

Desert Dust

By Edwin L. Sabin

Author of "How Are You Feeling?" etc.

"You?" She soberly surveyed me as I ploughed through the dust, at her knees. "I think you'll catch up. If you don't object to my company, yourself, occasionally, maybe I can help you."

"I certainly cannot object to your company whenever it is available, ma'am," I assured.

"You do not hold your experience in Benton against me?"

"I got no more than I deserved in the Big Tent," said I. "I went in as a fool and I came out as a fool, but considerably wiser."

"You reproached me for it," she accused. "You hated me. Do you hate me still, I wonder? I tell you I was not to blame for the loss of your money."

"The money has mattered little, madam," I informed. "It was only a few dollars, and it turned me to a job more to my liking and good health than fiddling my time away, back there. I have you to thank for that."

"No, no! You are cruel, sir. You thank me for the good and you saddle me with the bad. I accept neither. Both, as happened, were misplays. You should not have lost money, you should not have changed vocation. You should have won a little money and you should have pursued health in Benton." She sighed. "And we all would have been reasonably content. Now here you and I are—and what are we going to do about it?"

"We?" I echoed, annoyingly haphazard. "Why so? You're being well cared for, I take it; and I'm under engagement for Salt Lake myself."

The answer did sound rude. I was still a cad. She eyed me with a certain whiteness, a certain puzzled intentness, a certain fugitive wistfulness—a mute estimation that made me too conscious of her clear appraising gaze and rack my brain for some disarming remark.

"You're not responsible for me, you would say?"

"I'm at your service," I corrected. The platitude was the best that I could muster to my tongue.

"That is something," she mused. "Once you were not that—when I proposed a partnership. You are afraid of me?" she asked.

"Why should I be?" I parried. But I was beginning; or continuing. I had that curious inward quiver, not unpleasant, anticipatory of possible events.

"You are a cautious Yankee. You answer one question with another." She laughed lightly.

"Yes, why should you be? I cannot run away with you; not when Daniel and your Mr. Jenks are watching us so closely. And you have no desire to be run away with. And Pedro must be considered. Altogether you are well protected, even if your conscience slips. But tell me: Do you blame me for running away from Montoyo?"

"Not in the least," I heartily assured.

"You would have helped me, at the last?"

"I think I should have felt fully warranted." Again I floundered.

"Even to stowing me with a bull train?"

"Anywhere, madam, for your betterment, to free you from that brute."

"Oh!" She clapped her hands. "But you didn't have to. I only embarrassed you by appearing on my own account. You have some spirit, though. You came to the Adams circle, last night. You did your duty. I expected you. But you must not do it again."

"Why not?"

"There are objections, there."

"From you?"

"No."

"From Hyrum?"

"Not yet."

"From that Daniel then. Well, I will come to Captain Adams' camp as often as I like, if with the Captain's permission. And I shall come to see you, whether with his permission or not."

"I don't know," she faltered.

"I—you would have helped me once, you say? And once you refused me. Would you help me next time?"

"As far as I could," said I.—another of those damned hedging responses that for the life of me I could not manipulate properly.

"Oh!" She cried. "Of course! The queen deceived you; now

you are wise. You are afraid. But so am I. Horribly afraid. I have misplayed again." She laughed bitterly. "I am with Daniel—it is to be Daniel and I in the Lion's den. You know they call Brigham Young the Lion of the Lord. I doubt if even Rachael is angel enough." She paused. "They're going to make nooning, aren't they? I mustn't stay. Good-bye."

I sprang to lift her, but with gay shake of head she slipped off of herself and landed securely.

"I can stand alone. I have to. Men are always ready to do what I don't ask them to do, as long as I can serve as a tool or a toy. You will be very, very careful. Good-day, sir."

She flashed just the trace of a smile; gathering her skirt she ran on, undeterred by the teamsters applauding her spryness.

"Swing out!" shouted Jenks, from rear. "We're noonin'!" The lead wagons had halted beside the trail and all the wagons following began to imitate.

CHAPTEER XIV
I Take A Lesson

From this hour's brief camp, early made, we should have turned southward, to leave the railroad line and cross country for the Overland Stage trail that skirted the southern edge of the worse desert before us. But Captain Hyrum was of different mind. With faith in the Lord and bull confidence in himself he had resolved to keep straight on by the teamster road which through league after league ever extended fed supplies to the advance of the bulders.

