Clifford Josephine

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Содержание

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PREFACE

In the book I now lay before the reader, I have collected a series of stories and sketches of journeyings through California, Arizona, and New Mexico. There is little of fiction, even in the stories; and the sketches, I flatter myself, are true to life – as I saw it, at the time I visited the places.

A number of these stories first appeared in the Overland Monthly, but some of them are new, and have never been published. I bespeak for them all the attentive perusal and undivided interest of the kind reader.

The Author.

LA GRACIOSA

It was a stolid Indian face, at the first casual glance, but lighting up wonderfully with intelligence and a genial smile, when the little dark man, with the Spanish bearing, was spoken to. Particularly when addressed by one of the fairer sex, did a certain native grace of demeanor, an air of chivalrous gallantry, distinguish him from the more cold-blooded, though, perhaps, more fluent-spoken, Saxon people surrounding him.

Among the many different eyes fixed upon him now and again, in the crowded railroad-car, was one pair, of dark luminous gray, that dwelt there longer, and returned oftener, than its owner chose to have the man of the olive skin know. Still, he must have felt the magnetism of those eyes; for, conversing with this, disputing with that, and greeting the third man, he advanced, slowly but surely, to where a female figure, shrouded in sombre black, sat close by the open window. There was something touching in the young face that looked from out the heavy widow's veil, which covered her small hat, and almost completely enveloped the slender form. The face was transparently pale, the faintest flush of pink tinging the cheeks when any emotion swayed the breast; the lips were full, fresh, and cherry-red in color, and the hair, dark-brown and wavy, was brushed lightly back from the temples.

The breeze at the open window was quite fresh, for the train in

its flight was nearing the spot where the chill air from the ocean draws through the Salinos Valley. Vainly the slender fingers tried to move the obstinate spring that held aloft the upper part of the window. The color crept faintly into the lady's cheeks, for suddenly a hand, hardly larger than her's, though looking brown beside it, gently displaced her fingers and lowered the window without the least trouble. The lady's gloves had dropped; her handkerchief had fluttered to the floor; a small basket was displaced; all these things were remedied and attended to by the Spaniard, who had surely well-earned the thanks she graciously bestowed.

"Excuse me," he said, with unmistakable Spanish pronunciation; "but you do not live in our Valley – do you?"

"This is my first visit," she replied; "but I shall probably live here for the future."

"Ah! that makes me so happy," he said, earnestly, laying his hand on his heart.

The lady looked at him in silent astonishment. "Perhaps that is the way of the Spanish people," she said to herself. "At any rate, he has very fine eyes, and – it may be tedious living in Salinos."

Half an hour's conversation brought out the fact that a married sister's house was to be the home of the lady for a while; that the sister did not know of her coming just to-day, and that her ankle was so badly sprained that walking was very painful to her.

From the other side it was shown that his home was in the neighborhood of the town ("one of those wealthy Spanish

rancheros," she thought); that he was slightly acquainted with her brother-in-law; that he was a widower, and that his two sons would be at the depôt to receive him. These sons would bring with them, probably, a light spring-wagon from the ranch, but could easily be sent back for the comfortable carriage, if the lady would allow him the pleasure of seeing her safely under her sister's roof. She said she would accept a seat in the spring-wagon, and Senor Don Pedro Lopez withdrew, with a deep bow, to look after his luggage.

"Poor lady!" he explained to a group of his inquiring friends, "poor lady! She is deep in mourning, and she has much sorrow in her heart." And he left them quickly, to assist his *protégé* with her wraps. Then the train came to a halt, and Don Pedro's new acquaintance, leaning on his arm, approached the light vehicle, at either side of which stood the two sons, bending courteously, in acknowledgment of the lady's greeting. When Don Pedro himself was about to mount to the seat beside her, she waved him back, with a charmingly impetuous motion of the hand. "I am safe enough with your sons," she laughed, pleasantly. "Do you stop at my brother-in-law's office, pray, and tell him I have come."

