

"I know all about him. At least, Gus knows." Athelstan Taylor had appropriated a camp-stool, that he might accommodate Lizarann and his younger daughter on his knees. He looked round at his sister-in-law. "Don't you remember, my dear? Gus told us about him. A sort of old pensioner chap!"

Miss Caldecott remembered him, primly. "Not very sober, I fear!" said she.

Lizarann joined in the conversation. "Wunst you got him inside of the bust," she said, "the sconductor keeps his eye upon him. Yass!—All the way to Stockwell." Lizarann's confidence that her hearers knew the world had something very pretty and touching about it.

But Miss Caldecott, as the exponent of the League—which no one had asked her to form—checkmated Bridgett's relative. "We won't talk any more about him now, my dear," she said. The smallest shade passed over the Rector's face. However, it didn't matter for him. He could tickle Lizarann slightly, thanks to his position of vantage, and thus avoid being misunderstood.

With Challis it was otherwise. The effect upon his mind of the action of the League was that he now felt that Bridget's disreputable uncle was absolutely the only topic of conversation possible. He tried in vain to remember that anything else existed in the Universe.

"Mayn't we hear more about Miss Hicks's family?" said he, with some sense of proposing a compromise—not to run counter to the feeling of the League, as it were. Miss Caldecott said something confidentially to Space about not encouraging the child too much.

But she did not understand the earnestness and good faith of the said child. Lizarann had no suspicion that the gentleman's anxiety to know about her friend's connection was sheer affectation, and hastened to supply particulars. She proceeded to sketch the Hicks family, laying stress as much as possible on the excellence of its motives and the sobriety of its demeanour.

"Bridgetticks," she said, "she spinched her finger in the jam of the door, and felt it a week after in her shoulder-j'int. Yass—she *did*! And Mr. 'Icks, he don't take nothing till after gone twelve o'clock, and then mostly at