

between it and him . . . it couldn't be, of course. How could it? But she hadn't thought she should mind . . . so much.

She saw the journey away . . . and it was done. And then she saw herself come home again. Home! Well, it had to be, of course. She wasn't questioning that. But it changed everything.

She loved him more—if that was possible. More, and differently. But the laughing time was over. The days seemed long when he was out, and lonely . . . and while she sat sewing she would think and think, and wonder why such things should be . . . and why a mother can't have her child . . . just because people will talk about it. And she had learned what it means to have small hands at your heart . . . small hands tugging. She had learned the longing of the woman to give her breast to her child. She had had days and days to learn it in.

After such days as that when he came back she would sometimes greet him coldly . . . hardly speak . . . keep away. And weeks and weeks like that. It wasn't that she didn't love him . . . but she couldn't bear to have him touch her, somehow. She was sore. And then, after those lost days, passionate repentance . . . reunion . . . and the longing to tell him what she could never make clear.

How good he had been always! She remembered. How patient! How he had welcomed her back when the bad fits were over; how he had kissed her and kissed her, and said: "Never mind, Hetty . . . never mind, dear." And how she used to answer between her sobs: "Oh, but I *do* mind. I do mind. . . ."