

HESPER

...BY...

HAMLIN GARLAND

COPYRIGHT, 1905, BY HAMLIN GARLAND

CHAPTER I.

ARLY the entire boat load of passengers was jammed along the forward gates, ready to spring out upon the Jersey express to reach the waiting cars quite apart from all these who were man wearing three hats and a hat wearing forty and a girl on the after deck with a long hair and a look of loath to take their leave of the city.

Remembrance of the monstrous mannikin to a height of land marked, so singular, that the marked upon it, and the boy, a seventeen, cried out in shrill tones:

"Think of the real mountains, boys, to climb!"

"I don't speak for a moment," she said her voice was disconcerting. "I feel as though I'm saying good-bye to everything."

"What?" asked her escort. "I don't smile, but her accent was so sweet," she answered. "Yes, Wayne, you make me tired!"

"Just as if going west were good to everything!" He said. "I'm just beginning to think now. I'm glad to get away from this town. I want to study old books. Fifth avenue is a box of old papers had quite transformed his life. It had made him an American, filling him with a longing for the 'Hesperian mountains,' as the father called the romantic land he had seen but once, but whose splendor lived with him throughout the remainder of his short life.

As they sat at the table in the dining car Ann again listened indulgently to her brother's plans, and permitted him to order the dinner and assume all the manners of a grown man, earnestly trying to conceal her own weariness of spirit, sincerely regretful of her bitter words on the ferry.

Louis was not weary. He eyed every man who came in, avid to discover some western trait, some outward sign of inward difference between himself and his companions, but could not. They were all quite commonplace business men, well dressed, close clipped and urbane of manner. Some of them were evidently salesmen going over to Philadelphia or out to Chicago, and they all ate long and with every evidence of enjoyment. Some of the women were young and pretty—students returning to the west for their summer vacations.

Once more in the privacy of her stateroom and looking out at the landscape reeling past, Ann sank back in her seat wholly dismayed. "What in the world can I do out there?" she asked herself most poignantly. "Of course they don't play golf or tennis, and I can't ride, and besides, whom could I play with? Jeannette is not a bit athletic." And again the small round of her interests—she had no gayettes—was borne in upon her. "I shall die of inactivity."

Louis excused himself quite formally and went back into the smoking compartment to sit with the men, while Ann, left alone, gave herself up to a close, half ironic study of the absurdity of her position. With a dozen most desirable invitations to distinguished London homes, with everything before her

schedule time and had but a few minutes in which to make their transfer, and so they saw little of the great central metropolis. To them it was only a gloomy, clangorous shed fitted with long strings of railway coaches—names marked with strange names—names which meant little to her, but which excited Louis almost to tears. "See," he cried, "there is a car from Oregon and one from Wyoming!" The people who filled the coaches were not markedly different at first glance from those she had been traveling with, but Louis, more keenly discerning, began to distinguish types at once, and when one or two big men came in wearing wide hats and chin beards he trembled with joy. "There are some cattlemen—I'm sure of it," he whispered hoarsely.

Louis did not return to the Pullman till after the train had left the city, and she was just beginning to wonder there when he came in with eyes ablaze. "I've struck 'em at last!" he fairly shouted in her ear. "They're all up in the reclining chairs, chin bearders, spitters and all. I'm just crazy to sketch two or three of them. It doesn't pay to ride in a stateroom if you want to see types," he added in conclusive discontent.

As that day and the next wore on the boy began to burn with a new phase of his fever. He commenced to count the hours till he might be able to discern Mt. Olympus, the great peak of the Rampart range, whose fame is worldwide. Ann experienced her first decided flash of interest as the swinging, reeling rush of the train brought the great peak into view, a dim, blue dome against the western sky.

At last, just as the red was paling out of the sky, the train swung to the left on its southerly course, and the whole Rampart range began to stretch and wind away to northward and southward, while between the plain and the foothills rolled a tawny sea of soil, deeply marked with ravines and dotted with pine clad buttes. The range grew dimmer as they gazed, and at last even Louis was content to sink back in his seat and wait.

