

last encounter he had anticipated this scene; his fancy had been almost continuously busy in fashioning this scene. And now the reality had swept down upon him with no warning, and he was overwhelmed.

She would not speak. She had withdrawn her gaze, but she would not speak. She would force him to speak.

"I say," he began gruffly, in a resentful tone, careless as to what he was saying, "you might have told me earlier—what you told me on Wednesday night. Why didn't you tell me when I was at Brighton?"

"I wanted to," she said meekly. "But I couldn't. I really couldn't bring myself to do it."

"Instead of telling me a lie," he went on. "I think you might have trusted me more than that."

"A lie?" she muttered. "I told you the truth. I told you he was in prison."

"You told me your husband was in prison," he corrected her, in a voice meditative and judicial. He knew not in the least why he was talking in this strain.

She began to cry. At first he was not sure that she was crying. He glanced surreptitiously, and glanced away as if guilty. But at the next glance he was sure. Her eyes glistened behind the veil, and tear-drops appeared at its edge and vanished under her chin.

"You don't know how much I wanted to tell you!" she wept.

She hid her half-veiled face in her hands. And then he was victimized by the blackest desolation. His one desire was that the scene should finish, somehow, anyhow.

"I never wrote to you because there was nothing to say. Nothing!" She sobbed, still covering her face.

"Never wrote to me—do you mean——"

She nodded violently twice. "Yes. Then!" He divined that suddenly she had begun to talk of ten years ago. "I knew you'd know it was because I couldn't help it." She spoke so indistinctly through her emotion and her tears, and her hands, that he could not distinguish the words.

"What do you say?"

"I say I couldn't help doing what I did. I knew you'd know I couldn't help it. I couldn't write. It was best for me to be