

THE WELL-BELOVED

were so independent! I thought you would have come back, and was much surprised that you didn't.'

'My independent ideas were not blameworthy in me, as an islander, though as a kimberlin young lady perhaps they would have been. There was simply no reason from an islander's point of view why I should come back, and I didn't. My father kept that view before me, and I bowed to his judgment.'

'And so the island ruled our destinies, though we were not on it. Yes—we are in hands not our own. . . . Did you ever tell your husband?'

'No.'

'Did he ever hear anything?'

'Not that I am aware.'

Calling upon her one day, he found her in a state of great discomfort. In certain gusty winds the chimneys of the little house she had taken here smoked intolerably, and one of these winds was blowing then. Her drawing-room fire could not be kept burning, and rather than let a woman who suffered from rheumatism shiver fireless he asked her to come round and lunch with him as she had often done before. As they went he thought, not for the first time, how needless it was that she should be put to this inconvenience