

A BEAUTIFUL POSSIBILITY.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of the fairest of the West Indian islands a simple but elegant villa lifted its gabled roofs amidst a bewildering wealth of tropical beauty. Brilliant birds flitted among the foliage, gold and silver fishes darted to and fro in a large stone basin of a fountain which threw its glittering spray over the lawn in front of the house, and on the vine-shaded veranda hammocks hung temptingly, and low wicker chairs invited to repose.

Behind the jalousies of the library the owner of the villa sat at a desk, busily writing. He was a slight, delicate looking man, with an expression of careless good humor upon his face and an easy air of assurance according with the interior of the room which bespoke a cultured taste and the ability to gratify it. Books were everywhere, rare bits of china, curios and ex-