

tripping daintily down the stairs and, for all she knew, those expensive marble steps might have been built to give point to the compliment.

"You sure look the part!" he said in her ear as he gallantly escorted her down. "And say, this hotel! Ain't it simply elegant? We'll show those Gunsight folks who's who!"

"They're consumed with envy!" she answered, smiling. "I mean the women, of course. I heard one of them say, just before I moved over, that you'd built it here just to spite them."

"That's right!" laughed Rimrock—"hello, there, Porfilio—I built it just to make 'em look cheap. By grab, I'm an Injun and I won't soon forget the way they used to pass me by on the street. But now it's different—my name is Mister, and that's one bunch I never will know."

"They know me, now," she suggested, slyly, "but I'm afraid I'm part Indian, too."

"You're right!" he said as he guided her through the crowd and led the way out into the street. "Let's walk up and down—I don't dare to go out alone, or the boys will all get me drunk. But that's right," he went on, "I've been thinking it over—you can forgive, but you never forget."

"Well, perhaps so," she replied, "but I don't spend much of my time in planning out some elaborate revenge. Now those marble steps—do you know what Mr. Stoddard said when he came to inspect the mine?"

"No, and what's more, I don't care," answered Rimrock, lightly. "I'm fixed so I don't have to care. Mr. Stoddard is all right—he's a nice able provider, but we're running this mine, ourselves."

HE squeezed her hand where she had slipped it through his arm and looked down with a triumphant smile.

"We, Us and Company!" he went on, unctuously, "fifty-one per cent. of the stock!"

"Does Stoddard know that?" she asked him suddenly, looking up to read the words from his lips. "I noticed when he was here he treated me very politely, whereas Mr. Jepson didn't fare nearly so well."

"You bet he knows it," answered Rimrock, explosively. "And Jepson will know it, too. The first thing I do will be to get rid of our dummy and make you a Director in the Company. I'm going to take charge here and your one per cent. of stock entitles you to a bona-fide place on the Board."

"Well, I'd think that over first," she advised, after a silence, "because I foresee we shan't always agree. And if it's a dummy you want you'd better keep Mr. Buckbee. I'm fully capable of voting you down."

"No, I'll take a chance on it," he went on, smiling amiably. "All I ask is that you let me know. If you want to buck me, why, that's your privilege—you get a vote with me and Stoddard."

"Well, we'll talk that over," she said, laughing indulgently, "when you're not feeling so trustful and gay. This is one of those times I've heard you tell about when you feel like walking the wires. The morning after will be much more appropriate for considering an affair of this kind."

"No, I mean it!" he declared, and then his face reddened. He had used that phrase before, and always at an unfortunate time. "Let's go back to the hotel," he burst out, abruptly, "these boys are painting the town right."

They turned back down the street, where drunken revellers hailed their hero with cheers as he passed, and as they entered the hotel Rimrock carried her on till they had mounted to the ladies' balcony. This was located in the gallery where the ladies of the hotel could look down without being observed, and for the space of an hour Rimrock leaned over the railing and

gazed at the crowded rotunda. And as he gazed he talked, speaking close in her ear since he knew she had left off her 'phone; and all the time, as the people thinned and dwindled, he strove to win her over to his mood.

He was, as she had said, in one of those expansive moods, when his thoughts were lofty and grand. He opened up his heart and disclosed hopes and ambitions never before suspected by her; and as she listened it became apparent that she, Mary Fortune, was somehow involved in them all. Yet she let him talk on, for his presence was like wine to her, and his dreams as he told them seemed true. There was the trip to Europe—he alluded to it very tactfully—but he did not speak as if it were to be made alone.

And then he spoke of his plans for the Tecolote, and further conquests that would startle the world. There was Mexico, a vast treasure-house, barely scratched by the prospector; his star would soon lead him there. All he needed was patience, to wait the short time till the Tecolote began to pour out its ore. He asked her minutely of Jepson and his work and of her interview with the great Whitney H. Stoddard, and then he struck the stone rail with his knotted fist and told what would have to be done. And then at last, as the lights grew dim, he spoke of his long days in jail and how he had looked each day for her letter, which had never failed to come. His voice broke a little as he told of the trial and then he reached out and took her hand.

"I've learned from you," he said, leaning closer so she could hear him, "I've learned to understand. And you like me; now, don't you? You can't tell me different, because I can see it right there in your eye?"

She looked away, but she nodded her head, and her hand still lay quiet in his.

"Yes, I like you," she said. "I can't help but like you—but let's not say any more. Aren't you happy enough without always having things—can't you wait for some things in this world?"

"Yes, I can," he said. "I can wait for everything—the money, the success and all—but I can't wait for you! No, that's asking too much!"

He drew her towards him and his strong arm swept

about her, but she straightened rebelliously in his clutch.

"Remember!" she warned, and his arm relaxed, though his breath was still hot on her cheek. "Now I must be going," she said, rising swiftly. "Good-night, Rimrock! I'm glad you're here!"

"Don't I get a kiss?" he demanded hoarsely as his hand reached again. "Come on," he pleaded. "Didn't I turn you loose? You kissed me once—in jail!"

"But you're free now, Rimrock, and—that makes a difference. You must learn to wait, and be friends."

"Oh—hell!" he burst out as she flitted away from him. But she was deaf—she turned back and smiled.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Morning After.

THE morning after found Rimrock without regrets and, for once, without a head. He had subtly judged, from something she had said, that Mary did not like whiskey breaths, nor strong cigars, nor the odours of the two combined. So, having certain words to speak in her ear, he had refrained, with the results as aforesaid. For the first time in her life she had looked him in the eye and acknowledged, frankly, that she liked him. But she had not kissed him—she drew the line there—and once more in his shrewd unsophisticated way he judged it was never done, in her set.

He found her in the office when he appeared the next morning, with her harness over her head. It was the sign in a way that she was strictly business and all personal confidences were taboo, but Rimrock did not take the hint. It annoyed him, some way, that drum over her ear and the transmitter hung on her breast, for when he had seen her the evening before all these things had been set aside.

"What? Still wearing that ear-thing?" he demanded, bluffly, and she flushed and drew her lips tight. It was a way she had when she restrained some quick answer, and Rimrock hastened on to explain. "You never wore it last night and—and you could hear every word I said."

"That was because I knew what you were going to say."

She smiled, imperceptibly, as she returned the retort courteous, and now it was Rimrock who blushed. Then he laughed and waved the matter aside.

"Well, let it go at that," he said, sitting down. "Gimme the books, I'm going to make you a director at our next meeting."

Mary Fortune looked at him curiously and smiled once more, then rose quickly and went to the safe.

"Very well," she said, as she came back with the records, "but I wonder if you quite understand."

"You bet I do," he said, laying off his big hat and spreading out the papers and books. "Don't fool yourself there—we've got to be friends—and that's why I'm going the limit."

HE searched out the certificate where, to qualify him for director, he had transferred one share of the Company stock to Buckbee, and filled in a date on the back.

"Now," he went on, "Mr. Buckbee's stock is cancelled, and his resignation automatically takes place. Friend Buckbee is all right, but dear friend W. H. Stoddard might use him to slip something over. It's We, Us and Company, you and me, little Mary, against Whitney H. Stoddard and the world. Do you get the idea? We stand solid together—two directors out of three—and the Tecolote is in the hollow of our hand."

"Your hand!" she corrected, but Rimrock protested, and she let him have his way.

"No, now listen," he said; "this doesn't bind you to anything—all I want is that we shall be friends."



the diamond drill cores showed the ore from the heart of the hills.
"Pretty good," he observed.