

SOPHONISBA'S UNCLE

19

"Aunt Susan! Don't tell me the old girl is still alive! Lord how I used to try and dodge her!"

"She is very much alive," lamented Sophonisba, "and we still try to dodge her—and fail. She invited herself here, and took a great fancy to Edward and wouldn't go. So we got Angus to see to it. I don't mean we mentioned it exactly, we never do that, only Angus knows things without mentionin'. And she left."

Sophonisba's uncle looked hard at Angus' back, "indeed," he said.

"Oh it was all very tactful," said Sophonisba, "Angus just went to her with his face in a beastly mess an' asked her if ammonia was any good for small-pox, and she took him up wrong and lit out for the station, leavin' her luggage to be sent on, an' then Angus got the ammonia an' cleaned his face, and said he was sorry the poor old lady had 'mistook' him, as he was afraid she wouldn't care to come here again, an' she never has."

It seemed to me that Sophonisba's uncle hardly appreciated Angus' tactics, "then if I am to remain I must propitiate the powers that be?" he asked laughing.

"Oh, but you are different," said Sophonisba quickly, "I hope you will stay for ages, but she stayed six weeks, and would hardly let Edward and me speak to each other. She seemed to think it improper to leave us alone, and you see Dorothea, Angus' wife, who is a sort of genius too, sees to the household so that I have no household worries, and can be a companion to Edward an' the boys, an' mess round in the garden an' things. Life's awfully jolly at Moss-end."

"I'm sure it is," he agreed.

"I'll tell Angus to come, and perhaps he'll favour