

Let Not Man Put Asunder

"You reserve that field for yourself."

"I should naturally want my proper place."

"Which would be in front, I presume."

"I like your sarcasm, mother dear. It helps one to see the weak joints in one's harness. But I don't want you to think me wholly selfish."

"No, of course not. Only independent."

"Only free to lead my own life according to my own ideas."

"After marriage as much as before?"

"More than before. A married woman is so much freer—"

"*C'est selon*. Your poor father didn't allow me much freedom."

Petrina shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"But that was in—" she began.

"The Dark Ages," said Mrs. Faneuil, promptly.

"Yes, I know what you young people think—that you are wiser than the aged, and have more understanding than your teachers. You talk as if love and marriage were unknown things when you discovered them—as if you were the first that ever burst into that silent sea. Don't begin playing with fire, Petrina, my child; don't make rash experiments with gunpowder."

"And don't mix your metaphors, mamma."

"I shall if I please. Mixed metaphors are less dangerous than mixed ideas on grave subjects."

"But who thinks of danger? I don't see why the question should be raised."

"It raises itself, my dear. Even with the most unobtrusive man there are moments when he must be the head of his own household; and then all your theories of freedom—"

"I have no theories. In what I do I should never want to involve any one but myself."