

THE PROMISE OF DREAMS

left the doctor's office. Roy, in no mood for the exuberance of his companions, parted from them, but had not gone far before he met Cherry Malotte. His head was low and he did not see her till she spoke.

"Well, boy, so it's over at last!"

Her words chimed so perfectly with his thoughts that he replied: "Yes, it's all over, little girl."

"You don't need my congratulations—you know me too well for that. How does it feel to be a winner?"

"I don't know. I've lost."

"Lost what?"

"Everything—except the gold-mine."

"Everything except—I see. You mean that she—that you have asked her and she won't?" He never knew the cost at which she held her voice so steady.

"More than that. It's so new that it hurts yet, and it will continue to hurt for a long time, I suppose—but to-morrow I am going back to my hills and my valleys, back to the Midas and my work, and try to begin all over. For a time I've wandered in strange paths, seeking new gods, as it were, but the dazzle has died out of my eyes and I can see true again. She isn't for me, although I shall always love her. I'm sorry I can't forget easily, as some do. It's hard to look ahead and take an interest in things. But what about you? Where shall you go?"

"I don't know. It doesn't really matter—now." The dusk hid her white, set face and she spoke monotonously. "I am going to see the Bronco Kid. He sent for me. He's ill."

"He's not a bad sort," said Roy. "And I suppose he'll make a new start, too."

"Perhaps," said she, gazing far out over the gloomy