

grinding stones as the women reduced the corn to meal. The chief sat like a statue in a rude chair solemnly smoking. What a life was this — silence and peace. It enchanted Beauclaire, fresh from the empty superficial chatter of modern civilization, to find a human being content to remain for half an hour mute, one who could eliminate all unnecessary conversation and regard only the essentials. Beauclaire, nevertheless, began to find the long silence awkward, and ransacked his brain for a topic that might interest the Chief of the Zunis, but none suggested itself until Ramon remarked tentatively — "Your people travel much — far."

Then Beauclaire recalled an eminent American scientist, who had been sent by a great University to study the life of the southwest Indians, and who had dwelt for years among the Zunis and had written a history of the people. He endeavored to recall his name but it eluded him. At last it came — Jamieson, Albert Jamieson.

"You knew Albert Jamieson?"

"Uh," said the Chief slowly, shutting his teeth while the curves of his mouth deepened and hardened.

Another long silence, which Beauclaire broke by persisting, "Jamieson lived among the Zunis."

"Uh," came slowly, almost brutally — a monosyllable of relentless hate; but still the Indian smoked on — his face a mask of dark bronze. At length he tossed aside his cigarette, and bending forward, his elbows on his knees, his hands clasped, said, "Yes, I knew Albert Jamieson. He was a very wise man — a great Americano. I received him as my brother. He lived in this room. He stayed many months — many years. He became one of our tribesmen. He took one of our women, my daughter, to wife. The White Man's and the Indian's blood intermingled in their children. Eight years passed so. Then he deserted his wife and children." The chief pointed in the direction of the women grinding meal and continued. "He learned our sacred secrets. His wife died. He went to the great city and wrote a book. He gave our sacred secrets to the world. That was for science. Jamieson was an Americano. A Zuni would not have done that."

Beauclaire recalled the story as he had heard it when he first came to New Mexico, and reproached himself for having so stupidly revived the hatred of the Chief of the Zunis for Jamieson, the American. He was therefore relieved when the old Indian, having thus expressed himself, showed no disposition to further pursue the subject, but relapsed into his attitude of non-committal silence.

For the first time, Beauclaire now turned his eyes toward the women grinding meal. One girl, the one nearest him, had slender arms the color of old ivory, but the skin of the others was dark brown.

Having finished her work an instant before her companions, the girl of the ivory skin rose and stood for a moment regarding the others. She was tall and shapely, her dark blue gown just reaching the calves of her straight, bare legs. As she came toward Beauclaire, she raised her large, dark, fawn-like eyes to look at him, but quickly lowered them.

In that brief space, Beauclaire's trained eyes observed the low brow, the thick black hair parted in the center and knotted with red braid at the nape of the neck, the straight Anglo-Saxon nose, the colorless ivory skin, the erect, slender virginal beauty of her figure, the ropes of turquoise around her bare neck, the silver and turquoise hoops in her ears, and he knew that this was Albert Jamieson's deserted daughter.

He did not notice the other brown women who followed her from the room, nor did he see her again or speak to the Chief until the supper hour came and the men were seated about the table while the women served the meal.

"Mona," said the Chief, "give our guest, the Americano, food to eat first."

Mona! Mona! Mona! The name ran through Beauclaire's mind like a rhythm. Mona — Mona, the liquid vowels filled his consciousness.

She placed before him a pot of water, red peppers, a plate of tortillas baked from the maize meal, and strips of dried meat. But the artist ate little. He could not divert his eyes from this daughter of the desert as she moved about the room. The Chief noting this, suddenly raised his head and, giving Beauclaire a severe glance, said, "You like not the food — you do not eat."

The following day Beauclaire did not paint, nor the

next, nor the next. Like a Zuni he lay in the shade of the adobe huts and smoked and dreamed, and dreamed and smoked. Sometimes, aroused by the lash of his old ambition, he would prepare his canvas and seat himself before it, but his brush remained idle. With chin in hand and elbow on knee, he would lose himself for hours in the meshes of his wandering dreams.

He had fallen into the old lethargic state so fraught with disaster to his resolves and his ambitions. After a week of this he hurled himself into his saddle and rode through the dust and sun to Acoma. The cloud lifted and he came back. Still he could not paint pictures — he could only dream them. For the most part he sat with his sombrero drawn over his face, his large dark eyes following Mona as she attended to her duties or gently combed the long white hair of her grandfather. Between the old man and the young girl was a rare goodfellowship. Every touch of her long slender fingers was a caress, and Beauclaire was in no way surprised that the Chief invariably fell asleep under her touch.

Wherever she went, about the house or to the spring with the bright colored olla on her head, the eloquent, half-closed eyes of the artist followed her, lingering on her profile, the tender curves of her slender neck, or the patrician poise of her supple body. Sometimes his eyes pursued her with an intensity under which she winced. During all these days he dared not speak to her. There

he called his glory — the other he felt would be his destruction.

