

days of my life only to have the privilege of listening to it.

It was one of those sunshiny, cloudless days and the heat was most intense. The motion of the car, however, ameliorated this to a great extent; and, as we sped along there appeared to be something in the air that gave warning of an approaching storm. I mentioned this to Florence. And just as I spoke we could see a great dark volume of cloud rearing a threatening head above the summit of a mountain directly ahead.

My knowledge of the dry belt warned me that we might run into a cloud burst before we had gone many more miles.

"How far is it to the colony?" I asked my companion.

"About twenty miles," she replied.

"We may get wet," I cautioned her.

"I am more afraid of the roads," she replied.

Suddenly we began to climb a steep mountain road which had been hewed out of solid rock; and in time we began to spiral upwards until we had gained a great height above the level bench from which we had started. When we had reached an elevation of perhaps about five hundred feet the road ceased to climb, went off to the left at a right angle and crept daringly along the face of an almost perpendicular bluff of solid rock. Below could be seen the thread-like contortions of a great river worming its way to the sea.

The road, at this dangerous spot, had been walled along the outer edge with a four-foot parapet of solid concrete for the protection of travellers. And this rendered the eeriness of the situation less proportionate than it might otherwise have been.

The Professor stopped his car at what appeared to be the most precarious and most awe-inspiring portion of the road, and we all got out, leaned over the parapet at the almost bottomless pit directly under our feet. The roar of the river was not audible at that elevation, but the motion of the water reached the eye as it pushed along with its irresistible force.

"What a grand opportunity for a suicide," I commented, looking down speculatively.

"Jump, then," laughed Florence.

"You," I retaliated.

Such dreadful things are often said in the most trivial manner!

Having satisfied our spirit of adventure and curiosity, we climbed into the car again and were soon hastening along with a speed that was not in keeping with the apparent dangerous nature of the overhanging cliff road.

Having passed this breath-gripping portion of the highway with its thrilling experience, we descended again to a lower level and emerged into a narrow valley thickly wooded with heavy timber. The road skirted a beautiful emerald lake a mile or two in length and not more than half a mile in width.

I was told by Florence that the lake was a favorite spot for fishermen in Summer and hunters in the Fall. As we passed along we saw a party trolling from a canoe some distance from the shore.

"On our way home we may fish," said the Professor.

Just as he spoke there was a tentative clap of thunder almost directly overhead.

"Florence will teach you how to catch fish," Mrs. Agnew broke in.

Miss Agnew smiled:

"Don't flatter me too much," she objected, "lest you spoil my luck."

"It will take more than that to spoil it," complimented her father.

"One could scarcely blame a fish for nibbling your bait at least," I vamped.

"They do more than that," she replied, coloring slightly.

"Yet you have never caught one," I reminded her.

"No?"

"No."

"Who told you?"

The rebuke, although only half serious, came when least expected. I had been presuming things. What did I know about Miss Agnew's past, or even present? There was a slight tremor of jealousy. What lucky dog had perhaps a mortgage on such a priceless piece of human property?

It was a mere partial eclipse, however, for I came back in a few seconds.

"Oh, I was just joking. You did seem so lonely when I came, though."

There was a flash of lightning followed in a few moments by a peal of thunder that might have been the result of mountains tumbling into the valleys.

"Oh!" Florence cried out.

"Does one who can defy gravitation fear the thunder?" I objected.

Florence remained silent and my mind reverted to the dreadful possibility that, in the life of Miss Agnew, there might be an event of far greater value to her than any wealth of heart I could ever hope to offer.

The road emerged from the valley and timber and in due course the car was rolling along the smooth surface of a wide bench covered with a rich growth of half matured grain crop of some kind. Immediately I recognized the benches of the drybelt which were so familiar to me.

But there was one vast and surprising difference. Every square yard of this terrace, and all others which could be seen up as well as across the river, was clothed with a rich green carpet of vegetation. This contrasted with the anaemic sage brush and the gray alluvial silt such as I was accustomed to in reality, was not only a relief to the eye, but a surprise for which I had been thoroughly unprepared. It was similar to one of the unlikely changes that might have been brought about by Aladdin and his wonderful lamp.

But, if man had changed and had converted the drybelt into a land flowing with milk and honey; if a new race of human beings had been evolved from a dumb creature; if noise and been reduced to a minimum; if wheels could be put into motion without friction; if it were no longer necessary to chew food; if the practice and the thought of chewing had become loathsome; if electricity cost little or nothing; if telepathy had been added to the five senses; if all power and artificial light were derived direct from the air, electrified by hydraulic power; if, as I say, all those things had taken place, the face of nature had remained the same. There were the same mountains and valleys; the same rivers and streams; the same sun, sky, clouds; the same wind, rain, thunder and lightning.

Poor Florence! She was but a dream girl after all, for the metamorphosis to the drybelt could not be! It was unsafe to even think this, however, for, through the medium of the sixth sense, the girl might "hear" me.

We passed over several benches and through a number of farm homes at which we did not stop. All of the farms seemed to be occupied by members of the Fifty-Fifties, and "men," "women" and "children" came out to greet us as we passed by. And, what a swarm of children there appeared to be!

We turned a sharp curve leading from one terrace to another of a much lower elevation.

"Anthropoidea!" cried Florence, pointing down like one might from an airplane.

"Anthropoidea!" I mimicked.

On a bench one hundred feet or more below were the fat shining roofs of a collection of buildings with walls almost dazzling white in the sunshine, and the whole standing out in unspeakable contrast to the surrounding green fields and pastures.

There was no smoke as is usual from a village. And, furthermore, there were no chimneys. There was not a single telegraph or telephone pole leading wire-connection with the outside world.

The terrace on which the town stood was no more than twenty-five feet above the river, and the village itself comprised two long rows of buildings facing, on either side, a long, wide street.

The car descended a rather steep hill graded out of the sandy slope; and, with a sharp swing to the left at the foot, we glided noiselessly across the flat towards the entrance to the village.

Before a very picturesque dwelling at this outskirts of the town the Professor stopped his machine. On looking out I saw our mutual friend Uumlah coming down a few stone steps, his somewhat uncouth neolithic features beaming a warm welcome.

But, just as the Professor was about to step from the car, oh horror! the scene came suddenly to an end as though by magic. I made a vain effort to cling to Florence as a means of escape from some awful impending fate, but even her infinite personality could not save me. It was as though I had been shot in the temple by a rifle bullet.

I awoke.

I found myself in bed. My wife was beside me. She jabbed an elbow into my ribs:

"What are you jumping about?" she complained.

"Did I jump?"

"You certainly did. You woke me up."

"Oh, I am sorry."

"She sprang from bed and I followed lastly. I had a sickening fear that I might have betrayed myself again in such a beautiful dream. But I could not detect the slightest trace of suspicion in my wife's eyes or manners. I was safe, but not free from a conscience that was painful in its guilt.

What a treasure my wife was! How beautifully true! How she slaved uncomplainingly for the home, the children and me!

But oh Florence, Florence, you beautiful dream girl!

(Next Story, "John and Johnny")

NOW, as you lay this issue down, will you PLEASE check your RENEWAL DATE, and also CONSIDER listing friends?