

her mother." All of which did not enlighten Mr. Maxwell.

"She is not at home, then?" he ventured.

Thus helped, Mrs. Edmonds gathered her wits and explained.

A party of eight including her daughter had started that morning on a nutting expedition. At the Schuyler farm, seven miles out, they were to be joined by the young people there, and go on to the extreme southern part of the Schuyler woods, some five or six miles farther. The plan had been to return to the Schuylers for an early tea, after which the guests were to drive home by moonlight. But they were to have been at home by ten at the latest; indeed Marjorie had exclaimed over that hour and said that she must be at home by nine. "And now," Mrs. Edmonds finished hurriedly, her face paling over the thought, "it is after two o'clock, and I know something has happened to them. What can I do?"

Mr. Maxwell essayed to comfort her.

"You have forgotten the storm," he said cheerily. "It doubtless came up just at the time they were to start; and it rained very hard, you remember; moreover, the storm lasted a remarkably long time."

No, she had forgotten nothing; she knew just when the first flash of lightning came, and just how long the rain continued; and just how brilliant the moonlight had been since the storm was over. Ample time for them to have reached home two