

The reply was a laugh, so merry, hearty, and long that Eleanor looked indignant until she saw a roguish twinkle in Bartram's eyes; then she blushed and looked confused.

"Please tell me what I have said or done that was prosy or pokey?" asked Bartram. We lawyers have a habit of asking for proof as well as charges. I give you my word, my dear girl, that never in all my previous life did I feel as entirely cheerful, light-hearted, and good-natured as I do now-days. I have nothing now to trouble my conscience, or spoil my temper, or put me out of my own control, as used frequently to happen. I never before knew how sweet and delightful it was to live, and meet my fellow-beings—particularly those I love. I can laugh at the slightest provocation now, instead of sometimes feeling ugly and saying sharp things. Every good and pleasant thing in life I enjoy more than ever, and as you, personally, are the very best thing in life, you seem a thousand times dearer and sweeter to me than ever before. Perhaps you'll laugh at me for saying so, but do you know that I, who heretofore considered myself a little better than any one else in the village, am now organizing a new baseball club, a gymnasium association, and also am trying to get enough subscribers to build a toboggan slide? I never was in such high spirits and in such humour for fun."

Eleanor looked amazed, but also relieved, as she replied: "I never saw religion work that way on other people."

"Indeed? Where have your blessed eyes been? Hasn't your own father been a religious man for many years, and is there any one in the town who knows better how to enjoy himself when he is not at work?"

"Oh—yes; but father is different from most people."

"Quite true; he must be, else how could he be the parent of the one incomparable young woman?"

"Rey!"

"Don't try to play hypocrite, please, for you're too honest. You know you agree with me."

"About father? Certainly, but——"

"About father! More hypocrisy; you know very well what I mean. Dear little girl, listen to me. I suppose there are people who are scared into religion through fear of the wrath to come, who may become dull and uninteresting; it is a matter of nature in a great many cases. I suppose whatever is done for selfish reasons, even in the religious life, may make people uncertain and fearful, and sometimes miserable. But when a man suddenly determines to model his life after that of the One and only perfect Man and gentleman the world ever knew, he does not find anything to make him dull or wretched. We hear so much of Jesus the Saviour that we lose sight of Jesus the Man. He who died for us was also He whose whole recorded life was in conformity with the tastes and sympathies of people of His day. Do you imagine for an instant that if He was of solemn, doleful visage that any woman would ever have pressed through a crowd to touch the hem of His garment that she might be made well?"