

OUR FARM HOMES



SILENCE is sometimes more eloquent than a sermon.

The Heart of the Desert

(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER XXI.

The End of The Trail.

THE canon was sandy and rough. Rhoda could see the monastery set among olive-trees. Where the canon opened, to the desert she knew that the white men's camp lay, though she could not see it.

She had no fear of losing her way, with the canon walls bounding her in. She still was sobbing softly to herself as she started along the foot of the wall. She tramped steadily for a time, then she stopped abruptly. She would not go! The sacrifice was too much! She looked back to the canon top. Kut-le had disappeared. Already he must be only a memory to her!

Then of a sudden Rhoda felt a sense of shame that her strength of purpose should be so much less than the Indian's. At least, she could carry in her heart forever the example of his fortitude. It would be like his warm hand guiding and lifting her through the hard days and years to come. Strangely comforted and strengthened by this thought, Rhoda started on despite the familiar wilderness of the desert.

This, she thought, was her last moment alone in the desert, for without Kut-le she would never return to it. She watched the gray-green cactus against the painted rock heaps. She watched the brown, tortured crest of the canon against the violet sky. She watched the melting haze above the monastery, the buzzards sliding through the motionless air, the far multi-colored ranges, as if she would etch forever on her memory the whole that Kut-le loved. And she knew that, let her body wander where it must, her spirit would forever belong to the desert.

Rhoda passed the monastery, where she thought she saw men among the olive-trees. But she did not stop. She gradually worked out into an easy trail that led toward the open desert. The little camp at the canon's mouth was preparing to move when Jack Newman jumped excitedly to his feet. Coming toward them through the sand was a boyish figure that moved with a beautiful stride, tireless and swift. As the newcomer drew nearer they saw that she was slender and lithe, slender but full-chested and that her face—

"Rhoda!" shouted John DeWitt.

In a moment, Jack was grasping one of her hands and John DeWitt the other, while Billy Porter and Carlos shook each other's hands excitedly.

"Gee whiz!" cried Jack. "John said I was in superb condition, but I didn't realize that it meant this! Why Rhoda, if it wasn't for your hair and eyes and the dimple in your chin, I wouldn't know you!"

"Are you all right?" asked DeWitt anxiously. "Where in the world did you come from? Where have you been?"

"Where you hurt much in the fight?" cried Rhoda. "Oh!" looking about at the eager listeners, "that was the most

awful thing I ever saw, that fight! And Billy Porter, you are all right, I see. How shall I ever repay you for what you have done for me?"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Porter, "I'm repaid just by looking at you! If that Iron Pute hasn't made monkeys of us all, I'd like to know who has! How did you get away from him?"

"He let me go," answered Rhoda simply.

The men gasped.

"What was the matter with him?"

Wanted---A Home

WHO would not welcome such an attractive little fellow into their home as the baby boy shown in this illustration, and known as "M.J." Mr. Tovell of the Guelph Children's Aid Society, writes us that, "this is a fine boy, born Aug. 3, 1917, has perfect health and good temper." Mr. Tovell is also anxious to find a home for two brothers of four and five years, a boy six years old and a boy one year old. He would like to secure a home with a Roman Catholic family for twins (a boy and girl) about three months old. Mr. Tovell tells us that these children are all healthy and good. Homes west of Peterboro are preferred.

Rev. E. C. Hall of the Oshawa Children's Aid Society also writes us that he would like to place a healthy little girl about three months old with some family, "who really wants such a little asset to their possessions."

Our Folks have responded splendidly in the past whenever we have put them in touch with children through our columns, and we have no doubt they will do the same at this time. Full particulars may be secured by writing Mr. Ames Tovell, Children's Aid Society, Guelph, and Rev. E. C. Hall, Children's Aid Society, Oshawa.



ejaculated Porter. "Was he sick or dying?"

"No," said Rhoda mechanically; "I guess he saw that it was useless."

"And he dropped you in the desert without water or food or horse?" cried DeWitt. "Oh, that Apache cur!"

"No!" cried Rhoda. "He dropped me not far from here. We saw the camp and he sent me to it."

The men looked at each other incredulously. Jack Newman's face was puzzled. He knew Kut-le and it was hard to believe that he would give up what he already had won. DeWitt spoke excitedly.

"Then he's still within our reach! Hurry up, friends!"

John turned swiftly to the assistant. "Then he spoke very distinctly, with that in her deep gray eyes that stirred each listener with a vague sense of loss and yearning."

