

There was another pause, during which Herr Dremmel, with his eyes on hers, appeared to ruminate.

Then he said, "Did you have a pleasant time?"

This was fiendish. Even when acting, thought Ingeborg, there were depths of baseness the decent refused to portray.

"I think," she said in a trembling voice, "if you wouldn't mind leaving off pretending—oh," she broke off, pressing her hands together, "what's the good, Robert? What's the *good*? Don't let us waste time. Don't make it worse, more hideous—you got my letter—you know all about it——"

"Your letter?" said Herr Dremmel.

She begged him, she entreated him to leave off pretending. "Don't, don't keep on like this," she besought—"it's such a dreadful way of doing it—it's so unworthy——"

"Ingeborg," said Herr Dremmel, "will you not cultivate calm? You have journeyed and you have walked, but you have done neither sufficiently to justify intemperateness. Perhaps, if you must be intemperate, you will have the goodness to go and be so in your own room. Then we shall neither of us disturb the other."

"No," said Ingeborg, wringing her hands, "no. I won't go. I won't go into any other room till you've finished with me."

"But," said Herr Dremmel, "I have finished with you. And I wish," he added, pulling out his watch, "to have tea. I am driving to my fields at five o'clock."

"Oh, Robert," she begged, inexpressibly shocked, he meant to go on tormenting her then indefinitely?—"please, please do whatever you're going to do to me and get it over. Here I am only *waiting* to be punished——"