

THE FIGHTING CHANCE

"Awfully glad to admit you to the conspiracy," he said. "There's one vacancy—if you are eligible."

"I am; I was discovered recently kissing my saddle-mare."

"That settles it! Sagamore, give the young lady the grip."

Sylvia Landis glanced at the dog, then impulsively shifting the whip to her left hand, held out the right. And very gravely the Sagamore pup laid one paw in her dainty white gloved palm.

"You darling!" murmured the girl, resuming her whip.

"I notice," observed Siward, "that you are perfectly qualified for membership in our association for the promotion of bad manners. In fact I should suggest you for the presidency——"

"I suppose you think all sorts of things because I gushed over that dog."

"Of course I do."

"Well you need not," she rejoined, delicate nose up-tilted. "I never kissed a baby in all my life—and never mean to. Which is probably more than you can say."

"Yes, its more than I can say."

"That admission elects you president," she concluded. But after a moment's silent driving she turned partly toward him with mock seriousness: "Is it not horridly unnatural in me to feel that way about babies? And about people, too; I simply cannot endure demonstrations. As for dogs and horses—well, I've admitted how I behave; and, being so shamelessly affectionate by disposition, why can't I be nice to babies? I've a hazy but dreadful notion that there's something wrong about me, Mr. Siward."