

the old willow tree. "Oh! what fun! they can't see me, that they can't, and I can hear all they says, every word, and it will be such a nice surprise for them afterwards." And the child drew his knees still closer up to his chin.)

"Why don't you tell Sir Richard?" It was Fay's voice. "Surely he ought to know, and he might be able to help us."

"It's like asking for money, and though Dick is good-hearted and rich, I can't do that, darling. I think I had better chuck up the army, and find some lucrative employment in the City. My dear, I had better go into Soap or Alpaca."

"Not for me, Harry, never for me—and just as you are getting on so well. I can wait, old man" (and with a brave smile); "it's woman's work to wait, you know," and she placed her hand caressingly on his arm.

"They are getting interesting, but I do think Uncle Harry forgets Godmother belongs to me, and I can't make out why she should pat his arm."

"No, give me up, and marry the M. P. who is rich and adores you; that's my advice, little woman."

"He's taken her hand now, I do declare."

"And what should you do then?" This with a bewitching smile.

"Cut his throat, of course;" and Captain Selby made a dig at the willow with his stick as he passed.

"I do believe Uncle Harry is going to murder some one—this is exciting; I wonder if he would like my fruit knife, it isn't sharp, but my other knife hasn't got no blade, and wouldn't be much use." And Boy strained his ears to hear the reply, and nearly lost his balance as he leant over the branch. He watched them as they paused at the end of the walk.

"I am with you in the sunshine, I am with you in the shade,"

she sang. Then, with a sudden burst of feeling: "Only keep well, and—and—keep straight, and I shall never mind how long I have to wait."

"And if I go to India you will be faithful still?"

"Yes, faithful still."

"And you won't let the M.P. persuade you to marry him?"

"You forget I am engaged to Boy," laughed the girl.

"And are you quite sure you love me?"

"Quite sure."

"Darling!"

"My own old darling!"

They had said the same words a hundred times before. But, there! lovers' language is so very limited, so perfectly void of reason or intellect, so truly monotonous, and yet surpassing Solomon's wisdom to those who see their whole world in each other's eyes.

"I will not have you bind yourself, darling."

"No, we are both quite free."

"And I seal our freedom with this," said the young man bending down and kissing the beautiful face.

"I say! Oh! I say! What would Doddle's think? He will be ever so amused when I tells him. Doddle's said it was wrong to kiss the girls when I asked him if he was ever, in all his life, like

"Georgie Porgie pigeon pie, Who kissed the girls and made them cry."

Uncle Harry is naughty, and Godmother doesn't cry—yes, and I really do believe she likes it.") For she was

smiling as they passed under the willow.

"Uncle Harry!" And the two started and turned guiltily red, as they looked up into the branches above their heads, and caught sight of the child's beaming face.

"Uncle Harry, I've got something to ask you."

"You there, you young rascal; how long have you been there, I should like to know?"

"Oh! ever so long, but it was so inter-resting watching you and Godmother that I forgets."

"We are in for it now," said Captain Selby, under his breath, looking at his companion; "but what do you want to ask, Scaramouch?"

"Oh! only I heard John tell Maria this morning that he betted his boots the Capting (that's you) was keeping company with Miss de Vere—that's you" (nodding towards his Godmother). "What is 'keeping company,' Uncle Harry?"

"Well, pon my word, I hardly know how to explain," stammered his uncle, getting more and more uncomfortable. "Ask Miss de Vere."

"Godmother, can you tell me?" asked the child.

"I can't imagine, darling;" and if Uncle Harry is sure he doesn't know, you had better ask John—or Maria—or—Doddles."

"Do you really and truly think Doddles would know? He will be amused about the kissing, though, Doddle's will"—nodding his head and shaking with merriment.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated his uncle, really frightened now, but Boy went on unheedingly.

"I had settled, you know, to marry Godmother when I'm big, Uncle Harry, for she's pretty, kind and good, and we are going to live in the summer-house all by our two selves, and make toffee very often, and fish in the stream with a pin and a wriggly-wriggly worm;" (then, warningly) "But she musn't kiss no one but me then, must you, Godmother?"

And Boy, looking down at them, wondered why they they should both get so suddenly hot, as if they had been running in the sun.

"Shall you marry when you's big, Uncle Harry?" asked the little tormentor.

"I'd marry to-morrow, Boy, if I had the money," answered his uncle, quickly.

"Hasn't you got as much as I has, Uncle Harry?"

"As much as you have now, but one quarter what you will have, little one."

"Then you has got sixpence a week, and you do think father will 'member my five shillings at Christmas?"

"Dosh't he always remember it, Boy?"

"Not always, and of course I don't likes to remind, and he was months late last time, but I hoped and I hoped and I hoped, and at last one day I hears him say to mother, 'I se losing my memory, dear,' so I said, 'I specs that's how you forgot my five shillings, father;' but that wasn't reminding him, was it?"

"But why are you so anxious about your next five shillings, child?" asked Uncle Harry, anxious to keep his small nephew off the "keeping company" question.

"Well, you sees, this is August, and it's Mike's boots I wants, and one toe is through already, and I specs by Christ-

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mas all the other toes will be through, so if father should forget I can't think how I ever shall manage."

"We must think what can be done, my darling," said Fay de Vere, "but we must go back to the tennis-ground now;" and she turned away, followed by Captain Selby.

"I hope to goodness, Fay, the child will not repeat everything."

"Don't be afraid; children always forget so soon; he will never give it another thought."

At that moment the child ran past them as hard as his little legs could carry him.

"Where are you off to, Boy?" called out his uncle.

"Only going to tell John you isn't keeping company with Godmother, but you kissed her," shouted the child, as he disappeared in the direction of the stables.

To be Continued.

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