

"What is that you are holding so tightly in your hand?" asked the lady, her sweet voice suddenly becoming sharp.

Tommie blushed furiously and half uncurled her little brown fist to see if the treasure that she had there was safe.

The sweet-voiced lady did nothing so vulgar as to snatch the tiny parcel that the child held, yet it certainly slid almost imperceptibly from Tommie's hand to hers.

"Drive on, drive on, Stephen," she cried excitedly, while Tommie stood staring incredulously at her. "I have the ring. I have the ring; I feel it here inside this paper. I said the child would carry it about with her."

The coachman struck his horse smartly with the whip, the phaeton gave a leap, while Tommie stood as if rooted to the dusty roadside.

"Let me thee—let me thee," exclaimed the other lady in the phaeton.

The sweet-voiced lady looked over her shoulder at Tommie, who had gathered herself together and was tearing after them. "No, no, Gwendolen, you might drop it. We are pursued, but there comes Reginald Warrington down the road. He shall open it, he shall open it himself."

The coachman held his whip over the horse's back, and Tommie, open-mouthed and panting, ran as she said she could, "like sixty," through the dust behind, while Mr. Reginald rode smartly toward them on his tall hunter, Tartar.

"Good news, good news," screamed the elder