

THE OREGON DESERT

BY LIZORA C. CHANDLER

He watched beside her all the night, his young heart fierce with anger against the one who had caused her such anguish. When the light of morn-



ing streaked the sky, he took the cup from the spring and went into the pasture and milked it full of sweet warm milk which he brought to Laurel and pressed her to drink.

"It'll make you strong," he said, "so's the gran'thens—they mus'n know."

After repeated urgings she drank the milk and, looking at him, repeated, "They mus'n know." Then she arose and went slowly like an old woman toward the hut.

The old folk grumbled because they had not returned earlier. Laurel, always silent at reproach, did not reply, while the youth was careful to appease them.

And the long, empty day dragged on.

CHAPTER VII

Laurel went about like one in a trance. At night she sank into a heavy sleep that continued unbroken until morning and from which she was with difficulty aroused, but she was not refreshed. Her limbs seemed chained, her hands were heavy; she could hold nothing steadily. In the afternoon as she came in with a pitcher of water from the spring her hand shook so that a great splash went over the child's bare feet. The surprised shriek of the small voice startled her and the pitcher slipped from her hand and broke upon the floor at her feet.

"Ah, what be th' matter wid yo', Laurel?" said the grandmother, perceiving the distraught look upon the young face. "Go out o' door till yo' git a bit color. I'll red up th' house. Go on, child."

Laurel turned slowly and went out. She stood a few moments in half unconscious indecision, then because the trail that led downward had grown too painful she began slowly to climb the mountainside. Anguish was beating her heart with whips of steel, and she had not been able to cry out. She must go where no one would hear and where, like a true child of nature, she could talk her grief aloud instead of giving it silent battle in her heart.

She toiled on steadily up the hill. The brown mat of earth under her feet and the trees as she went higher grew poor and mean. The latter were huddled together by poverty of soil. They were so silent, and they watched her so.

She turned to look back. The very clouds had gone out of the sky, and her beloved mountain, always so near, seemed far away. Everything was falling away from her, and the pitiless desert stretched beyond her sight.

She went on upward, and her thought began to take on distinct form. She remembered the coming of those two and the fear that had haunted her all through that day. She remembered their going that next morning and the words of "th' tall un" about God.

"Why didn't he come 'stid o' th' other un?" she wailed unconsciously. "He wouldn't 'a' done sech a way—he wouldn't."

For a long time she stood as one bewildered. Her thought had lost itself, and she swayed back and forth like one beside herself. Then thought took up its old thread of sorrow and went on. She remembered her surprise when the other one came alone after a few days and the gladness that grew as she saw him often climbing the steep and knew that he climbed it because she was there.

Afterward came the long, empty days that before the coming of those two had not been worth the naming, and since he came no more had grown to be worse than nameless—the long days when, as she looked for him, she saw only the dead desert stretched out, so old and withered and gray.

She remembered how she had gone to seek him, and the finding, and the blinding grief that had wrapped her round. Her heart could no longer hold its agony. She climbed swiftly, like a wild creature, toward the rocky summit. Something was pursuing her. She must escape.

On and on she sped until at last she reached the dry and barren peak and sank breathless and strengthless upon the rough surface. But she had not escaped from this evil thing. Dizzy and panting though she was, it still lay upon her heart. She opened her mouth and gave a prolonged cry. Again and again the piteous wail rang out until she grew hoarse and could no longer cry. But the evil would not be driven away. It clung to her fiercely. All her thoughts grew cramped into one sad, mad thought that reached as high as the sky and that laid hold of the silence below.

This strain was too much for even her vigorous organism. A gurgle came in her throat, and a stream of warm blood rushed through her lips. She saw it with unstartled eyes. She was going to die, then, as the deer died that came panting into the mountain path with blood on its delicate lips. Everything faded from her sight. The light went out. Was it like this to the pretty deer?

After a time the light came back. A little later she could lift her head and look about her. She was not dead, then, like the deer. It was not so well with her as that. Nothing was left to her but to go back into her old, poor life, older and poorer than ever since she knew that it was so. Nothing but to go on bearing the common fretting of the meager days without faltering. A thousand pitiful noises were wrung from her soul. Such silly demands as were made upon her! Such foolish, fitful, peevish words as her poor ears had often to hear! Her spirit shrank from the dreary outlook.

The dusk came on. The outline of trees and rocks grew sharper at the summit and became an indistinct mass below. But she was not afraid. She had often shivered at imagined hearing of the bears' slow tread and the stealthy spring of the panther. But they had no terror for one in her mood. Death in any form would be easier tonight than the life which stretched so blankly beyond.

