

would stay with the child while you go home to-night and rest?

Then the priest spoke:

'Yes: there is Tia Magdalena at Jose Hiera's. They will let her come, now they know it is not smallpox.' (Ruth noticed how kind were his eyes, how refined his voice). 'I am going there now and shall send her over.'

He was as good as his word, and Tia Magdalena proved to be a most capable woman; so Ruth put on her hat that evening, and prepared to return to the Bower for a good night's rest. Robert Dillon had lingered around the outhouse on various pretexts all the afternoon, and now stood at the door of the abode waiting to escort her down the trail. She took a last look at her charge, who was now sleeping quietly.

'I shall be here early in the morning to relieve you,' she said to the Mexican woman. 'Good-night!' 'Good-night, senorita,' was the soft reply.

As the girl stepped out into the sunset, Prospero Diaz advanced toward her. She held out her hand to him, saying a few encouraging words. He raised it respectfully to his lips.

'I cannot thank you, senorita,' he said brokenly. 'But if I should ever be able to show my gratitude—'

'There is nothing to be grateful for, senor,' she interrupted kindly. 'I love the child, and could not do otherwise. But I am going to ask you to promise me one thing.'

'Anything—anything in my power!' he replied.

'Then, as soon as Carmela recovers, I beg that you will take her back to her mother's people.'

'I promise faithfully, senorita, and I, too, shall begin a new life in my own country.'

Dillon watched the scene with moist eyes. What a girl she was! What a pity she was not a daughter of Peter, a child of Mary!

Very little was said as the two walked down the trail side by side. Ruth, her heart full of womanly pity, was thinking hopefully of the black sheep they had just left, and did not at first notice her companion's silence. When they had covered about half the distance to the Gulch, she remarked facetiously:

'A penny for your thoughts, Senor Dillon.'

'Eh,' exclaimed Bob, startled: His thoughts—what were they? 'Ruth' he said—his earnest nature was stirred to the depths and the words came haltingly, 'you must know what I think of you. I am only a rough fellow, and life in a ranch house is hardly the thing for a dainty child like you. And—becoming miserably conscious that he should not have spoken at all—we are not of the same faith.'

Ruth glanced up at him shyly. What an humble opinion he had of himself, this king among men! His muscular shoulders were stooped forward despondently, his eyes bent moodily upon the ground. Suddenly a small hand was slipped into his, and the softest voice in all the world murmured:

'Thy country shall be my country, and thy God shall be my God. I have learned to love your faith, and I long to profess it.'

The little hand was detained; and slowly they pursued their homeward way, with the golden glory of the sunset all about them.

Whoop-up-Watt and Scotty were walking up the main street of Copper Gulch about an hour later, a little the worse for a prolonged stay at the Dutchman's. As they passed the miniature garden of the Bower, they became aware of two rustic chairs placed in close proximity, and occupied respectively by Miss Ruth Mason and Mr. Robert Dillon.

'Awe!,' said Scotty in a lugubrious tone of voice. 'That looks bad for the tenderfoot that was here.'

'You may bet your last lone peso it does,' assented Mr. Lindsay. 'I thought there was something in the wind when he hit the trail for Chicago last night. Good for old Babe! Let us go back to Dutchy's and drink their health!'

'Aye mon,' rejoined Scotty.

'Ave Maria.'

A TASTE OF REVENGE

The tears would come. The little cashier at the high desk could neither help nor hide the fact she was crying. The hurt was so deep and had come so suddenly, as a climax to so many other hurts of a painful day, that no amount of hard swallowing would keep the lump down, as she tried to face Mr. McGowan's entirely serious and wholly unsympathetic look and to speak to him.

'Crying won't help it, Miss Branch,' he said. 'Either your cash-slips are correct or they are not, and no amount of weeping is going to alter them. I merely call your attention to them that you may use more care. We can't have carelessness and stupidity here.' He turned away and walked slowly back to his desk. 'Please see that it doesn't occur again—this week, at least,' he added, over his shoulder.

Mr. McGowan was head book-keeper at Swain and Taylor's, where Edith Branch was chief cashier. He was a man intolerant of other people's mistakes and inconsiderate of other people's feelings—at least it seemed so, and had seemed so to Edith ever since she had been given the high desk in the central office of the big store, and had begun to turn in her reports directly to him.

He was not a young man. He did not look young with his wide, pale blue eyes peering near-sightedly through steel-bowed glasses, and with his queer little side-whiskers, that he kept cut short to hide their whiteness. And he was fond of the methods that had existed under his direction for many years in the accounting department, and jealous of his control of them.

'He thinks more of his old systems than of all the solar system besides,' Edith had once told her mother, in describing him at home, 'and he's mean, mean, mean to any one who breaks a single link for a single time!'

There was something about the way Mr. McGowan's lank lower jaw pushed itself out toward an offender and in the way his eyes seemed to mourn over that individual's faults that made one suspect him of being privately not without satisfaction in his opportunity and authority to administer a reprimand.

It was just after closing-time, and as the girl vaguely not without satisfaction in his opportunity, and let her hurt occupy her mind. Stupidity, indeed! There was not a cashier in the store, nor a clerk nor bookkeeper who did not make mistakes. Edith knew that. She was quite sure that even the impeccable Mr. McGowan himself must have made errors at some time in his calm career, although one of the exasperating features of the case was that he never seemed to make them now; and as she went to the coat-room that night exasperation and humiliation mingled in her heart, and something else that was harder and more bitter than either was growing up out of them.

'I wish—oh, I wish he'd make a mistake some time!' she whispered to herself. 'I wish he'd make a big—a terrible mistake, that would—would lose him his place, and then I'd be—oh, I'd be—'

But she did not finish the sentence. A little prick of compunction stopped her.

'Oh, I just dislike him so!' she repeated to herself, extenuatingly. 'He's so unfair!'

One day resembles another in a place like Swain and Taylor's, but that does not mean that they are not all interesting to a young girl whose health and spirits are of the best. Somehow Edith could not help feeling, as she sat at her desk again the next day, that her anger and depression of the day before had been somewhat greater than the cause warranted. She liked her work. She loved the bustle and hurry and the sure action it required of her had not been shaken by Mr. McGowan's insinuations. She loved the sights and sounds of the big store, too, the throngs of people, the lights and the colors, the buzz of voices, the tap, tap of heels of the hardwood floors of the aisles, and the soft whirring of the big revolving door near by.

(To be concluded next week.)

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