

man, whose very size made him imposing, and walked in a stately way to the door of St. Michael's. They would gladly have been supported by him to their pew, but it would have been, Miss Deborah said, really flaunting their nephew in the faces of less fortunate families, for Ashurst could not boast of another young man.

Miss Ruth wore her new bonnet that day in honor of his presence. She had taken it from the bandbox and carefully removed its wrapping of tissue paper, looking anxiously at the clouds as she smoothed the lavender strings and pinched the white asters on the side, before she decided that it was safe to wear it.

Gifford looked up the rectory lane as they drew near the church, and Miss Deborah noticed it. "Giff, dear," she asked, "did you observe, last Sunday, how ill poor little Lois looked?"

"No," he said, somewhat startled.

"Ah, yes," said Miss Ruth, nodding her head so that the white asters trembled, "she has never really gotten over that disappointment about young Forsythe."

"But she was not engaged to him," responded Gifford boldly.

"Not engaged," Miss Deborah admitted, "but she fully expected to be. He did not treat her honorably, there is no doubt of that. But her affections were unalterably his."

"How do you know that?" demanded her nephew.

"Why, my dear child," said Miss Ruth, "there is no doubt of it. Adele Dale told dear Deborah the whole story. Of course she had it from Lois."

"Not that it makes the slightest difference in my position," Gifford thought, as he sat crowding down the pain of it, and looking at Lois, sitting in the rosy light of the window of the left transept. "I am just where I was before, and I'll tell her, if it does not seem to bother her."

After church, there was the usual subdued gossip about the door, and while Gifford waited for his aunts, who had something to say to the rector, he listened to Mrs. Dale, who said in her incisive voice, "Is n't it too bad Helen is n't here? I should think, whether she wanted to or not, she'd come for her husband's sake." Even the apology of death had not made Mrs. Dale pardon John Ward.