She must go back. They surely would be calling her. She arose and began the descent, but her knees were weak and her feet slipped. It was a difficult thing when one was strong and well, but since she had almost died how strengthless she was and how short her breath. She clutched at the branches as she went, and she who had hardly known fatigue must now rest often.

There was no danger of losing the way, for as she came into each clear spot she looked for the snow mountain and guided her steps as the mariner looks at his star and makes sure of his watery path.

"Laurel!" she heard. "Laurel!"

It was the youth. He was seeking her. She who had called gayly morning and evening to the clouds and to the mountain could hardly find voice to let him know where to find her.

He came at last, and when he took her hands they were so cold that they chilled him. Leaning upon his shoulder, she reached the hut and sank upon her bed and laid the whole night through without even trying to lift her head.

CHAPTER VIII

Wilmot recognized the youth who had served as pilot to Craymer and himself on that memorable morning, though the face was prematurely anxious and the eyes were wide and intense.

"What be th' matter?" he cried. "Laurel hev waited an waited, but he doan't come. An she got so wile wid fear that he be sick that I comed here wid her one night. An she ief' me out thar wid th' beasts. An I got t' sleep. An when I comed to she hadn't come. So I ief' th' beasts an went an foun her lookin throo th' bushes at him an a girl settin wid her arm roun his neck. An she giv a leetle groanin cry an fell down. An I be feared they'd fin her. So I drug her way. She didn't wake up all sh' way hum, but her eyes was open. An she goes 'round so still—like a ghos'. Come back wid me. She liked yo' bes', but he's been an witched her."

Wilmot's already depressed heart grew heavier. He sat down upon a rustic seat and drew the youth beside him and put one big arm around him. Grief makes strange comrades. The boyish heart leaned against the big, true hearted man and was comforted. All would be well now. So he sat and patiently waited. But as the other did not move after long waiting he touched the hand upon his shoulder.

"Belikes we'd better go," he said. Then Wilmot's helplessness flashed over him. "My dear fellow," he answered, "my going will not help you. I'll telegraph for a doctor to visit your Laurel tomorrow."

But the youth wept over the hand he held and begged with his heart in every word until Wilmot promised.

It was the work of a few moments to go to his room and tumble the bed; to write a blind note to McAlvord and lay it on the breakfast table, and after that to get a pony from the long stables and set out with his face toward the moun-

tain that had stood so constantly in the horizon of his thought.

They cantered through the near corner of pasture land across the upper arm of the desert and reached the mountain path. As they were about to ascend Wilmot sprang off his horse and called to the youth with an involuntary fierceness:

"Why should I go? I am no doctor. I can do nothing for your Laurel. He may come here tomorrow. I am sure that he will come soon. I cannot go."

In an instant the youth was at his side. "Oh, but yo' won't be s' hard like 's t' go back now! Belikes yo' kin say somethin as'll comfort her. She's growed feared, like a wild bird. She talked t' me 'bout God sence yo' was thar, an she said he was big an white like ole Mount Hood. He'd take keer o' me an th' gran'thens an th' chile, he would, 'cause yo' asked him to."

"Well, go on, though I'm neither doctor nor missionary. But you must put the ponies in the shed and let me stay outside until it is day. Then if she comes out—"

He did not know what he would have added. The other was satisfied and, fearing more objection, hastened on.

When the ponies were corralled, the youth brought a blanket for his companion and, wrapping himself in another, laid down at a little distance.

Wilmot did not try to analyze his emotions during the hours of that night. Sympathy for the bold young heart whose affection had sought him, raging indignation against the one who had disturbed the peace of these simple folk and a pity deep as his manly heart held sway in turn.

The eternal stars shone out overhead. They wooed his thoughts from the tangled maze below to the hand that could hold them on their silent and mighty course. It was the hand of One whose pity was like that of a father.

"Oh, Laurel, little flower!" he said. "Somehow, somewhere and at some time the wrongs of life will all be righted."

CHAPTER IX

Morning came and touched everything with splendor. The weather beaten but grew soft with purple shadowing. The leaves of the vine that clambered up the steep roof tumbled in the morning air. A great rhododendron tree, which Wilmot had not noticed before, had still a few blossoms upon it. They must have named her for the tree—rhododendron, laurel. How much prettier the shorter name was!

The door of the picturesque old hut opened and Laurel came slowly out. Sorrow had cut her as frost cuts a flower. She did not see Wilmot, but with uplifted eyes she said in a tender, broken voice, as one would do a habitual thing though the heart were not in the doing of it: "Good mornin, pretty clouds. Good mornin, ole Mount Hood, sweet mornin' t' yo'." And she kissed her hands. Then, covering her eyes, she stood for a little with bowed head—not as one awaiting a blessing, but as one whose strength had become weakness.