"It isn't a bit as I expected it to be," he said, "but it is glorious. That purple green was wonderful. I'm going to try to get that some time. It isn't as picturesque as the Alps, but it's superb just the same, and just think how much wilder it was when father came here!"

"I'm glad you were not disappointed," he said, "but it is glorious. That purple green was wonderful. I'm going to try to get that some time. It isn't as picturesque as the Alps, but it's superb just the same, and just think how much wilder it was when father came here!"

"Hello, Don!" shouted Louis. "Hello, laddie! How do you do, Ann?" replied Barnett, and as Ann and her cousin embraced the big man caught Louis by the hand. "How's your muscle, my boy? Get all your traps? Here, Tom!" he called to a colored footman, "look out for these things."

They were met at the car door by a big, smiling man in frocked summer dress, while behind him stood a pale, sweet faced woman in blue.

"Hello, Don!" shouted Louis. "Hello, laddie! How do you do, Ann?" replied Barnett, and as Ann and her cousin embraced the big man caught Louis by the hand. "How's your muscle, my boy? Get all your traps? Here, Tom!" he called to a colored footman, "look out for these things."

Ann's entrance into the Barnett home cut her off from all contact with life distinctly western. She found herself still amid the velvet and silver of the stroller car and saw only remotely those who slept all night in the cramped corners of the ordinary coaches. Her cousins were not native; they were, indeed, only translated Philadelphians who had gone west in search of health—at least Mrs. Barnett was there for that reason. Her husband made the change for love of his wife.

A certain percentage of the townspeople and the members of the special circle in which the Barnetts moved were health seekers, and Ann was deeply relieved to find that all the comforts of an eastern home were to be enjoyed in the big graystone houses on Rampart avenue. Indeed, the Barnetts lived quite as they would have done in Seabright or Lenox. They had a dozen horses, a suitable assortment of vehicles, saddles and bridles and were enthusiasts concerning polo and golf. Their neighbors and friends were unfailingly ecstatic in praise of the climate and the views and seemed illogically anxious to placate the prejudices of this haughty, pale faced, scarlet tipped young girl, who looked with calm eyes upon the great peak glooming to the westward. They formed, in fact, a colony of alien health seekers, busied with pleasures, set distinctly apart from the toilers and the traders of the place.

Ann was puzzled and a bit bored by their insistence on winning her admiration of the mountains and, being naturally perverse, withheld the expressions of pleasure she might otherwise have uttered, for she was profoundly moved by what she saw.

"I never did understand that girl," said Donnelly Barnett to his wife one night after a drive into the great Bear canyon. "She has everything to make her happy, and yet she goes about torpid as an oyster. What's the matter with her?"

Jeannette sighed. "That's her mother's blood. She's like her mother in a hundred ways. Louis is exactly like his father. I remember when he came back from his first and only trip to the west. I was only a child, but I recall his enthusiasm. He was a lovable fellow, but I never could stand Alicia. She was positively stony. I have hopes of Ann. Her hand is strong and warm—human, in fact. Don't you think her indifference a pose?"

"I wish it were. No, it's genuine."

They arrived in Chicago behind their

that a girl of her age and tastes could desire, she had turned away to face the crude conditions of a western state in a warm glow of sisterly affection.

She took up the little red book, in which she had taken up a languid interest before, and, turning the leaves at random, fell upon bits of description that stirred her unconscious. Now that she was about to enter this land of her father's delight, the words took on passion and power.

They arrived in Chicago behind their

"She needs to be shaken up by a good, hot love affair. Some man will come!"

"That's what I've been saying, but the man don't come. She's twenty-six."

"How awful!"

"That's the part I don't understand about Ann. She has money, is handsome, and yet here she is quite disengaged, if we except her affair with Peabody, which Adney writes is quite as tepid as any of Ann's other affairs."

"Well, now, I'll tell you. She's come to the right place to have men ride up and demand attention. If she doesn't have at least an offer a week it will not be my fault. I'm going to invite all the young fellows home to dinner while she's here. Now watch things 'blee!"

