DESERT SANCTUARY
We owe it to ourselves to seek solitude, not only in the isolation of the desert.

The solitude that beckons from the desert, as we have seen, is in many ways a solitude that invites. We are attuned to it, as we should be, and are not afraid of the evidence of loneliness inherent in it.
We owe it to ourselves to seek sanctuary, now and then, in the quiet isolation of the desert.

The solitude that beckons from out this silent land is not, as many suppose, a solitude that invites loneliness. For when we learn to know the desert, and are attuned to its unpredictable moods, we find no evidence of loneliness inherent in it.
And when we acquire the habit of complete relaxation, we never tire of the land that supplies it. For our enjoyment a million colors, ranging from calm pastels to a riot of brilliance, hang their superb canvases. Innumerable species of plant and animal life afford unending entertainment. Mountains and landscapes seem never the same in their majestic contours and in their delicate shadings. Sky and stars and rocks and homes—and the people who love their respective offerings for the enjoyment who have learned responsiveness.

Eventually we gain an awesome reverence for the peculiar character of the land that abhors any semblance of affectation.
complete relaxation, we never tire of the displayment a million colors, ranging in tone, hang their superb canvases. The life affords unending entertainment, ever the same in their majestic beauty. Sky and stars and rocks and homes—and the people who live in these homes—all assemble their respective offerings for the enjoyment and the understanding of those who have learned responsiveness to their appeal.

Eventually we gain an awesome respect, even a profound admiration, for the peculiar character of the desert. It is a realistic land, a land that abhors any semblance of affectation. Every color, every creature and
shrub, abides content with its own native characteristics. The cholla offers no apology for its thorns; the tortoise seeks no excuse for its shell. The dreaded rattler chooses to invite death rather than assume a personality not its own. No springtime carpet of flowers, however lovely, is required to enhance the desert's beauty. Every tree and plant, with or without its blossoms, is sufficient unto itself and unto the desert to which it belongs. Calm, pastel shades fade into the riotous colors of sunset. Sunlight, valley, sand and rock, bird and animal adornment. Each is content to be as it was created. Each is vibrant with its own perfect symmetry of design.
to which it belongs. Calm, pastoral shades claim equal splendor with the riotous colors of sunset. Smoke tree and creosote, mountain and valley, sand and rock, bird and animal—none of these seeks extraneous adornment. Each is content to abide by the purpose for which it was created. Each is vibrant with its own symphony of beauty; with its own perfect symmetry of design.
When the Psalmist exclaims: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my strength," the inference is not that his strength stems altogether and in a universal sense from the hills. A more reasonable implication is that this strength derives from the sublime act of lifting up his eyes. "I will lift up mine eyes...whence cometh my strength."

Out on the desert, we may—in actual fact—lift up our eyes and behold the glorious wasteland spread beneath us. If we thirst, we may resume the journey. If we hunger, we may partake of its nourishment. We may gain new vision and behold the glory of the desert.

Christ often turned to the desert. When He entered the desert for forty days of fasting, rest, or when He recognized the wilderness of His life.
lift up mine eyes unto the hills, 
for from hence is that the source of his strength comes. A more reasonable inference is not that his strength 
flows from the hills. A more reasonable inference derives from the sublime act of 
Looking up, as stated in Psalms 121:1-2, "whence cometh my strength." 

In fact—lift up our eyes and behold 
the glorious wasteland spread itself into illimitable vastness, even unto 
the distant hills. If we thirst, we may drink freely of its waters. If we 
hunger, we may partake of its nourishment. If we see but dimly, we may 
gain new vision and behold the desert to blossom as the rose.

Christ often turned to the desert when His tired body pleaded for 
rest, or when He recognized the need for a resurgence of His mental
and spiritual strength. And He urged others to follow His example: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." For He knew, even as others have learned, that problems often lose substance when viewed in perspective against the tranquillity of the desert.

As we approach the day commemorating our Saviour's birth, we sense a renewed urgency for strength to cope with the problems and sorrows that crowd in upon us. May those times be moments to retreat by quiet meditation and prayer, to renew our spirit, to regain our will to this troubled world, and to strengthen the hearts of all men everywhere. May those times of solitude and meditation and prayer when He inspired His disciples to 'go apart into a desert place to rest' be times for us to draw near to Him.
others to follow His example:“place and rest awhile.” For He problems often lose substance tranquillity of the desert. 
Our Saviour’s birth, we sense with the problems and sorrows that crowd in upon us. May the spirit of Christmas remind us that only by quiet meditation and prayer can we hope to bring peace and good will to this troubled world, and mutual respect and understanding to the hearts of all men everywhere. This, also, was the burden of Christ’s meditation and prayer when He chose to renew His strength by going apart into a desert place to rest awhile.