Sister Anna was well pleased to greet the new arrival – "without an attachment." Her sister Nora's "unhappy marriage" had been a source of constant trouble and worry to her; and here she came at last – alone. Brother-in-law Ben soon joined them, and Nora's first evening passed without her growing seriously

lonesome or depressed. Sister Anna, to be sure, dreaded the following days. Her sister's unhappy marriage, she confided to her nearest neighbor, had so tried the poor girl's nerves, that she should not wonder if she sank into a profound melancholy. She did all she could to make the days pass pleasantly; but what can you do in a small town when you have neither carriage nor horses?

Fortunately, Don Pedro came to the rescue. He owned many fine horses and a number of vehicles – from an airy, open buggy to a comfortably-cushioned carriage. He made his appearance a day or two after Nora's arrival, mounted on a prancing black steed, to whose every step jingled and clashed the heavy silver-mounted trappings, which the older Spaniards are fond of decking out their horses with. He came only, like a well-bred man, to inquire after the sprained ankle; but before he left he had made an engagement to call the very next morning, with his easiest carriage, to take both ladies out to drive.

And he appeared, punctual to the minute, sitting stiffly in the barouche-built carriage, on the front seat beside the driver, who, to Nora's unpractised eye, seemed a full Indian, though hardly darker than his master. True, the people of pure Spanish descent did say that this same master had a slight admixture of Indian blood in his veins, too; but Don Pedro always denied it. He was from Mexico, he said, but his parents had come from Spain. However this might be, Nora stood in mute dismay a moment, when the outfit drew up at the door; and she cast a questioning

glance at her sister, even after they were seated in the carriage; but Sister Anna's eyes seemed repeating an old admonition to Nora – "Be patient, poor child; be still." And Nora, passing her hand across her face, heeded the admonition, gathered courage, and gave herself up to the perfect enjoyment of the scene and the novelty of the expedition.

It was a late spring day – the Valley still verdant with the growing grain, the mountains mottled with spots of brown where the rain of the whole winter had failed to make good the ravages of thousands of sheep, or where, perhaps, a streak of undiscovered mineral lay sleeping in the earth. Scant groups of trees dotted the Valley at far intervals, ranged themselves in rows where a little river ran at the foot of the Gabilan, and stood in lonely grandeur on the highest ridge of the mountain. Where the mountain sloped it grew covered with redwood, and where the hills shrank away they left a wide gap for the ocean breeze and the ocean fog to roll in.

Across the Valley was another mountain, dark and grand, with flecks of black growing *chemasal* in clefts and crevices, and sunny slopes and green fields lying at its base. And oh! the charm of these mountains. In the Valley there might be the fog and the chill of the North, but on the mountains lay the warmth and the dreaminess of the South.

Keenly the dark eyes of the Spaniard studied the lovely face, flushed, as it seemed, with the pleasure derived from the drive in the pure air and the golden sunshine.

"You like our Valley?" he asked, as eagerly as though she were a capitalist to whom he intended selling the most worthless portion of his ranch at the highest possible figure.

"Not the Valley so much as the mountains," she returned. "We have had fogs two days out of the week I have spent here, and I fancy I could escape that if I could get to the top of the mountains."

"Ah! you like the sunshine and the warm air. You must go farther South then – far South. I have thought a great deal of going there myself. There is a beautiful rancho which I can buy – you would like it, I know, – far down and close by the sea. And the sea is so blue there – just like the heavens. Oh! you would like it, I know, if you could only see it," he concluded, enthusiastically, as though this were another ranch he was trying to sell her.

But the thought of traffic or gain was very far from his heart just then, though Don Pedro was known to be an exceptionally good business man and a close financier. Many of his Spanish compeers looked up to him with a certain awe on this account. Most of them had parted with their broad acres, their countless herds, all too easily, to gratify their taste for lavish display and easy living, with its attendant cost under the new American *régime*; or had lost them through confiding, with their generous heart, their guileless nature, to the people whose thoughts were bent on securing, by usury and knaves' tricks, the possessions of the very men whose hospitable roof afforded them shelter. "He can cope with any American," they would say, proudly, speaking

of Don Pedro; and Don Pedro would show his appreciation of the compliment by exercising his business qualifications towards them, as well as towards "los Americanos."

