

"Your words imply that you love me, if not best, however," I said. "And that's what I wished to know."

"I didn't say so," contradicted Bess. Then, on a sudden impulse, "let's go back."

"There's no going back now," I asserted. "What's said cannot be recalled."

"I mean back to the hotel," she said, haughtily.

"Oh," I remarked, as though just understanding. "But you've only a handful of lilies," I observed.

"I don't care," she replied, "I've enough. Besides, I am terribly tired," a statement which her dancing eyes and piquant glance belied.

"But you haven't given me my answer yet," I told her. "How am I to know whether we're engaged or no?"

"Well, we're not," she said, decisively.

"But will be," I added.

"I'm going home now," she said.

"How?" I inquired, tersely, resolved to humor her in her whim.

"Walk." This with a defiant glance.

"On the water, like Peter of old?" I asked, innocently.

"I can wade ashore. I'm not afraid."

"It's four long miles by land, and warm, too," I admonished.

"And then, I have your parasol. Think of the sunburn."

"Then I shall be compelled to entreat you to take me back—to the hotel—of course."

"Suppose I won't be entreated," I taunted.

"Why not?" she demanded.

"Because you won't give me a definite answer."

"Is 'no' definite enough?" she asked, slowly.

"I refuse to consider that," I said. "Only 'yes' can pacify me."

"Then you will never be so," she said.

"Never is a long time," I mused. "But I must be going. It is almost luncheon hour." And I drove the skiff up on the beach and sprang out.

"Are you going to walk?" inquired Bess, a trifle angrily.

"Yes," I said. "I'm not afraid of sunburn, with this along." And I held up her red parasol.

"But, pray, how am I to get back?" she said.