

face and wildly staring eyes ; then, falling back, he lay still, his eyes closed.

A shriek for Sir James rose to Violet's lips, but was strangled in time, and, with instinct alone as her guide, she flung herself on her knees by the bedside, and, bending down, kissed the white lips. And instinct, as usual with a woman, was right, for the closed eyes straightway opened, a hand half moved towards her face, then checked itself and fell back.

"You know," he muttered, "you know."

"Yes, I've known all along, and it makes no . . ."

"How did you know?"

"How? Ah, my dear, there were kind friends enough to tell me, though without their telling I knew. Couldn't I read it in your letters, dear? Was I blind, do you suppose?"

"And knowing, you—you made no sign."

"I was waiting for you to tell me. I'm waiting now, Henry. A part, it's true, I know, but there's much more for me to learn."

"And—and when I have, you'll cast me off, I suppose. You must ; there could be no other issue to such a story as mine."

"No, there can be no other issue. Any woman would cast you off, as you say. And . . . don't you think she'd be right, Henry?"

"Yes. But why did you tell me, Violet? I knew you must hear it eventually, but I thought, I hoped, I should be dead first. That's why I would not fight."

"Henry, answer me a question. Do—do you regret this woman? Tell me the truth, dear, before God."

Henry stared at her. "Regret her," he said, and laughed.

"Oh, Violet, don't you know, can't you see? Oh, but what's the use now? No, I don't regret her ; she has ceased to exist for me. It happened in one minute. Where she is now I neither know nor care."