

Children's Department.

"Boy."

(CHAPTER VIII.)

"How many guests do you expect, Master Boy?" asked nurse next day, just as Boy had insisted on being dressed directly after his dinner, "so as to be perfectly ready."

"Three," answered Boy; "two ladies and a gentleman."

"Who are they?" inquired Nurse.

"You'll see when they come," was the answer.

"And you wish for your own tea service?" continued Nurse with a sigh, for she felt very hard worked, the dreaded Maria having been removed for the day.

"Yes, my own tea service, and mind about the jam, *not rubub*, remember, Nurse."

"Oh! bother!" came from Nurse.

"How rude," remarked Boy, as he walked to the window and watched. Then he climbed up into the window-seat to have a good "think" before they came, and he began as usual talking to himself in a monotonous undertone.

"I wish I had asked Mike," he said, "but, after all, it's better I shouldn't, for though he's very, very nice, he's dirty, dirty too. It isn't his fault, poor dear Mike, not his own self's fault, but it's the dirty, dirty plough and the mud. It isn't that Mike doesn't forget to wash, but he hasn't a Maria, and though I've the greatest of all dislikes to Maria, still I know she keeps me clean. I shouldn't think any one would ever marry Maria; I shouldn't, for she's particularly disagreeable. Doodles says I ought to teach my little self to like Maria, but Doodles *can't* know. She doesn't dress



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