

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MAID OF DREAMS

**I**NDIAN prayer is not the placid acceptance of thoughts comforting. The complete man is both mind and body — and all of him must work when the gods are called upon for work, and by fasting and exhaustion must the spirit path be made clear for dreams.

The first day Tahn-té had sat in meditation before the sacred wall of the stone face, chanting the songs to the clouds and the yellow birds of the sun color, watching the pictured rock until the lines moved when his body swayed to the chant, and a living thing seemed before him — the accumulated faiths of all the devotees in that place since the god was born!

As the sun went behind the mountain he knew the village herald was telling the people, and the leaders of Povi-whah would fast that night and send their thoughts to him. Po-tzah would fast although Po-tzah was not called upon by his position to do so.

And Po-tzah had said, "Speak for our children to the god."

He seemed to hear Po-tzah's voice, and the words repeat themselves in the dusk, and — stranger still — another voice back of Po-tzah's! it also spoke of children — through the chanted prayer he heard it — baffling yet insistent.

Then he knew it!

He knew it as the first shadow of the visions which

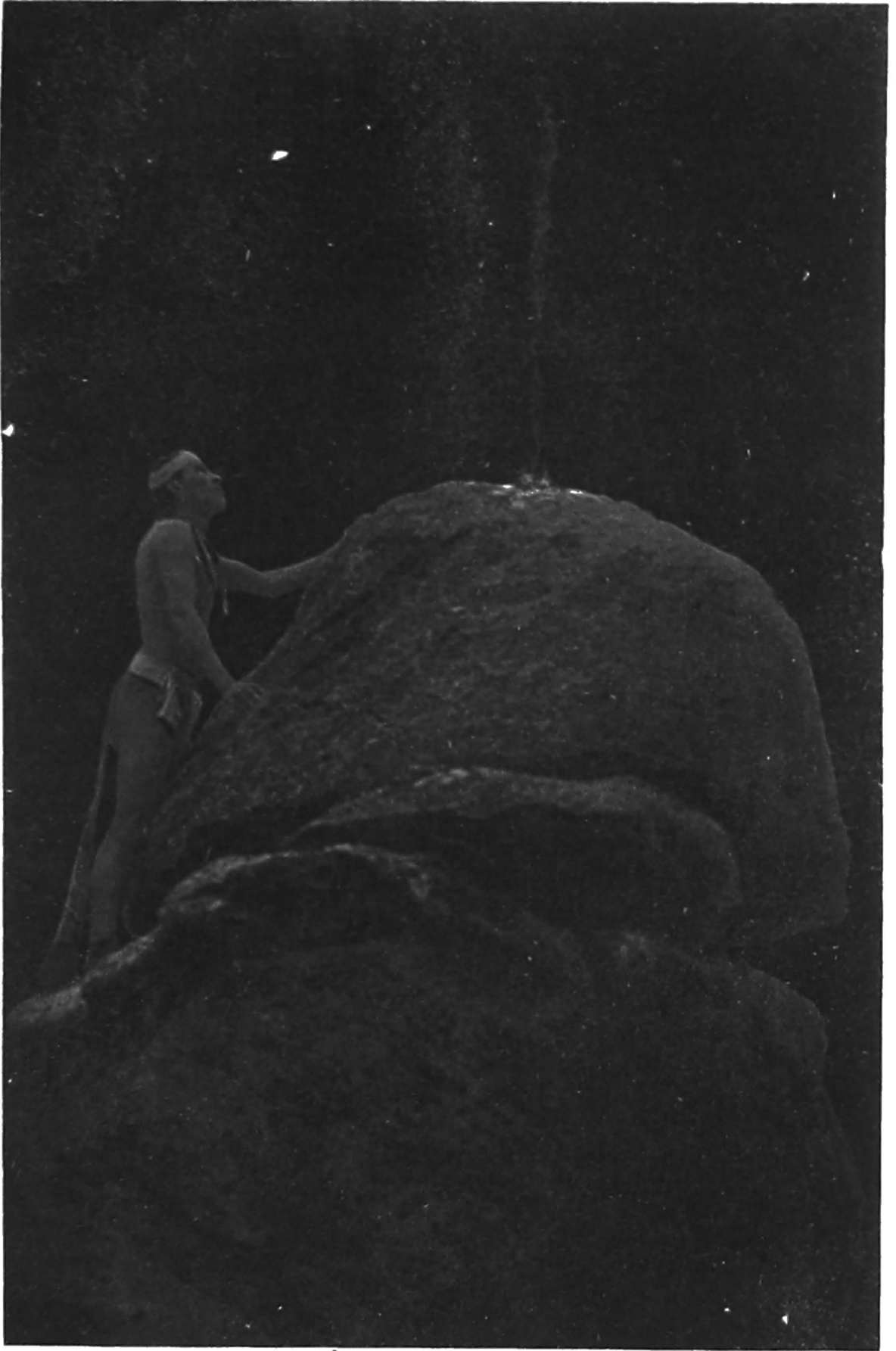
the prayer was bringing: — it was the voice of the Ruler whose office he now held — the aged man who had once worn the white robe and said — “If she had not died — her children would be your children!”

