Beyond the Mountains

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The birds were singing blithely in the valley and on the mountain, and there was a joyous echo in the girl's heart, as she tripped along the rough pathway. Barbara Gray was going away, and she was glad. All nature was awake early as if to bid her a fond farewell. The old farmer's children knew her step and loved her voice.

Her father, a poor but honorable grazier, stopped in the midst of his grateful [illegible] brown hand [illegible]

[illegible] Barbara [illegible]

[illegible] Barbara gently performed the service. Yet he knew that she would naturally be excited that morning, and he meant to make no mistake. She had not stopped to shake her hands, and reached the summit slightly in advance.

"How could you?" she cried, bitterly. "Is it not enough that the living emblem of our country has grown so scarce that no man here, however, ignorant, would have molested him—she pointed to the dead eagle—"and yet, for mere wantonness and to test your skill you did this?"

A half scowl flashed into the man's face, but it vanished instantly. He had caught sight of a white object in the eagle's wings, as he realized.

"No, Bab," he stepped apologetically, as was [illegible] not [illegible] it killed."

It was true that the [illegible] was [illegible] the [illegible] perfect [illegible] stealthily [illegible] the city.

"I think you," she said, "the angel gone from her side. He is not much hurt. The string may have broken, she stroked the bird's shivering fur. The flowers had fallen from her hands and lay scattered upon the gray feathers of the eagle.

"All he knew, God taught him," she went on. "He was but true to himself. Mr. Drake, you have not been that. When you were here before, you promised that although you would give much to secure this eagle, for my sake you would leave it in peace."

It was Barbara's nature to be frank. She did not believe Drake had seen the white kitten in the air. His face flushed at the imputation. A man may know he has been lying, but he likes not for others to possess such knowledge, much less tell him so.

"The buggy is waiting on the other side," he said [illegible] Bab."

District of Judge Drake had come upon Barbara Grace suddenly. She had not met him many times in her [illegible] a couple of days back, at the [illegible] the slopes of a grassy [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]