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In Hopiland

By ETHEL W. MUSGRAVE

DOWN the narrow street which writhed through the pueblo atop the high mesa, Tapayo, the old pottery maker passed. Her feet, brown and bare, rustled on the smooth white stone like withered oak leaves. They readily found the familiar path over which they had gone since childhood, but her eyes found strange the place they now entered. Before an open doorway Tapayo paused, gazing in with childlike curiosity. In the room were two young Indian women, neat in gingham dresses; and, as they talked in the language of the government school, one ran a sewing machine in humming accompaniment. Here used to sit the women flat on the floor weaving baskets of stout yucca fibres.

A wail quavered for an instant, and the old crone, turning, saw in a corner a baby asleep on a high and ugly iron bed. She noticed the curve of the springs under its trivial weight. How could a *deposhoyd* grow sturdy with straight and beautiful back cradled in such a way? And its blanket—it was from the white man's loom. She thought of her own swaddling robe, woven of strips of softest rabbit fur and made large so that she still used it. Why did mothers no longer weave for their babies? Was it that they knew too little? Bewildered by the strangeness of a room long-known, she slipped into the street once more, mumbling as she went.

Two girls approached, the hard heels of their stiff black shoes clicking on the stone roadway. It had not been so when Tapayo was a maiden. Then, with feet encased in soft buckskin dyed warm brown and fastened about her ankles with beautiful silver buttons bought from neighboring Navajo smiths, she had stepped as lightly as a fawn.

Now from the head of the street shrill voices sifted, voices which Tapayo recognized as coming from the talking

box of the white man. Her wrinkled face twisted in anger. What did the youths mean by bringing this screaming devil into the pueblo of their fathers? Surely little brother Coyote had slipped through the tiny doors of the box and was howling to deride the red man. Hopis living on the rocky wind-swept mesa high above the desert knew no music of gurgling brook nor whispering forest; but their voices, high and sweet as they chanted the legend of the moon maidens or the song of the flute dance, blended in stirring symphony with whirring rattle of gourds and regular monotone of tom-toms. When, at full moon of August, the chant of the Snake Clan arose, swelled by thunder-makers and rhythmic padding of feet, its sounds swept across the strings of Tapayo's inner being until she vibrated in aching response.

The songs of the fathers were sung half-heartedly now; the rites of the sacred dances were performed with little understanding. The youth of the village distrusted the old even as he doubted the new.

At the edge of the mesa, where the street abruptly ended, the bent figure paused, her unkempt gray hair and short woven skirt fluttering in the wind. Far across the desert the setting sun flung long red ribbons of departing glory, but already the evening air blew cold on her withered arms and the left shoulder, bared in the dress of her tribal mothers. A few feet below her in a pocket on the face of the precipice, a wee burro shifted in his tiny stall; from a nearby housetop a captive eagle screamed. Tapayo viewed the village with dim, anxious eyes. All seemed at this moment as it had been for hundreds of years, but she knew that within those age-old houses a new life was being lived.

"Outside it is yesterday," she muttered. "Inside it is tomorrow."