The picture of Po-tzah’s small brown babe came between him and the sacred figure on the rock,— a strange thing for the voice to suggest! A little child — in the dusk — and — sheltering arms around it!

“ Oh You!  
 Oh — Indwelling God!  
 Come to me!  
 Grey ghost — white ghost  
 Why is the false enchantment?  
 Grey ghost of darkness —  
 White ghost of high hills  
 Make way for sacred magic,  
 Sink far your darkened spells!  
 O You!  
 O Indwelling God  
 Come to me!”

In the dusk a shadow — or it might have been a drooping bough of the piñon tree — gave outline of a bent head above the outline of the babe — only a strange trick of carving on the gray stone, and swaying branches outlining a head — then the shoulders — then an arm about the babe! To the mind of the mystic it was the visible temptation of a black enchantment in the very presence of the god! — The strongest the opposing powers could send to man under vows of prayer and search for the spirit medicine of the highest thought.

“ Oh You!  
 Goddess of the stars  
 You — who gives the life!  
 Why is there for me false magic?”



*T*HE SIGNAL FIRE TO THE MOUNTAIN GOD



Mother mine of the starry skirt  
Why for me the darkened star?  
I, Master of spells, call to you!  
Ho:—there! It is I!  
Green and black spirit of power  
Seek elsewhere your victims!  
I seek the light.— I find the light!  
Mother mine of the starry skirt  
I find the light!  
I — Master of spells!”

He was no longer merely a singer of prayers now. The dance before the Ancient gods had begun as the first stars glimmered in the blue.

After many hours of the dance all the world drifts far. There is nothing real left but the circle where the prayer is, and the space where the feet touch in the dull pad-pad on the trail to the swoons where visions come.

A lone figure chanting breathless things:— not aloud now! The utterance is only broken whispers — only a god could read the meaning of them!

But he did not feel alone. All the Lost Others were back of him looking on from the dusk of the piñon boughs, and there to the right, ever in shadow, was a Presence! It stood close to the rock wall. The arms were folded, the line of the body strong and erect. The face was a hidden face, but if he — Tahn-té, faltered in the lines of the prayers,— or sank in the dance before the time — then he felt that the phantom there would become real, and the face would be seen, and that strong Thing would come forward — it would dance for jealous ghosts the dance of triumph — it would wipe out in mockery the unfinished homage to the gods!

The dawn came, and Tahn-té danced the stars of morning into the glow of the sun. The prayers had

been all said, and the Watcher no longer stood by the rock!

Tahn-té saw nothing now but the glare of the sun on the rock wall — a spot of light in the circle of black piñon.

He no longer even whispered. His moving arms seemed no longer a part of him — it was as if numbness was there. His feet moved mechanically — not able to lift themselves more quickly — neither able to cease by his own will.

The Trues were watching him now, waiting to help. There was the white bear of the North and the mountain lion of the East. There was the wildcat of the West, and the serpent of the South. There was the eagle of the upper world, and the mystic creature of the earth home which tells the weather wizards of the number of winter days.

