

"Considering all things, no," said Mabel thoughtfully.

Mr. Gregory Salmon blushed ; but she was not thinking of him.

"Had I been prepared for so complete a collapse of my property," added Mabel in conclusion, "I should have stayed away from a place which you were kind enough to press me to call home. But I was waiting for some portion of the wreck to drift to shore."

"It is a very terrible blow to you," said Mr. Salmon.

Mabel laughed so pleasantly that Mr. Salmon regarded her for a moment with amazement.

"Not at all," she said ; "I never cared for money. It would not have done me any good, or brought me one true friend. Good-bye, Mr. Salmon, and once more—thank you."

Gregory Salmon felt a small-souled individual as he took the little hand of his guest in his and bowed over it politely. He was glad she was going, but he was more glad that it was of her own free will, and at no hint from his wife.

"Good-bye, Miss Westbrook, if you are really determined to depart so hastily," he said.

"Yes, quite determined."

"And you will return to—Penton, perhaps?" he asked.

"I don't know," answered Mabel ; "I shall make up my mind as I go along."

She stooped and kissed Mrs. Salmon, and then went away from St. Lazarus ; and the brethren doffed their caps in mute respect to her as she passed them with a smile and friendly nod of farewell.

One brother of the Noble Poor, who had held aloof from the rest, Mabel discovered at the carriage door, talking energetically to Dorcas, and shaking his head with more vehemence than seemed necessary. This was Peter Scone, the senior member of the fraternity.

"She is a cross-grained vixen, my lady, Heaven knows that," he said, as if in explanation of his excitement.

"I don't believe it, Mr. Scone," answered Mabel cheerfully.

"She will not tell me where you both are going," he said.

"Is it necessary?"

"It may be some day," he replied eva-

sively ; "it may be very soon. Will you read this as you go along, please?"

He thrust a torn scrap of paper into her hands, and tottered away under the archway of the Cardinal's Tower, like a man in great haste to get from her. Mabel entered the carriage and turned her back upon the Hospital of St. Lazarus for good. Her new life lay beyond it—strange and unknown and incomprehensible—but there was no shadow of it on her fair young face.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ANGELO SEEKS ADVICE.

The Penton Museum had been closed to the general public some two hours or more, and its curator had dismissed the last official—a certain Mrs. Ironbrace, whose mission was to dust and wash and scrub at the corporate expense, and to do generally for Mr. Halfday—when the noisy bell of the establishment announced a visitor. On that particular evening Brian had settled down to work ; there were more papers than usual on the table of his room, the lamp had been carefully trimmed and set on the right side of his desk, the desk was open and Brian was writing busily, covering many pages of foolscap with a thick and almost illegible scrawl, when the summons from without disturbed the flow of his ideas. Brian Halfday set his pen aside and listened. He was unprepared for visitors ; he had considered himself a man without any friends beyond his bookshelves before Mabel Westbrook came to England ; he had been reserved, austere, and studious to a degree that had aged and ossified him, and there had been so few calls at the museum after business hours that a ringing of the bell came as a novelty and a surprise. Still, he was a man who had been long ago prepared for emergencies, one who knew the value of time, and had made his arrangements accordingly. Serviless, with a horror of office-keepers and charwomen, he had arranged, after Dorcas had resigned her post as housekeeper to him and gone to St. Lazarus to nurse her grandfather, a system of communication with the outside world when occasions like the present necessitated a parley with it. He did not move from his