Over the desert the snow peak rose in high relief against the sky, like some glistening shrine belonging to another and a fairer world. Wilmot began to understand how, in this joyless, isolated life, her fine nature had given a spirit to these fairer objects and had entered into kinship with them.

She turned and saw him, but she did not start or tremble as he had feared. She only looked at him calmly with a slow lifting of the eyes and a protracted but not searching gaze. He did not approach or vex her with a greeting, but she came slowly toward him.

"Why didn't yo' come back 'stid o' th' other un?" she asked.

"He uncovered his head and looked at her. What could he answer?"

"Why didn't yo' come?" she repeated in the same slow monotone.

His heart grew heavy with tenderness and with something which had been growing there for many weeks.

"I have come now," he answered. "I am sorry that I did not come before. I staid away because I was not wise and did not know what it was best to do. But I am here now, and if you will let me I will bring my sister, a dear, brave girl, to see you, and she and I will take you away, and you shall be with us always—if you will."

She clasped her hands tightly together.

"I have come to say that to you," he said. "Forgive me for not having come before."

"It hurts t' stay here," she said. "Everything hurts." She turned away. He waited patiently. Presently she lifted her eyes again to his face. Something in his look melted her. She threw herself down upon the moss covered log at his feet and sobbed passionately.

"Th' clouds 'n th' mountains," she sobbed. "They kin never be th' same. I—I want t' go."

Then Wilmot went toward the door of the hut, and meeting the "gran'thens" told the whole story in simplest language and begged from them their dearest treasure.

"We can't git 'long nobow 'thout Laurel," protested the grandmother. But the heart of the grandmother understood and was touched. "She doan't b'long t' us," she said, "n we hain't got no right t' set up ag'in it ef Laurel wants t' go."

Then followed a few necessary words of planning, after which Wilmot went back and lifted the slender form in his arms.

"Laurel, little flower, I am coming after you in a few more days. And you will go with me then?" She leaned against him as one who had found shelter from a pitiless storm. "Yo' didn't come before," she answered. "I thought yo' would come, but yo' didn't." "N he come. 'N then I got s' bad hurt here," and she laid her hand upon her heart, "thet I can't git my breath. But yo' hev come. 'N I'll go with yo' anywhere. I'll stay with yo'. I'll wait fur yo' when yo' be'n gone jes' I be'n doin these thar days. 'Fore yo' come that fust time I be'n dead. It be'n empty livin'—fore yo' come."

CHAPTER X

Craymer kept his half promise to Wilmot for one day only. Early the next morning he asked the Chinaman for breakfast, and after eating hastily, as if afraid time might weaken his purpose, he mounted a pony and with the paltry excuse of brushes and paints set off upon the well known trail.

His thoughts were swayed by conflicting emotions. Among them was anger toward Wilmot, which he nursed as a sort of excuse for action. He was not a boy that he should be so taken to task. He meant to marry his betrothed at the appointed time. He had only a few more weeks in this wild place, and he had not made good use of the time to fill his portfolio. It became him, therefore, to be diligent.

He did not ask himself why thoughts of work always led him in one direction. To be sure, he had implied a promise to Wilmot that he would make no more pictures of her, but if Wilmot were to have all of those already sketched why should he not make a new one for himself—one with that stately turn of the throat like an affrighted deer—not for exhibition, but for his own studio walls?

He did not know how long he had ridden, but felt that he must be near the mountain. He looked up to find his gaze shut in by an impenetrable misty wall. Then he became conscious of the chill that was creeping over him, but he would soon be there, and perhaps they would have that blazing fire upon the great hearth lighted.

He had given the pony rein as he had always done before, but now he noticed with a sudden failure of heart that this was not the pony he had always ridden on these errands. Those Indians were fools, every one of them. He had lost the trail and was wandering he knew not whither.

Presently a fine, drizzling rain began. He remembered having heard McAlvord say that it had not rained at that season for more than 40 years. A rain at this time meant fevers and many ills, for it always lasted during many days.

The hours fled. Night came on. The mist became a rain which fell steadily. He pressed onward in the hope of striking the bridge path, but cold, exhausted and hungry he sank at last upon the ground beside his horse.

They lay until morning, gaining some little warmth from each other. Another day of toil shut in by those wet, gray walls. Another night of exhaustion. They plodded through the third day,



growing each more hopeless and dispirited. The fourth morning he tried to urge the pony to arise, but after several attempts it stretched out its neck and would no longer struggle. He had to leave it. When this wretched rain was over, it would arise, no doubt, and find its own way back.

