

A WOMAN'S REASON.

CHAPTER I.

THE day had been very oppressive, and at half-past five in the afternoon the heat had scarcely abated, to the perception of Mr. Joshua Harkness, as he walked heavily up the Park street mall in Boston Common. When he came opposite the Brewer Fountain, with its four seasons of severe drought, he stopped short, and stared at the bronzed group with its insufficient dribble, as if he had never seen it before. Then he felt infirmly about the ground with his stick, stepped aside, and sank tremulously into one of the seats at the edge of the path. The bench was already partly occupied by a young man and a young woman; the young man had his arm thrown along the back of the seat behind the young woman; their heads were each tilted toward the other, and they were making love almost as frankly in that public place as they might in the seclusion of a crowded railway train. They both glanced at the intruder, and exchanged smiles, apparently of pity for his indecency, and then went on with their love-making; while Mr. Harkness, unconscious of his offence, stared eagerly out over the Common, and from time to time made gestures or signals with his stick in that direction. It was that one day of the week when people are not shouted at by a multitude of surly sign-boards to keep off the grass, and the turf was everywhere dotted with lolling and lounging groups. Perhaps, to compensate for the absence of the