

"And it's all false about girls that marry a man because they respect and honour him, and then have a romantic time finding out that they love him?"

"What nonsense! It's the most ridiculous thing in the world! But—"

"I was sure of it! If there's anything sacred about marrying, it's the love that makes it so; and they might as well marry for money or position!" She hid her face in her hands, and then burst out again: "But I will never have such a hideous thing on *my* conscience—such a ghastly wrong to *him*! He said himself that if I wasn't sure that I cared for Robert, it would have been unjust to marry him; and now how is it better with *him*? It's worse! He said it to comfort me, and it seems monstrous to turn his words against him; but if the truth kills him, he had better die! Yes, a thousand times! And don't suppose I didn't see all the advantages of accepting him that you did, and that I wasn't tempted to persuade myself that I *should* care for him. I only blush and burn to think that I saw them, and that I've come away, even now, without crushing every spark of hope out of him! I *do* respect and honour him—yes, he *is* high-minded and good every way; but if I don't love him, his being so good is all the more reason why I shouldn't marry him. Hush! Don't say a word, Marian!" she cried, hastening to spoil her point, as women will, with hysterical insistence. "That dreadful old man who bought our house came, while you were gone, and offered himself to me one day; it makes me creep! How would it be any better to marry Lord Rainford, if I didn't love him, than to marry Mr. Everton?"

She did not wait for the indignant protest that was struggling through Marian's bewilderment at this extraordinary revelation and assumption. "I shall always say that you meant the kindest and best; but if you try to argue with me *now*, I shall never forgive you! Good-bye, dear!" She flew at her friend, and catching her