

He could not bear to see her cry but would not tell her so. And then, as if love told him exactly what to do, he drew her closer into his arms, and gave her upon the lips a good heavy kiss which was that of a brother more than of a lover.

§ 5

Roger stood in the hall. He had not come home to dinner. It was ten o'clock. He had read the telegram. Now he read over and over again a note from Sue which had just come by a boy messenger :

" I'm going away to Bert. I'm not coming back. Never."

So it was over. Queer. He was neither shocked nor unhappy. He felt dull. The end. Yes, it was all over. He should have expected it. What should he do? One thought only formed in his brain : Theresa. He would go to Theresa. His mind took a more practical turn. How hateful it all was. He would have to divorce Sue. Well, it was only fair. He must set her free. He had spoilt enough of her life. He felt moved as he half-understood how much she must have suffered before doing this. Breaking all her own rules of faithfulness. He pitied her so much that he almost loved her again. But that was over. And there formed in him a sense of lightness. Poor Sue, she was free. And he? Well, he was going to Theresa.

As he put on his coat he saw that something else lay upon the hall table. He picked it up. It was a picture post-card from Perce : the bachelor in diggings, holding up to his landlady a dead rat which he has just fished out of the soup tureen. Underneath, the words : " I said vegetable soup, not Irish stew."