

will please you. I know it was stupid to tell her. I thought so several times afterwards. I did not like to tell you; but I do think you make too much fuss, Leon. A thing is out before you know it, but I can't see that it is such a sin as you want to make out."

He tried no more. He bowed his head to utter failure.

Stooping, he gently put his lips to his wife's pure brow, shaded with its innocent-looking curls of gold.

"Poor child," he said, tenderly, "poor, beautiful child. Sleep, Elsa, I must not keep you awake, or make you grieve. It would spoil your beauty; and it is your mission to be beautiful. Good-night!—good-night! I am not angry with you."

"Then why do you go rushing off in the middle of the night instead of coming to bed like a Christian?" she cried, pitifully. "Leon, Leon, why are you so strange—so unaccountable! You make me so unhappy—without my knowing why! You—you are—so very *very* hard on me!" Suddenly she burst into a passion of tears. Lifting herself from her pillows, she cast both arms round him, clinging to him. "I—I do love you," she gasped, "don't be so cruel to me, don't!" The tears welled up in the young man's beautiful eyes in sympathetic response.

He drew the lovely head down upon his breast, and soothed her with infinite compassion. Like Arthur, the stainless gentleman whose wife had failed him in another—a worse way—"his vast pity almost made him die," as he held her closely, caressing her like a child until her sobs had ceased.

"You are not angry any more?" she asked at last, lifting her wet eye-lashes with a wistful, appealing glance.

"No, Elsa, no. I am not angry. I am penitent. There is no need to make yourself unhappy. Go to sleep."

"I am very sleepy," she sighed, "but you will wake me if you move me."

"I will sit here until you sleep."

"Thank you. You are a good, dear boy. Good-night, Leon."

"Good-night, Elsa."

There was stillness in the room—utter stillness as at last Percivale laid his sleeping wife down, and, bending over her, bestowed a parting kiss.