

hung over the foot of the bed. For all the change that had taken place in the room during her absence she might have walked out of it only an hour before.

The sun beat on the windows; the lowered blinds produced a kind of yellow twilight; and the room itself had the peculiar, stuffy smell—a smell compounded of over-thick curtains, and furniture long in use, of the warmed wood of the piano, and details of the toilet—which it invariably took on if not freely aired. But most familiar of all was the utter silence that prevailed. The ceiling was so high, the house so massively built, that of all that went on in the upper storeys, no sound was to be heard. The other lodger on this floor, whose room was at the further end of the corridor, banged the flat-door twice a day, otherwise was as good as non-existent; and the old woman herself moved like a phantom in heelless, felt slippers. Louise knew this silence and hated it: she had often writhed under it. It deadened thought, was so heavy that she could feel it; it choked her, laid itself upon her nerves till they throbbled with exasperation. Sometimes she believed that she could hear her own heart beat. And on returning to it this afternoon, she felt as if she were stepping back into a malignantly enchanted palace. Time had stood still here: each thread of her life lay to hand just where she had put it down.

Her lips thinned and contracted. She had taken off her veil on coming in, and was still holding it. Now she threw it from her, and, sinking into a chair, buried her face in her hands.

“Over!—oh God!”

The words rose instinctively to her lips; it seemed as if, for hours, she had been waiting to call something of this kind aloud. What she meant, she could not have told. She was conscious only of resentment at being thus rudely thrust back into surroundings that she hated, into the desperate monotony of her former life. The summer, and all she had hoped from the summer, was behind her—what, in this very room, she had for two days deliberately foretasted in order that none of the pleasures of anticipation should escape her. These past weeks, which now stretched before her memory like a sea of light, were over; they would never come again. And neither was there a single new emotion in store for her, to console her for their loss; she knew it all now—knew him and what he could give her—like a page learned by heart.

hand on Krafft's cheek. If the blow had remained invisible, it might have been more easily forgotten; but he had seen it, as it were, take shape before him.—^aAnd yet again, he felt that the smallest loss of self-control on the part of Krafft would have been enough. But the latter was too proud to give himself away gratuitously: he preferred to take his revenge in the more unconventional ^bway of leaving his friend to bear the ignominy alone.

Maurice lay ^clong stabbing himself with these and similar thoughts. Only little by little did the tumult that had been roused in him abate. ^dGrowing calmer, he began to hark back to the starting-point of the affair. Then, and just the more vividly for the break in his memory, the ^ebrutal words Krafft had said ^freturned to ^ghim, one by one, and lacerated him. ^hSimultaneously, he felt an intense bitterness against Louise. She was the ⁱroot and cause of all his ^jsuffering; were it not for her, he might still be leading a quiet, decent life. ^kShe was answerable for everything that had taken place this evening; it was her doing that he was compelled to part, bit by bit, with his self-respect. Not once in all the months they had been together, had the smallest good come to him through her. Nothing but misery.

^lNow that he had brought the blame home to her, he had no further rest where he was. He must go to her, and tax her with it, repeat what Krafft had said, to her very face. She should suffer, too—and the foretasted anguish and pleasure of ^mbitter words and hot recriminations dulled all other feelings in him.

He ⁿrose and went. He was chilled to the bone from his ^oexposure, and one hand, which had hung down ^pfrom the bench, was ^qmuddy and sticky from grasping handfuls of dead leaves.

It was past eleven ^ro'clock; Louise was in bed and asleep. He entered, regardless of noise; she wakened with a start, and, at the

^aAnd . . . that] Or if it had only been returned, it would have helped to lessen the weight of his present abasement—oh, he would have given all he had to have felt a return blow on his own face. Even *TS2R* Or, had it only . . . face! Even *EI*⁺ ^bway] fashion *EI*⁺ ^clong] *Om.* *EI*⁺ ^dGrowing . . . affair.] *Om.* *TS2R*⁺ ^ebrutal] gross *EI*⁺ ^freturned] came back *TS2R*⁺ ^ghim . . . him.] *TS2R*⁺ ^hSimultaneously] Recalling them *EI*⁺ ⁱroot and] *Om.* *TS2R*⁺ ^jsuffering] sufferings *EI*⁺ ^kShe . . . it] It *TS2R*⁺ ^lNow . . . her,] Now *TS2R* Now, *EI*⁺ ^mbitter words and] *Om.* *TS2R*⁺ ⁿrose . . . was] rose, *TS2R*⁺ ^oexposure, and] exposure; *TS2R*⁺ ^pfrom] over *EI*⁺ ^qmuddy] wet *EI*⁺ ^ro'clock . . . she] o'clock. Louise *TS2R*⁺