They were all there — so the prayer had been a good prayer.

From some of them would come the medicine dreams!

The sun stood straight above, — then little by little reached towards the mountain. It made shadows, and as the shadow of the sacred rock touched the blinded dancer, he sank to the earth.

As he fell he strove to echo the prayer thought: —

“ I find the light  
I — master of spells! ”

But he did not speak it. Only the eagle of his dream repeated it over and over as it lifted him from the place where he had fallen, and bore him swiftly to the highest point of the mountain of Tse-cōme-u-piñ. It has been the Sacred Mountain since men first

spoke words in the land. When a man has climbed to the shrine of the summit there, it is as if all the world is very far below.

And that makes it lonely for the dweller there.

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The stars were again alight in the heavens when the devotee awoke from his sleep of exhaustion. To his entranced senses the stars were as the eyes of the gods who watched the shrine where few men had ever danced and lived. The wind touched the pines — and he thought their whispered movement was the rustle of the wings of the eagle who had come in his vision.

For the eagle was now his medicine, and the place where the eagle had carried him in the dream was the best of all good places for medicine that was strong.

In the starlight he again faced the ancient diety of the Lost Others: — those Others who had carved the stone lions of Kat-yi-ti at their entrance to the Under world, and had set the white stone bear of the North on guard in the western hills. They did fine things — those people who had perhaps first named the stars above. And this one ancient cave god of the stone face was a link — so the wise old Ruler had told him — with strange Mexic Brothers of the far south — who gave worship — and gave human sacrifice, to a solitary mountain shrine, called the shrine of the Sleeping Woman, where few men could dance — or even learn the prayers of that dance.

No awesome Presence now faced him in the shadow of the rock as he chanted his prayer of farewell under the stars. He had danced all adverse spirits out of the charmed circle. His way was clearly marked now to follow the way of the eagle, — there on the shrine of Tse-cōme-u-piñ he must say the final prayer.

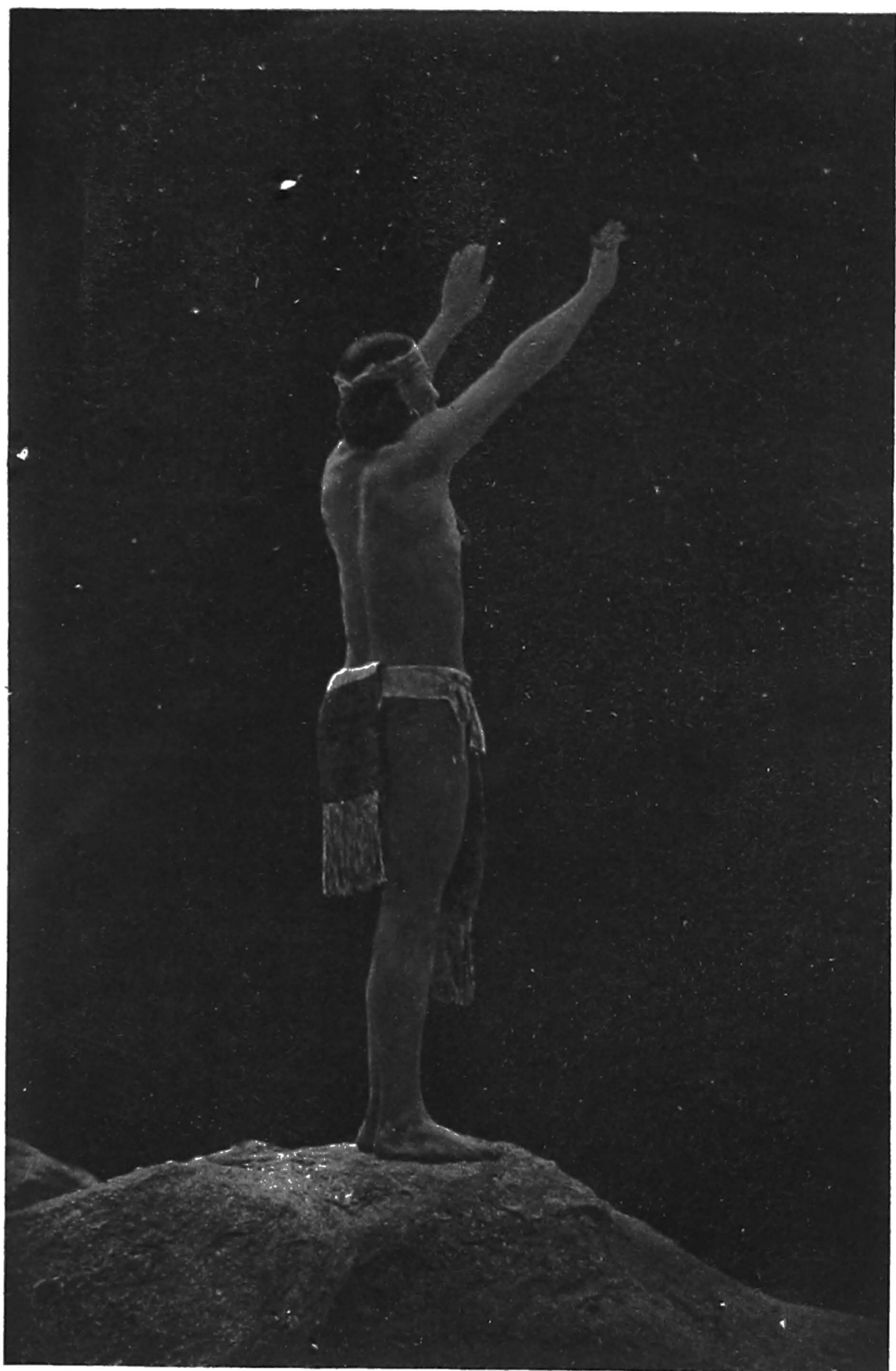
All of harmony and all of hope was about him. Three days and three nights had he ran or chanted prayers, or danced fasting, yet weariness was not with him as he ended the ceremony which no man since his birth had made in this place.

