

Author of 'The Devil's Rock' and 'The Mystery of the Old Mill'.

His words had revealed to her with lightning vividness the full horror and hopelessness of her position.

"Where could it all end save in greater misery for them all? And then she reproached herself bitterly for having sought to escape from the meshes of the net which fate had woven round her."

"You can say what you like. It is immaterial." He glanced at her angrily and muttered an oath as he rose for the time in which she spoke.

"There is no time now for losing our tempers, or else you'll make me do so with that infernal sneering manner," he cried angrily.

"Go on," she said quietly. "That means that you can at any moment be put on your trial for bigamy and have to face the whole world from the prisoner's dock, and what is more, that I can put you there and will if you drive me to it."

"I am waiting to know what you want. I have no doubt that I want your bullying cowardice or your cunning."

"What I want is easily said. I want to clear away from your path the difficulties that threaten to ruin you."

"And I mean to show you the only way in which it can be done," he continued, not heeding the interruption.

"Sir Jeffrey has settled on you a good many thousands of pounds, and as I happen to know, he has his wife like a loving husband should, left you everything that he could leave without touching the entailed estates."

"What's that?" he cried. He rushed to the door and tried to open it quickly, but in his haste fumbled with the handle and then threw it open and looked out.

"How dare you lay your hands on my wife?" "I answer no man who speaks to me in that tone and backs his words with a weapon while I am defenseless," he replied, with a good assumption of boldness.

"This is no weapon," said the baronet angrily, "in any such sense as that. It is merely a horse-whip for the back of a dastardly coward who dares to strike a woman!"

"You are right," she answered steadily; "there is work, but it is not and shall not be murder."

"You are much wiser if you didn't use such ugly terms. You seem to forget that half the actions of the whole world depend for their respectability upon their description."

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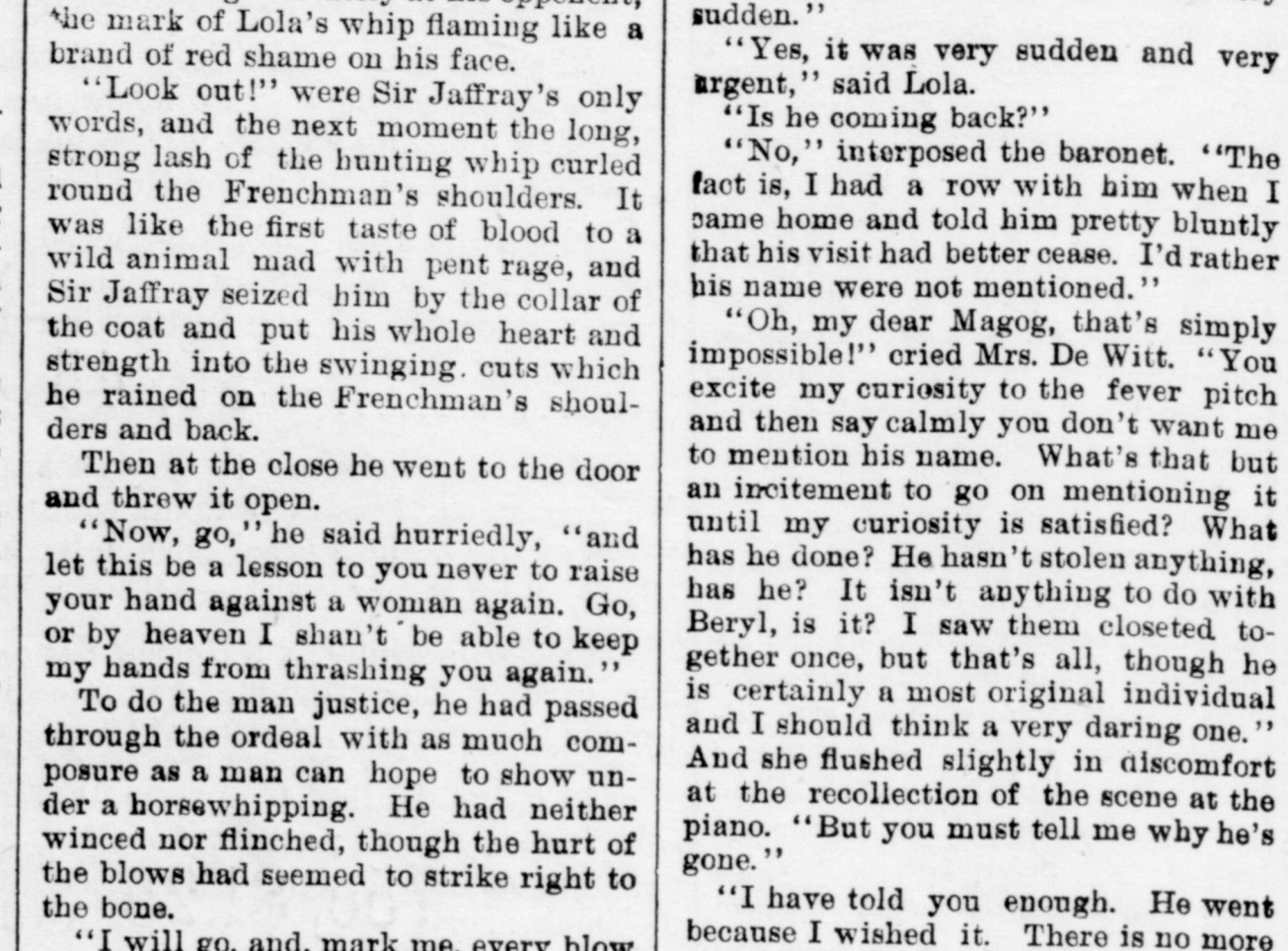
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Lola threw herself in a long, low easy chair.

Lola threw herself in a long, low easy chair. "I have told you enough. He went because I wished it. There is no more to be said."

"That means I am to ask you to favor," she said. "There are, as you couple of days ago, I have no end of things to see to. Yet I am anxious to hear what is doing at Leger's Court with Mr. Leger."

"You haven't the knack as yet, Lola, of making your house very attractive to your guests," said Mrs. De Witt ungenerally. "I have no end of things to see to. Yet I am anxious to hear what is doing at Leger's Court with Mr. Leger."

"I hardly know. I think he meant to try to kill me. He insisted me. You saw that mark on his face. I did it. I struck him with my riding whip. It was then he attacked me."

"Did the man dare to make love to you?" asked Sir Jeffrey, the thought driving his eyebrows together in a heavy frown and making him clench his teeth.

"I was always afraid of his coming here," said Lola evasively. "You know I said at the time I did not want him. Oh! He is loathsome and dangerous."

"Never mind, sweetheart. Pluck up courage. He won't trouble us any more," said Sir Jeffrey in a much lighter tone than he felt and wishing to cheer her up.

"I will stay," she said and then looked his arm. "I do not wish it," said the baronet firmly. But Lola would not yield.

"I would rather," she answered. "As you will, then," said Sir Jeffrey shortly. Then he turned to Pierre Turrian, who had been watching the pair closely and thinking rapidly what to do.



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