

*Brent*—Have you ever seen a young hare, fresh from its kind, run headlong into a snare. Have you ever seen a young man, free from the trammels of college, dash into a net? I did. I was not trap-wise. Good God! What nurslings we are when we first feel our feet. We are just like children loose from the leading strings. Anything that glitters catches us. Every trap that is set for our unwary feet, we step into. I did. Dropped in. Caught hand and foot,—mind and soul.

*Ethel*—Soul?

*Brent*—Yes.

*Ethel*—Didn't you mean body?

*Brent*—Body, mind and soul.

*Ethel*—Well body anyway.

*Brent*—And for what,—for what,—Life companionship. That is what we build on in marriage. And what did I realize. Hate and wrangling—wrangling. Just as the common herd, with no changes. Wrangle and make it a part of their lives,—a zest to their union. It has been my curse.

*Ethel*—What? Wrangling?

*Brent*—She did not understand.

*Ethel*—You?

*Brent*—My thoughts. My actions.

*Ethel*—How curious.

*Brent*—You mean you would.

*Ethel*—Probably.

*Brent*—I am sure of it. (Tries to take her hand. She pulls it away).

*Ethel*—Tell me more about your wife.

*Brent*—The slightest attention shown to any other woman means a ridiculous humiliating scene.

*Ethel*—Humiliating?

*Brent*—Is not doubt and suspicion humiliating?

*Ethel*—It would be a compliment in some cases.

*Brent*—How?

*Ethel*—It would be a fictitious value on some man.

*Brent*—You would not humiliate me in that way?

*Ethel*—No, I do not think I could. If a man showed a preference for another woman, she would be quite welcome to him.

*Brent*—No man could.

*Ethel*—Let me see,—Were you?—Just married, were you not. Go on.

*Brent*—Then came the baby.

*Ethel*—Ah!

*Brent*—One would think that would change things. But no. Neither of us wanted her. Neither of us loved her. She should come of love and not hate and she is a child of hate. She sits in her little chair. Her small wrinkled and disillusioned face turned to us with eyes watching us accusingly. She submits to carresses as though they were distasteful to her. As if she knew they were lies. At times, she pushes any nearing faces away with her little baby fingers. I shouldn't tell you this. It is terrible. I see it in your face. What are you thinking?

*Ethel*—I am sorry.

*Brent*—For me?

*Ethel*—For your wife.

*Brent*—My wife?

*Ethel*—Yes. Aren't you? No? Are you just sorry for yourself?

*Brent*—You think me purely selfish?

*Ethel*—Naturally I do. Why not be truthful to ourselves some times, eh?

*Brent*—We quarrelled last night,—about you (Ethel looks up at him.)

*Brent*—Gossip has linked our names together. My wife has heard it and put the worst possible construction on it.

*Ethel*—Well?

*Brent*—We said things to each other last night that can never be forgiven or forgotten. I left the house and walked the streets,—hours. I looked my whole life back and through as though it were some strangers' (X's to window and back). I believe we should be taught,—we should be taught when we are young, what marriage really means,—just as we are taught not to steal, to lie or to sin, and in marriage we do all three when we are ill-mated,—we steal affection from some one else,—we lie in our lives and we sin in our relationship.

*Ethel*—Do you mean that you are a thief, a sinner and a liar,—Oh! take some of the blame. Do not put it all on the woman.