

what she meant. She was a very clever lady. Her friends called her "the diplomatist," and many a secret had she worried from the breast of man and woman. Now she would try her hand on a child. She would cover herself with glory if she could induce this little common village girl to tell her where she had concealed the beautiful diamond that had been stolen.

She fixed her fine eyes on Tommie. She leaned over and spoke in a confidential tone and with childish curiosity. "How I wonder where that ring went."

Tommie looked up admiringly at the charming lady whose voice was like music. "Well," she said soberly, and pointing over her shoulder at the village girls who stood drawn up in a staring group behind, "we were just talking about it. Here was the ring," and Tommie pointed to the lady's gloved hand; "there was the open window," and she stretched out one of her arms toward the other lady who was observing her attentively from under the shade of her red parasol; "and there was the big black table," and she pointed to the stolid-colored coachman.

"Yes," said the lady; "go on."

"And the ring went," said Tommie, "just went and nobody saw it. Maybe an eagle flew down and took it in his beak. Maybe a man came down in a big balloon and reached out a stick with a hook on it, cause you know Mr. Reggie's back was half turned and he could not see him when he was reading. Maybe a little mousie crawled up the table leg and maybe——"