

Angela's Business

molishing phrases for poor little Angela. But what did he, as a man and a friend, have to do for Mary Wing?

The helper crossed the street in the lingering vernal sunshine. Here was the great building where Mary had once held an important place, where she came to-day, by special permission only, to remove the last traces of that association. Now that plan with which he had set out to-day looked back at the young man with rather a small face, and wry. He had never thought much of the plan: only to persuade Mary to let him make public the facts about her rejected honor from the Education League — legitimate news for the papers, fine peg for a new publicity campaign, etc. But all at once he knew that he was n't even going to mention this to Mary now. With what words, then, did he rush to her in her fresh disaster? Doubtless to say, "I'm awfully sorry." A stirring exploit. Had n't she shown him on that other day that she, the strong, had no desire for his fruitless sympathies?

The truth was, and he had known it from the beginning, he rather shrank from seeing Mary at all now, in the stress of this final defeat. Final, yes: for while Angela was attaining success to the full limit of her small conceptions, every aspiration that Mary had cherished, literally, had one by one gone down. And if this last was not the worst, perhaps, neither was it the easiest to bear. No, if anything on earth was calculated to harden and embitter a woman who could not easily yield, surely it must be her own so easy overthrow by pink cheeks and soft, empty eyes.

And these white-stone steps Charles now ascended had for him a reminiscent power, by no means comforting. The last time he had trod these steps, he had sworn, in anger, that he, single-handed, would force the School Board to bring Mary