

THE UNTAMED

aged the lower ridges, and trees and brush were stripped clean. To remain here meant slow death, and we fared higher.

We met with cattle on the upper slopes, spent and picking their path with care. A heifer slipped and rolled downward almost beneath our feet. There were many orphan calves, bawling impotently against echoing cañons' walls, and carrion-crows hung soundlessly in flocks, their shadows flitting swiftly over the earth in front of us. We came on the body of a horse at a dried waterhole. He had plunged from a ledge in his exhaustion, to die helplessly in sight of the place he sought. Crows had torn out the eyes.

But I would not let my mother become disheartened. All these creatures were moving downward, and some propelling force has always driven me upward in time of stress. So I led her far among the peaks. It was desolate enough, of a certainty—so barren that my poor, tottering mother wanted to go back,