Somewhere, he would perhaps fall on the trail, and the men of Kah-po or of Povi-whah would find him, as fainting medicine men had been found ere this — but that must be after he had reached the shrine, and gave prayers at the place of the eagle dream.

Past Puyé he went — scarce seeing the ghost walls of the older day; in sight of Shu-finne, the little island of forgotten dwellings on the north mesa — through the pines to the cañon of Po-et-se where rocks of weird shapes stood like gray and white giants to bar his way. He thought at times voices sounded from the stone pillars, but it might be the echo of his own. — He knew evil spirits did lurk along his trail — no mortal could escape their shadows. Even the god who had lived in the sun had been hurled to earth by them when the earth was new, and the first trees — the pines, had begun to grow at the edges of the ice. Since that time the Sun God only lived in the sky one half the time. In the night he went to the Underworld, and the strands of his dark hair covered his face. He must not let himself think that the adverse spirits were less than men in strength — for man needed all the medicine of the gods to war against evil!

Thus he thought — and muttered and stumbled blindly towards the north. Into the stream of Po-eh-hin-cha he crept and drank, — then up — up to Po-pe-kan-eh — the Place where the Water is Born, and from there to the shrine of the Sacred Mountain,





*A*ND REACHED HIS HANDS TO HIS BROTHERS —  
THE STARS  
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though his hands reached for help from every tree and rock past which he staggered or crept.

Only water and the smoke of the medicine pipe had been his portion. One may not eat the food of man, yet commune with Those Above.

The first stars were above the hills as he fell, bleeding from many hurts — and breathless — at the shrine.

Far above one lone eagle soared, and the weariness was forgotten in the joy of Tahn-té. The sacred spark came quickly to the twigs crossed ceremonially for the fire on the shrine, and into the blue above, the slender trail of smoke led undeviatingly up where the great bird drifted as if awaiting to witness his offering of fire. Had any other found medicine like that? He knew now that his magic was to be strong magic, for his faith had been great — and he had followed the faith, and found the bird of the strong gods waiting his coming!

