

I thought he loved me, and only found out the mistake too late? Oh, if you could know how I have sometimes—reading the stories of other blighted lives—dreaded a like fate for myself, you would not blame me for keeping my little secret. I kept it first, and auntie for me, because we both feared some such thing as that; and afterwards, after I knew you, and thought, and hoped—oh, I guarded it more closely than ever; for I was afraid if you knew you would be scared away, and I should lose——”

She did not finish the sentence, but slipped her arm about his neck again, not ashamed of speaking with this unreserve before others who loved them both. Then, looking in his face, she asked, half wistfully, half triumphantly:

“And you are not angry with me, are you? You forgive me for what I did?”

His answer was not spoken in words, but it abundantly satisfied even the exacting Olga.