But the haughty Don was well-mannered and agreeable; and after securing from Nora an indefinite promise that she would some time, when her ankle got strong, ride his own saddle-horse, he left the ladies safely at their door and retired, his heart and brain filled with a thousand happy dreams. He had only once during the ride pointed carelessly across the valley to where his ranch lay; but Nora had gained no definite idea of its extent.

One pleasant afternoon the two sons of Don Pedro stopped at the door. Their father had encouraged them to call, they said; perhaps the lady and her sister would bestow upon them the honor of driving out with them for an hour. Both lads spoke English with elegance and fluency (let the good fathers of the Santa Clara College alone for that), but among themselves their mother-tongue still asserted itself; and in their behavior a touch of the Spanish punctilio distinguished them favorably from the uncouth flippancy of some of their young American neighbors.

Nora cheerfully assented, and in a few minutes the whole party was bowling along, – the eldest brother driving, the younger explaining and describing the country and its peculiarities. Pablo and Roberto had both been born on their ranch, though not in the large white house they saw in the distance. That had been finished only a little while when their mother died. The *adobe* which had been their birthplace stood several miles farther back,

and could not be seen from here.

"It is not on this ranch, then?" queried Nora.

"Pardon, yes; on this ranch, but several miles nearer the foothills; in that direction – there."

"And is the land we are passing over all one ranch?" Nora continued, persistently.

"We have been driving over our own land almost since we left town," replied Pablo, a little proudly. "San Jacinto is one of the largest ranchos in the county, and the Americans have not yet succeeded in cutting it up into building-lots and homestead blocks," he added, laughing a frank, boyish laugh, which seemed to say, "you are as one of us, and will not take it amiss."

Sister Anna looked stealthily at Nora, but her eyes, with a strange light in them, were fixed on the horizon, far off, where they seemed to read something that made her brow contract and lower a little while, and then clear off, as, with an effort, she turned to the boy and brought up some other topic of conversation. But her heart was not in what she said, and Sister Anna exerted herself to cover the deficiencies that Nora's drooping spirits left in the entertainment.

It was sunset when they reached home, and standing on the rose-covered veranda of the little cottage a moment, Nora looked across to where the lingering gleams of the sun were kissing the black-looming crown of the Loma Prieta, with floods of pink and soft violet, and covering all its base with shades of dark purple and heavy gray. She raised her clasped hands to the mountain

top.

"How glad, how thankful I could be, if from the wreck and the ruins I could gather light and warmth enough to cover my past life and its miseries, as the pink and the purple of the sunset cover the black dreariness of yon mountain."

"Come in, Nora, it is getting cold," interrupted Sister Anna; "or the next thing after having your nerves wrought up so will be a fit of hysterics."

"Which, you will say, is one more of the bad effects of Nora's unhappy marriage."

If Nora's wilfulness and Nora's unhappy marriage had been ever so deeply deplored by her, the loss of Sister Anna's love, or Anna's sisterly kindness, could not be counted among its many bad effects. Brother-in-law Ben, too, was whole-souled and affectionate; more practical, and a trifle more far-seeing than Anna; but he never said, "I told you so." He quietly did all he could to bind up bleeding wounds.

It soon came to be looked upon as quite a matter of course that Don Pedro should be seen in his carriage with the two sisters; or, that his black steed should be led up and down before the cottage door, by one of his servants, dark of skin, fiery-eyed, and of quiet demeanor, like his master. Then, again, the sons were seen at the cottage, always courteous, attentive, and scrupulously polite. If in the privacy of their most secret communings the "Gringa" was ever spoken of *as* the Gringa, it was only in the strictest privacy. Neither to Nora, nor to any of their servants, did ever look or

word betray but that in the fair young American they saw all that their widowed father desired they should see.