Time was lost to him in the trance of that which he had lived through. The day was gone, and he stood alone on the heights and reached his hands in ecstasy to his brothers the stars. He felt the exultant strength of the mortal with whom the gods have worked!

And when the last mountain prayer had been whispered, a reeling, staggering, nude figure walked, and sometimes ran and often fell down the steep sides of Tse-cōme-u-piñ, and when the great dark pines and the slender aspens were reached, he used his hands as well as his feet in making his way, reeling from tree to tree, but holding with instinctive steadiness to the trail of the Navahu — the ancient way of the enemy, where ambush and slaughter was often

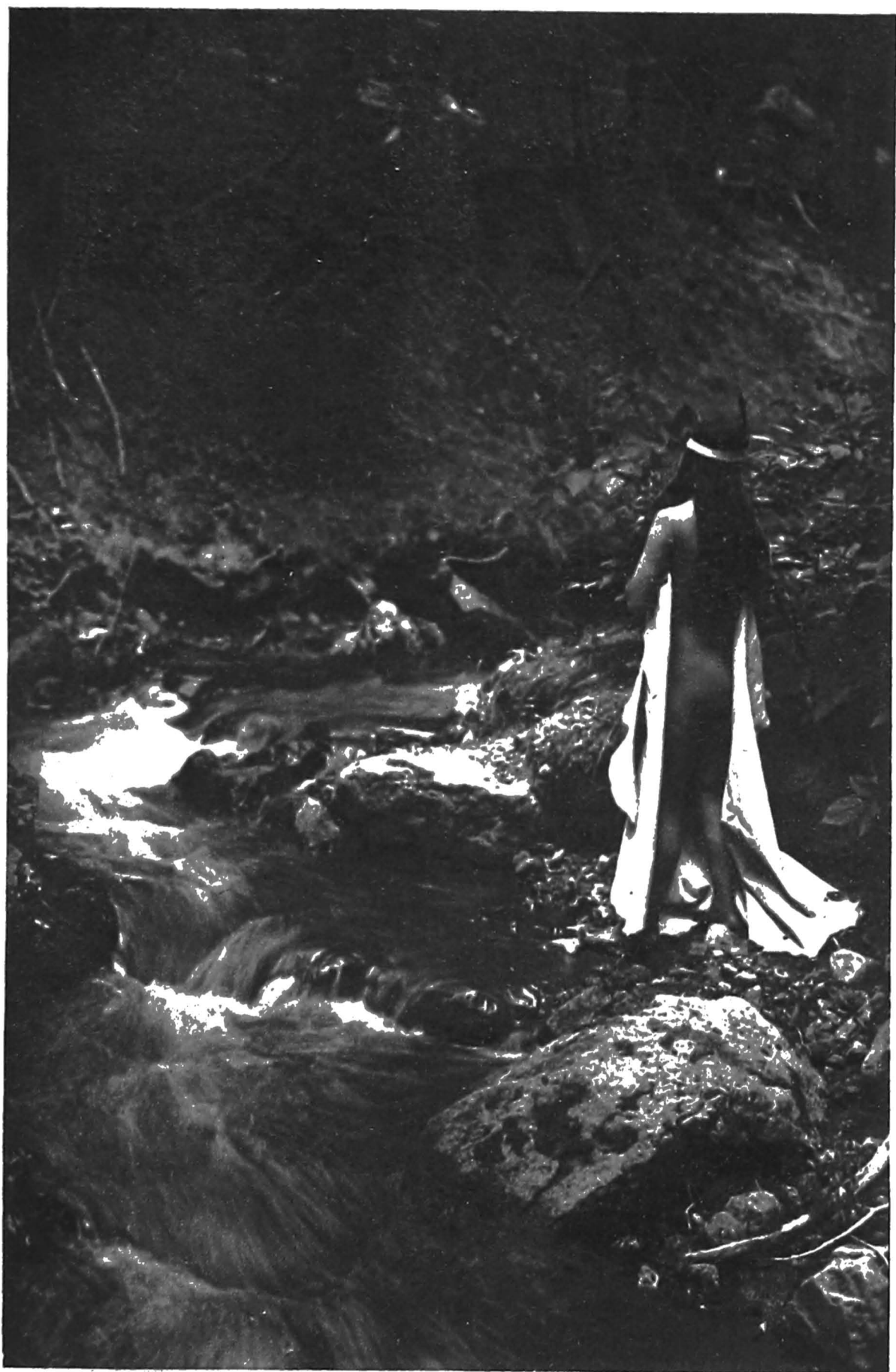
known. Many captives had been driven between the high rock walls. Youths and maidens swept from Te-hua corn fields, and Navahu captives as well, caught by Te-hua hunters in the hunting grounds to the West,— all came through the one great pass — and the way of the trail was so narrow that to guard it was not a hard thing in time of battle.

