

to see him on a plea of headache, yet, pausing to chat with a friend half a block distant, he saw the obnoxious "Cheseman" enter the same house, and he did not come out while Dart watched, which was until it was quite too dark to distinguish forms on the street.

"There is no one else there for him to call on, so she saw him but refused me," he said to himself by way of consolation.

He avoided her for several days, but as she did not seem to notice it he sought an interview.

She was smiling and cordial, would even have been as affectionate as of old had not his manner chilled her.

"Dora, I demand satisfaction," he said hotly, for the green-eyed monster had taken full possession of him by this time.

"Satisfaction? Let me see, that sounds like the challenge to a duel; I am not much of a markswoman, so, if it will suit you, I will say bayonets. The time—to-night, at the ghostly midnight hour."

She laughed and clapped her hands in childish glee.

"Miss Hastings, this matter is nothing to mock at. I am in earnest."

"So am I, Mr. Wylie, and will choose as my second Mr. Cresswell."

"Dora!"

He was on his feet now, his eyes flashing with indignation.

"You insult me; add insult to injury. This will be our last meeting of my seeking. I release you from an engagement that must be odious to you. Good day."

She did not speak or try to stop him, though he was sure he heard a dry sob as he closed the door, but he did not look back.

They only met occasionally after that in class or on some such occasion. He was moody and taciturn, she unusually gay.

"Oh, that woman can be so false!" he groaned aloud when restlessly pacing his room floor—a common occupation with him of late.

"Hang it! I can not graduate under such deuced circumstances. I know I shall fail."

Some one remarked in his hearing a few hours after—

"Guess Wylie's girl's gone back on him. That Cresswell, or Cresswell, or whatever his name is, goes to her boarding place about every day. I'd not thought that of Dora Hastings, though."

"Oh, you can't tell anything about these girls—false as Satan, every one of 'em," was the flattering rejoinder.

Wylie ground his teeth and sat down to write to his father, intending to announce his desire to leave the university at once; but, then, what excuse could he make or reason offer.

"No; I've got to live it out now," he fiercely told himself, crushing the sheets of paper in his hands.

Commencement found him half sick and wholly discouraged. He graduated, but without honors, from the same platform Dora Hastings stepped with honors and winner of the first prize besides.

"She don't care, and therein lies the difference," he muttered.

At the little class reunion and supper following he avoided her until the farewells were being spoken; then for a moment he lightly held her hand while a few cold sentences barely escaped freezing on his lips. She made some careless speech, laughed nervously, and turned away barely in time to keep him from seeing a great pearly tear-drop that splashed right down on the blue ribbon that bound her diploma.

"Heartless coquette!" he almost hissed from between his set teeth.

He did not leave the city until ten o'clock the following day, and as he stepped into his coach he saw Cresswell assisting Dora Hastings into another belonging to another line.

"Thus our ways divide," he said tragically.

When he reached home he found his mother's brother—a cattle king named Smithson—visiting there. His uncle laughed at his pale face and white, soft hands.

"Come out west," he said, "and we'll make a man of you."

"I'll go," said Dart quietly.

Of course it made a sensation in his little world, but he went, taking care that the county paper containing an item to that effect should be mailed to his former fiancée.

That was all in the past now, and, as we have said, he had been a ranchman for over a year and a half. He found it was no easy task that he had so hastily undertaken, but still the life had its charms, and it helped him at times to forget. Through the busy "round up" season and on, in fact, till snow came, forgetfulness was obtained through excitement by day and weariness by night; but in the long, inactive winter it was terrible, with little to do but think, think!

Thus it was on this Easter—this anniversary day of their plighted troth—he was almost beside himself as bitter memories thronged his soul. He was tired, too, of this "heathendom," as he termed it. He was hungering for civilization—he was homesick.

Sitting in his cabin, thought became unbearable, and once more he resorted to the saddle, this time taking the wildest, most vicious piece of broncho flesh in the corral. One of the men glancing from the window remarked it to his companions.