

The great case collapsed like a bubble after it was discovered that nobody was poisoned. Michael Sewell laughed very heartily when the news first reached him, and said that he was aware of it all along, for he had tasted the stuff in the bottle after taking it from his wife's hands; but the only person disposed to believe him was that wife herself, who considered it extremely probable, and just in Michael's style.

There was a grand unlocking of police cells, and a grand procession therefrom, Michael Sewell and Dorcas, Angelo and his indignant father, and the captain of the "Mary Grey"—the latter vowing that he would make a case of damages for his detention; but exceedingly glad, nevertheless, that he had got so well out of a troublesome piece of business. Concerning the skirmish between Angelo and Brian in the boat, that for ever remained a mystery to those not deeply concerned. Angelo was silent, and Brian said, laughingly, to a few who were inquisitive, that when he got better, he should consider the practicability of taking out a summons for the assault, only, unfortunately, he had no witnesses to support the charge. To Angelo he was above all jesting. The love of this weak-minded young fellow was to be respected for all time, even if his jealousy was to be deplored.

Angelo had sobered down and become a grave and thoughtful man. Eccentricity had died out with his own violent dash at revenge. The rivals had become friends, and Angelo was grateful that Brian's life had been spared. The clergyman's son was not of the stuff that malefactors are made, and he had approached so closely to the verge of crime that to be saved at the eleventh hour was to render him a stronger and a better man henceforth.

'You will not desert us, Angelo,' said Brian to him one day, when there was a rumour of the date's being fixed for Brian's marriage with Mabel; 'you will show your friendship and true courage—your forgiveness even—by being with us then?'

Angelo wavered.

'It may be beyond my strength—but I should like to be there,' he answered.

'You will come—for our sakes as well as your own,' said Mabel, who was, however,

a little nervous of the experiment which Brian had suggested.

Angelo fell into his own odd, embarrassed manner which had been missing from him for a long time. It was a good sign, the lovers thought.

'Thank you—I—I think I'll come. If I might be allowed to—to give Brian away, I should feel more easy in my mind,' he said.

'To give Brian away!' exclaimed the bewildered Mabel.

'Oh! I forgot, it's the giving the bride away, isn't it?' he stammered; 'well, it's about the same thing, only I should have liked to pass Brian over, if only to show there's no jealousy left in my heart.'

'Wouldn't giving Mabel away answer the same end?' suggested Brian.

'Well—yes—but Mabel might not like me to do that,' he said, looking at her wistfully.

'Are you not the oldest friend I have in England?' asked Mabel.

'Thank you,' Angelo answered.

So Angelo Salmon gave the bride away, to the astonishment of many of his friends, and was as brave and strong as Brian had prophesied that he would be. He was proud of his task, too—it was a sign that Mabel had forgiven him completely, and his heart was lighter and not heavier in consequence.

'I give her to one who will be strong enough to protect her against the troubles of this world,' he said at a later hour; 'I should have been always too weak for that, I am afraid.'

But we are precipitating a crisis by a few lines, and ere the curtain is rung down upon our characters, we would for the last time speak of the strange adventures of the money which Mabel Westbrook had brought from America to benefit the Halfdays.

It was in Penton, where our story opens, that it closes. Where the shadows began, in the twilight of one April day, to steal over the life of Mabel Westbrook, the brighter life commenced and the darkness sank back beyond the hills. It was in the old lodgings too, on the Penton Road where Mabel had taken refuge for a week or two before her marriage, that Dorcas had proved at last that Michael Sewell had his fits of penitence, and was not so thorough a scamp as every one acquainted with him was dis-