

There's Many a Slip.

"I am very sorry to have to cause you this disappointment, Mr. Neal. I esteem and thank you for your offer, but my pledge is already given to another."

"And that other is—" exclaimed the young man, almost involuntarily, and without removing his intent gaze from the girl's beautiful face.

A vivid flush suffused Rennie's fair cheeks for a moment; then her lips parted in a frank, happy laugh.

"I do not mind telling you, Mr. Neal, since you will know so soon. I am engaged to Roscoe Farnham."

For the first time Neal's eyes dropped away from hers; but the look that flashed through them during that brief interval was as quickly veiled as James said, in tones whose slightly tremulous accent seemed quite natural under the circumstances:

"Accept my sincere congratulations, Miss Lawrence!"

Then with a pressure of the hand he was gone.

Once outside of the house, however, the mask fell from his countenance.

"So," he hissed between his set teeth, "Roscoe Farnham, the only rival I feared, has supplanted me! But let him beware! His apparent success in no way weakens the force of my determination to win Rennie Lawrence for my wife. He has a pledge, but he has not yet the lady; and the old adage holds good that 'there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.' What luck has won craft may depoil him of."

But no threatening of the severely vowed revenge was apparent for a time.

The young men met each other on apparently the most friendly terms, and Neal promised to be best man at the prospective ceremony.

Calling upon Mr. Lawrence one evening, Neal desired a private interview, at the close of which Rennie was summoned to the library.

"My child," said her father, with manifest excitement, "you have bestowed your affections upon a man devoid of honor or principle. Tell her Neal!"

"Spare me, Mr. Lawrence," said Neal, averting his face. "You tell her, I will assist you if necessary."

Between them the story was told.

Now Neal, in consequence of alleged suspicions, had been investigating Mr. Farnham's antecedents, and had learned that his love affairs in various places were quite notorious.

That, just prior to his engagement to Rennie, he had cruelly broken a previous betrothal, and finally that his employers were even then investigating grave charges against him, which were likely to lead to his dismissal from the firm.

"Now, my daughter," said Mr. Lawrence, in conclusion, "will you wait to be publicly involved in this man's inevitable disgrace, or will you act the part of wisdom by dismissing him at once?"

Rennie had listened without word or

sign, but now she raised her beautiful head proudly.

"I will do this," she answered quietly. "I will send him a letter by James this very night, and by his own answer will I judge him. If he is indeed dishonorable and unworthy, no letter that he can write, no matter how skillfully worded, can hide it or disguise it from me!"

And without another word she left the room.

Twenty minutes later William Neal took his leave, walking a few paces away from the house, then returning, concealed himself at a convenient point and waited.

Presently a servant man emerged from the lower part of Mr. Lawrence's house, followed by a rosy cheeked chambermaid.

"It is too bad sending you all the way down there tonight," the girl was saying. "You could have dropped it in the post box just as well."

Neal was looking on her face who would know she meant it, answered James, "I'll be back before long, for I haven't got to wait for an answer."

He moved reluctantly off notwithstanding, and in another moment Neal touched him on the shoulder.

"Is that you, James?" he called, cheerily. "Did I hear you say you had a letter to take to Mr. Farnham's lodgings? I am going that way, and I'll carry it if you say so, and spare you the walk—and leave you that much longer time for courting!" he added significantly.

"Much obliged to you, sir," replied James.

And resigning his trust with alacrity he quickly retraced his steps to the house, knowing well that he ran no risk of betrayal from his pretty inamorata.

For two days Rennie waited for an answer to the letter.

On the afternoon of the third day her father, coming home earlier than usual, found her in a swoon upon the floor.

"My advice is to take her somewhere," said Neal, who had called in opportunely. "If you have relatives anywhere in this country, take her among them and remain with her until she recovers in a measure from this sad blow."

"But my house here—how can I manage about that in the meantime?" Mr. Lawrence asked, in a state of complete bewilderment.

