

## ADRIFT

SHE came in to sew for me, but she wasn't that awful infliction—the woman who comes in to sew by the day. I liked her and I liked to have her. There was something about her blue eyes that it gave me pleasure to look at; and she had that most charming and rarest thing in woman—a merry laugh. How she had kept it, God only knows. Life had taken hold of her and twisted her all askew; she had gone as wrong as woman can go, and she had suffered correspondingly. Yet she had kept her laugh. A child's laugh! A long, low, rippling sound like happy water falling, falling over clear, clean stones in the sunshine. Such a pretty thing, a laugh like that. I loved to hear her.

She could sew. Sewing had been her original profession; but by the time she came to sew for me it was not her profession any more. She had left it for a sadder trade. Her young body was for sale to any man that cared to buy. And her clever hands were idle.

I had come to know her quite by chance. She had been in hospital, and once as I was passing up the ward to see some other patient, her blue eyes met mine. I stopped and spoke to her, and we talked a little—a very little. It was her blue eyes that kept talking, saying all kinds of unsayable things to me. They had seen life on its difficult side.