

flirtation was no longer a flirtation, but verging rapidly to real love.

At first he put aside the idea angrily. He in love with a peniless school-teacher! He determined not to near her until this idle fancy died out—he would leave the house that morning.—But, alas for human nature! when he entered the breakfast room, and she smiled at him, he discovered that there was no need for his speedy departure, and so he lingered on, each day becoming more perilously sweet.

One day they strolled down together to the sea-shore. The pale moon had just risen, and her silver rays flooded beach and ocean with light. The low murmur of the waves as they lapped the shore was the only sound which broke the silence. Presently Miss Lenox spoke:

"How peaceful and calm the sea looks. I have often wished I could go to sleep beneath those cool glistening waves, and never wake up again."

"It is hardly a natural wish from the lips of a young girl, Miss Lenox. I confess I should not like to give life up now." And he looked at her tenderly.

Hagar noted the look, and complimented him upon his flirting in her thoughts.

"Perhaps it does not sound well, but please remember that a village school marm does not naturally find her path strewn with roses, said she, laughing rather bitterly.

"God knows, Miss Hagar, that I would willingly take all your troubles on my shoulders, and leave you only the roses of life, were it possible," said he earnestly.

"I hardly think you would be accepted as school-mistress of M——, I doubt your qualification for teaching, and your patience to drum A B C into the heads of stupid children; and that is my particular burden," laughed she lightly.

"Hagar, I must speak. You must hear me—I love you better than my life. Give me the right to make your path smooth through life."

"Admirably spoken—rather high-flown, though, was it not, Mr. Ranleigh?" said Hagar, believing him to be only flirting.

"Hagar!"

"Miss Lenox, if you please."

"Miss Lenox—Hagar, you wrong me. I love you truly, devotedly, and earnestly as man ever loved woman."

"That is certainly an honor done me; it would be greater if I could believe it," returned Hagar, scornfully.

"Hagar, Hagar, have you no mercy, no pity? Are you a woman, or only stone, to stand there and taunt a man who pleads be-

fore you for life or death?" cried he, passionately.

"Do you really do me the honor to love me? Excuse me if I doubt it. I have grown no better looking since that night you spoke in such a complimentary manner on the piazza," she answered coldly.

"Hagar, that was before I knew you. You will not take such a cruel revenge upon me for thoughtless words. I thought you liked me a little, Hagar; out of pity answer me."

"You were mistaken; I do not care for you. My only answer is no."

He had been standing before her; now he came nearer, caught her hands tightly in his own, and said sternly:

"Hagar, look into my eyes, straight into them, and tell me that you do not care for me?"

"Does it not strike you that you are taking an unfair advantage of me? Remove your hands; I do not care for you," answered Hagar haughtily, throwing back her head, and looking into his eyes.

His face blanched, but he held her hands tighter. Then he loosed them, but it was only to throw his arms around her and press her to his heart. Closer, and still closer he strained her; his lips clung to hers in a long burning kiss, and then his arms fell at his side.

"Ask your pardon, shall we return?"

Hagar, too much surprised and stunned to speak, or even realize what had happened, silently retraced her steps. At the hall-door he raised his hat, saying coldly,—

"Good-by, Miss Lenox; allow me to compliment you on your revenge."

That night Rolf Ranleigh left, and in a few days Hagar returned to her school, and to the weary drudgery of her life. A nameless something seemed to have gone from her life, leaving it cold and void, what it was she knew not. The glorious, glowing autumn days which followed were ever after remembered as the dreariest, saddest in her life.

Gradually came the conviction that she loved the man whom she had so heartlessly, cruelly repulsed; loved him as a woman loves but once in her life, and loved him hopelessly, too, for he would never return after what had passed. "Ah, I deserve it, I deserve it," she would moan to herself day after day.

Whether she had loved him all along, or whether the burning kiss he had pressed on her lips awakened all her slumbering soul, she knew not; she was not stone, but a true-hearted woman, who had discovered, when too late,

that she had a heart by the bitter pain gnawing at it.

So the year passed, and once more it was the golden summer time. Hagar's little cottage faced the sea, and one evening, as the sun cast his last quivering rays on the water, she stole out, and going down to the beach she paced up and down, thinking of the year before. Her eyes were bent on the ground, and after some time had passed in this way, she raised them and saw a gentleman standing a few feet from her; it was Rolf Ranleigh. For some time they stood looking at each other. Hagar's mind was in perfect chaos; the only distinct thought was that she could now ask Rolf's pardon for her conduct to him. Acting on the impulse, she came quickly to his side and said:

"Mr. Ranleigh, I behaved shamefully to you; will you forgive me?" She raised her eyes to his, and something she saw there impelled her to say in a broken, hesitating voice, blushing deeply the while:

"And, Mr. Ranleigh—Rolf—if you care—for my love now—it is yours." At these last words she shyly extended her hands to him. Rolf caught her in his arms, and drew her closely to him, so close that she could feel the tumultuous throb of his heart against her own, and once more his lips clung to hers, and his eyes looked into hers with a world of passionate tenderness.

At length his happiness found words.

"Hagar, I thought I would come and catch one more glimpse of your dear face before I left America forever, but I need not go now, need I, little girl?"

"Not if my love can keep you, Rolf."

"And, Hagar, are you satisfied with your revenge, or will you make me wretched for a few more years?" asked he, teasingly.

"Now, Rolf, I will if you don't—" but Rolf stopped all further threats by pressing his lips to hers.

**BOTHERED HIM.**—A Portland sea-captain, who has been absent from home some eight years, arrived the other day. Calling upon a lady friend soon after his arrival he was pained to see what he supposed to be the result of some terrible injury to the spine. He delicately questioned her upon the subject, but she was apparently at a loss to comprehend his meaning. Finally, after much canvassing at cross purposes, the lady discovered that the old salt seriously supposed her pained to be a tumor or some other unsightly excrecence, caused by the disease of the spine.

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