

face of a different woman altogether—a woman who held out her arms to him in the crowd and smiled a welcome. But always when he went to clasp her to him—the moment when everything seemed accomplished—she would change back to the horizon again and the interminable eyes that mocked and mocked at him out of their interminable loveliness.

It was in one of these shocks of failure that he sat up suddenly and rubbed his own eyes—then he rubbed them again.

Before him on the greensward and dressed in cowboy fashion like himself, a young fellow was eating a slight repast and smiling at him merrily.

"I didn't want to disturb you," he said in very good English and a peculiarly soft voice, "but I didn't think, either, that you owned all the shade."

Careless looked about to where the stranger's horse was picketed; then back at him.

He was slim and of medium height with a rather loose wearing of his clothes, and had an oval, expressive face with dark, flashing eyes. Careless was aware of an instinctive liking even before he answered his remark.

"I raickon," he said, "you can hev as much o' the shade as you want, an' if yer goin' my way I'll be glad of yer company."

As he swept a hand down the trail the young fellow nodded. "For fifty miles or so, anyway," he said. "Better draw up, hadn't you?"

Careless answered the suggestion with a hungry appetite, and they ate in silence, then rode on together. It was evening now, and the light went slowly out, leaving the billowed prairie a sea of dark that rocked gently beneath their horses' feet, and in the quick night air with a moon bowling red like Burgundy on the horizon, conversation struck a lively, genial note.

With a peculiar sympathy and adaptability to each other's point of

view they mixed their philosophies of life to their hearts' content and sent many a merry laugh back at the cloyed, unfree world they seemed always leaving behind. Verily they tore systems and conditions to pieces till civilization had not a leg to stand on—or rather, the stranger did in his boyishly passionate, romantic way, and with a play of fancy and education that set his companion wondering. But in it all Careless agreed—agreed out of the infinite, if laughing, rebellion of his own heart and because—well, such a buoyant, devil-may-care comradeship on a night road was a thing to remember. On the head of it he made known something of himself and his reason for hitting the trail.

The young fellow laughed in consequence and looked him over with interest.

"I wish you luck with her," he said, "but you may not find her so very nice after all—as nice maybe as a cowboy girl you know—somewhere."

"I don't know of any," rejoined Careless carelessly.

"But you may sometime—and before long. It's one like that who would love you best—a little wild and woolly westerner, say, with a dark eye and the grit of a god."

Repeating the final phrase with unction, Careless turned suddenly in his saddle to give vent to the conclusion he had arrived at previously.

"That sounds about as much like a cattler," he said "as things you've said afore. I know 'em, all hefts an' shades, an' I raickon you don't wear the brand." Then, with a sparkle of inquisitive fun in his eyes,—“In fact I'm not just sure as you'd know a coyote if you seen it.”

The other laughed with a quick, appreciating glance. "You can call me Bill," he retorted, "and it ought to be enough for you if I know a man."

Careless tapped his head with his sombrero three times in acknowledge-