Barnett, nominally a mining broker, was, in fact, president of the polo club, secretary of the Sage Grass Golf association—in short, financial nurse to every collection of amiable sports in the town. He knew all "the best fellows" in the state and now became more popular than ever. The young men accepted his dinner invitations with gratitude, and each and all paid prompt and undisputed court to the proud eastern beauty, as one young fellow called her. But they soon acknowledged failure. Her reserve led to a sense of injury and was reported to be arrogance. They were seldom flattered by the slightest unbending on her part.

However, several of these young fellows turned out on acquaintance to be socially related to some of her friends in Boston and New York and in that way won a certain acceptance which no mere civil engineer from Omaha or professor from St. Louis could hope to attain. They were met on the conventional plane, and they got no further at any time.

Meanwhile Ann was really troubled about Louis. He was sleeping less and less each day, and his sleep was broken, and at the end of the first week he fell in a state of collapse. The excitement, the late hours, the contact with new types and, above all, the attempt to understand the country and his relationship with it had worn him out. Then Ann said in her decisive way: "I don't believe this altitude is good for Louis. I think I will take him home again."

"Oh, don't do that. It isn't the altitude; it's the social whirl. Send him down to my ranch. It's a hole of a place, but it's just what he needs—nothing to see but coyotes and cowboys. We'll put him under Rob Raymond's wing. Rob's my foreman and a good chap. He'll take to the boy like anything. I'm sure of it."

The plan as worked out by Barnett involved a trip on his automobile for the four of them; but he delayed too long. Mrs. Barnett entered upon one of her "poor spells," and Donnelly, faithful as a big dog, promptly told Louis to go ahead and not wait for the party. "I must stay and nurse Jeannette."

Ann was afraid to let Louis go alone, but Barnett poolpoohed her. "He'll get on all right. In fact, he'll rejoice to be free of us for a day or two. I'll wire the mail carrier to meet him and take him down, and I'll send a letter to Raymond to look out for him. He'll be more than safe. He'll be happy, and he won't miss us in the least."

Ann insisted on going down herself. "I want to see him properly settled," she said.

Barnett slyly winked at his wife. He really wanted to see Ann "jarred." "It'll do her good to rough it a little," he said privately. Thereupon Louis, trembling with eagerness, began to "rustle his outfit." He bought a pistol, a rifle, a broad rimmed hat, some blankets and the most highly ornamental cattlemen's saddle in the Springs.

"What a child you are!" Ann exclaimed as she watched him, her eyes warming with love and pride. "You're a dear boy!" she added as he came to her side.

He looked up at her tenderly. "You're good to me, Hesper," he said fervently. "Sh! Don't ever call me by that absurd name."

"It isn't absurd, I like it," he said. Barnett, seated at his telephone, made every arrangement for them. "You'll be met by old Jones, and when you get there Mrs. Jones will look after you. She's a very good cook, so don't get nervous when you see her. She's not pretty. Raymond will do his best to entertain you, and when you come back you'd better ask Raymond to put his own horses in the cart and drive you out. He'll be better company than Jones."

CHAPTER III.

BARNETT'S ranch, one of his chief amusements, lay at the head of a valley surrounding a spring which was the source of Wildcat creek. The buildings stood just where the ravine opened out upon a grassy meadow. It was a comfortable place, sheltered from the desert winds by the low hills to the north, while a small artificial pond, graveled and rimmed with cottonwoods and willows, gave it enviable distinction among the bleak and barren farmsteads. It was known as the "Goldfish ranch," for the reason that at one time Barnett had filled the pond with ornamental fish.

At about 5 o'clock of a hot and windless July day a horseman galloped swiftly up the valley into the yard and was met at the door of the house by a tall, composed young fellow in broad hat and spurs.

"Hello, Perry!" he said quietly. "You made good time."

Perry, a young Mexican, showed a score of his white teeth in a grin. "Here is letter. Some people coming to ranch tonight."

The young foreman turned toward the house, from which the faint strains of "Annie Laurie" came. A plump, light haired young fellow of about thirty sat tilted back in his chair, with one leg thrown across the corner of the table, playing a mouth organ.

"Hello, Rob!" he called.

