

impersonal in certain cases as it seems to be at first sight. 'Do you know, Lady Hilda,' Berkeley said one afternoon, when he had come to pay, as it were, a sort of farewell visit, on the final completion of their joint schemes for restoring happiness to the home of the Le Bretons, 'our intercourse together has been very delightful, and I'm quite sorry to think that in future we must see so much less of one another than we've been in the habit of doing for the last month or so.'

Hilda looked at him straight and said in her own frank unaffected fashion, 'So am I, Mr. Berkeley, very sorry, very sorry indeed.'

Arthur looked back at her once more, and their eyes met. His look was full of admiration, and Hilda saw it. She moved a little uneasily upon the ottoman, waiting apparently as though she expected Arthur to say something else. But Arthur looked at her long and steadfastly, and said nothing.

At last he seemed to wake from his reverie, and make up his mind for a desperate venture. Could he be mistaken? Could he have read either record wrong—his own heart, or Hilda's eyes? No, no, both of them spoke to him too plainly and evidently. His heart was fluttering like a wind-shaken aspen-leaf; and Hilda's eyes were dimming visibly with a tender moisture. Yes, yes, yes, there was no misreading possible. He knew he loved her! he knew she loved him!

Bending over towards where Hilda sat, he took her hand in his dreamily: and Hilda let him take it without a movement. Then he looked deeply into her eyes, and felt a curious speechlessness coming over him, deep down in the ball of his throat.

'Lady Hilda,' he began at last with an effort, in a low voice, not wholly untinged with natural timidity, 'Lady Hilda, is a working man's son——'

Hilda looked back at him with a sudden look of earnest deprecation. 'Not that way, Mr. Berkeley,' she said quietly: 'not that way, please: you'll hurt me if you do: you know that's not the way *I* look at the matter. Why not simply "*Hilda*"?'

Berkeley clasped her hand eagerly and raised it to his lips. 'Hilda, then,' he said, kissing it twice over. 'It *shall* be Hilda.'

Hilda rose and stood before him erect in all her queen-like beauty. 'So now that's settled,' she said, with a vain endeavour to control her tears of joy. 'Don't let's talk about it any more, now; I can't bear to talk about it: there's nothing to arrange, Arthur. Whenever you like will