs. Prency had occasion to leave the room for an instant soon after, and Jane lifted her head, and said: "Who would have thought, miss, that that young man was going to be so good."

"He always was good," said Eleanor; "that is, until now."

"I'm sorry I mentioned it, ma'am, but I s'pose he won't be as wild as he and some of the young men about this town have been."

"What do you mean by 'wild'? Do you mean to say that he ever was wild in any way?"

"Oh, perhaps not," said the unfortunate sewing-girl, wishing herself anywhere else as she tried to find some method of escaping from her unfortunate remark.

"What do you mean then?—tell me! Can't you speak?"

"Oh, only, you know, ma'am, some of the nicest young men in town came down to the hotel at night to chat, and they'd take a glass of wine once in a while, and smoke, and have a good time, and——"

Eleanor looked at Jane very sharply, but the sewing-girl's face was averted, so that questioning looks could elicit no answers. Eleanor's gaze, however, continued to be fixed. She was obliged to admit to herself, as she had done to her mother several days before, that Jane had a not unsightly face, and quite a fine figure. She had heard that there sometimes were "great larks," as the young men called them, at the village hotel, and she wondered how much the underlings of the establishment could know about them, and what stories they could tell. Jane suddenly became to her far more interesting than she had yet been. She wondered what further questions to ask, and could not think of any. Finally she left the room, sought her mother, and exclaimed: "Mother, I am not going to marry Reynolds Bartram. If hotel servants know all about his goings-on in the evenings, what stories may they not tell if they choose? That sort of people will say anything they think of. I don't suppose they know the difference between the truth and a lie—at least, they never do when we hire them."