

Willie, that Mrs. Grey really sent you to ask me for the cake?" and he looked me right in the eye and said: "Yes, mama, and she wants your cake basket, too." "Now, I am sure you are lying," I said, "for she would not want *that* with all her lovely silver and china." "But she does, mama," he persisted, "for her things all got broke when she went away and left Tige to keep house." Then I was in despair; such a jumble of things which might possibly have happened, with others which were impossible, I believe nobody but Willie could put together. Tige is a dog of course, you understand, and is never allowed in the house. A few evenings before, as Mrs. Grey and I, with several others, including Willie and the Grey children, were talking and laughing about something which had happened, Mrs. Grey, who is a perfect home-hermit, said in a jocose way, "When I go away for a week I shall leave Tige to keep house. That meant she would never go; and you see Will caught up that remark and used it to give himself away with."

"But fearing that Mrs. Grey might really have wanted something, I ran over to see her about it, and found that my boy had made the whole thing out of whole cloth. I am getting so that I never know what to do when he speaks. I am almost afraid he is lying every time."

"Have you tried to find what was at the bottom of this one instance of untruth?"

"No; I just gave it up. It was so flagrant I didn't have the strength even to slap him."

"I wish you would please call him in and get him to talk that over with us. You begin it in a tender, sympathetic way, and let us see what comes of it."

"I don't feel very tender and sympathetic when I think about it, but I will try, if you think any good will come of it."

"No harm can come of it, and we may get some light for you."

"Well, light is what I want, that is sure."

After a moment of silence, in which she was evidently trying to bring herself into a proper temper, this mother arose, and going

to the door, called the child, who came quickly bounding in; a bright, beautiful boy. He and I were good friends, so that I had only to hold out my hand to have him come within my arm-clasp, where he stood playing with my watch-guard and waiting to see what it all meant.

"Oh, Willie," began his mother, bravely, "what about that cake for Mrs. Grey's company? What company is she going to have and when is it to be?"

"Oh, can we have it, mama?" and how his eyes sparkled. "'Cause, if we can, I must go and build up the house quick, where Tige broke it down, you know, and I must run and tell her, for I am her company, you see."

"Oh!"

That was all the mother could say for at least a minute. Light had broken in. But at last she asked, almost indignantly,

"Willie, why could you not have told me that you were playing and that Mrs. Grey was Nellie?"

"'Cause I wasn't playing, mama. It was 'honest Injun,' and she is just Mrs. Grey. Nellie is gone."

"Gone! Where?"

"Oh, to Europe, I guess; where children is before they's born."

"Oh! and who are you?"

"I am Mr. Grey."

"Indeed! I thought you were company?"

"Yes, am Mrs. Grey's company, and my train is awful slow. Toot! toot! toot! Say mama, can't I have some of that chocolate cake?"

"Yes, dear." Just as soon as she could control her tones: "Mama will put you up a nice dinner to take to Mrs. Grey. So you are a travelling man and just getting home, are you? Mama is very glad that she understands you at last."

"The child, in his eagerness, had slipped out to the commissary department, and the mother said, huskily, "Just to think that I accused him of lying! But he seems to have forgotten it."

"Ask him, please, my dear, if he has. See what he thought about that."