

tell you all this! My very life would be incomplete without it! I owed something to you long before I owed anything to another: a duty can never set aside a duty. And as to what I have owed you since, it becomes more and more the noblest earthly debt that I shall ever leave unpaid. I did not know *you* perfectly when we parted: I was too young, too ignorant of the world, too ignorant of many women. A man must have touched their coarseness in order to appreciate their refinement; have been wounded by untruthfulness to understand their delicate honour; he must have been driven to turn his eyes mercifully away from their stain before he can ever look with all the reverence and gratitude of his heart and soul upon their brows of chastity.

"But of my life otherwise. I take it for granted that you would like to know where I stand, what I have become, whether I have kept faith with the ideals of my youth.

"I have succeeded, perhaps reached now what men call the highest point of their worldly prosperity, made good my resolve that no human power should defeat me. All that Macbeth had not I have: a quiet throne of my own, children,