



KEEP your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.
—Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Heart of the Desert

(Continued from last week.)

THE mellow, haunting melody caught Rhoda's fancy at once, as Cartwell knew it would. She turned to the snowy figure at the piano. DeWitt was wholesome and strong, but this young Indian seemed vitally itself.

"Nina, if I should die and o'er ocean's foam
Softly at dusk a fair dove should come,
Open thy window, Nina, for it would be
My faithful soul come back to thee—"

Something in Cartwell's voice stirred Rhoda as had his eyes. For the first time in months Rhoda felt poignantly that it would be hard to be cut down with all her life un-lived. The mellow voice ceased and Cartwell, rising, lighted a fresh cigarette.

"I am going to get up with the rabbits to-morrow," he said, "so I'll try to bed now."

DeWitt, impelled by that curious sense of liking for the young Indian that fought down his aversion, said, "The music was bully, Cartwell!" but Cartwell only smiled as if at the hint of patronage in the voice and strolled to his own room.

Rhoda slept late the following morning. She had not, in her three nights in the desert country, become accustomed to the silence that is not the least of the desert's splendors. It seemed to her that the nameless unknown Mystery toward which her life was drifting was embodied in this infinite silence. So sleep would not come to her until dawn. Then the stir of the wind in the trees, the bleat of sheep, the trill of mockingbirds, lulled her to sleep.

As the brilliancy of the light in her room increased there drifted across her uneasy dreams the lifted notes of a whistled call. Pure and liquidly sweet they persisted until there came to Rhoda that faint stir of hope and longing that she had experienced the day before. She opened her eyes and finally, as the call continued, she crept languidly from her bed and peered from behind the window-shade. Cartwell, in his khaki suit, his handsome head bared to the hot sun, leaned against a post while he watched Rhoda's window.

"I wonder what he wakened me for?" she thought half resentfully. "I can't go to sleep again, so I may as well dress and have breakfast."

Hardly had she seated herself at her solitary meal when Cartwell appeared.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "The birds and Mr. DeWitt have been up this long time."

"What is John doing?" asked Rhoda

carelessly. "He's gone up on the first mesa for the wildcats I spoke of last night. I thought perhaps you might care to take a drive before it got too hot. You didn't sleep well last night, did you?"

Rhoda answered whimsically. "It's the silence. It thunders at me so! I will get used to it soon. Perhaps

I ought to drive. I suppose I ought to try everything."

Not at all discouraged, apparently, by this lack of enthusiasm, Cartwell said:

"I won't let you overdo. I will have the topbushy for you and we'll go slowly and carefully."

"No," said Rhoda, suddenly recalling that, after all, Cartwell was an Indian, "I don't think I will go. Katherine will have all sorts of objections."

The Indian smiled sardonically. "I already have Mrs. Jack's permission. Billy Porter will be in, in a moment. If you would rather have a



Picturesque Scenery in the Yale-Car District of B. C.

The illustration herewith was taken at the time of a Victoria Day celebration. As will be noted, one of the main features of the scenery was the baseball game. The buildings shown are the Salmon Hatchery buildings. Salmon Arm lies at the foot of Mount Ida, which may be seen in the distance.

white man than an Indian as escort, I'm quite willing to retreat."

Rhoda flushed delicately. "Your frankness is almost—almost impertinent, Mr. Cartwell."

"I don't mean it that way at all!" protested the Indian. "It's just that I saw so plainly what was going on in your mind and it piqued me. If it will be one bit pleasanter for you with Billy, I'll go right out and hunt him up for you now."

The young man's naivete completely disarmed Rhoda.

"Don't be silly!" she said. "Go get your famous topbushy and I'll be ready in a minute."

In a short time Rhoda and Cartwell, followed by many injunctions from Katherine, started off toward the irrigating ditch. At a slow pace they drove through the peach orchard into the desert. As they reached the open trail, thrush and to-bee fluttered from the cholla. Chipmunk and cottontail scurried before them. Overhead a hawk dipped in its reeling flight. Cartwell watched the girl keenly. Her pale face was very lovely in the brilliant morning light, though the somberness of her wide, gray eyes was deepened. That same earnestness and patience as her tongue which we touched other men touched Cartwell, but he only said:

"There never was anything bigger and finer than this open desert, was there?"

