

CHAPTER XXXII

SUNDAY was stiflingly hot. At Sloane Street the roof of every Putney omnibus was already laden with passengers, and Richard on his way to Carteret Street to make the acquaintance of Laura's married sister, Milly Powell, her husband and young child, was forced at last to be content with a seat inside. The public houses were just closing for the afternoon, and the footpaths full of holiday-makers, with here and there a girl or a middle-aged man carrying a Bible. No vehicles were abroad except the omnibuses and an occasional hired carriage which passed by with a nonchalant, lazy air.

At the Redcliffe Arms there got in a little family party consisting of a stout, seemingly prosperous man, gruffly good-humoured, his wife, and a boy of about three years, whose puffy face was disfigured by large spectacles.

"Sit here, Milly, out of the sun," the man said curtly.

Richard looked up at the sound of the name. The woman's likeness to Laura was unmistakable; beyond doubt she must be the sister of his betrothed.