

mother and yourself. I find, however, that you *are* exceptions to a very general rule. But what is the matter with Miss Leeds?"

"Miss Leeds?—oh, yes, our little dressmaker! We are so accustomed to calling her Amy, I did not think of whom you were speaking. What of her, Annie? I did not observe her."

"Why, a minute ago I noticed she was deathly pale, and her hands were shaking as though she had the ague. In a few seconds she dropped her work and slipped out of the room—I wonder if she is ill."

"Oh, no, I think not. She took her breakfast at home, of course—she always does—but she seemed all right when she came. She is such a quiet mouse, I never thought of her being in the room. But there!—I recollect now—why, Annie, I used to hear it hinted years ago that she was engaged to Hugh Ellisson! I remember about the time her father died it was quite a matter of gossip; but after Hugh returned to West Point, I heard very little more about it. He has been away so long, and his marriage is so sudden, that I did not once think of her—indeed I did not notice that she was here. Probably we have been wringing the life-blood out of her soft little heart with our idle chatter. I am *very* sorry!"

"Shall I run after her, and try to comfort her?"

"Why no, Annie; you could not make a greater blunder! Miss Leeds is as proud as she is reserved; and would resent your well-meant sympathy. Though she lives by her needle, we haven't a prouder-spirited lady in Weston. If, as I conjecture, she is vexing herself about this marriage, of course, she will choose to be alone; if not, she will very soon be back. I hope she'll not go and break her silly heart about Hugh Ellisson!"

"Why do you say 'silly,' Inez? As I view it, it is a very serious matter to have the expectations of years cut off in this summary manner."

"Well, yes—it is a little hard, no doubt. But it depends upon quite a number of things whether or