

One night, during this half-hour, one of the young ladies, Agnes Summers by name, the same Agnes who had defended Minnie on a former occasion, began to wonder if there was nothing the boys could do while the reading was going on.

Nobody could suggest anything at first, but at length one boy volunteered the information that he could knit; other two professed the same accomplishment, and, encouraged by this example, several voices expressed their willingness to learn.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Mabel, "we might have thought of that sooner."

"O, but," objected Minnie, "wouldn't it be too ridiculous to see boys sitting knitting."

"Not at all," asserted Mabel. "I once knew a family of Germans, rich people too, who had all their knitting done by the young men, and anyhow it won't matter if it is ridiculous, it's useful, and nobody will laugh when they remember that. I thought at first it would have been rather ridiculous to see the girls painting the gates and palings, but it turned out quite the opposite. It is wonderful how earnestness beautifies the most commonplace things, and reconciles us to the most incongruous."

"Well, I see you are right, and I suppose I must give in," answered Minnie, "We can give it a trial at any rate, though it will justify its existence, in my eyes, I am afraid, only by its success, as papa said our undertaking had in his,—oh, that's a dreadfully narrow way to look at it, no, I'll give the plan my unqualified support."

"That's more like you," said Mabel, smiling at her impul-