

For a moment he was silent, and when he next spoke the tone of his voice startled her.

"Trixy—Miss Reynolds, have you ever had an ideal, a perfect model? Do you know what it is to have that idol shattered at one blow? If you do, then you know just how I feel at the present moment."

"Then you have had such an experience?" she asked.

"Yes, I have," he answered. "When I first saw you I knew that I had met my ideal—my ideal of a perfect woman. But, oh! how I was deceived."

Her face paled slightly at these cruel words, but she did not hesitate to reply, coldly—

"Indeed! what have I done to merit so much of your contempt?"

"You, no doubt, heard the discussion between Angelica and me on the evening we first met. You know now why I was so sadly disappointed."

"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Sherwood, to have incurred your displeasure. No doubt you will gladly dispense with my company. Good evening." And before he knew what had happened she had spurred ahead of him and vanished around a bend in the road some rods farther on.

Then suddenly the clouds rolled from his vision and he saw things in their true light. He saw that he was fast losing earth's dearest treasure to him, simply because of pride, and he resolved not to give it up so easily. In a moment he was racing wildly in pursuit of the fleeing girl. Swiftly and surely he gained upon her, and at length rode up beside her.

"Trixy," he panted, "pardon me, I did not mean what I said. I no longer hate you. Believe me, I am thoroughly converted."

But she either did not hear him or feigned not to do so, and still they raced swiftly on, side by side.

"Trixy," he ventured again, when he had recovered his breath, "listen to me, I love you. I always have loved you, but until I came so near losing you I would not acknowledge it. Answer me and tell me that you love me."

Still she answered not, while on the brow of the next hill appeared the Mountain House. He must act, and act quickly. He resolved upon a stratagem. Heading straight for a large stone lying in the middle of the road, he slackened his pace, and as he reached it fell over with a loud crash. He saw her glance back-