

with me," he pleaded, noticing her agitation. "You have talked about my returning to this country. You have pictured it out in glowing colours, and I know that I should be enthusiastic. But I cannot, for when I come back you will not be here. Wait, please wait a little longer!" he cried, as Constance endeavoured to speak. "You know not how I love you. Ever since I saw you that wild night at Siwash Creek your image has been enshrined in my heart. Through that terrible trial, on the long trail, and out in the Quelchie camp, the story of which I have told you over and over again, you were ever with me. My love has intensified; it has become a burning fire. And oh, Constance! tell me, is there any response? Dare I hope for any return of my love?"

He was close to her now, looking passionately into her face, from which all the colour had fled. Her eyes remained fixed upon the ground as she listened to his rapid words. Her heart was beating fast, and only with an effort could she control her voice.

"What has this to do with your decision about that church in Toronto?" she slowly asked, with averted face.

"It means much. If you consent to become my—wife, I might accept that offer."

"And why?"

She turned as she spoke and looked him full in the eyes. In her words Keith detected a note of surprise and reproach.