

"In a certain sense, *yes*!"

"Very well, dear. Perhaps if there are more senses than one in the business, you'll tell me what they are. According to me, a man either cares for a girl, or he doesn't. I can't see any half-way."

"I can see heaps of half-ways. What I mean is, when he takes more pleasure in her society than he does in . . ."

"In his wife's? I don't see that we don't mean the same thing, so far."

"Then I don't mean that at all, but something else. What is the use of talking if you always twist what I say round?" Marianne is like a witness in the hands of a clever counsel, but with an advantage. If the witness resorts to the use of a bludgeon against the legal rapier, the Court interposes to protect his assailant. There was no Court in Marianne's case.

Charlotte retreated into the entrenchments of forbearance. "I don't want to quarrel, dear!" she said. "Suppose you write the letter!"

"To her?"

"To him. Do it now! You may just as well." None the less, Charlotte was surprised—only she didn't show it—when Marianne shook off the re-established cat, and rose to go to the writing-table. The cat, this time disgusted beyond words, stretched herself, and weighed the comforts of divers corners available. Mrs. Eldridge could have afforded one, but decided that cats were too hot in this weather. So Pussy had to be content with an angle in sofa-cushions.

The long-expiring light of the summer evening had been good to talk by, but enough of it was not left for letter-writing. Nevertheless, Mrs. Challis wouldn't ring for the lamp. Candles would do, she said. And having lighted them, she sat down to write.

A fly had perished in the ink since it was last used, and had to be coaxed out gradually, legs having got left behind by the first drags employed. Also, the pens—so described—consisted of a single example, which was a very long pen with diabolical corrugations at its shoulder, and a terrible sharp point. It refused to write on any terms, and on examination was proved to consist of one widowed nib, a