

that there were but two contingencies which he felt might thwart his plans: her marriage to Wilmot Allen, or his own untimely death. And he feared the latter but little. The former, however, had at times seemed imminent to those who spied upon the daily life of the heiress for him, and in lending money to Wilmot he was taking a first step toward making it impossible. For Barbara herself Blizzard had at this time no more feeling than for a pawn upon a chess-board. It pleased his sense of fitness to know she was beautiful; and to be told that she was like sunshine in her father's house.

"What has become of her?" he said.

"Of Miss Ferris?" Wilmot did not care to discuss her with a stranger. But unfortunately there were fifteen thousand dollars of the stranger's money in his inside pocket. "She became a great favorite in society," he said, "and then dropped out to study art."

"Painting?" The legless man knew perfectly well, but it suited him to make inquiries. "Music?"

"Sculpture," said Wilmot shortly.

"Is she succeeding?"

"She works very hard, and she has talent."

"That is not enthusiastic."

"You mustn't ask me; I'm not an art critic."

"What a pity."

"A pity that I'm not an art critic?"

"No. A pity for a beautiful girl to do anything but exist."