

recognise your own ribbons. This ribbon was bought here."

"I think not." Celia was still polite.

"Excuse me, I bought it—at least, my sister bought it here yesterday. It can't be all sold out in one day. If you will let me see all the apricot shades——"

"Certainly." Celia tried hard to keep the weariness out of her voice as she lifted down the pile of ribbon bolts.

"Are these *all* there are?"

"These are all, madam."

"Well, it's most extraordinary! I know my sister said that she bought the ribbon here, or if it wasn't here it was at Clark's. If you are sure there are no others——"

"These are absolutely all, madam."

"Then it must have been at Clark's. How provoking! One would think that in a store of this size"—but Celia's attention was already claimed by another ribbon seeker, and she turned away.

"Atrocious how rude these clerks are getting," sighed she of the apricot ribbon. "That girl positively turned her back upon me while I was still speaking. I'll mention it to the floor-walker; it will be a kindness to the firm."

As a result of this kindness the floor-walker looked a little more sharply than usual at Celia. He was used to complaints of fussy women, and, being a just man as floor-walkers go, he gave them usually no more attention than they deserved. But upon hearing this complaint it suddenly occurred to him that the head of the ribbon department had not been looking herself for some time; observed critically, there were serious defects in her appearance. She was extraordinarily