

Some of Minnie's books were lost as usual, when at last she was free to go, for although she had tried, and been pretty successful too, in keeping her books together since her promise to do so, they sometimes reverted to their old habit of getting lost again, and to-day she had almost fallen back to her former careless state.

Mona looked on from time to time when she could spare a minute from her work, and at last observed in her most sarcastic manner that "fair words were easily spoken and light vows swiftly broken."

Minnie flared up in a moment.

"Fair words are easily spoken, as you say, Mona," she retorted, "you speak of what you know nothing. It may be so. Sharp things cost more, I dare say, and that is doubtless why they are generally more successful in their aim."

Mona laughed disagreeably, and enquired with mock politeness, "at what object Minnie might at present be aiming."

She was about to retort with a bitterness scarcely less penetrating than Mona's own sharp thrusts, when she suddenly checked herself, and putting her books which she had now collected under her arm, she walked out without even waiting for Mabel, lest she should find the temptation to speak too strong for her. Her heart was very heavy as she walked homewards, and her eyes *would* keep filling with tears.

Only last night she had been so happy in her efforts to do good, and here she was, actually as bad as any of the people she had been flattering herself she could reform. What *was*