

the girl's companion, Miss O'Neill, in spite of her wrong-headed zeal for the Suffrage and Home Rule. Had Bel Alison been out in search of a foil, she could have discovered none better than this big-hearted, fanatical woman of five-and-thirty, shortish and squarely built, with an upward nose, an ugly, humorous mouth, and a quantity of rough brown hair in a chronic state of untidiness. Lady Forsyth gathered that she was an active philanthropist, and that the incongruous pair shared a flat somewhere in Earl's Court. To outward seeming they had certainly nothing beyond the same address in common.

If Bel's movements were over-deliberate, Miss O'Neill's were apt to be sudden; and she strode into the boat with the decision of one given to putting her foot down to some purpose.

"Steady on! You evidently don't do things by halves!" Sir Mark remonstrated, laughing, and consigning her to a cushion in the bows. Bel had already usurped Maurice's seat astern, and Mark rowed stroke—this time without need of invitation. Then they turned about and moved slowly up the loch, dabbling their oars in the sunset fires and shivering the purple shadows of the hills.

And if for Helen Forsyth the pleasure of the evening was over, for Mark it had but just begun. And she knew it. Therein lay the sting. Though "the boy" was now very much a man, she could honestly have said, two weeks ago, that nothing beyond minor differences and mutual flashes of temper had marred the deep essential unity of their relation—a unity the more inestimably precious since he was now all she had left of her nearest and dearest on earth. Husband, daughter and younger son had all passed on before her into the Silence, and of her own people one brother alone remained. At the moment he was High Commissioner of New Zealand, and seemed disposed to stay on there in-