

seemed real that you could care, in spite of all—that you'd forgive me, if you should come back——”

“Did you want me to come?”

“Oh, ‘want’ isn’t the word to express it!”

“Even though you dreaded—being found out!”

“That didn’t count, against having you alive, and knowing you were in the world—if only for your parents’ sake. I wanted them to be happy, more than I wanted anything for myself except Brian’s good. I had you for my own, in my dreams, while you were dead, and I expected to lose you if you were alive. But——”

“You really expected that?”

“Oh, indeed, yes!”

“Although you knew from Mother how I’d loved you, and searched for you?”

“You thought I was *good*—then.”

“I think so now.”

“But you can’t! You know what a wicked, wicked wretch I was! Why, when you came into this room and looked at me, I *saw* how you felt! And your letter——”

“Don’t you understand, I was testing you? If you hadn’t cared for me, what you did might have been—(only ‘might’, mind you, for what man can judge a girl’s heart?) what you did to my people *might* have been cruel and calculating. I had to find out the truth of things, before letting myself go. The letter was written to let a stranger see—if you turned out to be a stranger—what to expect. But O’Farrell made me sure in a minute, that the girl here must be *my* Girl. After that, I’d only to see you—to ask if he told the truth—to watch your face—your precious, beautiful face! I thought of it and pic-