

16 THE BEWILDERED BENEDICT

But Sophonisba's uncle received our explanations rather coldly, and seemed to take quite a dislike to Satan. He insisted that I should make him walk in front, not behind. He said he hoped to God he wouldn't start having hydrophobia in our house, it would be such an unfortunate beginning, and Sophonisba said she hoped not too. She remarked that it would be such a bad example for the boys. They imitated simply everything, specially the sort of things they shouldn't, and added, "you *will* be careful won't you?" Then she returned hurriedly to the question of luggage. "Oh there's a bag somewhere or other," he answered shortly. "I did not bother to bring the usual cartload. I just flung a few things in the first bag I found handy and came straight on without any formality. There's my dear old friend," he pointed to the bag Sophonisba had fallen over, "been all over the world with me."

"Edward will tell the porter to bring it up," said Sophonisba avoiding my eyes.

"What's his third initial?" I asked idly for the sake of saying something, as he stopped behind to make some remark to the boys.

"Hasn't a third," said Sophonisba coldly, "don't be silly, Edward. Everybody knows millionaires are eccentric. It's a privilege they have."

"Of course," I owned readily. All the same it seemed an odd eccentricity to prefer other initials than one's own upon one's bag.

"It's only a step up," I said to my uncle-in-law, "but there's a cab if you'd rather?"

"Oh no, let me stretch my legs, a relief after chronic confinement—really yachts and motors are making pedestrianism quite a lost art." He gave his odd high laugh. There was not much mirth in it, and his eyes