

JUST TO BE CONTRARY.

The Heartstone. 3
CHAPTER II.

lot that!"—she snapped her fingers. "Just allow me to tell you, Mr. Allan Keith, that although you are my guardian—thankness it will not be much longer. I am not my master, and I will submit to no tyranny. I insist in this matter, as in all others, that my own interests are concerned to do precisely as I please, and would be as well for you to understand it."

"Very well, Rosalie." Her face grew dark with an emotion that, had she seen it, might have subdued her even then, but her eyes were bent in the mocking teasing with which she had finished her rebellious speech.

"If it were not that this business is of vital importance, I would defer to you after these people have left the neighborhood; but I have decided it to the utmost limit. As it can only say to you that, if you regard my wishes in this respect, I will repent it as long as you live."

"I had adding threats to commands!" flashed Rosalie, her temper mounting to white heat. "You are a very poor judge of character, Mr. Keith, if you do not know that this is the very way to make me determined than ever. I will give you good day, sir, and hope you have a pleasant business trip. I go to the destruction you so kindly prophesied for me, and without another word she fled and swept into the house."

"I had half a mind to give it up, Mr. May's attentions are getting a little too pointed of late," she muttered when she was alone. "But he has taken to playing the game on me in that mean fashion, then issuing his orders like the Mogul, without the compliment of an explanation. I will show that I can be just as contrary as he is. How he has changed, these last few months. Often, he but know it, a kind word to him might have—might have—never mind! I won't think of foolishness, and lately he has liked a perfect dragon. He is as me just as if I were a child, he an immense distance above, and these last few months he actually seemed to avoid me, since he has given me my liberty completely. I will make what I please. If I am not good enough to be company for him, I am not good enough to mind his whimsical orders, either; and if May attempts any of his loving nonsense, I'll send him to right-about and come home."

"I could Rosalie have seen the look on her guardian's face when he had read his study and threw himself listlessly upon a chair, it might have told her much that her willful refusal was to bring upon her."

"Is this the end? Has regard, not even, gone as well as the emotion I had once hoped might restore her heart and make it free? But no, I have long since decided that I am no fit mate for—a bright, impatient child, who would too soon tire of my soberness, and feel her hands a galling yoke; and so I have left her free—for this—to fall under the influence of one who could only bring her unhappiness and sorrow, even

though he is honorable, as I fear not; even though this escapade has not the sinister look that Martha fears. If she had only told me before; but I must see if this other trouble is to be averted at any cost—or if I must send my charge from me, must shut even that light out of my life, because it will be out of my power to longer surround her with the comfort and luxury which have become indispensable to her. I can only trust that some good influence will stay her steps and guard her safely while I am absent from her."

He paced his room until morning, while Rosalie slept lightly on her downy couch, and met him at the breakfast table with a face so serene that he took heart of grace, although his hand trembled as he held hers for a moment and simply said: "Good-bye, Rosalie." Then he was gone.

"I don't believe I care to go," Rosalie mused as she sat in the garden that afternoon. "I think I will go away from everybody and make a visit of a few days, and perhaps he will be kinder when I come."

A step on the gravel interrupted her, and in another moment Frank May stood before her.

"So you did get out!" he said with well affected surprise. "I thought when I noticed your guardian stealing away after our last interview, that he would have shut you up, perhaps—"

"Shut me up!" flashed Rosalie, every other feeling giving way before the resentment his words excited. "I would like to see him try it! So that is how he found out about me, I will go, anyway."

"That's a girl of spirit!" was the admiring rejoinder. "Come, then; we have scant time if we expect to return before dusk. I have a buggy waiting just beyond the gate."

And conducting her to it he helped her in, and they drove off.

But long before they arrived at the gypsy camp Rosalie wished most heartily that she had not come.

There was a sort of assurance in her companion's manner toward her that not only annoyed but in a measure alarmed her.

When the camp was reached, however, the picturesqueness and novelty amused her for a time; but the fortune that an old crone told her seemed to contain a sinister intent; and as soon as she rejoined her escort she requested him to take her immediately home.

"But this is not the way we came!" she exclaimed after they had gone some distance. "Where are you taking me?"

"To the home we are henceforth to share together, my darling," was the reply as he attempted to put his arm around her. "I am convinced that your guardian would never have consented to let me have you; so the only way was to take you by stratagem, as I have done."

"What do you mean by such rubbish?" demanded Rosalie, thoroughly roused. "It is usual to ask the lady's consent first to any step of this kind."

"That consent was given—or at least implied when you came here with me" was the reply. "No other opposition shall stand in the way."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Heart Failure.

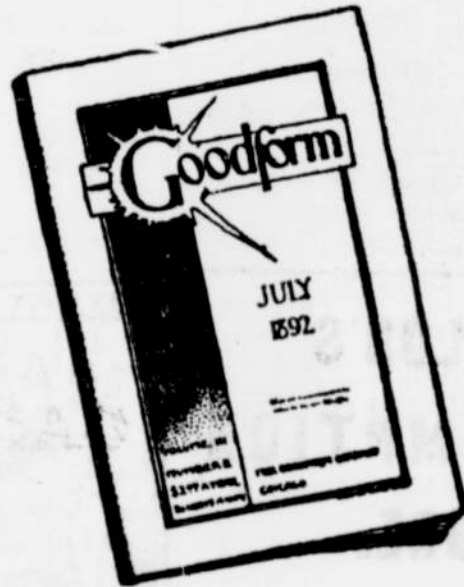
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