

Mabel did not know very well what to say in reply to this confession. She felt very much inclined to get up and embrace Mona on the spot, a most uncommon circumstance with our calm, quiet, undemonstrative Mabel, but it being within school hours, and consequently such an exhibition being altogether out of the question, she merely slipped her hand into Mona's and gave it a hearty squeeze which was cordially returned by Mona, at the same time furtively wiping some imperceptible spots of dust off her cheek, while she narrowly examined the points of her compasses which she still held in her hand.

"Don't say anything," whispered Mona, after a long pause, "I'll manage it myself."

"Very well," agreed Mabel, as she rolled up her work and went out.

Mona was determined to do what she had made up her mind to do, thoroughly, and to do it at once, before her purpose began to cool, and perhaps die out all together. Accordingly, she watched diligently for an opportunity to speak to Minnie, which seemed to be a particularly difficult matter to obtain that afternoon; but at last her perseverance was rewarded by the sight of Minnie alone in the dressing-room.

She was rummaging about in her jacket-pocket for something, and started slightly when she became aware of Mona's presence. She did not speak, but continued her search, and Mona looked at her wistfully for a moment, not knowing how to begin—her carefully prepared appeal having vanished as if by magic.