The retinue of the Whitehead family consisted of but a single Chinaman, who was cook, laundress, maid-of-all-work; but during Nora's stay she was never aware but that she had half-a-dozen slaves to do her bidding, so careful, yet so delicate was Don Pedro in bestowing his attentions. He soon hovered about the whole family like one of the *genii*. If Nora just breathed to herself, "How pleasant the day is – if we only had carriage and horses" – before the hour was over the Don, with his carriage, or Don Pedro's boys, or an invitation to ride from the Don, was at hand. Before she had quite concluded that fruits were not so abundant or fine in the country as in the city markets, the Don had contracted a pleasant habit of sending his servants with the choicest of all his fields and store-houses contained to the little cottage in town. Fish, fresh from the Bay of Monterey, and game, that plain and mountain afforded, came in the run of time, quite as a matter of course, to the kitchen and larder of Don Pedro's dear friend Whitehead. It was not to be refused. Don Pedro had a hundred points of law that he wished explained; had so much advice to ask in regard to some tracts of land he meant to purchase, that Brother-in-law Ben always seemed the one conferring the greatest favor.

It was a little singular, too, this friendship of the Don's for Lawyer Whitehead. As a general thing, the Spanish population of California look upon our lawyers with distrust, and have a

wholesome horror of the law. Don Pedro, though liberal-minded and enlightened, was not backward in expressing the contempt he felt for many of our American views and opinions; but above all he abominated our most popular institution – the Divorce Court. Not as a Catholic only, was it an abomination to him, he said. He had often declared to see a divorced woman gave him the same shuddering sensation that was caused by looking upon a poisonous snake.

When her ankle had grown quite strong, Don Pedro solicited for Rosa the honor of carrying Nora for a short ride through the country. And Nora, mounted high on the shapely animal's back, had seemed in such pleasant mood when they left her sister's door, that she quite bewildered her escort by the sudden sharp tone with which she replied to the question he asked: what feature she admired most in the landscape before them?

"Those many little lakes," she said. "They have an enticing look of quiet and rest, and hold out a standing invitation to 'come and get drowned,' to weary mortals like myself."

He was too delicate to allow his shocked glance to rise to her face, but to himself he repeated, "Poor lady! she has much sorrow in her heart," and aloud he said:

"You are homesick, Leonora?" How much prettier it seemed to hear the sonorous voice frame the word "Leonora," than the stiff appellation of "Mrs. Rutherford," which the Don could hardly ever bring himself to utter. It was so long, he excused himself, and not the custom of his country – though, in direct

contradiction to the first part of the excuse, he would slyly smuggle in an addition – Blanca, Graciosa, Querida – trusting for safety in her lack of acquaintance with the Spanish tongue.

"No," she answered honestly to his question, "I have no place to be homesick for. I am glad to be here; but – "

"Ah! but you must see the Southern country first," he interrupted, eagerly. "I am going South this winter to purchase a ranch, on which I shall make my home. I leave this ranch here to my two boys. Their mother died here, and the ranch will be theirs. But my ranch in the South will be very fine; the land is so fair – like a beautiful woman, almost."

"I shall miss you, if you leave us; particularly through the rainy winter months," she said.

"How happy that makes me!" he exclaimed, as once before; and he did now what had been in his heart to do then – he bent over her hand and kissed it warmly, heedless of the swarthy Mexican who rode behind his master.

All through the summer, with its dust and its fog and its glaring sun, did Don Pedro still find a pleasant hour, early after the fog had risen, or late after the sun had set, to spend, on horseback or in carriage, with "the one fair woman" who seemed to fill his whole heart. Sometimes, when returning from an expedition on which Sister Anna had not accompanied them, she would greet them on the veranda with uneasy, furtive eyes; and the Don, blind to everything but his passion for Nora, still did not observe the impatient answering glance.

Don Pedro was delicacy and chivalry itself. Bending low over her white fingers one day, he asked, "And how long was Mr. Rutherford blessed with the possession of this most sweet hand?"

"I was married but a year," she answered, with her teeth set, and quickly drawing back her hand.

On reaching home she reported to her sister. "Aha," she commented, "he wants to know how long you have been a widow, and whether it is too soon to make more decided proposals."

Then came the early rains, and for Nora fits of passionate crying, alternating with fits of gloomy depression. Don Pedro was in despair. Her varying moods did not escape him, and when, to crown all, her ankle, still weak from the sprain, began to swell with rheumatism, she took no pains to hide her fretfulness or sadness either from her sister Anna or the Don. In the midst of the gloom and the rain came Don Pedro one day to announce that he was about to set out for the South, to conclude the purchase of the ranch he had so long spoken of.