Under its adventitious guidance we should strike the stage road at Bitter Creek, eighty or one hundred miles; thence trundle southwestward, for the famed City of the Saints, near two hundred miles farther.

Therefore after nooning at a pool of stagnant, seummy water we hooked up and plunged ahead, creaking and groaning and dust enveloped, constantly outstripped by the hurrying construction trains thundering over the newly laid rails, we ourselves the tortoise in the race.

My Lady did not join me again to-day, nor on the morrow. She abandoned me to a sense of dissatisfaction with myself, of foreboding, and of a void in the landscape.

Our sorely laden train went swaying and pitching across the gaunt face of a high, broad plateau, bleak, hot, and monotonous in contour; underfoot the reddish granite pulverized by grinding tire and hoof, over us the pale bluish fiery sky without a cloud, distant in the south the shining tips of a mountain range, and distant below in the west the slowly spreading vista of a great, bared ocean-bed, simmering bizarre with reds, yellows and deceptive whites, and ringed about by battlements jagged and rock lewn.

Into this enchanted realm we were bound; by token of the smoke blotches the railroad line led thither. The teamsters viewed the unfolding expanse phlegmatically. They called it the Red Basin. But to me, fresh for the sight, it beckoned with fantastic issues. Even the name breathed magic. Wizard spells hovered there; the railroad had not broken them—the cars and locomotives, entering, did not disturb the brooding vastness. A man might still ride errant into those slumberous spaces and discover for himself; might boldly awaken the realm and rule with a princess by his side.

But romance seemed to have no other sponsor in this plodding, whip-cracking, complaining caravan. So I lacked, woefully lacked, kindred companionship.

Free to say, I did miss My Lady, perched upon the stoic mule while like an Arab chief I conveyed her. The steady miles, I admitted, were going to be as disappointing as tepid water, when not aerated by her counsel and piquant allusions, by her sprightly readiness and the essential elements of her blue eyes, her faelle lips, and that bright hair which no dust could dim.

After all she was distinctly feminine—bravely feminine; and if she wished to flirt as a relief from the cock-sure Daniel and the calm methods of her Mormon guardians, why, let us beguile the way. I should second with eyes

open. That was accepted.

Moreover, something about her weighed upon me. A consciousness of failing her, a woman, in emergency, stung my self-respect. She had twitted me with being "afraid"; afraid of her, she probably meant. That I could pass warily. But she had said that she, too, was afraid: "horribly afraid," and an honest shudder had attended upon the words as if a real danger hedged. She had an intuition. The settled convictions of my Gentile friends coincided. "With Daniel in the Lion's den"—that phrase repeated itself persistent. She had uttered it in a fear accentuated by a mirthless laugh. Could such a left-handed woe prove too much for her? Well, if she was afraid of Daniel I was not and she should not think so.

I could see her now and then, on before. She rode upon the wagon seat of her self-appointed executor. And I might see him and his paraded impertinences.

Except for the blowing of the animals and the mechanical noises of the equipment the train subsided into a dogged patience, while parched by the dust and the thin dry air and mocked by the speeding construction crews upon the iron rails it lurched westward at two and a half miles an hour, for long hours out-faced by the blinding sun.

Near the western edge of the plateau we made an evening corral. After supper the sound of revolver shots burst flatly from a mess beyond us, and startled. Everything was possible, here in this lone horizon-land where rough men, chafed by a hard day, were gathered suddenly relaxed and idle. But the shots were accompanied by laughter.

"They're only tryin' to spile a can," Jenks reassured. "By golly, we'll go over and I'll arn 'em a lesson." He glanced at me. "Time you loosened up that weepin' o' yourn, anyhow. Purty son it'll stick fast."

I arose with him, glad of any diversion. The circle had not yet formed at Hyrum's fire.

"It strikes me as a useless piece of baggage," said I. "I bought it in Benton but I haven't needed it. I can kill a rattlesnake easier with my whip."

"Wall," he drawled, "down in yonder you're liable to meet with a rattler too smart for your whip, account of his freckles. 'Twon't do you no harm to spend a few cartridges, so you'll be ready for business."

