

"What is the matter?" she enquired, raising her hand. "Are you ill?"

"Ill? in body, no; in mind, yes. I thought I had at last found my ideal in woman, and only came in time to see the homage of another accepted, after his six months' probation."

"Are you then in love with Agatha, too?" she asked, with a little quiver in her voice, while a film gathered before her eyes.

"Agatha! I'm talking about you, not your daughter."

She saw in a moment the mistake he had made, and looking up at him, as he stood like stern fate before her, asked, "How long have you been in the porch?"

"The last half hour, madam," he returned sternly.

"Then you heard Mr. Berrick propose for—"

"Your hand," he said bitterly.

"You are mistaken," she returned softly, "it was for Agatha, and I imposed a six months' probation upon him in case——"

He didn't wait to hear why, but threw himself upon the settee at her side, and looking into her faithful brown eyes, he poured out the love and fear he had suffered, thinking that Berrick was preferred before him.

"Is'nt it like the fate I prophesied upon the piano, the first evening I met you. Did you hear what I said then?" he enquired in his abrupt way.

She smiled at him, and he seized her hands, asking if he might hope.

"Let me tell you one thing first. By my late husband's will, I lose everything if I marry again."

"So much the better. I only want you. I have plenty for both."

"I have something to tell you, too, and after you have