"And you are going, too?" she said, lugubriously.

"I beg you to give me permission to go. I am the slave of Leonora, La Graciosa, and will return soon. I will not go, if you grant me not permission; but I beg you let me go for a short time." He had sunk on his knees by the couch on which she rested, and his eyes flashed fire into hers for a brief moment; but he conquered himself, and veiled them under their heavy lashes. "Let me go," he pleaded, humbly, "and give me permission to return to you, Leonora. In my absence my sons will do all your

bidding. They know the will of their father."

Nora had extended her hand, and motioned him to a chair beside her couch, and listened with a smile on her lips to all the arrangements he had made for her comfort during his absence.

"Since I have allowed you your own way in everything, I must have mine in one particular. Of course, you will take a saddle-horse for yourself besides the spring-wagon. Now you shall not leave Rosa here for me, but shall take her along for your own use. It is absurd for you to insist that no one shall use her since I have ridden her; I shall not keep her here while you are struggling over heavy roads, in the wagon, or on some other horse."

It was, perhaps, the longest speech she had ever made to him, and it was all about himself too, and full of consideration for him – oh! it was delicious. With fervent gratitude he kissed her hand, called her Preciosa, Banita, till she declared that he should not say hard things of her in Spanish any more. He desisted for the time, on her promise that she would try to be cheerful while he was away, and not get homesick, unless it were for him; and they became quite gay and sociable over a cup of tea which Sister Anna brought them into the sitting-room – so sociable, that Nora said of the Don, after his departure:

"If any one were to tell me that a church-steeple could unbend sufficiently to roll ten-pins of a Sunday afternoon, I should believe it after this."

But in a little while the fits of dejection and the fits of crying came back again. Sister Anna did her best to break them up; she

rallied her on breaking her heart for the absent Don; she tried to interest her in her surroundings, so that she should see the sungleams that flashed through the winter's gloom.

"See this beautiful cala that has just opened in the garden," she would say, with an abortive attempt at making her believe that her ankle was strong and well.

"I cannot get up, miserable creature that I am," came back the dismal response.

"Oh, that lovely cloth-of-gold has grown a shoot full half a yard long since yesterday; come and see."

"I cannot."

"Yes, you can; come lean on me. Now, isn't this sunshine delightful for December?"

Nora drew a deep breath; after a week's steady rain, the sky was clear as crystal, and the sun laughed down on hill and valley, blossoming rose and budding bush.

"See how the violets are covered with blue, and the honeysuckle has just reached the farthest end of the porch. Oh, Nora, how can any one be unhappy with flowers to tend, and a home to keep?"

"Ah! yes. You are right, sister; but it is your home – not mine."

Anna laid her arm around her as though to support her. She knew her sister's proud spirit and yearning heart, and she only whispered, as she had so often done, "Be patient, poor child; be still."

But that short, passionate plaint had lightened Nora's heart;

after a week's sunshine the roads were dry enough to ride out once more with Don Pedro's sons, and when steady rain set in once more after that, she tried to show her sister that she could take an interest in "home" – though it was not her own.

A month had worn away, and as long as the weather permitted the regular running of the mails, Pablo and Roberto brought greetings from their father once a week; but when the roads grew impassable, they too were left without news. Not an iota did they fail of their attention to Nora, however; whatever dainties the ranch afforded were still laid at her feet, or rather on her sister's kitchen table; and the roads were never so bad but that they paid their respects at least twice a week.

"You have no cause to complain," said Sister Anna.

"No," replied Nora, with a yawn; "but I wish the Don would come back."

And he did come back.

"I am so glad you have come," she said, frankly, meeting him on the threshold.

"I can read it in your eyes," he exclaimed, rapturously. "Oh, how happy that makes me!" And if Sister Anna's head had not appeared behind Nora's shoulder, there is no telling what might have happened.

He had brought the spring with him; mountain and valley both had clothed itself in brightest green, in which the bare brown spots on the Gabilan Range were really a relief to the satiated eye. In the deep clefts of the Loma Prieta lay the blackish shade

of the *chemasal*, and only one degree less sombre appeared the foliage of the live-oak against the tender green of the fresh grass. Again did Nora all day long watch the sun lying on the mountains – a clear golden haze in the daytime; pink and violet, and purplish gray in the evening mist.

