

"so they can look about them. Pigeons hate to be rushed into a crowd."

The stranger roused himself and gazed at the newcomers. "What kind of pigeons do you call them?" he asked, in languid curiosity.

"Pouters," replied Titus.

"They look as if they had their stomachs under their chins," said the elderly man, with slight animation. "Ugly things!"

"They're New Yorkers," said Titus, slyly. Then he added, "I don't think they're beautiful myself, but I wanted to have them. Here, pigeons, have some canary seed," and he put a dish in beside them.

"Where is your grandfather?" asked the stranger, abruptly. "That is, if you are Judge Sancroft's grandson. I think some one said you were."

"Yes, sir, I am. My grandfather is driving with my adopted sister Bethany."

"Adopted sister," said his companion, thoughtfully. "Is that the Hittaker child?"

"Yes, sir—Hittaker-Smith. My grandfather had some kind of papers made out. We're going to hold on to little Bethany."

A heavy shadow passed over the man's face, and Titus thought he heard him sigh. "I heard about her," he said, dreamily. "They said kidnapers tried to steal her."

A sudden thought flashed into Titus's mind. "You're not Mr. Hittaker, are you, sir?" he asked, sharply, and he stared in boyish curiosity at his visitor.

The man nodded slightly. "Yes, yes, my name is Hittaker."