



TRUE greatness is to fulfill faithfully the duties of your station.
—F. B. Meyer.

The Heart of the Desert

(Continued from last week.)

"I've waited for the others to get busy," he said, "but they act foolish. Half the trouble with you is mental. You need a boss. Now, you don't eat enough, in spite of the eggs and beef and fruit that that dear Mrs. Jack sets before you. See how your hands shake this minute!" Rhoda could think of no reply sufficiently crushing for this forward young Indian. While she was turning several over in her mind, Kut-le went into the house and returned with a glass of milk.

"I wish you'd drink this," he said. Rhoda's brows still were arched haughtily.

"No, thank you," she said frigidly; "I don't wish you to undertake the care of my health."

Kut-le made no reply but held the glass steadily before her. Instantly, Rhoda looked up. The young Indian was watching her with eyes so clear, so tender, with that strange look of tragedy belying their youth, with that something so compelling in their quiet depths, that once more her tired pulses quickened. Rhoda looked from Kut-le out to the twisting sand-whirls, then she took the glass of milk and drank it. She would not have done this for any of the others and both she and Kut-le knew it. Thereafter, he deliberately set himself to watching her and it seemed as if he must exhaust his ingenuity devising means for her comfort. Slowly Rhoda acquired a definite interest in the young Indian.

"Are you really civilized, Kut-le?" she asked one afternoon when the young man had brought a little white desert owl to her hammock for her inspection.

Kut-le tossed the damp hair from his forehead and looked at the sweet wistful face against the crimson pillows. For a moment Rhoda felt as if his young strength enveloped her like the desert sun.

"Why?" he asked at last. "You said the other day that I was too much civilized."

"I know, but—" Rhoda hesitated for words, "I'm too much civilized myself to understand, but sometimes there's a look in your eyes that something, I suppose it's a forgotten instinct, tells me means that you are willing to let all this go—" she waved a thin hand toward cultivated fields and corrals—"and take to the open desert."

Kut-le said nothing for a moment, though his face lighted with joy at her understanding. Then he turned to view the desert and Rhoda saw the look of joy change to one so full of unutterable longing that her heart was stirred to sudden pity. However, an instant later, he turned to her with the old impassive expression.

"Right beneath my skin," he said, "is the Apache. Tell me, Miss Rhoda, what's the use of it all?"

"Use?" asked Rhoda, staring at the blue sky above the peach-trees. "I am a fit person to ask what is the use

of anything? Of course, civilization is the only thing that lives. I can't get your point of view at all."

"Huh!" sniffed Kut-le. "It's too bad Indians don't write books! If my people had been putting their internal mechanism on paper for a thousand years, you'd have no more trouble setting my point of view than I do yours."

Rhoda's face as she eyed the stern young profile was very sympathetic. Kut-le, turning to her, surprised upon her face that rare, tender smile for which all who knew her watched. His arms flashed and his fine hands clasped and unclasped.

"Tell me about it, Kut-le, if you can." "I can't tell you. The desert would show you its own power if you would give it a chance. No one can describe the call to you. I suppose if I answered it and went back, you would call it retrogression!"

"What would you call it?" asked Rhoda.

"I don't know. It would depend on my mood. I only know that the ache

living as a white, I may live. Up till recently I have worked blindly and hopelessly, but now I see light."

"Do you?" asked Rhoda with interest. "What have you found?"

"It isn't mine yet," Kut-le looked at the girl exultantly and there was a triumphant note in his voice. "But it shall be mine! I will make it mine! And it is worth the sacrifice of my race."

A vague look of surprise crossed Rhoda's face but she spoke calmly: "To sacrifice one's race is a serious thing. I can't think of anything that would make that worth while. Here comes Mr. DeWitt. It must be dinner time. John, come up and see and a little desert owl at close range. Kut-le has all the desert at his beck and call!"

Kut-le persuaded Rhoda to change the morning ride which seemed only to exhaust her, to the shortest of evening strolls. Nearly always DeWitt accompanied them. Sometimes they went alone, though John was never very far distant.

One moonlit night Kut-le and Rhoda stood alone at the corral bars. The whole world was radiant silver moonlight on the desert, on the undulating alfalfa, moonlight filtering through the peach-trees and shimmering on Rhoda's drooping head as she leaned against the bars in the weary attitude habitual to her. Kut-le stood before her, erect and strong in his white flannels. His handsome head was thrown back a little, as was his custom when speaking earnestly. His arms were folded across his deep chest and he stood so still that Rhoda could see his arms rise and fall with his breath.

