

"My meaning is as plain as yours," she replied. "You said you hoped that you had taught me a lesson that I could not forget. Well, your hope is realized. I shall not forget."

She walked to the other door, opened it and left the room without another glance in the direction of her husband.

When she reached her room upstairs she flung herself upon her bed overwhelmed by a sense of the humiliation of the moment. The thought that she, the daughter of one of the proudest families in the land, had been subjected to an insult such as none of her name had ever submitted to without a drawing of swords, was unendurable to her. She struck the pillow wildly with her clenched hands as she lay face downward upon it. She could utter no word; she could not cry out—the agony that she suffered was beyond such relief. She could only beat her pillow; and the motion of her arms as she lay there suggested the frantic efforts of "some strong swimmer in his agony". Truly she felt that the water had gone over her head. She felt herself sunken down to the deepest depths of humiliation and unable to do anything to help herself—to do anything that would give her back her self respect.

For a full half hour the woman lay there before her tears came—tears that brought no relief to her; and when they ceased her sobs shook the bed on which she lay.

With curious suddenness her sobs also ceased. There was a silence that lasted more than a minute; and then she sprang from the bed and stood in the middle of the room as though listening intently to a voice from outside. But it was not to such a voice she was listening; it was to a voice from within that whispered to her:

"You fool! think of all you have submitted to at the hands of that man—all without a word—without a thought of being revenged upon him! And you have it in your power to gain happiness and to repay him

for his treatment of you. You have it in your power to humiliate him as he has humiliated you and yet you stand here under his roof awaiting his next blow!"

That was what the voice said to her and when she had thought upon its words for some time, she laughed, and flung the handkerchief with which she had dried her tears into a corner of the room.

"A fool—a fool indeed!" she cried. "A fool to submit to an intolerable bondage when I have it in my power to free myself—to gain my freedom and my revenge at once. He told me that I should not forget the lesson that he taught me. He was right—I said so—I will show him that I shall not forget it—never—never!"

Again she laughed and this time there was no bitterness in her laugh; it was as joyous as a girl's in the presence of her lover.

The room was in twilight. She switched on the lights at each side of her dressing-table and put her face close to the mirror so that she might examine the mark made by the blow upon her temple. She saw that it was an ugly bruise, for he had dealt it not with his open hand but with his fist—a brutal bruise; the skin was discoloured but not broken. She was able to examine it now in quite an impersonal spirit, just as she would examine an accidental bruise. She was able to go to her medicine chest and find the bottle of the particular ointment which she thought most suitable to apply to her wound and when she had applied it she dusted it with the medicinal powder in the right way, and without the least show of emotion. When this was done, she smoothed down the disordered coverlet of the bed, and seated herself in a snug chair by her fire, picking up the book which she had been reading previously and finding her place.

She felt happier than she had done for more than a whole year.

But she had overestimated the strength of her resolution. The book