

her first youth can never be quite indifferent with regard to a lover, even should he not be quite all that she could desire.

The Rodneys lived at Denmark Hill, in a little cul-de-sac called Bigwood Lane, where the houses, though small, were all detached and had quite pretty gardens.

They had lived there just seven years, though their earliest memories were of residence in a roomy old house above their father's place of business in the City Road. As the price of City property steadily advanced Samuel Rodney had grasped the fact that it would be considerably to the advantage of his pocket, as well as to the improvement of the health of his children, if he were to let the premises above the shop and to remove his household a little farther out.

He had hesitated a long time before he had taken this step, for he was oddly attached to the house in which he had been born and in which he had been brought up, and, moreover, he was very conservative in all his ideas. Nevertheless, on the whole, he had, sentiment apart, never had any reason to regret the change he had at that time made, for, after paying rent and taxes for the house in Bigwood Lane, he found himself fifty pounds per annum in pocket by it.

Estelle's face still wore an expression of deep thought as she got off the bus at the end of Bigwood Lane and walked towards the green wicket which gave admission to the small strip of garden in front of the house.

As she went through the gate she beheld a man on the step apparently ringing vainly at the bell.

The electric bell was one of a very inferior type and was constantly going out of order, and Estelle hastened forward to apologise to the man and explain why it had not rung.

She was surprised at his appearance. He was middle-