

"At moments of danger, when your life or your liberty was at stake, you risked committing any imprudence rather than accept my assistance. I was the enemy, the man to be distrusted, the man capable of every infamy, the man to be avoided, and to be thought of only with a sort of dread. Isn't that hatred? Is there anything but hatred to explain such an attitude?"

Florence did not answer at once. She seemed to be putting off the moment at which to speak the words that rose to her lips. Her face, thin and drawn with weariness and pain, was gentler than usual.

"Yes," she said, "there are other things than hatred to explain that attitude."

Don Luis was dumfounded. He did not quite understand the meaning of the reply; but Florence's tone of voice disconcerted him beyond measure, and he also saw that Florence's eyes no longer wore their usual scornful expression and that they were filled with smiling charm. And it was the first time that Florence had smiled in his presence.

"Speak, speak, I entreat you!" he stammered.

"I mean to say that there is another feeling which explains coldness, mistrust, fear, and hostility. It is not always those whom we detest that we avoid with the greatest fear; and, if we avoid them, it is often because we are afraid of ourselves, because we are ashamed, because we rebel and want to resist and want to forget and cannot ——"

She stopped; and, when he wildly stretched out his arms to her, as if beseeching her to say more and still more, she nodded her head, thus telling him that she need not go on speaking for him to read to the very bottom of