

he? What a gift it is to be able to sing."

"Yes, but after all, I think I would rather be muscular than musical."

"Would you? Men are so strange. You are as bad as my father—he worships muscle."

"Which is your father, Miss Haughton? Is he here?"

"Yes. Let me see whether you can pick him out."

I looked at her earnestly to impress her face on my mind. It was a strong, vigorous, sincere face, and I did not object to the process at all. Nor did she. A friendship had sprung up between us. Then I looked round the room.

"I see him," I said: "he is talking to Judge Wilmot."

"But I don't know Judge Wilmot."

"Well, you see that shortish, sturdily-built man with iron-grey hair and beard, and a very emphatic manner, who looks as though he were just giving judgment?"

Her eyes went in the direction of mine.

"Yes, you are like a witch; that is he," she said. "Now isn't he a dear?"

"Of course he is; how could he help it, when he is your father," I said.

"You musn't be foolish."

"So he adores muscle? Well he may, he is evidently muscular."

I could not help sizing him up with reference to Spotley. I could not help sympathizing with Spotley on the hypothesis that he had once ventured to regard him in the light of a future father-in-law.

"Ah, he should see Spotley, at our bank," I said with affected carelessness. But as I said it I looked full into her eyes. She was off her guard, and her face, for one half second, was an index of her soul. It expressed surprise, enquiry, anger and sadness, all at once.

"You know Spotley?" I said remorselessly. I mean Reginald Spotley. He is at our bank. I am in the

—— bank. My uncle, our host, is its president."

"Oh yes, of course; I remember."

"Spotley is a fine fellow," I continued, "curious in some of his ways, but really a fine fellow—a gentleman every inch of him."

Her glance repaid me. I knew at once that she loved him.

"What made me mention him now was the fact of his being an extraordinary boxer. Women don't appreciate that sort of thing, but Spotley is an A 1 athlete, no mistake about it. Knocks down men double his own size."

"Indeed?" she said earnestly.

"A fact, upon my honor. People come into the bank to see him."

"You astonish me," she said.

"Why? do you know anything to the contrary of him?"

"I always believed him brave and manly at heart. But they are preparing for the dance."

Just then some one came up and claimed her as his partner, and our talk ended. But I determined to observe her parent. By and by I was introduced to him. I found him a vulgar, irascible, good-hearted man of about fifty-two, of the kind usually called a "sport." He had made money, and he worshipped his daughter. These were the two pivots on which his life turned. He was an old acquaintance of my uncle's, and had a prodigious respect for him. My relationship to the President of the

—— Bank made me *persona grata* to Mr. Haughton. We sat together watching the dancers and chatting affably. The old man had no reticence. He was about the roughest diamond I ever came across.

"That's my daughter, young man, that one there with the diamond bracelets. See 'em?"

"They are not so fine as she is," I replied.

"Ha! so you are took with her, like all the rest, eh? Well, I tell you you're right. Features, her