

school hours. As to Mrs. Ellis, she was quite roused from the languor, which Edith had at first fancied in her manner; she talked and questioned with much spirit: her somewhat worn face lit up and took a fresher color. In return for Edith's confidence, she gave her an account of the village, and of the society therein.

"It was a pretty place," she said, "and there were some pleasant people; a great many pretty girls besides yourself, my dear, and oh, so few eligible *partis*. There's plenty of gossip: that you'll soon find out; there is a nice new church, and a young clergyman lately come out from England; an Oxford man, people say he's a Broad-churchman, but I'm sure nothing so shocking can be true, he has such beautiful eyes." Of her own household, Mrs. Ellis spoke rather in the tone of an outsider than of its nominal mistress and head. The children were away, so there would be a few days quiet for Edith to settle down. Alice was a good child, affectionate and not apt to give trouble; poor Ada has been delicate, more so in mind than body; then as to the boys, they were good boys enough—for her part, her health did not allow her to have much to do with the management of them. Mrs. Cadgett did that for her. Mrs. Cadgett was the widow of an old acquaintance of her husband. She was sure, she hoped, that Edith and Mrs. Cadgett would like each other—in that family Cadgett was absolutely invaluable.

An involuntary presentiment that this mutual liking between herself and the invaluable Cadgett might not be so easy, crossed Edith's mind; one of those previsions of future likings or dislikings which rise in one's thoughts, one knows not how or whence; unless, perhaps, in Edith's case, it was caused by her remembering that in leaving the hall she had passed through the boy's schoolroom, and there, amid many caricatures and inscriptions in chalk and charcoal, had noticed a legend to this effect "Cadgett is a sly old cat," "Mother Cadgett belongs to the feline race." There was also a rude drawing representing in outline, the figure of a very disagreeable looking old lady, with outstretched hands like talons, and a hook nose, like the beak of some large bird.

Pending these reflections, the door opened, and to them entered a figure in which, recognizing some vague resemblance to the above mentioned fresco, Edith was not surprised to hear announced as Mrs. Cadgett, but very considerably so, to find herself seized by a pair of skinny hands, (the fingers of which protruded from their black mittens like claws), and folded in a close embrace.

For above half a minute, she went through the process of being folded to Mrs. Cadgett's bosom: where she was half stifled with the quantity of close black crape thrust against her face, besides having her nose pressed violently against some hard substance, which formed part of Mrs. Cadgett's dress.

That lady proved not less demonstrative in her words than in her acts. She was an elderly person, in the weediest of widows' weeds—with a loud quick way of speaking, and a generally aggressive manner; in fact, her tactics on society were those of Lord Nelson in a sea-fight—she sailed into the midst of the enemy and attacked on all sides at once.

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