

along the gunwale to the bow and fastened the painter to an iron ring in the planking, then handed her out safely. He retained his grasp of her hand.

"A moment ago you dared me to kiss you," he said gravely. "I am not in the habit of taking dares from anybody."

"Let go my hand at once, sir. You know very well you cannot so far forget yourself as to take such a liberty. I dare you to prove yourself no gentleman."

"I warn you——!"

"I dare you!"

"Very well! On your own head be it, then! The boatman is worthy of his hire," he paraphrased and laughingly he seized her in his arms and kissed her.

The next instant he received a resounding slap in the face. It had young muscles and indignation behind it and it found him unprepared. He started back automatically, tripped, lost his balance and fell into the water.

"Oh, you—you miserable—*fresh Aleck!*" came her mortified cry.

She lingered only long enough to make sure that he could swim. As he drew himself out of the water the sound of her running feet died out on the pier.

With chattering teeth Kendrick cast loose, siezed his paddle and drove it deep into the water. Ye gods, what a fool! Very angry at