Beauclaire followed his impulses as other men follow their ripest judgment. So one day, while watching her, he decided to remain always with the Zunis. What could be a more exquisite thralldom than to lie in the shade and watch Mona? Did not her father, Albert Jamieson, become one of the Zunis for the sake of science? Why should not he renounce his race for his art — and for her? And when she and he were of the same tribe, what would be more natural for him, whose study, whose science had been love, to teach this beautiful child of the desert the meaning of the word as her father's people spoke it?

The idea at once became a fixed purpose, and, filled with it, he approached the old chief on his return from the land of the Navajos.

"Señor Ramon, I wish to remain always with the Zunis. I should like to make your people my people. I should like to salute you as Chief."

The old Chief withdrew a step and looked at Beauclaire. His face was inscrutable, and the "Uh" which issued from his grim lips gave no hint of what was in his mind. He rolled a cigarette, lighted it, and, gently shaking his head, walked away. But Beauclaire was at his heels. "Ah, Chief, let me know soon what you decide."

"Uh!" grunted Ramon, and walked on. At the doorway, he stopped and said, "I will think."

The beginning was auspicious, and Beauclaire with his new purpose was happy. He laid hold of his brushes, went out, and dared a New Mexican sunset. Ha! he would make a portrait which he would call La Mona. He would work months over those eyes. He would paint those shadows beneath the shadows. He would send the beauty of Mona throughout the world until pilgrims would throng the desert for a glimpse of the woman hidden there. He would stride past all the moderns and sit beside Leonardo. Mona in her first youth should taste immortality.

In the morning Ramon gave Beauclaire unexpected hope. "I will present your name to my people," he said. It was the day before the Zunis were to convene in the village ten miles distant, and Mona sat in the sun drying her hair — blue-black and long like a mantle enveloping her body and falling to her knees. She sat quite motionless in the sun. Beauclaire looked and cast over him her vanquishing spell.

Resisting no longer, he hastily arranged his canvas in the shadow and began a sketch. Never had he worked so rapidly. Never had he felt so keenly in every fibre of his being the ecstasy of creation. Hitherto, all his pictures had fallen short of his conceptions, but now his brush moved of its own will, guided by a Raphael, or a Titian. He saw his own dream surpassed. He had believed that the reason why he had not painted his best in San Francisco was because he had always been in love. He now realized that it was because he had never loved.

If only she would not stir. Half an hour more work like this and he would have a masterpiece. So long as her thick hair veiled her face, she could not see him. But already the breeze was playing with the black silken floss. So intent was he on his canvas that he did not observe the shudder that passed over her when she caught sight of the sketch. Throwing back her hair, she flung up her arms in a passionate frenzy of fear and grief. Then she rose, hid her face in her hands, and went into the house crying, "The Americano has stolen my soul — the Americano has stolen me from myself."

The sleeping Chief awoke, came to the door and confronted Beauclaire, who rose to his feet. On the canvas, lifelike, was the evidence of his disloyalty.

There was silence for the space of a minute, then the Indian pointing to the fatal canvas said, "So this is the kind of a Zuni you would be. You knew that only lost ones, without immortality allow themselves to be painted on your white cloth. Yet you dare to steal the spirit of Mona. You shall not become one of us. We have known one Americano. Go back to your own people."

As the chief spoke, the eagles on the roof screamed raucously.

Beauclaire looked at the chief and bowed his head. Even before Ramon turned his back to re-enter the house, the artist felt the chill of irrevocable banishment. His act was irreparable — not to be condoned.

(Continued on page 12)



"He hastily arranged his canvas and began a sketch"

was something in the attitude of the Chief which forbade it. Perhaps it was contrary to the ancient customs of the tribe. So he contented himself to live in the shadow of the Chief's dwelling and feast his eyes on her movements and expression.

At times she seemed of pure American lineage, and he then wondered how Jamieson could desert such a daughter to a life of semi-savagery. She belonged to a greater world, to the people of her father — she, the daughter of science and the desert. At moments like this, he dreamed of a plan to wake in the night and ride with her across the arid waste, seventy miles to the railway station and take her to her people in the East. But these were dreams. She was, after all, pure Indian. In that calm face was the inherited tendencies of a hundred generations.

As time wore on a lethargy more overwhelming than he had ever experienced fettered him. He longed to forget all that had preceded — his family, his friends, his loves. His letters lay unopened, and his newspapers were thrown away. He had no care for the world that called itself civilized, nor for anything that it signified. His blood itself was transmuted, for the pictures that he now envisioned were so incomparably more beautiful than any he could hope to execute that he abandoned all idea of work. He would live. After all, he was greater as a lover than as an artist. And it was not too late to correct his first interpretation of life. He would throw his oils and his brushes to the winds, and tear his canvas into ribbons. But he hesitated at the suggestion — the hope — the possibility, that one day he might paint the portrait of Albert Jamieson's daughter. Why not immortalize her? Why not thus immortalize himself? With the celerity of inspiration, he saw the completed picture, but it vanished with the realization that he dare not make the request of Ramon, who was always like a sentinel near her.

During the torrid days and cool nights that followed, two Monas pursued Beauclaire, the one who was to immortalize him, and the Mona in the flesh. The one