

Isabel grew scarlet as she replied "that they were quite well when she left them, and that she did not return until the first of February."

Lady Ashton was gratified to see that she was successful so far. Isabel was no longer the same attentive listener to all Arthur's stories of marvellous adventures, (for she was both hurt and angry, as the question was evidently intended to annoy—for as Emily had come to Eastwood with the Ashtons, Lady Ashton had later intelligence from Elm Grove than she could possibly give) and Arthur finding her pre-occupied, transferred his attention to Mabel Ainsley, so that Isabel was left to the mercy of a queer old gentleman who sat next her on the other side, who was exceedingly deaf, and stuttered dreadfully. Nor did Lady Ashton's evident satisfaction tend to make her feel more at ease, so that she was heartily glad when this to her most tedious dinner was over. But she had a worse attack to endure, for when the ladies reached the drawing-room, Lady Ashton said in the most annoying tone, "I should not have mentioned your pupils if I had had any idea that you would have been so painfully affected by my doing so, at the same time rest assured my dear Miss Leicester—."

"Pray don't mention it Lady Ashton," replied Isabel coldly, "any apology is quite unnecessary."

"You mistake my meaning Miss Leicester," replied Lady Ashton stiffly, "I am not aware of having anything to apologize for," she added with a contemptuous little laugh, "I was about to say" she continued, "that the sooner you overcome this feeling the better. You ought not to be ashamed of earning an honest living—."

"Nor am I ashamed of it," replied Isabel with dignity, "at least I hope not."

"I am glad that you qualify your denial, as your crimson cheeks both now and during dinner are ample proof that I am right. But (as I was about to say, when you interrupted me so rudely) from my observations, I thought it high time that Mr. Barrington should be reminded of your position, as I know that his father would never allow him to marry a governess, of course it is no disgrace to be a governess, still, it is not from that class of persons that Arthur should choose a wife."

"I'm afraid that you have taken unnecessary trouble, Lady