

promised the Rector's wife, without first consulting him, to take part in a bazaar which she was getting up for the Coal Fund for the poor. He had struck her, and he had announced his object to teach her a lesson that she should not forget.

Once again she laughed as she had laughed before, recalling those words that had a significance beyond what he meant to attach to them.

No; she would not forget the lesson that he had taught her—nor would he.

She was startled out of her reverie by the knock of her maid at the room door. There was a dinner party at Lord Altonhurst's that night, and the maid had come to dress her for it.

She recovered herself in a moment.

"I had no idea it was so late, Marie," she said. "I was lying down—one of my headaches. I don't think that I should venture out. I shall write and explain—that—that—no; I'll not. I shall go, I shall be all right when I get there. What shall I wear? Am I too pale this evening for the cerise with the Mechlin lace, Marie?"

"Madame is beyond doubt a little pale," replied the maid looking at her critically. "But that's no reason why—but what is the matter with your forehead, Madame? It is a wound—a scar!"

"I had actually forgotten what it was gave me the headache," said Mrs. Lacon. "I got it in the drawing-room after tea. I was stooping—you know that bit of loose ormolu on the Sevres table—it should have been fastened long ago. I meant to tell Simmonds about it."

"It is no more than a scratch," said the maid. "It is no disfigurement. It will attract to Madame the sympathy of the table of Mylord. Everyone will say, 'How brave of Mrs. Lacon to come!' Isn't it so? But I shall touch it with a camel's brush to conceal the blue of the bruise. These little accidents lend themselves to a sympathetic word or two."

Mrs. Lacon said she had not

thought of it in that light. (She wondered how much Marie knew—how much Marie guessed.)

She felt that she had never looked better in all her life as she stood in front of the big cheval glass. The Mechlin lace which she inherited from her mother was priceless, and the old Du Barry rose silk that made a foundation for the bodice gave an artistic relief to the delicate cream of the lace. Her fair hair had been treated by the adroit fingers of Marie in the simple way that suited her style of beauty, and looking in the glass she was satisfied with her appearance. Even Marie, who was much more difficult to please, was satisfied.

He took his seat beside her in the big Mercedes as if nothing particular had happened, and he made no allusion to the incident of the afternoon, though he did not refrain from speech.

"Remind me to write to the motor people to-morrow about the new magneto," he said. "I'll be away the most of the day at Heathercroft's. I've promised to try that Irish hunter that someone let him in for. The fool thinks he knows something about horses. This is the third crock he has brought within the year. Remind me in the morning, do you hear?"

"I'll not forget," she replied.

"Eh, what—what is that you say?" he asked quickly.

"I'll not forget," she replied. "You will write after breakfast, I suppose."

"Immediately after breakfast—if you remind me," he replied.

That was the extent of their conversation on their way to Lord Altonhurst's place. It seemed as if he had forgotten that a few hours earlier he had struck her to the ground with a blow of his fist.

As usual the dinner party was followed by a dance. It took place not in the big ballroom but in the hall, but the hall was large enough to allow sixty or seventy couples waltzing without being overcrowded, and this night there were only twenty on the