"You need not shut it up. With your permission I will occupy a room here, so that I can receive whatever mail matter comes during your absence," Neal answered readily.

The arrangement was concluded and the following day Mr. Lawrence and his daughter departed from the city, leaving Neal in possession of the house.

Of the letters that came he forwarded all but two, which, after having been carefully steamed open and pe-

rused with evident satisfaction, were sealed up, enclosed in another envelope and returned to the sender.

At Neal's urgent suggestion Mr. Lawrence's absence was prolonged from three months to five, by which time he felt they could be safely recalled—he having learned that Farnham was preparing for a business trip to Europe, expecting to be absent two years.

"That will do," he ejaculated. "Long before he returns Rennie Lawrence will be my wife."

When the heart-broken girl returned Neal was the first to meet her and became her very shadow, offering no word either of condolence or love, but rendering the thousand little attentions which sooner or later win their way.

For a while he used his influence to keep her from society, for the purpose of avoiding any chance meeting with Farnham, who was still in the city; but at last he decided upon attending a concert at which celebrities were to appear, having been informed that the ship on which Roscoe had taken passage would sail early in the afternoon.

It required considerable importuning on his part to induce Rennie to accept of any kind; but she yielded at last, and Neal felt that he had scored the second move in the game he was playing.

For awhile she sat beside him, listlessly indifferent alike to the concert and his occasional whispered remarks. Neal was searching Rennie's fair face with an expression of triumphant admiration, overcast, nevertheless, with a shade of anxiety, while the girl wore an absent-minded, far-away look, tinged with hopeless melancholy.

But after awhile some of the music seemed to arouse her attention and interest, and she listened breathlessly to the song in which the singer, a tenor of rare power and sweetness, was throwing all the strength of artistic skill and appreciation, bringing out its subtle sentiment with a power and pathos that stirred the tenderest emotions of her heart.

And not less deeply concerned, but in a widely different sense, was William Neal. He saw that the whole tendency of the programme thus far was to lead her thoughts further away from him and back to that past from which he wished to draw her entirely; and he watched her intent face with a furtive uneasiness and perturbation, conscious that he had made a grave mistake. Finally, as the curtain fell at the close of the first part, to be followed by a short interval, Neal rose with evident relief.

"I see a friend in another part of the house to whom I wish to speak, if you will excuse me for a moment," he said. Then with a forced laugh: "I hope they will give us something a little more cheerful in the remaining numbers of the programme. This high-strung sentiment is rather too rarified for actual every-day experience."

He turned away without waiting for an answer; and Rennie was sitting with her head bowed, and her eyes full of tears, when a step sounded near her, and a voice—starting with earnest pathos, sincerity and grief—said:

"May I sit here and talk with you for a few moments, may I, Miss Rennie Lawrence?" and lifting her head with a sudden start, she looked into the frank but troubled face of Roscoe Farnham.

Where was doubt, mistrust, suspicion now?

Gone, before the whisperings of that

truer voice, whose accents no heart could mistake or disbelieve—that voice that bade him welcome to her side.

"I thought you had gone to Europe," she faltered, scarcely knowing what she said. "Mr. Neal"—then she stopped abruptly.

"Mr. Neal told you so," supplemented Roscoe, with involuntary bitterness. "Perhaps it may prove to be not the first misrepresentation for which I am indebted to Mr. Neal." Then, with a quick movement drawing a letter from his pocket: "Tell me, Rennie, what does this mean? Did this indeed come from you? It seems impossible, and yet the writing is yours."

Mechanically Rennie took the letter he offered.

A glance at the address brought an expression of astonishment to her face. Then taking out the enclosed sheet she read it to the end.

