

melting the last coldness in his soul, healing the last wounds upon his spirit.

He roused himself, flung up his head, and began to whistle :—

“Tit-a-weet !”

And he looked so comical that she laughed.

“That isn’t anything like a bird,” she said.

“It is. It is very like cock robin.”

To their mutual amazement it seemed entirely unnecessary to discuss the future or the past, and the present demanded only happy silence. Here in the enchantment of the woods was love, and it was enough.

While they stayed in the woods they hardly talked at all, but as they walked home he became solemn and said, as though it pained and puzzled him :—

“We are no longer young.”

“We shall never be anything else,” she protested, for she was pained by the change in his mood.

“Youth passes,” he said.

And her exhilaration died in her, for she knew she had touched his obstinacy. He saw her droop and was sorry, and began to whistle and to laugh, but she could not be revived. She had thought to have secured him, to have made him safe with the charm of love for ever, but she was sure now that the hardest of all was yet to come.

In the evening, as they sat by the fire in the little white room, Mendel and Clowes talking and Morrison curled up on the floor gazing into the coals, he suddenly ceased to hear Clowes’ voice, and saw very clearly the bubble of his life in London before him—Mr. Kuit, Issy, Hetty Finch, Mitchell, Logan and Oliver—Logan and Oliver leaving the Merlin’s Cave and going out into the street and walking home to the Pot-au-Feu, up the narrow, dark stairs to Hetty Finch’s room.