

"Now my dear young friend, your name is Edith Sorrel, and I'm agoing to introduce myself to you right off; you shall know all about me. I'm Mrs. Cadgett, and I'm the dearest friend Fanny here has in the world. I calculate we love each other like two sisters, and now you've come to *our* house, and to be a member of our family, I want you to look on me as your mother. Where are your things? I'll go and help you to unpack them this minute: you'll be having some patterns that are new from England, and you must lend some of them to my daughter Julia. She's coming from Montreal this very night by the cars. She has mixed in the very highest society I can assure you."

Here Mrs. Ellis interposed for Edith's protection; she was too tired just now to have her stock of fashions inspected.

"And you, Master Ned," said Mrs. Cadgett, directing her fire to Edward, what are you doing here idling among the young ladies. Figgs Minimus told me you were kept in?"

"I thought he might be excused for this one occasion, Cadgett, you know," said Mrs. Ellis.

But apparently Cadgett did not or would not know. "Now, Fanny dear, you are too kind-hearted altogether, and you let these boys make a fool of you," she said. "If the Major knows it, he will be angry with me and you too; and *you* know well, Master Edward, what your Pa said he would do to you if he caught you scheming again from school: there was to be a *thrashing*, Master Ned, and that's why you're a skulking in here, trying to throw the blame on your step-mother or Miss Sorrel."

Edith pitied the boy as he left the room; his face in a flame. For you see it is decidedly unpleasant to have the prospect of a flogging brought before one in the presence of a young lady cousin.

Mrs. Ellis did make an effort to say something in the boy's behalf, but it was weakly urged, and ably met by Mrs. Cadgett, half with flattery to Mrs. Ellis, and half with threats of the anger of Major Ellis, at any one's interference with the boy's school work.

"Well, I don't like to interfere; he's not my own son, certainly, Cadgett—still it is hard that poor Ned should be beaten."

"Never you fear, Fanny dear, I'll manage all that, and the Major shall know nothing about it. Bless you," she said, bestowing her benediction on Edith. "All our boys look on me as their mother, and respect me as such, I can tell you."

Edith thought that Ned's respect and love for the universally maternal Mrs. Cadgett was not very apparent in his manner to that lady.

Mrs. Ellis, glad to change the subject, had proposed to show Edith her room.

"And I was thinking, do you know, Cadgett, that the little sitting-room outside your bedroom, would do nicely for Edith: the one we intended for her upstairs, is too cold."

She spoke somewhat appealingly as if asking Mrs. Cadgett's consent to her plan; that consent was neither given nor withheld, and Mrs. Ellis, excusing her-