

"I forgive you from the bottom of my heart, my love—as I trust the Unknown God, Whom I have so long and so vainly struggled against, will forgive me. But oh, Griselda, think what a fool I have been!"

"Not a fool, my love! Never a fool!"

"Yes, a fool—a fool of the finest water. Forgiveness may change the future, but it cannot alter the past: what we have written we have written upon the pages of our lives; and there is no moral indiarubber strong enough to erase that superscription."

"Alas! dear heart, that is only too true."

"Think what a career I should have had if only I had recognized earlier the fundamental goodness as well as greatness of the English people! I should have attained to the very summit of private happiness and of public success."

"But you forgive me, my dearest? You are not angry with me?"

Griselda was always very woman, losing the principle in the illustration and the absolute in the concrete.

"Yes, my dear; once again I say to you that I forgive you absolutely. What you did, you did for the best according to your lights; and your sin was committed solely out of your too great love for me. But oh, Griselda!" and here the strong man's voice broke into a wail of passionate regret, "you have robbed me for ever of the crowning joy that was my right—the joy of lifting up my head among men as the father of the Prime Minister of England."

While his parents were dreeing their weird, and realizing that what they had done they had done and there was no undoing, Mark likewise was reaping the harvest he had sown.

"Well," exclaimed Eileen, when he had finished his story, "it is wonderful, simply wonderful! Just like a tale out of a fairy book."