

18 THE BEWILDERED BENEDICT

me anyhow by great brutes of—of clumsy footmen, it is a treat to think a skilful dainty maid will perform that function."

The girl was now close to us, and prepared to turn off by the drive, which dividing into two, went, one portion to the front, the other to the back premises. Jane is as pretty as she is well-mannered and respectable. Her capacity for waiting amounts to genius. We have never had such a parlourmaid before, and Sophonisba says we never will again; that we must do everything we can think of to retain Jane.

So, as the girl was passing us quite close, I asked her if she had had a pleasant afternoon, knowing she had been to some much looked-forward-to function, but forgetting the nature of it. Her reply enlightened me.

"Oh sir I had a lovely time," she cried, her eyes shining, and added with a thrill of triumph, "I sat next to the brother of the corpse."

"Lucky fellar, corpse or not corpse," murmured Sophonisba's uncle gallantly, and the girl passed on blushing, but not ill-pleased, I think.

I hurriedly pointed to a distant back-view engaged in digging, "And that's Angus," I said with pride.

"Your gardener?"

"Oh no," I exclaimed shocked at the suggestion, "the man who gardens. A gardener does what he likes, Angus—"

"Does the same," added Sophonisba drily.

"Only when it's for the best," I said, "Angus is our faithful servant and friend. When things get worrying we go to Angus whatever they are, and he puts them right. He is a genius and Scotch."

"It was Angus who finally got rid of great-aunt Susan," explained Sophonisba.