Rhoda turned from staring at the distant mesas and eyed the young Indian wonderingly.

"Why!" she exclaimed, "I hate it! You know that sick fear that gets you when you try to picture eternity to yourself? That's the way this barrenness and awful distance affects me. I hate it!"

"But you won't hate it!" cried Cartwell. "You must let me show you its loveliness. It's as healing as the hand of God."

Rhoda shuddered.

"Don't talk about it, please! I'll try to think of something else."

They drove in silence for some moments. Rhoda, her thin hands clasped in her lap, resolutely stared at the young Indian's profile. In the unreal world in which she drifted, she needed some thought of strength, some hope beyond her own, to which to cling. She was lonely—lonely as some outcast watching with sick eyes the joy of the world to which he is denied. As she stared at the stern young profile beside her, into her heart crept the now familiar thrill.

Suddenly Cartwell turned and looked at her quizzically.

"Well, what are your conclusions?" Rhoda shook her head.

"I don't know, except that it's hard to realize that you are an Indian."

Cartwell's voice was ironical. "The only good Indian is a dead Indian, you know. I'm liable to break loose any time, believe me!"

Rhoda's eyes were on the far Indian line where the mesa melted into the mountains.

lights all eham; perhaps it was that Rhoda merely had reached the limit of her heroic self-containment and that, had DeWitt or Newman been with her, she would have given way in the same manner; perhaps it was that the young Indian's presence had in it a quality that roused new life in her. Whatever the cause, the listless melancholy suddenly left Rhoda's gray eyes and they were wild and black with fear.

"I can't die!" she panted. "I can't leave my life un-lived! I can't crawl on much longer like a sick animal without a soul. I want to live! To live!"

"Look at me!" said Cartwell. "Look at me, not at the desert!" Then as she turned to him, "Listen, Rhoda! You shall not die! I will make you well! You shall not die!"

For a long minute the two gazed deep into each other's eyes, and the sense of quickening blood throbbing Rhoda's heart. Then they both woke to the sound of hoofbeats behind them and John DeWitt, with a wildcat throw across his back, was on them.

"Hello! I've shouted one lung out! I thought you people were petrified!" He looked curiously from Rhoda's white face to Cartwell's inscrutable one. "Do you think I've come out on this attempted trip, Rhoda?" he asked gently.

"Oh, we've taken it very slowly," answered the Indian. "And we are going to turn back now."

"I don't think I've overdone," said Rhoda. "But perhaps we have had enough."

"All right," said Cartwell. "If Mr. DeWitt will change places with me, I'll ride on to the ditch and he can drive you back."

DeWitt assented eagerly and, the change made, Cartwell lifted his hat and was gone. Rhoda and John returned in a silence that lasted until DeWitt lifted Rhoda from the buggy to the veranda. Then he said:

"Rhoda, I don't like to have you go off alone with Cartwell. I wish you wouldn't."

Rhoda smiled.

"John, don't be silly! He goes about with Katherine all the time."

John only shook his head and changed the subject. That afternoon, however, Billy Porter buttonholed DeWitt in the corral where the New Yorker was watching the Arizonian saddle his fractions horse. When the horse was ready at the post, "Look here, DeWitt," said Billy, an embarrassed look in his honest brown eyes, "I don't want you to think I'm buttin' in, but some one ought to watch that young fellow. Anybody with one eye can see he's crazy about Miss Rhoda."

John was too startled to be resentful.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Cartwell is a great friend of the Newmans."

"That's why I came to you. They're plumb locoed about the fellow, like the rest of the Easterners around here."

"Do you know anything against him?" insisted DeWitt.

"Why, man, he's an Injun, and half Apache at that! That's enough to know against him!"

"What makes you think he's interested in Miss Tuttle?" asked John. Porter flushed through his sin.

"Well," he said sheepishly, "I seen him come down the hall at dawn this morning. Us Westerners are early risers, you know, and when he reached Miss Tuttle's door, he pulled a little slipper out of his pocket and kleased it and put it in front of the sill."

DeWitt scowled, then he laughed.

"It's no worse than the rest of us that way! I'll bet that the Easterners are early risers, you know, and when he reached Miss Tuttle's door, he pulled a little slipper out of his pocket and kleased it and put it in front of the sill."

Porter sighed helplessly.

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