The rush of the swift water was always near as he went on and on in the darkness. It had a lulling effect. The whispers of the pines also spoke of rest. This was the fourth day of the fasting. He, Tahn-té, had been strong as few men are strong, but suddenly in the night, earth and sky seemed to meet, and putting out his hands he groped through a thicket of the young pines, and fell there quite close to the dancing water — and all the life of earth drifted far. He, Tahn-té, the devotee of the Trues — the weaver of spells, and dancer of the Ancient Dance to the God of the Stone, lay at last in the stupor beyond dreams, helpless in the path of an enemy if any should trail him for battle.

His sleep was dreamless, and the length of it until the dawn seemed but a hand's breadth on the path of the stars across the sky.

But with the dawn a vision came, and he knew it again as the actual form of that which had been so often the vague dream-maid of charmed moments.

There was the flash of water in the pool — a something distinct from the steady murmur of its ripples — that was the sign by which he was wakened quite suddenly, without movement or even a breath that was loud. Under the little pines at the very edge of the stream he was veiled in still green shadows, and there before him was The Maid of Dreams. Those Above had let her come to him that for once his eyes



*T*HE MAID OF DREAMS



should see and his heart keep her in the medicine visions of this fasting time of prayer.

Not once did she turn her eyes towards him as she stood, dripping with the water of the bath. Her slender figure was in shadow, and her movements were shy and alert and quick.

To the dry sand she stepped, and lifted thence a white deerskin robe. Two bluebird wings were in the white banda about her loosened hair, very blue was the color of the wings as the light touched them, and he thought of the wonderful Navahu Goddess Etsan-atlehi who was created from an earth jewel — the turquoise, and who is the beloved of the Sun. If a maid could be moulded from any jewel of earth, Tahn-té thought she would look like this spirit of the forest stream. Even while held by the wonder and the beauty of the vision, he thought of this, and recalled the bluebird feathers in the prayer plumes of Tusayan: — next to the eagle they were sacred feathers: — the gods were sending him strong thoughts for magic!

Suddenly the maid stood tense and erect as though listening — or was it only the nearness of a mortal by which she was thrilled to movement? — for she clasped the trailing white skin to her breast, and stepped into the deeper shadow where grew the fragrant thickets of the young pine under the arms of the great pine mothers.

Without sound she moved. His eyes watched in strained eagerness for the one turn of the head, or one look of the eyes towards him, but that was not to be. To mortal all the joys cannot be given at one time — else all would be as gods!

He stared at the shadows into which she had blended herself, and he stared at the pool from which



she had arisen. It was again a mirror reflecting only the coming day. Yet his heart leaped as he saw a sign left there for him!

Drifting idly there in a circle was a bit of blue too vivid for the echo of the sky of dawn — it was the wing of a bluebird, and even as he looked, it was caught in an eddy more swift, and moved on the surface of the water straight to the edge of the bank nearest his place of rest.

Staggering to his feet, he went to meet it. It was not an empty vision as the maid had been, and it did not fade as he grasped it. The visions of the night had been strong visions, but with the dawn had come to Tahn-té the added medicine of the second gift of the Spirits of the Air. Above the clouds must his thoughts be in their height. The medicine of the eagle had made that plain to him, and the feathers of prayer lay in his hand as a sign such as had come to no other man!

The Brothers of the Air were plainly to be his kindred!

