

on Mr. Dexter's mind. The very tiniest of tiny matrons is Mrs. Dexter, and proportionately proud of her six foot son—a gentle little soul, more used to asking than granting favours, more accustomed to obeying than being obeyed. One of the docile sort of little women who always mind their men folks, whether as fathers, husbands, or sons, and who do as they are bidden, like good grown-up children, all their lives."

"Yes, Franky dear," says Mrs. Dexter folding two mites of hands on her lap; "only please sit down, dear. You make me nervous, fidgeting about so. What is it?"

"You are going to Boston this afternoon, mother?"

"Yes, dear. As I return to Georgia so soon, I must go to Boston at once, if I go at all. I really must go, you know dear, having so many friends there, and coming north so seldom. And then I have such a quantity of shopping."

"How long do you propose staying in Boston?"

"Well, two or three days, or a week. Certainly not longer. Your poor dear uncle hates being left alone, and you have annoyed him very much, Franky dear, by your prolonged absence this summer. He says there is no gratitude or natural feeling left in the world— young men are all selfish and headstrong alike. You really should be careful, Franky dear, it will not do to arouse him, and there is so much at stake. More than once have I caught him talking to Lawyer Chapman about Laurence Longworth—"

"Never mind about that, mother," cuts in Frank, impatiently, striding up and down once more; "I'll make that all right before long. I shall be home for good in less than a fortnight. Mother," he comes back abruptly and sits down beside her, "I wish you would ask Miss Landelle to go with you to Boston."

"Yes, dear?" says Mrs. Dexter, interrogatively, but more placidly if possible than before, "Miss Landelle? I will if you say so. What a pretty creature she is—the prettiest I think I ever saw."

"Do you really?" Frank cries, and all his honest face flushes and brightens "Thank you, little mother. Yes, she is

beautiful as an angel, and as sweet and as good. You will love her, mother—No one can know her and help it—so will my uncle—"

"Your uncle, Franky dear!" says Mrs. Dexter, opening her innocent little eyes; "he doesn't know her you know, and is not likely to, so how can he, you know?"

Frank laughs. He has a subtle plan in his head of which the trip to Boston is only the initial step, but he is not disposed to take his mother into his confidence at present. Old James Longworth is certainly in the pitifully benighted state of not knowing Marie Landelle at present, but out of that depth of darkness his nephew proposes to rescue him.

"Would she like to come, do you think?" inquires the lady. "I should like to take her very much. There is always a sort of distinction in chaperoning a new beauty—people take so much notice of one, and gentlemen are so very attentive, and then I dislike travelling alone. I shall be pleased to take her, Frank, if you really think she will be pleased to go."

"Mother mine," Mr. Dexter cries, "my conviction is, that you are without exception the most charming little woman in the world. Like to go? I am certain of it—I have it from her own lips—I—in fact I asked her yesterday, and she said she would be delighted."

"Oh! You did. Well then, Franky dear, nothing remains but to obtain Mrs. Windsor's consent. I presume she will not object?"

"I don't see why she should. You will put it to her, mother, as a personal favour to yourself. Say you have taken such a fancy to Miss Marie—which will be true, won't it? And that she is looking pale—which is true also—and needs a change, and that you will prize her company so highly, and all that. You know what to say—women always do. And, mother, suggest to Miss Landelle that as you may remain a week, and will be out a great deal, shopping and making calls all day, and going to theatres and places in the evening, she had better take a box."

"But, Franky dear, we are *not* going to theatres and places. We shall have no one to take us."