

putting it, Scroop! Why—of course—only that it would be pleasant, and that we should be glad to have her! I always feel that I should like to know her better, for my own part." Her pique at his want of tact had been a bracing stimulus, and enabled her to put their talk more on its old footing. The subdued tone gave place to what was almost like that of those thoughtless, unembarrassed groups they were drawing so near to. How free from care everyone else does seem when one meets him out!

Of course, she threw off their late conversation—washed her hands of it—quicker than he could. But by the time they came within hearing of the nearest group, and heard the word *denominational*, and knew thereby that religious education was under discussion, Challis had shaken off the gloom or distraction that made his answer ring so false: "You are kindness itself to Marianne. I wish she were more tractable." Those were his words. They had sounded rather civil than true or heart-felt. But behind them, inexplicably, was a feeling akin to gratitude to Judith, who had somehow made it easier to his mind to go back to Marianne without a shock. Not that it would have been good form in him to acknowledge it!

In the pre-Shakespearian days of Love, did ever a King Solomon, we wonder, feel grateful to the last Harem capture for a courtesy shown to a disused, tolerated survival of other days?

Challis was intercepted by the group of heated discontents, saturated with religious education. Judith passed on without looking at him, merely referring to the abstract truth, "There is tea," and leaving his teawardness to develop itself at leisure, or die of neglect. The huge board left a sweet biscuit to meet her, and after exchanging a few words and a kiss, made believe that he had found her in the wilderness, and brought her in safety to refreshments, which it was distinctly understood that he was to share.

The conclave on religious education, like Polly's employers after Sukey had taken the kettle off again—presumably—had all had tea, and were horridly indifferent about anyone else going without.

They were confident they might rely on Mr. Challis's impartiality to distinguish between things that to the