"I don't want Kut-le harmed! I shan't tell you anything that will help you locate him. He did me no harm. On the contrary, he made me a well woman, physically and mentally. If I can forgive his effrontery in stealing

me, surely you all will grant me this favor to top all that you have done for me."

Porter's under lip protruded with the old obstinate look.

"That fellow's got to be made an example of, Miss Rhoda," he said. "No white that's a man can stand for what he's done. He's bound to be hunted down, you know. If we don't, others will!"

"John, after all our talk, you must understand! You know what good Kut-le has done me and how big it was of him to let me go. Make them promise to let him alone!"

But there was no answering look of understanding in DeWitt's worn face.

"Rhoda, you haven't any idea what you're asking! It isn't a question of forgiveness! You don't get the point of view that you ought! Why, the whole country is worked up over this thing! The newspapers are full of it. Just as Porter says, the Apache's got to be made an example of. We will hunt him down, if it takes a year!"

So far Jack Newman had said nothing. Rhoda looked at him as if he were her last hope.

"Oh, Jack," she cried. "He was your friend, your dearest friend! And he sent me back! Why, you never would have let me go if he hadn't volunged me!"

"So we found!" said DeWitt grimly. But Rhoda was watching Jack.

the tan. As it had come when DeWitt had rescued her, the old sense of the appalling nature of her capture came returning to her again. With silence and clarity she was getting the new viewpoint. The old Rhoda would have protested, but she was blind. She fought desperately and blindly. The new Rhoda had lived through hours of hopeless battle with circumstances. She had learned the desert's lesson of patience.

"I have thought," she said slowly, "so much of the joy of my return to you! God only knows how the picture of it has kept me alive from day to day. All your joy seemed swallowed up in your thirst for revenge. All right, my friends. Only, whenever you go, I go too!"

"I think you had better ride on to the ranch with Carlos," said DeWitt. "While we take up Kut-le's trail. This will be no trip for a woman."

"You're foolish!" exclaimed Jack. "We'll not let her go. We'll go with her. You can't tell what stunt she is up to!"

"That's right!" said Porter. "It'll be her last hour, but she's better come with us."

"Don't trouble to discuss the matter," said Rhoda coolly. "I'm coming with you. Katherine probably sent some clothing for me, didn't she?"

"Why yes!" the first James said. "That was one of the first things she thought of. She sent her own riding things for you. She spoke of the little suit dress you had on and said you didn't; anything appropriate in your trunk for the rough trip you might have to make after we found you."

Jack was talking rapidly, as if to relieve the tension of the situation. He undid a pack that he had kept tied to his saddle during all the long weeks of pursuit.

"We can rig up a dressing-room of blankets in no time," he went on, putting a bundle into Rhoda's hands. Rhoda stood holding the bundle in silence while all hands set to rigging up her dressing-room. She sat suddenly cool-headed and resourceful.

Her mind was forced away from her own sorrow to the solution of another heavy problem. In a moment she smiled she unrolled the bundle and smiled tenderly at the evidence of Katherine's thoughtfulness. There were underwear, handkerchiefs, ties and Carlos and Katherine's own party corduroy divided skirt and Norfolk jacket with a little blouse and Aunt

Rhoda took off her buckskins not tattered blue shirt slowly, with by that would quiver. This was the last, the very last of Kut-le! She dressed herself in Katherine's clothes, then folded up the buckskins and laid aside. She would keep them, always! When she came out from the tent she stepped awkwardly, for the skirts blew over her head, and straight of back as she smiled at her. At another time Rhoda would have joined in his amusement, but now she asked soberly:

"Which horse is for me?"

"Which horse is for me?" "I shall wouldn't know you! I thought I never could want you anything but eternal but—Jack! Isn't she wonderful!"

Jack grinned. Rhoda, tanned and over-faced, and straight of back as she should, was not to be compared with the invalid Rhoda.

"Geel!" he said. "Wait till Katherine sees her!"

Rhoda shrugged her shoulders.

"My pleasure in all that is revealed up by this savage obsession of yours."

John DeWitt led out Rhoda's pony.

"You don't understand, dear," he said. "You can't doubt my heavenly joy at having you safe. But the danger of it. That Apache devil!"

"I do understand," John said. "Rhoda really. 'Don't try to explain again. I know just how you feel. Only, I will not have Kut-le killed.'"

"Rhoda," said DeWitt hoarsely, "I shall kill him as I would a yellow dog!"

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