

"What did he say?"

"He wouldn't say anything—wouldn't answer! And he said to his wife: 'You say a *something* word'—you understand, Adeline?—'you say a something word, and see if I don't smack your eye. You try it!' My daughter talked for an hour, and then he said: 'If you think you'll sedooce me into committing of myself, you'll find you're mistook. So I should think better of it, if I was you. Yours werry truly, Robert Steptoe.' Just as if he was writing a letter." Both ladies laughed, and Lizarann pricked her finger badly, and it redded all over the 'em-stitch. But she couldn't understand the laugh. She was not fond of her aunt's husband; you can't love pock-marks unless they have some counterpoise in beauty of disposition. But she had a certain spirit of partisanship about her belongings, too!

"I suppose the children go to some school—Board School or something," said Teacher.

"They haven't children, thank Heaven! these people," said the outside lady. "But there's a little girl—somehow—with a father. They said she came here—at least, I suppose the 'school-house up the road' meant here."

"Then she must be here now. What was her name? Did you make out?"

"Eliza Ann something—Doubleday, I think, as near as I can recollect. No, it wasn't Doubleday. What could it have been? . . ." And this lady tapped one hand with the other, to keep on showing how hard she was thinking.

"Was it Eliza Ann Coupland? Come here, Lizarann, and tell the lady if it was you."

Lizarann approached by instalments, in awe. She had received false impressions from the conversation—one that her uncle could write a letter, and this lady knew it. A second that her aunt's children—if any—would have been all over little sand-pits that would catch and hold the gr . . awful, like their father, and that therefore we ought to be thankful. A third that she was a "little girl somehow," and she had never been told that she was one somehow, only that she was a little girl.

"Are you the little girl?" said the lady.

"I don't know, miss," said Lizarann. She thought the