

"Oh, so I think, decidedly!" said Belle, kissing her friend in a rapture. "You dear creature! how nice! it's splendid!"

Lillie took the embrace with her usual sweet composure, and turned to her looking-glass, and began taking down her hair for the night. It will be perceived that this young lady was not overcome with emotion, but in a perfectly collected state of mind.

"He's a little bald and getting rather stout," she said reflectively, "but he'll do."

"I never saw a creature so dead in love as he is," said Belle.

A quiet smile passed over the soft, peach-blow cheeks, as Lillie answered,—

"Oh, dear, yes! He perfectly worships the ground I tread on."

"Lil, you fortunate creature, you! Positively it's the best match that there has been about here this summer. He's rich, of an old, respectable family; and then he has got good principles, you know, and all that," said Belle.

"I think he's nice myself," said Lillie, as she stood brushing out a golden tangle of curls. "Dear me!" she added, "how much better he is than that Danforth! Really! Danforth was a little too horrid; his teeth were dreadful. Do you know, I should have had something of a struggle to take him, though he was so terribly rich? Then Danforth had been horribly dissipated—you don't know—Maria Sanford told me such shocking things about him, and she knows they are true. Now, I don't think John has ever been dissipated."

"Oh, no!" said Belle. "I heard all about him. He joined the church when he was only twenty, and has been always spoken of as a perfect model. I only think you may find it a little slow, living in Springdale. He has a fine, large, old-fashioned house there, and his sister is a very nice woman; but they are a sort of respectable, retired set—never go into fashionable company."

"Oh, I don't mind it!" said Lillie. "I shall have things my own way, I know. One isn't obliged to live in Springdale, nor with pokey old sisters, you know; and John will do just as I say, and live where I please."

She said this with her simple, soft air of perfect assurance, twisting her shower of bright, golden curls; with her gentle, childlike face, and soft, beseeching blue eyes, and dimpling little mouth, looking back on her, out of the mirror. By these the little queen had always ruled from her cradle, and should she not rule now? Was it any wonder that John was half out of his wits with joy at the thought of possessing *her*? Simply and honestly, she thought not. He was to be congratulated; though it wasn't a bad thing for her, either.

"Belle," said Lillie, after an interval of reflection, "I won't be married in white satin—that I'm resolved on. Now," she said, facing round with great earnestness, "there have been five weddings in our set, and all the girls have been married in just the same dress—white satin and point lace, over and over, till I'm tired of it. I'm determined I'll have something new."