The men were banging, by turn, at a sardine can set up on the sand about twenty paces out. Their shadows stretched slantwise before them, grotesquely lengthened by the last efforts of the disappearing sun. Some aimed carefully from under pulled-down hat brims; others, their brims flared back, fired quickly, the instant the gun came to the level. The heavy balls sent the loose soil flying in thick jets made golden by the evening glow. But amidst the furrows the cans sat untouched by the plunging missiles.

We were greeted with hearty banter.

"Hyar's the champeens!"

"Now they'll show us."

"Ain't never see that pilgrim unlimber his gun yet, but I reckon he's a bad 'un."

"Jenks, old hoss, cain't you I'arn that darn can manners?"

"I'll try to oblige you, boys," friend Jenks smiled. "What you thinkin' to do; hit that can or plant a lead mine?"

"Give him room. He's made his brag," they cried. "And if he don't plug it that pilgrim sure will."

Mr. Jenks drew and took his stand; banged with small preparation and missed by six inches—a fact that brought him wide awake, so to speak, badgered by derision renewed. A person needs must have a bull hide, to travel with a bull train, I saw.

"Gimme another, boys, and I'll hit it in the nose," he growled sheepishly; but they shoved him aside.

"No, no. Pilgrim's turn. Fetch on yore shootin'-iron, young feller. Thar's yore turkey. Show us why you're packin' all that hardware."

Willy-nilly I had to demonstrate my greenness; so in all good nature I drew, and stood, and cocked, and aimed. The Colt's exploded with prodigious blast and wrench—jerked, in fact, almost above head; and where the bullet went I did not see, nor, I judged, did anybody else.

"He missed the 'arth'!" they clamored.

"No; I reckon he hit Montany 'bout the middle. That's whar he scored center!"

"Shoot! Shoot!" they begged.

"Go ahead. Mebbe you'll kill an Injun unbeknowst. They's a pack o' Sioux jest out o' sight behind them hills."

And I did shoot, vexed; and I struck the ground, this time, some fifty yards beyond the can. Jenks stepped from amidst the riotous laughter.

"Hold down on it, hold down, lad," he urged. "To hit him in the heart aim at his feet. Here! Like this—" and taking my revolver he threw it forward, fired, the can plinked and somersaulted, lashed into action too late.

"By Gawd," he proclaimed, "when I move like it had a gun in its fist I can snap it. But when I think on it as a can I lack guts."

The remark was fat. I had seen several of the men snip the head from a rattlesnake with a single off-hand shot—yes, they all carried their weapons easily and wotently. But the target of an immobile can lacked in stimulation to concord of nerve and eye.

Now I shot again, holding of mere guesswork, and landed appreciably closer although still within the zone of ridicule. And somebody else shot, and somebody else, and another, until we all were whooping and laughing and jesting, and the jets flew as if from the balls of a mitrailleuse, and the can rocked and gyrated, spurring us to haste at it constantly changed the range. Presently it was merely a twist of ragged tin. Then in the little silence, as we paused, a voice spoke irritatingly.

"I laow yu fellers ain't no great shucks at throwin' lead."

Daniel stood by, with arms akimbo, his booted legs braggartly straddled and his freckled face primed with an intolerant grin at our recent efforts. My Lady had come over with him. Raw-boned, angular, joddis but as strong as a mule, he towered over her in a maddening atmosphere of proprietorship.

(To be Continued.)

The Forbidden Lure.

"Leave all and follow—follow!"

Lure of the sun at dawn,
Lure of a wind-paced hollow,
Lure of the stars withdrawn;
Lure of the brave old singing
Brave perished minstrels knew!
Of dreams like sea-fog clinging
To boughs the night sifts through.

"Leave all and follow—follow!"

The sun goes up the day;
Flickering wing of swallow,
Blossoms that blow away,
What would you, luring, luring,
When I must bide at home?
My heart will break her mooring
And die in reef-fung foam!

Oh, I must never listen,
Call not outside my door,
Green leaves, you must not glisten
Like water, any more.
Oh, Beauty, wandering Beauty,
Pass by; speak not. For see,
By bed and board stands Duty
To snatch my dreams from me!

—Fannie Stearns Davis, in the Indianapolis News.

LITTLE REAL PHILOSOPHY
Ed Howe.

There is little real philosophy these modern days. The big talking and writing that goes on is as exaggerated as are smaller performances in the same line. In the distant future when a collection is made of the literature of today, it will be found so trifling that not much of it will be preserved.

