## Schools and Colleges

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like her, but I know her character and she doesn't attract me. But with Fen —I fell in love with her at first sight."

she doesn't attract me. But with Fen—I fell in love with her at first sight.' He looked at both of them and saw that what he had said was very unpalatable. Only their recent anxiety about him and a fear lest any discussion should bring back a return of his illness held them silent. "Do either of you know?" continued Laurie, "where Fen has gone to?" Mr. Pridham remained silent, but his wife answered, "I prefer to know nothing of Fenella Leach. I am only sorry I ever allowed her to enter our door."

"Oh, mother, don't be hard!" Laurie burst out. "Remember why she went away. It is horrible for me. I feel responsible in every way. She has gone on my account with some mistaken idea of saving me. She was afraid of being made to own up that she saw me in the hall that night, though, of course, it would not have mattered really."

"Laurie," asked Mrs. Pridham after a pause, "did you find anyone in the hall with her?"

"Good Heavens—no!" He looked in amazement at his mother. "Who could I find?"

"That's just what we want to know.

"That's just what we want to know. Has it never occurred to you that she—and someone else—may have been there before you came—that the other man hid while she spoke to you and got you safely out of the way, and that afterwards she let him out

and that afterwards she let him out also?"

"Mother, what makes you ask these extraordinary questions? Has anyone suggested that this happened?"

"There have been rumours," Mrs. Pridham replied vaguely. "Miss Leach has behaved so very strangely that it occurred to me, while pretending to shield you, it was someone else all the time she wanted to help."

This was a new and staggering thought for Laurie. He turned it over in his mind carefully.

Then he said, "That makes it all the more necessary that I should find her at once. I shall leave no stone unturned to do so."

H Is voice sounded very tired and his face looked drawn. Mrs. Pridham's heart misgave her.
For a moment she wished that Fenella was there with them; in spite of the agonizing fact that, if she were, Laurie might insist on marrying her. It was gall and wormwood to reflect on the possibility of this girl inheriting, with Laurie, the title that was coming—the jewel in her crown of life.

"I think I'll go up to town to morrow. Father will you let me have

"I think I'll go up to town to-morrow. Father, will you let me have the car?"

Mr. Pridham know

the car?"

Mr. Pridham knocked off the ash of his cigar. "Of course, if you're bent on it, my boy, you must go, but I should prefer that you put it off for a few days. Selina, can't you reason with Laurie and persuade him. I don't seem to have any influence." He walked away moodily and Laurie sat silent until he was out of sight. "Mother! won't you trust me?" He spoke very gently, and Selina Pridham

"Mother! won't you trust me?" He spoke very gently, and Selina Pridham could not resist the appeal, but the prejudice which warped her judgment made her unfair and harsh.

"Since you insist, Laurie, I suppose I must tell you. Miss Leach has gone to America. She left here the day after your accident, and went to London. There she was joined by Mr. Mauleverer and they travelled together, under assumed names, to New York. That is all I can tell you, but I believe the facts speak for themselves."

After that enunciation, Mrs. Pridham rose, with great dignity, from her seat, and passed through an open French window into the house.

Laurie remained staring in front of him, perplexed but unconvinced, and to him came Theo, with two terrier pups in her arms.

"Aren't they duckies? Hallo, Laurie! what's up? Got the hump, dear boy? I heard mother bleating at you like an old sheep who's lost a lamb."

Laurie ignored Theo's attempts at raillery. "Look here, Theo, I think you can help me. You're a jolly good pal for a fellow to have as a sister.

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