

SIDE 6- ST. JOHN / JANE

JANE

She likes you, I am sure. And her father respects you. Moreover, she is a sweet girl ---rather thoughtless; but you would have sufficient thought for both yourself and her. You ought to marry her.

ST. JOHN

Does she like me?

JANE

Certainly better than she likes anyone else. She talks of you continually: there is not subject she enjoys so much or touches upon so often.

ST. JOHN

It is very pleasant to hear this. Very. Go on for another quarter of an hour.

JANE

But where is the use of going on when you are probably preparing some iron blow of a contradiction, or forging a fresh chain to fetter your heart

ST. JOHN

It is strange that while I love Rosamond Oliver so wildly--- with all the intensity, indeed, of a first passion, the object of which is exquisitely beautiful, graceful, fascinating-- I experience at the same time a calm, unwarped consciousness that she would not make me a good wife; that she is not the partner suited to me; that I should discover this within a year after marriage; and that to twelve month's rapture would succeed a lifetime of regret. This I know.

JANE

Strange, indeed!

ST. JOHN

While something in me is acutely sensible to her charges, something else is deeply impressed with her defects: there are such that she could sympathize with nothing I aspired to-- co-operate in nothing I undertook. Rosamond, a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle? Rosamond a missionary's wife? No!

JANE

But you need not be a missionary. You might relinquish that scheme.

ST. JOHN

Relinquish! What! My vocation? My great work? My foundation laid on earth for a mansion in heaven? My hopes of being numbered in the band who have merged all ambitions- of substituting peace for war- freedom for bondage- religion for superstition- the hope of heaven for fear of hell? Must I relinquish that? It is dearer than the blood in my veins. It is what I have to look forward to and to live for.

Pause.

JANE

And Miss Oliver? Are her disappointment and sorrow of no interest to you?

ST. JOHN

Miss Oliver is ever surrounded by suitors and flatterers: in less than a month, my image will be effaced from her heart. She will forget me; and will marry, probably someone who will make her far happier than I should do.