

"I may, and I may not," said Frances, and her face became grave, and a curious wistfulness gathered in her eyes. She was unaware that she had thus revealed her heart-sickness, but Adrian saw it, and inwardly wondered. More than once of late he had detected in the girl for whom he entertained a chivalrous feeling of respect and friendship a certain restlessness, a vague discontent, which displayed itself rather tacitly than in words. And it had cost him more than one anxious thought.

"I think I need a change. That one dip into the lap of luxury last year altogether demoralised me, Adrian, and I have more cause to hold myself up as an awful example to my compeers. I think I shall go home next Saturday to learn a lesson in homely contentment from daddy and the rest. The gilly-flowers will be out by then, I should think. Did you know gilly-flowers could preach? There is a whole bed of them in the Vicarage garden. Daddy says they teach him all the summer through a perpetual lesson in sunny contentment."

"You certainly look as if you needed a change. Several times of late I have imagined you looked more tired than usual," said Adrian, kindly.

"I've no business to be tired; for I am perfectly well, and I am not killed with work—driven like a galley slave, as I used to be. I've lost heart, friend; that's what's the matter with me."

He did not like to ask why, believing she would tell him if she felt moved to it.

"We all do sooner or later," she said, more lightly, drawing an impossible figure with her parasol on the bare ground under the tree; "it's not our fault, but a question of sex. Suppose we go home now and have tea."

"To Barker Street, do you mean?"

"Why, of course. I invested in a whole cake at two shillings yesterday, so you had better come and help me to eat it; then we'll go to the City Temple at night, at least I shall."

She sprang up and opened her sunshade to the sun.