

THE BRUSHWOOD BOY

lute chin, and the known poise of the head. There was also the small well-cut mouth that had kissed him.

"Georgie—*dear!*" said the mother, amazedly, for Miriam was flushing under the stare.

"I—I beg your pardon!" he gulped. "I don't know whether the mother has told you, but I 'm rather an idiot at times, specially before I 've had my breakfast. It 's—it 's a family failing."

He turned to explore among the hot water dishes on the sideboard, rejoicing that she did not know—she did not know.

His conversation for the rest of the meal was mildly insane, though the mother thought she had never seen her boy look half so handsome. How could any girl, least of all one of Miriam's discernment, forbear to fall down and worship? But deeply Miriam was displeased. She had never been stared at in that fashion before, and promptly retired into her shell when Georgie announced that he had changed his mind about going to town, and would stay to play with Miss Lacy if she had nothing better to do.

"Oh, but don't let me throw you out. I 'm at work. I 've things to do all the morning."

"What possessed Georgie to behave so oddly?" the mother sighed to herself. "Miriam 's a bundle of feelings—like her mother."

"You compose—don't you? Must be a fine thing to be able to do that. ["Pig—oh, pig!" thought Miriam.] I think I heard you singin' when I came in last night after fishin'. All about a Sea of Dreams, was n't it? [Miriam shuddered to the core of the soul that afflicted