"Is it not beautiful?" she asked of Brother-in-law Ben, one evening, as he came up the street and entered the gate.

"You are just growing to like our Valley, I see; it is a pity that you should now be 'borne away to foreign climes.'"

"And who's to bear me away?" she asked, laughing, as they entered the house.

"Let me call Anna," he said; "we will have to hold family council over this."

In council he commenced: "Don Pedro has this day requested that I, his legal adviser, go South with him, to see that all papers are properly made out, all preliminaries settled, before he fairly takes possession of his land."

"Well?" queried Anna.

"Well, my dear, so much for his counsellor Whitehead. But to his friend Benjamin's family he has extended an invitation to accompany us on this trip, presuming that his friend's wife and sister-in-law would be pleased to see this much-praised Southern country."

"We'll go, of course," assented Anna, artlessly.

"Certainly, my dear – of course;" affirmed easy-going Ben. "But, my dear, I hope you both understand all the bearings of

this case."

Nora's head drooped, and a flush of pain overspread her face, as she answered, chokingly, "I do."

"Then, my dear, since Don Pedro has never mentioned Nora's name to me, except to send message or remembrance, had I not better tell him – "

"No, no!" cried Nora, in sudden terror. "Oh, please not; leave it all to me."

"Certainly, Mrs. Rutherford," he assented, still more slowly; "I am not the man to meddle with other people's affairs – unasked," he added, remembering, perhaps, his business and calling.

"Don't be angry with me, Ben," she pleaded; "you have always been so kind to me. What should I have done without you two? But you know how I feel about this – this miserable affair."

"All right, child," he said, pressing her hand. "I should like to give you a piece of advice, but my lawyer's instinct tells me that you will not take it, so that I am compelled to keep my mouth shut – emphatically."

They set out on their Southern trip, a grand cavalcade; Don Pedro on a charger a little taller, a little blacker than Nora's horse; in the light wagon Anna and her husband, and behind them a heavier wagon containing all that a leisurely journey through a thinly populated country made desirable. For attendance they had Domingi, the Don's favorite servant, two *vaqueros*, and an under-servant, all mounted on hardy mustangs. Never did picnic party, intent on a day's pleasuring, leave home in higher spirits.

The fresh morning air brought the color to Nora's cheeks, and her musical laugh rang out through the Valley; and when they passed one of the little lakes, all placid and glistening in the bright sun, Nora turned to her companion with a smile: "I don't think those lakes were meant to drown one's self in, at all; they were made to cast reflections. See?" and she pointed to herself, graceful and erect, mirrored in the clear water.

"Oh, Graciosa," murmured the Spaniard.

How bright the world looked, to be sure; flowers covered the earth, not scattered in niggardly manner, as in the older, colder Eastern States, but covering the ground for miles, showing nothing but a sea of blue, an ocean of crimson, or a wilderness of yellow. Then came patches where all shades and colors were mixed; delicate tints of pink and mauve, of pure white and deep red, and over all floated a fragrance that was never equalled by garden-flowers or their distilled perfume.

When twilight fell, and Don Pedro informed them that they would spend the night under the hospitable roof of his friend, Don Pamfilio Rodriguez, Nora was almost sorry that, for the complete "romance of the thing," they could not camp out.

"We will come to that, too," the Don consoled her, "before the journey is over. But my friend would never forgive me, if I passed his door and did not enter."

"But so many of us," urged Nora, regarding, if the truth must be told, the small low-roofed *adobe* house with considerable disfavor.

"There would be room in my friend's house for my friends and myself, even though my friend himself should lie across the threshold."

Nora bowed her head. She knew of the proverbial hospitality of the Spanish – a hospitality that led them to impoverish themselves for the sake of becomingly entertaining their guests.

Of course, only Don Pedro could lift Nora from her horse; but Sister Anna found herself in the hands of the host, who conducted her, with the air of a prince escorting a duchess, to the threshold, where his wife, Donna Carmel, and another aged lady, received them. Conversation was necessarily limited – neither Don Pamfilio nor Donna Carmel speaking English, and Brother Ben alone being conversant with Spanish.

