

silent. What else was there for me to do except to be silent? I knew you'd know I couldn't help it. It was a——" Sobs interrupted her.

"Of course I knew that," he said. He had to control himself very carefully, or he too would have lost command of his voice. Such was her power of suggestion over him that her faithlessness seemed now scarcely to need an excuse.

(Somewhere within himself he smiled as he reflected that he, in his father's place, in his father's very chair, was thus under the spell of a woman whose child was nameless. He smiled grimly at the thought of Auntie Hamps, of Clara, of the pietistic Albert! They were of a different race, a different generation! They belonged to a dead world!)

"I shall tell you," Hilda recommenced mournfully, but in a clear and steady voice, at last releasing her face, which was shaken like that of a child in childlike grief. "You'll never understand what I had to go through, and how I couldn't help myself"—she was tragically plaintive—"but I shall tell you. . . . You *must* understand!"¹

She raised her eyes. Already for some moments his hands had been desiring the pale wrists between her sleeve and her glove. They fascinated his hands, which, hesitatingly, went out towards them. As soon as she felt his touch, she dropped to her knees, and her chin almost rested on the arm of his chair. He bent over a face that was transfigured.

"My heart never kissed any other man but you!" she cried. "How often and often and often have I kissed you, and you never knew! . . . It was for a message that I sent George down here—a message to you! I named him after you. . . . Do you think that if dreams could make him your child—he wouldn't be yours?"

Her courage, and the expression of it, seemed to him to be sublime.

"You don't know me!" she sighed, less convulsively.

"Don't I!" he said, with lofty confidence.

After a whole decade his nostrils quivered again to the odour

¹ In the autumn of 1911 the author will publish a novel dealing with the history of Hilda Lessways up to the day of her marriage with Edwin. This will be followed by a novel dealing with the marriage.