

husband knew the worst there was to know before he asked her to be his wife. But she had been spared the dreadful ordeal of telling him. He had known much of her early history, and had seen the latter part shaping itself. In spite of everything he had been willing to take her. But whether he had condoned her past life because he was common and commonplace, or in spite of being both, I could not decide, and have never decided. Often and often lately I have asked myself—Which?

After you and I knew each other, and I began to care, I tried with all my might to stop loving you, for fear of the consequences. I foresaw that loving you would mean suffering for me, perhaps for us both. Sometimes I made up my mind that I would leave England, and go back to live in America. But I was not strong enough—or weak enough, to run away.

After we had our second talk together—the queerest, most starry talk any woman ever had with any man she was just beginning to know—I could think of nothing and no one but you. I could not imagine how I had found the world worth living in, before I knew you were in it.

Things you said made me realise how much I still had to learn, and how far off the horizon is. It was like climbing a mountain, to go up and up the path of friendship with you, finding with each turn a new and unexpected outlook. The higher the level I reached, the more mountains of almost unattainable knowledge and inspiration I saw, billowing away to the ends of creation, the borders of eternity. And I gloried in that great company of mountains, because you had climbed them all, and knew their names and their most intimate beauties.

Even if I had been the woman you nobly believed