"This writing is not mine," she said, trembling violently. "It is a clever forgery, I admit; but I never saw this letter before. I did write you on that date, but I did not direct it to that address, for I did not know you were out of the city."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Roscoe fervently; then more earnestly: "Rennie, it is currently reported that you are engaged to William Neal. But as I looked at you both tonight from where I sat, I read admiration and triumph in Neal's face, but neither love nor interest in yours; and in spite of all that has passed, my heart gave a sudden bound of renewed hope and courage. So when Neal left you just now, I resolved to avail myself of the first opportunity I had found to approach you since the receipt of that cruel letter. I am convinced that there has been some terrible wrong—some shameful treachery. Tell me, did you see Neal the day this letter was written?"

For answer Rennie related briefly as possible what she knew of the whole matter.

"Neal knew that I was called away from the city by telegram that very evening," said Roscoe. "He accompanied me to the cars, and received a message from me for you, with the promise to write in a day or two—I expecting to be absent for about three weeks. He thought that would give him time for his sinister work; and having heard you make the declaration that you would send a letter and let me witness for myself, he doubtless contrived, by bribing the servant, or in some other way, to obtain possession of the letter, and imitated your handwriting in preparing this one—a very clever forgery."

"During the period you were absent, I wrote twice, begging you to explain that strange letter. Those letters were returned unopened—see, here they are—we can guess now by whom. Never mind, darling," he added quickly, as he saw her turn deadly pale. "It is all right now, I hope. I will furnish your father any credentials he may require in reference to my business and social standing; as for Mr. Neal, his character is pretty thoroughly established. But see, they are preparing to go on with the entertainment."

"I will just add that I would have been on the ocean tonight but for an accident to the machinery of the vessel; and having nothing better to do, I concluded to attend this concert, which proved, after all, the very best thing I could have done. My sailing will be delayed for a week, and a great deal can be done in that time. Tomorrow I will call upon your father and invite him to accompany us—you

and I, Rennie—when we do go on our wedding tour. May I?"

One glad, grateful, joyous look answered him; and as he pressed her hand at parting, a step at his side announced the return of William Neal.

A dark frown overspread Neal's face as their eyes met, but with a quiet bow Roscoe Farnham passed him and returned to his seat.

"Take me home, please!" were Rennie's first words to her escort; "I feel unable to remain any longer."

Without comment, Neal obeyed.

The carriage was called and a short time later Rennie was at her own house.

"Good night!" she said, quietly, without offering her hand; and the next moment William Neal was standing outside the door alone in a very bewildered frame of mind, and involuntarily cursing the imprudence that permitted him to leave her for a single moment unguarded in a public place.

Just what mischief had been done he could not determine; there was no help for it but to wait and see.

His enlightenment came very soon in the form of a brief note from Rennie, informing him that their acquaintance was at an end absolutely and forever.

Roscoe Farnham called next day, had a long interview with Mr. Lawrence and a longer one with his daughter, at the close of which Rennie whispered as he kissed her for a brief good-bye:

"Let us forgive him, Roscoe, for he did me one good turn in prevailing upon me to go to that concert. If I had remained at home, as I wanted to, you would have left the city without an opportunity for an explanation, and we should have missed our life's happiness forever!"

"There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," laughed Roscoe, unconscious that he was quoting the very expression his rival had used.

"But the slip was not ours this time, darling—and so we will forgive him."—Dublin World.

The Man Who Lost Hope

Mr. H. N. Warner, of Minden, Neb., said:

"In 1894 I was attacked with paralysis in my left side. You might stick a pin to the head into my left hip and I would not feel it. I was unable to do any kind of work and had to be turned in bed. I made up my mind that I could not be cured as I had used all kinds of medicine and had tried many doctors. I was advised to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and commenced their use last September. Before I had finished my first box I felt better, and by the time I had used six boxes the disease had entirely disappeared, and I have not been so free from pain since I was a boy. The paralysis also disappeared, and although two months have passed since I finished my last box, there has been no recurrence of the disease."—From the Gazette, Minden, Neb.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People contain, in a condensed form, all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood, and restore shattered nerves. They are an unfailing specific for such diseases as locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, sciatica, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous headache, the after-effects of the grip, palpitation of the heart, pale and sallow complexion, and all forms of weakness either in male or female.

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