

### PART III.

Thou wilt not with Predestination round  
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

—Omar Khayyam.

THE scandal smouldered for a day or two and then raged across London like a fire. Mary stayed at home. She could not face the glare of it. She said she was ill. Her hand shook. She started at the slightest sound. She felt shattered in mind and body.

"I could not have stopped her," she said stubbornly to herself a hundred times, lying wide-eyed through the long, terrifying nights. She besieged heaven with prayers for Elsa.

On the fourth day Jos came to her.

She went down to her little sitting-room and found him standing at the open window with his back to her. She came in softly, trembling a little. She would be very gentle and sympathetic with him. She would imply no reproach.