

try hard to believe it, the teachings of my childhood rise up at every step and prevent my accepting it. I can't understand this mystery of open war between God and our hearts—between God, who made them, on the one hand, and what is best, not what is worst, within them, on the other. I pray for light, but no light comes. Why should God's law fight so hard against God's instincts in our souls—against all that we feel to be purest, noblest, truest, best in our nature?"

"Not God's law," Will said gently, smoothing her hand with his own, "but the priests', Linnet, the priests',—which is something quite different. God's law is never some precept beyond and outside us: it is the law of our own being, the law of our own hearts, the law of the native instincts and impulses that stir us. Your marriage with Andreas, were it twenty times blessed by priest or by Pope, was from the very first moment an unholy and unnatural one. It was a sin against purity and your own body; it was a legalized lie, a life-long adultery. You felt its shame yourself, and shrank from the man physically. Your heart was not his, so how could your body be? Even the laws of men would have allowed you to leave him and come home to me, whose complement and mate you are by nature, after his treatment of you that day, and your discovery of his letter to Philippina. But the laws of your Church, which are not the laws of men but the laws of priests—and therefore worse and more unnatural than even the common laws of mankind—forbade you to take advantage of the loophole of escape which divorce would permit you from that wicked union your priests had imposed upon you. The Church or the law that bids you live with a man you loathe and despise that Church or law dishonors your own nature; that Church and that law is not of God, nor even of man, but of priests and the devil. The Church or the law that forbids you to live with the man your own heart dictates and points out to you, is equally of the devil. And see how it proves itself so! It needed the intervention of Franz Lindner's knife to free you from your false union with Andreas Hausberger! Can that Church and that law be right or sound which make a murder the one loophole by which a soul can free itself from the unholy bond they would unwillingly impose upon it? Your own heart told