

blue eyes, their flintiness forever dissolved, filled as she turned away, a hand at the lump in her throat.

"Gail seen me at my best and worst," she cried. "I never told you, Dick. It was him, more than Borden's marrying on the outside, saved me." She stopped with a choke. "Gail and Arthur one night. . . ."

Gail flushed, with thoughts of Chickaman, of the bath-house, "Javver" and the yellow shades, the horse-whip; of his temptation, compassion, and disdain. Was it more to create than save?

"Oh, the kid told me, Sydney," muttered Dick, staring straight before him, striving to be harsh and careless. "And I says to him," he turned to Arthur, who was picking up the wood, chucking it on the sled, "'Huh, your mother's an undiscovered country for me, like the Tsana, the only one left for a man raised up here, and as a rustler, the spittin' ringer for her son.' That was two months back on the trail." He faced Gail. "Arthur put me onto this notion for the heart-stuff, though he ain't mine. And once you bluffed me in that. Only show us a sky-pilot!"

"It was Dick's charity," uttered Sydney. "Or I'd 'a' been dead."

Gail blazed inwardly, with some vast, gratified, inordinate ecstasy, welling toward Dick Trueblood, as a counterpart of himself.

III

Again the dogs ceased swinging their fluffy tails. They were at the wrecked tent. Outside it, Clara's fire had sunk into the snow. She was lifting the big kettle, steaming with the last duff of rice, bacon rind, and the raw-hide of moccasins. The four caught sight of Gail and the newcomers, listlessly fixed on them for a mo-