

and that you are strange, and—a little clumsy, perhaps. You don't mind my saying this?"

"Not at all."

"It is very rude, I know," continued Mabel, thoughtfully; "but you must forgive me till I know exactly what I am saying."

"Certainly I will."

"Thank you," said Mabel; "what band is that playing outside the house now?"

"I'll see in a minute. Try and rest."

"Yes, I shall be glad to rest," answered Mabel, wearily.

She closed her eyes and drifted into dreamland, and thence to a deep refreshing sleep which added one more item to the strength she had been near losing for ever. She woke up clear and inquisitive, if a little sharp in her method of asking questions, and when Dorcas entered noiselessly in the evening and approached her bedside, she smiled, and tried to reach her hand towards her.

"I am glad to see you, Dorcas," said Mabel.

Dorcas turned to Mrs. Salmon with a face full of light and pleasure.

"She is much better—she is getting well."

"Yes," was the reply, "I think she is."

The next day Mabel was stronger, but sadder. The truth had come back; she remembered the whole story now, and how it had ended with the death of Adam Halfday, the man whose good luck had come to him with the last breath in his body. The world became very grey and dim to her, and her heart sank with her coming strength. She had failed in her mission—she had killed Adam Halfday instead of raising him from the poverty of his life to independence. She had completely failed in all that she had undertaken to perform. Adam had died rich without touching a penny of his money, which was lying in his name in Penton Bank. What had become of his bank-book, she wondered; she had taken it from her pocket, and then had fallen with it to the ground. It was of no great consequence: the Halfdays that were left in the world would come into their rights, and there would be no one to dispute them.

The day that followed this saw Mabel on a couch, by permission of the doctor, who had allowed leave of absence from bed for two hours; on the next day she could walk

across the room, leaning on Dorcas Halfday's arm. From that time there set in convalescence steadily, and Mabel Westbrook was soon looking something like her old bright self.

The invalid was enabled to make use of a small sitting-room, adjoining the bed-room to which she had been taken after Adam Halfday's death, and here she made arrangements for the future, and received, by cautious degrees, those friends who had been anxious concerning her safety. The Reverend Gregory Salmon congratulated her very profusely on her recovery. Mrs. Salmon shed tears of joy over it, being a feeling woman, but watery; and Angelo gesticulated in dumb show for a while, and expressed all his rejoicings by pantomime, until a lump in his throat melted by degrees.

Mabel was grateful for their interest in her; they seemed to have become her friends, these Salmons, in spite of herself, and she did not feel so entirely alone in the world to which she had returned as she did before her Sunday morning's ride. She was well enough to decline, very kindly, the further friendly services of the chaplain's wife, whom she was keeping from her husband's home and sundry small duties connected with the Hospital of St. Lazarus; she parted with many thanks and kisses, and promises to make the Master's house her home again for a few days, and she insisted upon Angelo's returning with his parents. She asked that as a favour, when Angelo announced, somewhat timidly, his intention of remaining at Datchet Bridge and escorting her to Penton when she was strong enough for the journey.

"I am coming back with Dorcas Halfday," said Mabel, "and your parents have scarcely seen you since your return from America."

"But——"

"I would greatly prefer your not remaining, Mr. Angelo," she said, interrupting him very kindly and firmly; "people will inquire for what reason you wait for me, and I should dislike that exceedingly. Therefore," she added, still more kindly, "you will go to oblige me, I am sure."

"To oblige you, Miss Westbrook, I am willing to do anything;" and then Angelo arose with a sigh, shook hands with her very heartily, and went home with his father and mother.