

CONCERNS RELATIONS IN GENERAL 3

isn't the missionary uncle that's written, thank goodness, it's the one that was such a corker in his youth."

"A corker?"

Sophonisba has a delightful and unique language of her own.

"A regular clergyman's son," she explained; "there was simply nothin' he didn't do—that he shouldn't have, I mean. Couldn't leave money or cheques or decent lookin' servants about. He forged, cheated at cards an' got found out, and bagged some of the church funds, then——" she lowered her voice. "Are the boys listenin'? Well, then he ran away with the gardener's wife, a woman with goggle eyes—that's the sort he was. An' now after thirty years, an' us thinkin' him dead, he has the cheek to write to me, who was a wee kid when he did a flit."

She paused to help herself to some marmalade.

"How did he discover I was married?" she went on.

"I tell you what it is, he's found out I've got a rich husband, an' he's goin' to try an' rob us and run off with our servants—just as we've got so well settled with them, too, an' Jane a perfect treasure. He's heard somehow what a ridiculous kind old thing you are, and thinks to do us down for all he's worth. Well, he hasn't struck it as lucky as he thinks! He can go back to where he came from—prison, for all I know or care. It wouldn't be the first time, though thank goodness he mostly did the things under an alibi——"

"Alias?" I suggested.

"Well, it's the same thing. Anyway, he can go back again, quick march! Have such an example in the house with the boys! Drink, as well as other things. I shall not even know such a vile person! 'My dear Niece Soapy,' indeed! What next!"