

## PANORAMA: PHOENIX, ARIZONA

nix and abandon yourself to its strange, peculiar charm. This desert of ours is not a white expanse of sand stretching endlessly to a far horizon. This desert is mother to the Palo Verde that drips its blossoms like so much honey from its branches; to the golden poppy and the fragrant mesquite; to the Cholla and the Ocatilla and the Sahuaro, king of all cacti. It is broken by strange, fantastic mountains, coral, gray, and crimson, and in the sunset, all shifting blues and mauves.

At twilight our desert plays Mephisto to the souls caught in the mesh of its haunting beauty. The quickening darkness lays its passing hand on the tall cacti, stern, erect, brooding, unchanging, and smudges a velvety blackness over their thorns. It arrests the quiver of the restless, delicate cotton-wood leaves and turns them to black lace against the lingering gold of the western horizon. It creeps up on the hills—on the ponderous hulk of Camel-back, on the graceful slopes of Squaw Peak, on the

weird, twisted Buttes, and flattens them into great wings in the vast amphitheatre. In a little while the stars come out, and, the season being right, you may see the moon lift itself by its boot-straps over the rim of space.

You begin to feel a desire to flatten your body against the harsh, rough, somehow living ground, and you turn and drag yourself with a sudden sense of terror toward the lights of the city, with its dull security of walls. You go laggingly, throwing glances over your shoulder. The Mephisto of the desert has your soul, and the shell that you are carrying back to town is strangely reluctant to turn its back on the unchanging, eternal, persistent West that smiles with steady, grim aloofness on the Chamber of Commerce, on the service clubs, on the tourist hotels, on the new sky-line of a green but rapidly ripening city, which is determined, God willing or not, to have a population of 100,000 by 1930, and Los Angeles be damned.