The ladies were shown into a low, clean-swept room, in which a bed, draped and trimmed with a profusion of Spanish needlework and soft red calico, took up the most space. Chairs ranged along one wall, and a gay-colored print of Saint Mary of the Sacred Heart, over the fire-place, completed the furnishing. Nora pleasantly returned the salutation of the black-bearded man who entered with coals of fire on a big garden-spade. Directly after him came a woman, with a shawl over her head and fire-wood in her arms. She, too, offered the respectful "*buénos dias*," and she had hardly left when a small girl entered, with a broken-nosed pitcher containing hot-water, and after her came another dark-faced man, the *mayordomo*, with a tray of refreshments and inquiries as to whether the ladies were comfortable.

Nora dropped her arms by her side. "I have counted four servants now, and Don Pedro told me particularly that his friend, Pam – what's-his-name – was very poor."

"Spanish style," answered Anna, with a shrug of the shoulder. "But it is very comfortable. How cold it has grown out-doors, and how dark it is. I wonder if we shall be afraid?"

"Hush! Don't make me nervous," cried Nora, sharply, shivering with the sudden terror that sometimes came over her.

"Be still," said Anna, soothingly; "there is nothing to be afraid of here."

After a while they were called to supper, where, to their surprise, they found quite a little gathering. Neighbors who spoke English had been summoned to entertain them, and after supper, which was a marvel of dishes, in which onions, sugar, raisins, and red pepper were softly blended, and which was served by three more servants, they got up an *impromptu* concert, on three guitars, and later an *impromptu* ball, at which Nora chiefly danced with the Don.

In spite of the biting cold next morning, all the male members of last night's company insisted on escorting our friends over the first few miles of the road. They came to a stream which they must cross, and of which Don Pamfilio had warned them, and the Don insisted on Nora's getting into the wagon with her sister. The *vaqueros* with their horses were brought into requisition, and Nora opened her eyes wide when, dashing up, they fastened their long *riattas* to the tongue of the wagon, wound the end of the

rope around the horn of the saddle, and with this improvised four-horse team got up the steep bank on the other side in the twinkling of an eye.

Reaching San Luis Obispo directly, they delayed one whole day, as Nora expressed herself charmed with what she saw of the old mission church, and what remained of the old mission garden. A group of fig-trees here and there, a palm-tree sadly out of place, in a dirty, dusty yard, an agave standing stiff and reserved among its upstart neighbors, the pea-vine and potato.

"Oh! it is pitiful," cried Nora, hardly aware of the quotation. "Even this proud avenue of olives, towering so high above all, has been cut up and laid out in building-lots."

"The advance of civilization," Brother Ben informed her; and, in reply, Nora pointed silently into a yard, where a half-grown palm-tree stood among heaps of refuse cigar-ends and broken bottles. The house to which the yard belonged was occupied as a bar-room, and one of its patrons, a son of Old Erin, to all appearances, lay stretched near the palm, sleeping off the fumes of the liquor imbibed at the bar.

They laughed at Nora's illustration, and decided to move from so untoward a spot that very afternoon, even if they should have to use their tent and camp out all night.

More flowers, and brighter they grew as our friend travelled farther South. On the plain the meadow-lark sang its song in the dew and the chill of the morning, and high on the mountain, in the still noonday, the lone cry of the hawk came down

from where the bird lived in solitary grandeur. Wherever our friends went they were made welcome. Not a Spanish house dare the Don pass without stopping, at least for refreshments. He had *compadres* and *comadres* everywhere, and whether they approved of his intimate relations with the "Gringas" or not, they showed always the greatest respect, extended always the most cheerful hospitality.

At last they approached Santa Barbara, its white, sun-kissed mission gleaming below them in the valley as they descended the Santa Inez Mountains. Stately business houses and lovely country-seats, hidden in trees and vines – the wide sea guarding all. But they tarried not. Don Pedro announced that he had promised to make a stay of several weeks at his particular friend's, Don Enrico del Gada. He was proud to introduce them to this family, he said. They would become acquainted with true Castilians – would be witness to how Spanish people lived in the Southern country; rich people – that is – . They had always been rich, but through some mismanagement (through the knavery of some American, Nora interpreted it), they were greatly in danger of losing their whole estate. A small portion of their rancho had been sold to a company of land-speculators, and now they were trying to float the title to this portion over the whole of the Tappa Rancho.

