

Angela's Business

a press-agent clearly. Requested to explain this dark saying, he gave a light disparaging account of his only offer, stating that Appleholt Brothers, before accepting his book, had desired him to rewrite it throughout, completely revolutionizing the character of his heroine and omitting not less than fifty thousand words, including the existing plot.

Mary glanced up at him. "I'm taking this with a little salt — shall I?"

The author laughed. "Well, it was about like that. Still," he added, as if there were such a thing as carrying modesty too far, — "of course I could do what they want easily enough — in a month, I think."

"You don't seem excited at all. But you are n't going to do it?"

"On the contrary, I have now formally changed the name of my old novel to 'Bandwomen,' and — put it in the Morgue."

"The Morgue?"

"A repository for deceased manuscripts, recently founded by my relative."

"Oh!" said she, slowly. And, after a pause: "You don't feel any longer that it's good?"

"I *do* feel that it's good! I'd swear it — before a publishers' convention. But — it does n't happen to be the story I want to write any more. I'm not interested in it."

There was another pause.

"It does n't represent you now, I suppose? And the one you do want to write? — you're writing it, are n't you? Judge Blenso says you work till all hours of the night — and this is going to be your masterpiece."

"I shall have to caution the Judge about this, I see. We won't have a friend left, between us."

"But I'm interested, very much so. I've wondered . . .