This was the dawning of the fifth day on the prayer trail. A little way he walked, and the world reeled about him,— to escape from the cloud of weakness he ran the way of the brook towards the far river — and then as a brook falls into the shadows of a cavern place, Tahn-té fell and lay where he fell. In the darkness closing over him he heard the rustle of wings — though another might have heard only the whisper of the pines.

When the sun stood straight above, and the bush of the sage brooded over its own shadow, it was then Po-tzah and the brothers of Po-tzah found him. They wondered at the wing of the bluebird in his hand, but carried him on a robe of the buffalo until



they brought him to his own home. Then the people of his order brought to him the foods and the drinks allowed after the fasting time to the men who make many prayers.

When the strength had come back he spoke in secret council of the vision of the eagle and the vision of the maid born from the waters of the sacred mountain of prayer.

The old men debated wisely as to the visions and the meaning of the visions. The dance was a great dance and plainly had the favor of *Sinde-hési* since *Tahn-té* had come out of it alive; — the Summer People would hold a long feast to mark the time, and the boys who were taught by the old men, would be told in the *kivas* of the ways in which a man might grow strong in body and strong in spirit to face the god who lives on high in the hills.

Of the visions of the eagles they were glad — for in his dream *Tahn-té* had been carried by the eagle to the shrine of power, and that was very great medicine. It was well he had kept strength to follow the trail and meet the eagle there.

Of the maid-vision there was long talk. To dream of a maid was the natural dream thought of a young man, and the wing of the bird could be only the symbol for thoughts that fly very high.

The clan of his mother — the Arrow Stone People, thought the vision by the pool meant that the time to choose a wife had come to *Tahn-té*. He had proven himself for magic. It was now time that he think of strong sons.

The elders agreed that it was so, and talked of likely maids, and that was when the name of *Yahn the Beautiful* was spoken. But *Tahn-té* heard part of the talk, and stopped it. He had read the books of the

white god, and out of them all he had found one strong thought. The white god, and the prophets of that god, were strong for magic because they did not take wives of the tribes about them. Because of that they had been strong to conquer their world. He, Tahn-té, meant to work for the red gods as the priests of the dark robe worked for the white gods. He would work alone unless other men worked with him. It was not magic in which a woman could help. But alone he fastened four feathers of a bluebird to the Prayer Flute of the far desert, and in the dusks under Venus and the young moon he breathed through it softly to bring back the vision of the Maid of Dreams.

Not all this talk was spoken of outside the kiva: — only the name of Yahn had been said — and that Tahn-té would have no wife even when urged by the old men. But Koh-pé, the wife of Ka-yemo did hear of it — also some other wives, and Yahn Tsyn-deh heard their laughter, and carried a bitter heart in the days to follow. She had no love for Tahn-té, yet — to wed with the Highest — would be victory over a false lover!

For the feast made for Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho, she would gather no flowers and bake no bread, and when the dance in honor of Tahn-té was danced, she put on her dress of a savage, brown deer skin fringed and trimmed with tails of the ermine of the north. About her brows she fastened a band on which were white shells and many beads in the pattern of the lightning path — and on it was also the white of the ermine — and the warrior feathers of the eagle which she wore not often — but this day she wore them!

Also she took from an earthen jar the strands of



**S**TRAIGHT TO HIM DRIFTED THE BLUEBIRD'S WING



beads of the Navahu. With head held high she walked through the village and knew well that she looked finer than all the dancers. Thus proudly she walked to the sands by the river's edge, and held the beads against her brow and bosom — and twisted them about her round arms as she gazed at her reflection in the water. But the pride and the defiance died out of her face when there were no jealous eyes to watch, and a tear fell on the still water, breaking the picture.

For a space she stood — a lonely figure despite her trophies — and the music of the dance came to her on the wind, and filled her with sullen rage. A canoe was on the shore above; she pushed it into the water and stepped in lifting the paddle of split ash wood and sending the craft darting downwards — anywhere to be away from the voices of people.

And Koh-pé, of the red beads, laughed at a safe distance, and told her comrades of the terraces that the Apache had gone fishing without a net — she would come home empty!