

had never before tried to attack her. She had absolute mastery over him, and he usually behaved with her as gently as any of the other cats. With himself it was quite different. He was accustomed to Hephæstus springing at him; but then he beat him hard with a great stick until he was so sore that he could neither stand up nor lie down.

"I have always implored Madame to carry something heavier than that silly little whip, and now it's all over. She will never be able to control him again. Hephæstus will have to be killed, and I will be desolate. Ach, what a misfortune!"

He began to weep.

"Good God!" I cried, "you don't mean to say that you're sorry for the brute."

"One can't help being fond of him—*das arme Ding*! We have been for five years inseparable companions."

I had no sympathy to fling away on him at that moment.

"How do you account for his springing at Madame to-night? That's all I want to know."

"She must have been thinking of something else when she grabbed him, *gnädiger Herr*. For she missed her grip. Then he fell and was frightened, and she must have lost her nerve. Hephæstus knew it and sprang. That is always the case when wild animals turn. All accidents happen like that."

His words filled me with a new and sickening dread. "*She must have been thinking of something else.*" Of what else but of my presence there? That stupid, selfish wave of the handkerchief! I sat gnawing my hands and cursing myself.

The ambulance arrived. Men hurried past my box. I waited again in agony of mind. At last the porter came and cleared the passage and doorway of loungers, and I heard the tread of footsteps and gruff directions.