

She turned to Mr. Edmund Gray. 'Sir,' she said, 'we ought to be very grateful to you—indeed, we are—for enabling us to clear away the odious cloud of suspicion which had rolled over our heads. It was very good of you to draw out those statements for my sister. But I do think that if Mr. Dering had told his old friends about you—about Mr. Edmund Gray—we should have been spared a great deal of trouble and unnecessary shame.—Good-day, sir.'

Sir Samuel lingered a moment. He looked as if he would appeal to Mr. Edmund Gray as to a brother. 'Don't speak to him,' Elsie whispered. 'Let him alone. He will become himself again presently. Let him alone.'

So he went out, and the door was shut, and Edmund Gray was left alone with George and the Scholar.

'My Master'—Elsie sat down beside him—'I fear you have been interrupted. But indeed it was necessary. Don't ask why. Things get into a muddle sometimes, don't they? You have gathered something of the trouble, too. Now that is all over—past and gone.'

'I am glad for your sake, child.'

'Master—dear Master—I have a confession to make. When I found out who you were—I mean what manner of man you were—my only thought at first was to coax you and wheedle you and flatter you till you gave me exactly the information that I wanted. I confess it. That was my only purpose. Nay—more—for the sake of my lover and my brother I would do it again. Well—I found that the only way to win your confidence was to pretend to be your Scholar and to believe all you taught. So I pretended. So I won your confidence. So I obtained all I wanted. So I have made it impossible for even the most malignant creature in the world to pretend that these two men had anything to do with what they called a forgery. But—believe me, dear Master—while I pretended, I was punished, because my pretence is turned to certainty.'

'Child, I knew it. You could not pretend—no woman could pretend so as to deceive me on a point so simple.'

'Dear Master, you do not know the possibilities of feminine craft. But I pretend no more. Oh! I care not how you make your attempt, whether you destroy Property or not. Mr. Dering says that Property is Civilisation—but I don't care. To me it is enough to dream—to know—that there is