

for me, but without you life will be a blank. Don't turn me away, Ruth," I said, although she made no sign that occasioned alarm. "Unworthy and all as I am, tell me that you love me."

By this time I had stolen my arm about her waist. She did not resist.

"Make me the happiest boy on the planet, Ruth, dear," I whispered, putting my lips to her ear, and I could feel them burn with the contact.

She paused a little, then placing a hand on each of my bronzed cheeks, she gazed into my eyes for some moments. Then she said: "You know what the love of a woman is?"

"I believe God has given me the soul and intelligence to realize the value of yours," I replied.

"It is her world, her life—her all," she said, speaking low and earnestly, and continuing to gaze into my eyes. "When a woman bestows this priceless gift she can give no more. She has drained the treasure-house of her heart to the last extremity."

"Yes, I think I understand," I whispered.

Suddenly she flung both her arms about my neck.

"Lachlan," she said, "you dear boy, how could I love any one but you? Have you not known since the night we walked on the prairie when Alfred was hurt that I was all yours?"

I took her in my arms and kissed her fondly while I whispered, "Oh, Ruth, Ruth, my Ruth! Just to think that you are all mine! I wouldn't change places with the angels."

She smiled at my impetuosity and earnestness, and