

Mr. Romney came along and showed the selfish egoism of the artist."

Mary murmured: "Mother —"

Mrs. Moreland waved her to silence. "I must say that he tried to atone."

"Please —" her daughter began.

"Now these Western millionaires have finished the work. They have worn you to the bone."

"Oh, no," said Mary. "Oh, no! You don't know what you are saying."

"I am your mother," said Mrs. Moreland magnificently, and leaving her chair she came over to Mary's side, and put her hand on Mary's shoulder, and looked down at her. She was becoming superb again. She was mounting her pinnacle, and Mary was small and insignificant before her.

"I am your mother, and I am going to exercise my authority and protect my child."

Mary looked up at her in blank amazement, but she could not be antagonised or displeased, because on her mother's face, blended with magnificence, was still the softened expression.

"I want you to rest," said her mother; "and I am going to try to find some sort of employment — some ladylike employment in New York — companion or something like that — and see if I can't take care of my own child for a while."

Her stern lips broke into the most affectionate smile they had ever worn. The ridiculous words and the useless proposition did not destroy the effect of Mrs. Moreland's sacrifice.

"It's very kind of you, mother," Mary began, "very kind, indeed."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Moreland shortly; "it's nothing of the sort. It is my duty, and I won't disguise from you, Mary, that it is also a great pleasure."