Raymond was in bad humor. "Put up your plaything, you monkey, and listen to me a moment."

"What's up?"

Raymond pointed at the letter. "Read that. Nice thing the old man works on us." His indignation and disgust deepened into a growl. "This settles it. I'm going to pull out."

The other man composedly took up the letter. "What's he done now?"

"Going to quarter a crazy kid on us, a New York degenerate, who'll be a confounded nuisance every hour of the day. And that isn't all—the kid's sister is coming down to stay a few days—here his dismay was fairly comical—'to get the lad settled.'"

Baker's eyes widened, and his fat face lengthened. "Not comin' today?"

"That's what?"

"And us without no woman round."

Raymond broke forth again: "That's it, now. You'd suppose Barnett would at least read my letters. I told him last week that old Jones and his wife were going up to Skytown."

"Well, we're in for it. We can't turn a woman out on the plain. Jack, you slovenly whelp, set to work and clean up the mess you've made. Perry, go rope some snags for a fire. Hustle, now!"

Baker began to read the letter aloud in a monotonous, painful way, while Raymond moved about the room, picking up the litter.

My Dear Rob—I'm sending you a new hand and a visitor. They are cousins and nice people. The lad is not very strong, and I'm sending him down to you to get an upward turn. He's crazy on the subject of wild animals and cowboys and is a very clever artist. He'll want to have you pose for him.

Raymond came over and seized the stove lid lifter as if to break Baker's head. "We're to cook and purvey like boarding house keepers and doctor like a nurse at a health resort, and in addition we're to pose for a delicate youth who thinks we're 'material.' That settles a shy at mining."

Baker broke forth into a slow drawl. "Hain't you better strike a few attitudes so's to be in practice when the boy comes?"

Raymond throttled him half in earnest. "I've a mind to wring your neck," he said through his teeth. Then, suddenly releasing him, he again commanded him to clear away his dishes.

Baker was not yet finished with the letter. "Hold on. Don't be in a rush. I hain't got to the girl yet. That's what interests me. Miss Rupert will only stay a few days to get the lad settled."

"She can't stay too quick to suit me."

Baker's voice took on a little more expression as he read Barnett's appeal. "Now, don't be cranky, old man. The Ruperts are good stuff, and on Mrs. Barnett's account—"

"Ends up by laying me under obligation to his wife, knowing mighty well I'd do anything for her. Well, I'll do it, but I reckon the atmosphere won't bake a cake while she's here. I'll leave you and Dutch to do the talking. That'll chill her cold."

Raymond's brow darkened and his eyes threatened. "No you don't, my Christian friend and neighbor. You remain right here and do the honors. You will pass for the boss. I've got to cook."

"Great Peter, you mustn't do that! I can't carry it through. I'm no speller."

"Play the mouth organ for her."

"Oh, see here, you're joshin'."

"You won't find it any 'josh.' You've been getting gay with me lately and need discipline. You pass for the foreman. Understand? You amuse the girl and pose for the boy, while I knock pots. That is settled. Now take the pail and rustle some water, and don't you peep."

Perry, entering at the door with an armful of brush, called out, with quiet joy. "The senora has come!"

Raymond seized him by the arm. "Listen here, Perry. The old man has written down to say that he has made Jack the boss. I'm going to cook a few days, and then I leave. You tell the other boys that Jack Baker is made foreman, and they've got to obey him. You sabbie?"

Perry grew solemn of face. "I sabbie. If you go, I go."

"Never mind that. Get out there and help take care of the team, and Jack, you go too." He laid a hand on his back and pushed him through the doorway just as the two seated back rounded the corral and drew up to the door.

"Oh, isn't this fine?" called a clear, boyish voice, and a moment later the cool, deliberate voice of a girl replied: "Oh, what a blessed relief after the hot sun of the plain!"

Then Baker was heard to say, with elaborate courtesy: "Shall I help you out, miss? I reckon you are the friends of the old man—I mean Barnett." And a moment later the young girl stood in the doorway looking out at the plain. Raymond gave her but one glance from the corner of his eyes, but her firm, well balanced body and calm, high bred face touched him with admiration. His resolution to be disagreeable weakened, though he kept about his work.

