

guest entered the room, "I may as well tell you at once that Aldous's marriage is put off."

"Put off!" exclaimed Lady Winterbourne, bewildered. "Why it was only Thursday that I was discussing it all with Marcella, and she told me everything was settled."

"Thursday! — I dare say!" said Miss Raeburn, stitching away with fiery energy, "but since then a poacher has murdered one of our gamekeepers, which makes all the difference."

"What *do* you mean, Agneta?"

"What I say, my dear. The poacher was Marcella's friend, and she cannot now distract her mind from him sufficiently to marry Aldous, though every plan he has in the world will be upset by her proceedings. And as for his election, you may depend upon it she will never ask or know whether he gets in next Monday or no. That goes without saying. She is meanwhile absorbed with the poacher's defence, *Mr. Wharton*, of course, conducting it. This is your modern young woman, my dear — typical, I should think."

Miss Raeburn turned her buttonhole in fine style, and at lightning speed, to show the coolness of her mind, then with a rattling of all her locket, looked up and waited for Lady Winterbourne's reflections.

"She has often talked to me of these people — the Hurds," said Lady Winterbourne, slowly. "She has always made special friends with them. Don't you remember she told us about them that day she first came back to lunch?"

"Of course I remember! That day she lectured