

nights I suffered as I had not known I could suffer. It was as if my soul were being flayed alive. I do not think human nature could endure more.

I wonder if Alma suffered so, when, knowing that all was over between her and Cyril, she bade me good-bye, and drank the poison?

I longed desperately, the second night, to go to A——'s door, and knock; to beg her to let me in, and then to tell her everything. I did get up at last, and go out into the corridor; but I went no further. I could not bear to be so selfish as to disturb A—— in the night with my troubles.

Next morning, when she came into the garden—the dear, enchanted garden—I was there. I had been there since dawn. The sunrise had given me back a little courage, and I had made up my mind to say nothing to her, for I was sure no one could really help me. I meant to let her think that I had only just come down, but she saw by my face that something had happened. She thought that you and I had quarrelled! I could not bear to have her believe that of us, and somehow she drew from me enough to make her understand.

Then she gave me the advice of which I told you when I began to write: to marry you, and keep silent about the past. She said: "A woman's past is her own, just as a man's is his." And on principle, I agreed with her. Only, I could not take her advice. She argued with me, insisting that it was a stupid convention for women to tell such things to men; that men did not wish them told; they would rather be happy, and not know; that "confession" was a selfish luxury, and the wish for it a sign of hysteria. I repeated over and over that perhaps she was right, and explained that I had no hysterical longing to confess,