"I never knew how grateful the shade of a tree could be," Ann said partly to Louis and partly to Baker. "Is it always so fiercely bright here?"

"Oh, no; this is an unusual spell. I mean it is rather—"

She was now aware of Raymond moving sullenly about in the gloom wherein the stove sat. He was dressed in a light tan, loosely fitting shirt and

brown trousers without braces. His spurs rattled at his heels as he walked to and fro, little and powerful. He did not look up—did not appear to notice what was going on, but came and went at his work, deaf and absorbed.

Louis was instantly delighted with the room. "Isn't this ripping?" he exclaimed as he studied its furnishings. "Won't this make a strong background for an illustration? Only that stove— isn't it too bad?—that's all out of key. Why don't you have a fireplace, Mr. Raymond?" he asked, turning to Baker.

Raymond gave Baker a glance, and the plump one waded in: "Too little wood in this country, Cook, draw up a chair for the lady."

Raymond's eyes flashed with a silent menace, but he did as he was told, and as he put the chair down for Ann he dusted it with his hat.

Louis was husky voiced with joy. "Did you see that, Ann? I'll have to work that in somewhere."

Baker continued, in the same tone, "Can't you rustle a little grub for the company, Jack?"

Raymond curtly replied, "I'll try hard."

Baker, who was gaining self control, turned to Ann. "We have to humor our cooks out here. They're scarce and mighty uncertain in their minds—stop and shy at nothin', like a locoed steer."

Louis clapped his hands. "Oh, isn't the talk good, Ann? And these chairs—aren't they fine?"

"Cook made 'em," said Baker. "He's handy as a bootjack with tools."

Ann ignored the chairs, but studied the cook, whose curiously absorbed, sullen yet deft movements interested her. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, and his lean, powerful figure dignified the rough and dust stained clothes he wore. His profile was stern and manly, but his chin was youthful. His eyes she had not yet seen.

Raymond, on his part, was fairly abashed by the grace and youthful charm of his visitor. She reminded

him, as she stood there calmly looking about the grimy walls, of the stories he had read of princesses visiting the huts of their peasantry. She was of good height, but the proud lift of her head made her seem taller than she was, and the cut of her gown, the color of her gloves and hat, told of good taste and the service of the best tailors and milliners. "Great Scott!" he said to himself. "She's an up to date beauty. What will I do to feed her?" And, imperturbable as he looked, his heart sank within him, and if he could have fed her honorably, he would have done so instantly.

Raymond took no pains to be noiseless or dainty in his work, but every moment told. He sloshed out the coffee-pot and sliced the bacon and stirred the fire, all with a grace and quiet dignity which opened Ann's eyes in an effort to understand him. His hands were noticeably fine, and the poise of his head expressed strength and pride. He was very brown, almost as brown as the leather cuffs he wore on his arms.

Once, when he passed out of hearing, she turned to Baker suddenly and asked: "Why does your cook wear spurs? An affection, I suppose."

Baker flushed and stammered. "Well, no; he has to help with the cattle once in awhile."

Raymond called to Perry, who was seated on the doorstep. "Perry, jump your horse and round up a dry cottonwood snag. This brush is of no sort of use. I want a hot fire."

Louis beamed on Ann. "He's talking just like Walter Owen's heroes."

Ann silenced him. "Hush! He'll hear you."

Baker, quite ready to take a fall out of Raymond, interposed: "He's a little hard at first, but real sociable when you get him started. He's shy as a rabbit when they're any company round."

Raymond uttered a cough which made Baker start. "I guess I'll go out and see what that driver has done with his horses."

Louis sprang up. "I'll go, too, if you don't mind, sis."

Continued Next Week

Men and women who eat fat meats and drink strong coffee usually have coarse, florid skins. Hollister's Rocky Mountain Tea makes your skin soft and fair. 35 cents, tea or tablets, Linn Drug Co.

Good onion sets. Chambers' Hardware.



"Hello, Don!" shouted Louis.



"It sure makes a fitting combination."