

"My dear child," said the mother, "you are making altogether too much of very little. Of course, it is impossible that everybody in the town sha'n't be surprised at the sudden change that has come over Mr. Bartram; but it ought to comfort you to know that all the better people in the town are very glad to learn of it, and that his example is making them very much ashamed of themselves, and that instead of the meetings being conducted almost entirely by him and Sam Kimper, hereafter——"

"Him and Sam Kimper! Mother, the idea of mentioning the two persons in the same day!—in the same breath!—how can you?"

"Well, dear, they will no longer manage the meetings by themselves, but a number of the older citizens, who have generally held aloof from such affairs, have resolved that it is time for them to do something, so Reynolds will very soon be a less prominent figure, and I trust you will hear less about him. But don't—I beg of you—don't visit your displeasure on that poor girl. You can't imagine that she had anything to do with her father's conversion, can you, still less with that of Mr. Bartram? Now do dry your eyes and try to come back to your work and be cheerful. If you can't do more, you at least can be human. Don't disgrace your parentage, my dear; she has not even done that as yet."

Then Mrs. Prency returned to the sewing-room, and chatted a little while with the new seamstress about the work in hand, and Eleanor joined them in a few moments, and the mental condition of the atmosphere became somewhat less cloudy than before, when suddenly a stupid servant, who had only just been engaged and did not entirely know the ways of the house, ushered directly into the sewing-room Mr. Reynolds Bartram. Eleanor sprang to her feet, spreading material, and needles, and spools of silk, and thread, and scissors, and thimbles all over the floor. Jane looked up timidly for an instant, and bent her head lower over her work. But Mrs. Prency received him as if she were the Queen of England sitting upon her throne with her royal robes upon her.

"I merely dropped in to see the judge, Mrs. Prency; I beg pardon for intruding upon the business of the day."

"I didn't suppose he was at home," said the lady. "You have been at the office?"

"Yes, and I was assured he was here; I was anxious to see him at once. I suspect I have a very heavy contract on my hands, Mrs. Prency. What do you suppose I have agreed to do? I have promised, actually promised, to persuade him to come down to the church this evening and take part in the meetings."

Eleanor, who had just reseated herself, flashed an indignant look at him.

"I am sure I wish you well in your effort," said the judge's wife, "and if it is of any comfort to you I promise that I will do all I can to assist you at it."

Then Eleanor's eyes flashed again, as she said, "Mother, the idea of father——"

"Well?"

"The idea of father taking part in such work!"