

"Because she is poor?" asked Angelo, with a marked elevation of his eyebrows.

"Because she is a mystery—because we have nothing but her word as to all this."

"It is enough," replied Angelo.

"It is not sufficient for me," said Mr. Salmon sharply. He was an irritable man, and the short quick responses of his son aggravated as well as perplexed him.

"Miss Westbrook is a guest in your house, father," Angelo remarked, "and to be treated, I hope, with respect so long as she remains there."

"Of course, of course," answered the father, "as long as she remains, I am not likely to forget the courtesy due to a lady who has been invited to my home. There has certainly been an error of judgment, and I take my share of blame. I have been credulous, Angelo—I have believed every word of your statement as to her position in life, just as you believed it before me, and without seeking one atom's worth of proof, and now we are both trembling on the brink of an abyss!"

Angelo shook his head as he walked on by his father's side.

"I don't understand you," he said.

Mr. Salmon fancied that he had impressed his son at last.

"Suppose—I merely say suppose, for the sake of the argument, Angelo—that Miss Westbrook is a shrewd, long-headed, far-seeing woman of the world," he continued; "she meets you in America, hears you are rich, discovers you to be credulous, and lays her plan accordingly. Could she have acted in a cleverer way to enlist our sympathy and gain our admiration?"

"You know I admire her," said Angelo; "I have not attempted to disguise even a deeper feeling than admiration for her, and I—I—I—" he began to grow confused, "I object to any supposition that attempts, for a single moment, to lower Mabel Westbrook in my estimation. There!" he concluded, with an emphatic stamp of his foot upon the grass.

"If I put a mild supposition before you, Angelo, you need not fly at me like a bulldog," said the father, reprovingly.

"I beg your pardon. But—don't say anything against her just now, please."

"Surely, it has not gone so far as this. My dear boy, you have not been weak enough to allow Miss Westbrook to antici-

pate an offer of marriage from you? You have not concealed this from your own father and mother?"

"I have not kept anything from you," said Angelo, moodily; "I have not had the chance."

"Bless me!"

"I have not had the chance of winning the heart of a good woman like Mabel Westbrook," Angelo continued; "I am too weak and poor a fellow—I have nothing to recommend me but my money."

"That is everything to a woman looking for a husband."

"Which she is not."

"She would not have you if she were rich," said Mr. Salmon, seeing his advantage; "she is too brilliant and sharp a girl—'go-ahead' they call it in the country from which she has come. She would have had hundreds of admirers if she had been wealthy. You know she would not have had you."

"Yes," said Angelo very sadly, "I know that."

"And if she accept you for the sake of position—if she has known all along of this blow to her fortune, and has played her cards accordingly, what a miserable life lies before you. The world will not only laugh at you," said the father, "but she will laugh at you too."

"I have been laughed at so often in my life," replied Angelo, "that one more jest will not affect me much. And if it comes from her, I can forgive it."

"Not afterwards. Not when time has proved to you what a dupe you have been."

"She will not make a dupe of me," said Angelo; "I wish she would."

"But —"

"But I have received your warning, sir," said Angelo, interrupting him, "and will consider it. I do not think there is anything more for you to say, and I am quite certain there is nothing more which I can hear with any patience."

"Angelo!"

"Therefore you will kindly leave me."

"Certainly. But you *are* weak, you know. You will do nothing rashly?"

"I will do nothing rashly," was the echo here.

"Or without consulting me?"

"I will not promise so much as that,"