

dimpled hand and gently stroked her cheek, acting as if to say, "Poor thing, all alone, 'lone, 'lone. I'm so solly, solly, solly, so velly, velly, velly solly." Did I say that her eyes were tender and true enough to win a man's heart and keep it, and that her lips spoke of patience and gentleness? If I did not, I repair my neglect. She must have been a beautiful woman in her youth—no, no, to-day, just when she inclines her head, and Baby strokes her cheek again, and coos, "Pretty, pretty, pretty, and so velly, velly, velly good." Was not that a lovely flush on her cheek?—oh, the fool of a man who might have had that love! She opens a neat little bag, and as this is public affairs we watched without shame. Quite so; she is to be away all day, and has got a frugal luncheon, and—it's all she can do in return. Perhaps he cannot eat it. I don't know, nor does she. Baby-ways are a mystery to her; but would he refuse that biscuit? Not he; he makes an immense to-do over it, and shows it to his mother and all his loyal subjects, and he was ready to be kissed, but she did not like to kiss him. Peace be with thy shy, modest soul, the Christ child come into thy heart!

Two passengers on Baby's left had endured these escapades with patient and suffering dignity. When a boy is profoundly conscious that he is—well, a man, and yet a blind and unfeeling world conspires to treat him as—well, a child—he must protect himself and assert his position. Which he does, to the delight of everybody with any sense of humor, by refusing indignantly to be kissed by his mother or sisters in public, by severely checking any natural tendency to enthusiasm about anything except sport, by allowing it to be understood that he has exhausted the last remaining pleasure and is fairly burnt out. Dear boy, and all the time ready to run a mile to see a cavalry regiment drill, and tormented by a secret hankering after the Zoological Gardens. These two had been nice little chaps two years ago, and would be manly fellows two years hence. Meanwhile they were provoking, and required chastisement or regeneration. Baby was to them a "kid," to be treated with contempt; and when in the paroxysm of delight over that folly of a law paper he had tilted one of the young men's hats, that blase ancient replaced it in position with a bored and weary air. How Baby had taken in the situation I cannot guess, but he had his mind on the lads, and suddenly, while they were sustaining an elaborate unconcern, he flung himself back and crowed—yes, joyfully crowed—with rosy, jocund countenance in the whites of the eyes of the two solemnities. One raised his eyebrows, and the other looked at the roof in despair; but I had hopes, for who could resist this bubbling, chortling mirth? One laughs a glad, boyish chuckle, and the other tickles Baby just at the right spot below the chin—has a baby at home after all, and loves it—declaring aloud that he is a "jolly little beggar." Those boys are all right; there is a sound heart below the little affectations, and they are going to be men.

This outburst of His Majesty cheered us all mightily, and a young woman at the top of the 'bus, catching his eye, waved her hand to him, with a happy smile. Brown glove, size six and a quarter, perhaps six, much worn, and jacket also not of yesterday; but everything is well made, and in perfect taste. Milk-white teeth, hazel eyes, Grecian profile—what a winsome girl!—and let me see, she takes off a glove—yes, is wearing an engagement ring; a lucky fellow, for she must be good with those eyes and that merry smile. A teacher, one guesses, and to-day off duty, going to meet her fiance in the city, and then the three—her mother, that dear woman with hair turning grey—will go upon the river, and come home in the sweet summer evening, full of content. As soon as he gets a rise in the office they will marry, and she will also have her gift, as every woman should. But where am I now?—let that Baby bear the blame.

We had one vacant place, and that was how he intruded on our peace; but let me make one excuse for him. It is aggravating to stand on the edge of the pavement and wave your umbrella ostentatiously to a 'bus which passes you and draws up fifteen yards ahead, to make your dangerous way along a slippery street with hansoms bent upon your life, to be ordered to "hurry up" by the impatient conductor and ignominiously hauled on to a moving 'bus. For an elderly gentleman of military appearance and short temper it was not soothing, and he might have been excused a word or two, but he distinctly exceeded.

He insisted in language of great directness and simplicity that the conductor had seen him all the time, that if he didn't he ought to have been looking, that he—the Colonel—was not a fox-terrier to run after a 'bus in the mud, that the conductor was an impertinent scoundrel, and that he would have him dismissed, with other things and words unworthy even of a retired Anglo-Indian. The sympathy of the 'bus did not go out to him, and when he forced himself in between the lawyer and Grannie, and, leaning forward with his hands on his cane, glared at us impartially—relations were strained. A cut on his left cheek and a bristly, white moustache half hiding, half concealing, a cruel mouth, did not commend the new passenger to a peaceable company. Baby regarded the old man with sad attention, and at last he indicated that his fancy is to examine the silver head of the Colonel's cane. The Colonel, after two moments' hesitation, removes his hands and gives full liberty. On second thoughts, he must have got that cut in some stiff fight; wonder whether he is a V.C. Baby moves the cane back and forwards to a march of his own devising, the Colonel actively assisting. Now that I see it in a proper light, his moustache is soft and sets off the face excellently. Had it not been for the cut puckering the corner of the upper lip, that would have been a very sweet mouth for a man, or even for a woman. Baby is not lifted above all human weaknesses—preserve us from perfect people!—