Hour after hour he toiled onward, shaken by chills, consumed at the same time by an inward fire and fever. But the warm hut, with its blazing fire of great logs, was in the elusive distance. The impatience and strain made his brain reel. He sank upon the ground in heavy exhaustion. A dark object lay before him. He arose and tried to approach it cautiously, but, unable longer to guide his footsteps, he stumbled against it and fell. It moved slightly and gave a husky whinny.

He stretched out his hand. Could it be the pony he had left hours before? With one desperate effort of his swiftly ebbing strength he made conviction sure by finding the knot in the bridle rein which he had handled nervously during the dreadful hours of that first dreadful day.

Great heavens! He had gone in a circle. He was lost then, and the hut, with its blazing fire, might be miles away. The thought was almost death itself and made such darkness in his soul that he grew mad, and, giving a great cry, swooned away.

The silent hours passed. They made themselves into night and into day and into night again. The unlooked for dawn was rising softly on slow wings when he aroused himself.

"It was a dream," he said. "Helen, my betrothed, I have come back to you. I am stained with the earthly life. I am not worth your taking, but your innocence will make me true. We will go away together, dear, and I will teach you to believe in me. Let us go. Where is your hand? It is growing dark. Why did I bring you out into this dreadful night?"

The words had hardly ceased, and it was not yet too late to save the ebbing life, when a tall man rode swiftly up. His lips grew white as he fired signal shots and looked through a glass out into the clear morning to see that a company of horsemen in the near distance had heard and were turning in the right direction.

He stuck his gun into the ground and fastened his handkerchief to it in order that the riders might not lose their way. Then he mounted his horse and rode away. At the foot of a tall mountain upon whose side hung a vine wreathed but he paused and looked up through the morning splendor which crowned the radiant summits and touched the hidden places, up at the clouds and across at the serene, white mountain, and as he looked his heart grew still and there echoed a voice in his ears, and these were the words it said:

"I'll go with yo' anywhere. It be'n empty livin' fore yo' come. Goodby, pretty clouds! Goodby, ole Mount Hood, a sweet goodby t' yo'!"

The Repertee.

Even Dr. Johnson was won over by Wilkes' delightful manners until they were found by Boswell "reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other and talking earnestly in a kind of confidential whisper of the personal quarrel between George II and the king of Prussia. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the kid." According to Boswell, "when Wilkes and I sat together each glass of wine produced a flash of wit, like gunpowder thrown into the fire—puff, puff!" But Wilkes hardly confirmed this, for he thought the famous "Life" the work "of an entertaining madman," in which "much was put down to Boswell which was undoubtedly said by Johnson—what the latter did, and the former could not say." We can well imagine that an encounter with Boswell would have many charms for Wilkes.

No man ever lived who could adapt his wit better to his company. Compare his chaff of the alderman, formerly a bricklayer, who was trying to carve a turbot with a knife—"Use a trowel, brother, use a trowel!"—with his reply to Mme. de Pompadour when she asked him, "How far is it safe to go in England against the royal family?"—"That is what I am trying to find out, madame." There are few more really witty replies recorded than that made to the prince regent, who asked him at dinner when he drank to the king's health, "How long have you been so loyal, Wilkes?" "Ever since I knew your royal highness."—Cornhill Magazine.

Sensitizing Paper.

There are two ways of sensitizing paper. One is to apply the solution with a brush, and the other is to float the salted paper on the surface of the liquid. Thin papers like Rives photographic paper take the solution quickly and do not require so many applications of the solution if it is applied with a brush, or so long a soaking if floated on the liquid as do the heavy, rough papers like Whatman's drawing paper or crayon paper.

The paper is first salted, and it is better to have this done by the dealer in photographic goods, as it is much easier to apply the sensitive solution than it is to salt the paper. If photographic paper is used, ask for fresh salted paper, but if drawing paper is used take it to the dealer and have it salted. The expense is very trifling, a sheet of salted paper costing only a cent or two more than the plain paper.

The sensitizing solution is made of 240 grains of nitrate of silver and 5 ounces of distilled or filtered water. Dissolve the nitrate of silver crystals in the water, and then add strong liquid ammonia drop by drop, stirring the solution constantly until the brown precipitate which is formed by the addition of the ammonia has disappeared and the liquid is clear. Not more than 75 drops of ammonia should be added to the solution, and if it does not clear when this amount has been added clear the solution by filtering.—Harper's Round Table.

A Sixteenth Century Letter.