We not only live extravagantly, but talk and write in the same way. In making a financial venture, caution and common sense are important, and necessary to success, but in writing and talking extravagance pays best; so many publications are willing to pay high prices for extravagant statements that modesty and real sense are not much in demand.

Likewise audiences in theaters, clubs and conventions like extravagance better than the truth and we get only tinsel of no permanent value. Intellectually this age will, I fear, make a poor showing in the literature of a thousand years hence.

A Song in Everything.

There is a song in everything.
In every little care that comes.
In tables as they suok their thumbs,
The tunes the brave canaries sing,
The mother's patient, gentle smile,
The glory of the after-while.

There is no sadness but is sweet
With fragrance, and there is no day
But spreads some beauty on life's way.

The dusty and the weary feet
Upon their homeward journey bring
Delights which loving hearts may sing.

The high chair and the cradle, too,
Have ever set brave lips to song,
No grief has ever lived so long
But turned to music as it grew,
And every hour of strife and pain
Leaves in the heart some sweet refrain.

Lord, teach me this, from day to day,
To find beyond the hurt and care
Thy mercy shining everywhere;
Let me rejoice that children play,
And know when bitter tempests sting
There is a song in everything.
—From the Chicago Tribune.

Whatever The Cost.
From the Duluth Herald.

France and Belgium are going to remain neutral in that separatist row even if they have to send in extra troops

JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD

Often Prevented by Female Trouble

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound brings Joy to Homes by Removing Cause of Trouble

Brooklyn, N.Y.,—"I was working after I got married and the young lady who worked next to me asked me if I had any intentions of having a child. I told her I would be the happiest woman on earth if I could become a mother, but I always had terrible cramps, backaches and headaches. She then told me of a woman she knows who took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for the same troubles and it helped her greatly. I took about a half bottle and found that the following month I did not suffer any pain, so I kept on taking it. I have a wonderful baby boy six months old and he is as strong and fat as any one could wish a baby to be. I still take the Vegetable Compound regularly because I have looked fine all the time and felt fine and my mother told me that was the reason. I will be glad to have you publish my testimonial with my name and address."—Mrs. EDWARD WEBBER, 1824 Greene Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y.

and I was afraid that I could never have any more, for I had been told that I never could have a living child for I was not strong enough to carry one. But they were mistaken and I had a nice baby boy and now I have five children. I can't praise your medicine enough. My youngest sister has taken it, too, and praises it."—Mrs. G. L. WISWELL, 48 Mechanics Row, Auburn, Maine.

These cases are similar to many others reported to us. It is well for women to carefully consider such statements and to give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial. It may bring great joy to your home.

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98 per cent of these replies are "Yes."

That means that 98 out of every 100 women who take this medicine for the ailments for which it is recommended are benefited by it.

This goes to prove that a medicine specialized for certain definite ailments—not a cure-all—can and does do good work. For fifty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been a medicine for women.

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Free From Old Trouble

Auburn, Maine.—"I suffered with inward weakness for ten years and had doctored all this long time but never got any help. One day I saw my sister and she told me of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I went and got me a bottle of it. I took two bottles and a half and I was just as free from my old troubles as I could be. I had only one child

Woman Explains Why People Swim in Winter

Why some persons go ocean swimming in winter was revealed by a woman bather at Brighton beach, New York, on a recent Sunday afternoon. There were several "polar bears," "Arctic swans" and other of the cold-water clan splashing and plunging through the surf. Apparently they were enjoying it or else moving fast to keep from freezing.

A man and a woman bather detached themselves from the swimmers and hurried toward the bath-houses. Their teeth chattered and waves of "goose flesh" rippled up and down their bare arms and legs, much as the surf was breaking over the ice-bersted sands.

"How's the water?" asked a bystander.

"Co-oo-oo!" stammered the woman.

"Did you enjoy the swim?"

"No-oo-ooo!"

"Then why did you go in?"

"'Cause I'm crazy!"—New York Sun and Globe.

The Reason Why

"Why," asked the school inspector, "should we celebrate Washington's birthday more than we do mine?"

"Because he never told a lie, sir," shouted one of the pupils.—Boston Transcript.

If you think you need exercise, try walking up instead of taking the elevator.

Children Cry for Fletcher's CASTORIA

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