

12 THE BEWILDERED BENEDICT

her uncle almost at once. He has been with us more years than I care to count, seeing, that for a dog, life is so short, and ought really to be middle-aged and sensible. Instead he is merely ridiculously young and happy, and perhaps it is the wiser philosophy.

Like his master he dislikes cats, against whom he wages deadly war, and is no respecter of persons or of social status. He will wag at a tramp, provided he is a pleasant merry tramp, and will growl at a duke, if he does not fancy the duke. He never bites anyone, but when he does, it is entirely that person's own fault, and because he is innately worthless and depraved, and Satan's unerring instinct has discovered the fact. To be bitten by Satan—if he ever did bite—is equivalent to losing one's reputation.

So he came with us because there was not time to drag him home, but owing to Satan and the money-boxes we arrived rather late at the station. The train indeed was in and had disgorged its Hill Land passengers.

The first thing we discovered on the platform was a bag. Literally it was Sophonisba who discovered it by falling over it. She was annoyed at her haste being so checked, and said as she straightened her hat, "What a bag!"

It certainly was the worse for wear.

"And it's labelled 'Hill Land,'" went on Sophonisba examining it with disgust, "nice sort of disgrace havin' a visitor comin' with a bag like that! Can it be somebody for the Biltons? They have such fearful people to stay."

It was a very ancient kitbag which sagged helplessly in the middle, bulged crudely in unexpected places, and had three almost obliterated initials.

"One looks like a W," said Sophonisba, "but I can't