

bestowed a kiss on the edge of his stepmother's ear with which she had to be satisfied.

When they got down to the sitting-room a long-legged youth was crouched in the armchair with one foot on the mantelpiece.

"Hullo! Here's the cry-baby," he remarked, and merely to avert a scene Mrs. Ambrose spoke sharply to him.

"Now, Dick," she said, "I won't have it. I just won't! You leave Spudgins alone. I think you might know better than to tease the child . . . and hurt him."

"He's my brother," said Dick Ambrose lazily; "and if no one else will smack him when he wants smacking I mean to do it!" But Spudgins had trotted off to the other end of the room, the proud possessor of several chocolate drops and a box of counters with which he would play happily till bed-time, so war was averted for the moment.

"Have I got your chair?" asked the youth languidly after a little pause.

The words were just on Mrs. Ambrose's lips to suggest that he need not move when Miss Dalywood's words flashed to her and she answered "Yes"; and she added "I guess you know that's always where I sit."

Young Ambrose got up with a great effort. He was astonishingly good-looking, a fact which not even his slovenly dress or his roughened hair could hide.

He took a cigarette case out of his pocket, struck a match on his boot and lit a cigarette and then in the same lazy way he paused:

"You don't mind, do you?"

It was on the tip of Helen's tongue to say "No, give

me one"; but she
remarked a little
smoke in her

But Dick
cigarette bet
coat-tails, the
warmth of the

"Silvia n

"No: I've
promised she

Dick yawned
time and yawned
hurry."

"It seems
never have a

"Oh! the
stepson, "fulfill
point?"

"Well, you
of you do not
guess that is
folk's idea!"

Young A

"What's
about the other
temper as a

The word
of pleasure.
feel that he
played at playing
whether he
her.