The following copy of a letter, written in 1595 by a young lady when residing with a lady of rank as attendant in her waiting room, an office carrying no menial service with it and much sought after by the daughters of gentlefolk, may be interesting:

To my good Mother, Mrs. Parke, at Broomfield:

DEAR MOTHER—My humble duty remembered unto my father and you, &c. I received on Wednesday last a letter from my Father and you, whereby I understand it is your pleasure that I should certify you what times I do take for my lute and the rest of my exercises. I do for the most part playe of my lute after supper, for then cometh my Lady heareth me, and in the mornings after I am reddie I playe an hower and my writhings and siftings after I have done my lute. For my drawinge I take an hower in the afternoon and my French at night before supper. My Lady hath not been well these two days, she telleth me when she is well that she will see if Hilliard will come and teche me, if she can by any means she will. I hope I shall performe my duty to my Lady with all care and regard to please her and to become myselfe to every one else as shall become me. Mr. Harrisone was with me upon Fridaye, he heard me play and brought me a dussion of trebles. I had some of him when I came to London. Thus desiringe pardon for my rude writhings, I leave you to the Almighty, desiringe Him to increase in you all health and happiness. Your obedient daughter, REBECCA PARKE.

Negroes With Red Hair.

"A man sees lots of funny things while traveling around the country, but the most peculiar sight I ever saw was in Omaha the last time I was there," said Charles Killinger of Cincinnati. "While walking along the street there one day I saw two negroes with hair as red as any red hair you ever saw. It was as kinky as the negro wool usually is. It was a funny sight, and I stopped to look at them as they went down the street. A friend of mine who resides there told me those negroes had come from the south some years ago and as far as he knew were full blooded darkeys. Six fingered people are not uncommon, but for freaks those darkeys took the cake."—Denver Republican.

Mistakes of the "Publisher's Reader."

I was speaking of some of my experiences as a publisher's "reader," a few years ago, in a recent conversation with a friend, who told me that Mr. John Morley had read "Mr. Isaacs" for Messrs. Macmillan and had advised against its publication on the ground that while it would be a most creditable book to have on their list, there would be no sale for it. In the light of subsequent events this is rather amusing, but it only proves that even so astute a critic as Mr. Morley is not infallible—in other words, that he is human.—Critic.

Another Place.

Bill—Where've you been?
Jill—Down to the doctor's.
"I'll bet he told you to go south."
"No, I didn't go to consult him; I went to collect a bill."
"Oh, well, in that case it was probably not the south where he told you to go!"—Yonkers Statesman.

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	P. M.	
Leave Wilmington	4 00	
Leave Marion	6 43	
Arrive Florence	7 25	
	P. M.	A. M.
Leave Florence	8 00	9 25
Arrive Sumter	9 10	4 29
	P. M.	A. M.
Leave Sumter	9 12	9 37
Arrive Columbia	10 20	10 55

No. 52 runs through from Charleston via Central R. R., leaving Charleston 7 a. m., Lane 8 28 a. m., Manning 9 05 a. m.

TRAINS GOING NORTH.

	No. 54.	No. 53.
	A. M.	P. M.
Leave Columbia	6 45	9 00
Arrive Sumter	8 08	6 30
	A. M.	P. M.
Leave Sumter	8 12	6 30
Arrive Florence	9 25	7 45
	A. M.	
Leave Florence	9 58	
Leave Marion	10 36	
Arrive Wilmington:	1 20	

*Daily. †Daily except Sunday.
No. 53 runs through to Charleston, S. C., via Central R. R., arriving Macon 6 8 p. m., Lane 7 36 p. m., Charleston 9 15 p. m.
Trains on Conway Branch leave Chadbourn 11 43 a. m., arrive at Conway way 20 p. m., returning leave Conway at 2 45 p. m., arrive Chadbourn 5 15 p. m., leave Chadbourn 5 45 p. m., arrive at Hub at 8 25 p. m., returning leave Hub 8 30 a. m., arrive at Chadbourn 9 15 a. m. Daily except Sunday.
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Lv Elliott,	8 40	
Lv Sumter,	9 25	
Lv Creston,	4 29	
Lv Preston,	5 17	
Lv Creighton,	5 45	
Lv Peggalls,	9 15	
Lv Orangeburg,	5 40	
Lv Denmark,	6 12	

TRAINS GOING NORTH.

	No. 76.	No. 32.
	a. m.	p. m.
Lv Denmark,	4 25	
Lv Orangeburg,	5 03	
Lv Peggalls,	10 00	
Lv Creston,	3 50	
Lv Creighton,	5 30	
Lv Sumter,	6 40	