

slightly as she heard him pronounce her name—"is this all you have to say to me? is this all the welcome you have for me?"

The old crow became impatient and scratched his head vigorously with one foot.

"We might shake hands," she suggested, calmly, but with her breath coming quickly and with heightened color in her cheeks.

She held out one hand to him timidly, but he caught both of hers—and held them.

"Ha—a, ha—a!" cawed the old reprobate up on the dead limb. Then he broke into a hoarse laugh, but pulled himself up short, and tried to look as if he had only been clearing his throat. He wanted to see the whole of the comedy.

Harry Yorke looked steadily into her eyes, and she in turn looked shyly into his as he held her in front of him.

"Marie," he said again, after an awkward pause, "do you know what has brought me here?"

"Why—why do you ask me this?" she asked, evasively; but she was shaking like a leaf, and her eyes were fixed on the ground before her.

"Because I wanted to tell you that *you* have," was the answer. "I want you to tell me that I have not done wrong in coming, and that you are glad to see me."

"Don't you think you are asking me to undertake a rather heavy contract?" she rejoined, the perverse and inscrutable promptings of old Mother Eve and the instincts of her better self each having their share in the framing and significance of this question.

"Heavy!" he repeated, somewhat taken aback, and a sudden sense of fear seizing him. "Is it, then, such a very hard thing to do?"

"But is it necessary to do it?" she persisted, ignoring his question.