

be to lend my influence to what I believe wrong. Think of the harm it does. You heard that Miss Belper's brother was made drunk last New Year's Day in his calls, and was drowned going home at night. New Year's Day is becoming a terror to many mothers, sisters, and wives. Forgive me, dear Mrs. Rupert, I must go home—I can't stay."

"Nonsense, Hannah! I shall be positively angry with you. I have announced that you will receive with me, and I shall have all this awkward folly to explain. I am vexed with you."

Hannah went to the window and meditated. She turned:

"Mrs. Rupert, I will stay, on two conditions. First, I must *pour out and offer all the wine myself.*"

"But you won't do it. You are going to trick me, I fear."

"Indeed, no; I will pour it out and offer it. And the other condition is, you will not interfere with what I say or do."

"Very well. I know you may be odd, but never unladylike; and we shall have at least variety in your performances."

Hannah went out and sent a servant with a note to Hillary, and to a florist. He returned before the first calls, and placed on the centre-table a large crystal dish filled with button-hole bouquets, and by it, on either side, two elegant boxes. These Hannah did not explain, and Mrs. Rupert regarded them curiously.

The test hour came with the callers. Three gay young bloods came first, and compliments were passed, and refreshments presented. Hannah was prompt.

"Mrs. Rupert and I do not think alike about wine," she said. "I object to it; but, as she has it, it is to be my privilege to offer it."

She poured a glass of Oporto, and took it up, the ruddy light shining through the crystal on her white hand. She looked one guest full in the eyes.

"He who drinks, drinks at the peril of his soul," she said; and the young man's hand fell at the solemn words.

A silence came—not one offered to touch the glasses.

"Let me give you flowers," said Hannah, all radiant; and she pinned on each youth's coat a button-hole bouquet. They glowed at the courtesy.

"Now," said Hannah the strong, "I would be glad if you would go out as my knight-errants, pledged to drink no wine to-day."

"We cannot neglect such a challenge!" cried one, and Hannah opened one of the boxes, and there were cards painted by Hillary and herself, in little forget-me-not sprays, and a pen ready for each name, and each one wrote his name, and slipped a card in his pocket.

"You will not be shy of meeting your mothers to-night," said Hannah, and taking three bits of red ribbon from the other box, she deftly tied each button-hole bouquet, and her calm voice said: "It is a token of the blood, that cleanses from all sin!"

The three callers were gone.

"Hannah, however did you do it?" cried Mrs. Rupert.

"I must do it," said Hannah. "I must do the best I can." And