

said Angelo, "and after all that you have said against her."

"I have merely surmised—I know nothing against Miss Westbrook. Until this morning I have never suspected her for an instant."

"She should have been above suspicion always."

Angelo turned abruptly from his father, and went on across the meadows to the country road lying beyond the hedge-rows in the distance. He had promised Mabel that he would take a walk—she had wished to get rid of him that morning, and thought that a stroll would do him good, and he would set about it at once. He wanted time to consider the new position of affairs before Mabel left St. Lazarus, and he wanted that time to himself, and away from his father, whom he left looking after him. Mr. Gregory Salmon made no attempt to follow; he was wise enough to see the futility of pressing his arguments more closely on his son that day. They would have their weight in due course, for Angelo was mild and tractable, and there was no necessity for haste now. Angelo was walking steadily from home and Mabel Westbrook, and was comparatively safe in consequence. What might happen before he was back to luncheon, who could tell?

If the Master of St. Lazarus had already sketched forth a programme in his mind, it was disposed of by a prompter course of action on the part of the lady principally concerned. As he walked across the quadrangle, he saw that Mabel's boxes were at the front door, and that Hodsmen the porter was bringing round a barrow for them. The Brethren of the Noble Poor, interested in the fitting, had collected in a group upon the grass to talk of it—like a wheezy chorus in an ancient play. Much of the history of Adam Halfday's life and death had found its way to his old companions, and the American girl's connection with the story had afforded food for comment here. The loss of her fortune was not known to these old men, who had learned to regard Mabel with awe and admiration, as a guardian genius of St. Lazarus, who might benefit each brother in his turn. At the outer gates, Miss Westbrook's hired carriage stopped the way, and in the carriage Dorcas—who had accompanied Mabel to the Hospital—waited for her patroness, and was dull and stolid.

Mr. Salmon passed into the house, and found Mabel Westbrook equipped for travelling, and sitting by the side of his better half, who had been evidently weeping.

Mabel met him with a bright smile as he entered. This was as it should be. She was parting amicably. Mrs. Salmon had managed a delicate piece of business with more judgment than he had given her credit for.

"I could not leave St. Lazarus without bidding you good-bye, Mr. Salmon, and thanking you for all your hospitality," said Mabel as he entered.

"Going to leave us!" replied Mr. Salmon with an affectation of surprise that was very badly done.

"Somewhat unceremoniously, perhaps," said Mabel; "but I have been here under false pretences, as I have been telling this good friend of mine, who begs me to remain."

"Does she, though?—dear me," ejaculated the Master. "Well, we shall have luncheon in half an hour," he added with a dash; "you will not go till then?"

"I should have waited till your return, Mr. Salmon, and only till your return," was Mabel's answer. "I have said good-bye to this lady and your son."

"Have you seen Angelo?" exclaimed the Master.

"Mine was a farewell in disguise to him," said Mabel, "and I think it was as well. He would not judge me harshly for leaving without the formality of an adieu. Remember me to him, please," she added, as she turned to the mother and rested her hand upon her shoulder.

"I wish you would not go away so suddenly—as if—as if we had done something to offend you," said the Master's wife. "Mr. Salmon, this is quite a voluntary act of Mabel's; I have not said a word to her."

"Why should you?" answered Mabel. "Is it likely that you would so quickly after my misfortunes, as the world will term them presently. No, no; I give you credit for more kindness and charity, although it is my duty none the less to take the initiative."

"You have acted with great decision of character, Miss Westbrook," said Mr. Salmon, "and have certainly surprised us. But it may be for the best. Considering all things, I cannot blame you very much for the step you have taken."