

any woman of intuitions. She cried aloud dolorously:

"He stole the roses from her pore cheeks! Oh, the everlasting wickedness of some men!"

Quinney smiled derisively.

"And, oh! the everlasting foolishness of some women! Mabel Dredge still wants him."

James, floundering in quicksands, attempted to lie his way out of them.

"It isn't true."

"Pah!" said Quinney. "You're nicely decorated, and there's a smooth buttery glaze to you, but your paste is rotten! Now, let's get to business. Posy and her mother think that I value things more than persons. Here"—he snatched up Hunsaker's cheque—"is a *thing* worth eleven hundred pounds. I offer you this, James Miggott, and with it Mabel Dredge, who prefers flashy stuff. You must choose, and choose quick, between Mabel, *plus* this cheque, and Posy in her go-to-meetin' clothes, *plus* her mother, who's right, by Gum, not to trust her alone with you."

Personality can be irresistible. This little man, with all his disabilities, held these three persons spellbound under the magic of his voice and manner. Posy's bosom was heaving with emotion; Susan stared, open-eyed and open-mouthed, at the lover of Laburnum Row, her Joe, miraculously restored to her. James glared at his master, recognizing him as such, defiant still, but stricken dumb. Quinney chuckled.

"The cheque won't be on offer long, my lad.