

of sleep, and she was dreaming then; for the expected figure was close to her, the figure in grey flannel and a plain straw hat; not elderly certainly, not much older than herself; and it was true enough she would have liked that figure if it had only been real.

"Go away," she murmured, rather frightened. "Please go away."

There was something dreadfully wrong. It was a nice girl's face that she saw, at least she had often called it so, and it was not black, and the owner of that face was assuredly going to like her very much indeed, although it was hardly a case of love at first sight; for the girl had failed to keep her appointment, the foreign girl with the amazing name was not there, the Persian girl who was to adore the sun and the coals of Lewside Cottage was evidently a deceiver of the baser sort. She had not come, and instead she had sent some one who could not fail to recognise the little girl waiting at the gate of the wood, who was calling her fond names, and actually kissing her, just as if the story was going to end, not in the second best way, but in the most blissful manner possible, with a dance of fairies on Tavy banks and a wedding-march. It was Aubrey who had come to the gate of the wood.

"I wish you wouldn't," said Boodles rather sleepily. "I am waiting here for a girl."

Then something appeared before her eyes which woke her up; the letter which she had written to Devonport; and she heard a voice saying very close to her ear, so close indeed that the lips were touching it—

"I wrote it, darling. I was afraid you would not come unless I deceived you a little. But I signed it with my own name."

"Yerbua Eimalleb—what nonsense!" she sighed.

"It is only Aubrey Bellamie written backwards."

"Oh, you must not. How could you? It made me so happy. I thought at last I should have a friend, to drive the loneliness away—and now, it is all dark again and miserable. You are sending me back to the creeping, crawling shadows."

"I have given up the Navy. I have given up my people, and everything, for the one thing, the best thing, for you," Aubrey said.