"It really is great work!" he was saying eagerly. "It seems to me that a civil engineer has tremendous opportunities in the really big things. Some of Kipling's stories of them are bully."

"Aren't they?" answered Rhoda sympathetically.

"There is a big thing in my favor too," the whites make no discrimination against an Indian in the professions. In fact every one gives him a boost in passing!"

"Why shouldn't they? You have as good a brain and are as attractive as any man of my acquaintance!"

The young man drew a quick breath. "Do you really mean that?"

"Of course! Why shouldn't I? Isn't the moonlight uncanny on the desert?"

But Kut-le did not heed his attempt to change the subject.

"There are unlimited opportunities for me to make good, now that the government is putting up so many dams. I believe that I can't go to the top with any man, don't you, Miss Rhoda?"

"I do, indeed!" replied Rhoda sincerely.

"Well, then, Miss Rhoda, will you marry me?"

Rhoda raised her head in speechless amazement.

Kut-le's glowing eyes contracted. "You are not surprised?" he exclaimed a little fiercely. "You must have seen how it has been with me ever since you came. And you have been so—so bully to me!"

Rhoda looked helplessly into the young man's face. She was so fragile

that she seemed but an evanescent part of the moonlight.

"But," she said slowly, "you must know that this is impossible. I couldn't think of marrying you, Kut-le!"

There was a moment's silence. An owl called from the desert. The night wind swept from the fragrant orchard. When he spoke again, Kut-le's voice was husky.

"Is it because I am an Indian?"

"Yes," answered Rhoda, "partly. But I don't love you, anyhow."

"But," eagerly, "if you did love me, would my being an Indian make any



Rising Dairymen.

The two boys here shown are the sons of Mr. G. F. Morehead Co. Unfortunately we are unable to have a look at the face of one little chap, but it is easily seen that they are interested in their father's Ayrahires. The call they are holding is a son of Mr. Morehead's famous champion cow, Bileen.

—Photo by an editor of Farm & Dairy.

difference? Isn't my blood pure? Isn't it old?"

Rhoda stood still. The pain in Kut-le's voice was piercing through to the shadow world in which she lived. Her voice was troubled.

"But I don't love you, so what's the use of considering the rest? If I ever marry any one it will be John DeWitt!"

"But couldn't you," insisted the tragically deep voice, "couldn't you ever love me?"

Rhoda answered wearily. One could not, it seemed, even die in peace!

"I can't think of love or marriage any more. I am a dying woman. Let me go into the mist, Kut-le, without a pang for our friendship, with just the pleasant memory of your goodness to me. Surely you cannot love me as I am!"

"I love you for the wonderful possibilities I see in you. I love you in spite of your illness. I will make you well before I marry you. The Indian in me has strength to make you well. And I will cherish you as white men cherish their wives."

Rhoda raised her head commandingly and in her voice was that boundless vanity of the white, which is as old as the race.

"No! No. Don't speak of this again! You are an Indian but one removed from savagery. I am a white! I couldn't think of marrying you!" Then her tender heart failed her and her voice trembled. "But still I am your friend, Kut-le. Truly I am your friend."

The Indian was silent so long that Rhoda was a little frightened. Then he spoke slowly.

"Yes, you are white and I am red. But before all that, you are a woman of exquisite possibilities and I am a man who by all of nature's laws would make a fitting man for you. You can love me, when you are well, as you could love no other man. And I—dear one, I love you passionately! I love you tenderly! I love you enough to give up my race for you."

(Continued on page 17.)



A Group of Busy Red Cross Workers.

The illustration shows a number of the members of the Women's Institute at Linden Valley, Victoria Co., Ont. This is one of the many Institute branches which are doing splendid Red Cross work. The snapshot was sent to us by "Aunt Beth," one of our Home Club members.

is there." His eyes grew somber and beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. "The ache to be there—free in the desert! To feel the hot sun in my face as I work the trail! To sleep with the naked stars in my face! To be—Oh, I can't make you understand, and I'd rather you understood than any one in the world! You could understand, if only you were desert-taught. When you are well and strong—"

"But why don't you go back?" interrupted Rhoda.

"Because," replied Kut-le slowly, "the Indian is dying. I hope that by