

opening and reading of other people's letters, the sharp dealing that puts money in the pocket, the luring to our houses of guests one degree more presentable than those of our neighbours. Faugh! who should know it better than I, who am one of them?"

"Oh, Henry dear, be just. Your father was never like that, I am sure. He is an honourable man, and—and devoted to you. He was broken-hearted when he heard of—of Losfontein. He wished to come out with me, and would have done, but the doctors forbade him."

"It is him I blame more than the rest, for they were nothing to me; he was, in a way. As a child, I thought a lot of my father, Violet. I relied on his teaching and believed in it, and . . . Everything he told me I found afterwards to be wrong. I found amongst other things he'd lied in saying that only outcasts drank, gambled, and were immoral; for men and women, as I saw, did these things daily, and were regarded as no outcasts, but were smiled upon by all. I lost all faith then, and with no knowledge of the world, or life as it really is, relied on myself till Carados came and gave me the teaching I welcomed, for I saw it was no sham, no ignorance. He spoke of things he knew."

"As *he* knew them."

"Possibly. From a poisoned source comes poison. But how was I, poor, ignorant fool, to know that? I swallowed both truth and poison together."

Again he stretched out his hand for a draught; and then resumed his bitter, laboured speech.

"Well, being an ignorant fool, and defenceless, passion had its own way with me. It blinded my eyes, making me believe in a worthless woman's truth. It drove me to work to make a name for her; and I did, too, of a kind, though I know now I was but second-rate, really. I kept you in the dark, being afraid that if I told you your influence would