"Pure Castilian blood," the Don affirmed; "fair of skin, hair lighter than Nora's tresses, and eyes blue as the sky. Such the male part of the family. The female portion – mother and

daughter – were black-eyed, and just a trifle darker; but beauties, both. The daughter, Narcissa (Nora fancied that a sudden twinge distorted the Don's features as he spoke the name), was lovely and an angel; not very strong, though – a little weak in the chest."

All the evening the Del Gadas formed the subject of conversation, so that it is hardly surprising that morning found Nora arrayed with more care than usual, if possible, and looking handsome enough to gratify the heart of the most fastidious lover.

A two hours' ride brought them to the immediate enclosure of the comfortable ranch house, and with a sonorous "*buénos dias caballeros!*" the Don had led his party into the midst of a ring formed by the host, his son, and other invited guests. Some of them had just dismounted, and the spurs were still on their boots; some had red silk scarfs tied gracefully around the hips, and all were handsome, chivalrous, picturesque-looking men. Don Enrico advanced to assist Anna, while Don Manuel, his son, strode toward Leonora's horse and had lifted her from the saddle before Don Pedro could tell what he was about. Such clear blue eyes as he had! All the sunshine of his native Spain seemed caught in them; and his hand was so white! Nora's own could hardly vie with it.

His head was uncovered when he conducted her to the veranda, where the ladies were assembled. His mother, a beauty still, dark-eyed, full-throated, and with the haughty look and turn of the head that is found among the Spanish people; the sister a delicate, slender being, large-eyed, with hectic roses on

her cheeks. Nora detected a strange glimmer in her eye and a convulsive movement of the lips as she addressed a question in a low tone to her brother, after the formal introduction was over.

"You must excuse my sister," he apologized to Nora, "she speaks no English. She wanted to know whether you had ridden Rosa. Long ago she tried to ride the horse, but could not, as she is not strong. When Don Pedro was here last she wanted to try again; but he would not consent. I suppose she is astonished at your prowess."

Nora watched the darkened, uneasy eyes of the girl; she thought she knew better than the unsuspecting brother what had prompted the question.

The Del Gada family, their house, their style of living, was all the Don had claimed for them. The first day or two were devoted mainly to out-of-door entertainments; the orange-groves, the vineyards, the almond-plantation on the ranch were visited, and a ride to the mission of Santa Barbara, whose Moorish bell-towers haunted Nora's brain, was planned and undertaken.

The warm light of the spring-day shed a soft glimmer over crumbling remnants of the monuments that the patient labor of the mission fathers have left behind them – monuments of rock and stone, shaped by the hands of the docile aborigines into aqueducts and fountains, reservoirs and mill-house; monuments, too, of living, thriving trees, swaying gently in the March wind, many of them laden with promises of a harvest of luscious apricot or honey-flavored pear. The hands that planted them

have long fallen to dust; the humble *adobe* that gave shelter to the patient toiler is empty and in ruins, but the trees he planted flourish, and bear fruit, year after year; and from the shrine where he once knelt to worship his new-found Saviour, there echoes still the Ave and the Vesper-bell, though a different race now offers its devotion.

A day or two later, winter seemed to have returned in all its fury; the rain poured ceaselessly, and swelled the creeks till their narrow banks could hold the flood no longer; the wind tore at the roses, hanging in clusters of creamy white and dark crimson, on trellises and high-growing bush, and scattered showers of snow from almond and cherry trees. The fireplaces in the Del Gada mansion were once more alive and cheerful with a sparkling fire. It made little difference to the company assembled at the ranch; it gave Nora and Sister Anna an opportunity of seeing more of the home-life of the family, and impressed them with the excellence of the haughty-looking woman at the head of the establishment. No New England matron could be a more systematic housekeeper, could be more religiously devoted to the welfare of her family and servants. "And the romance of it all," Nora often repeated. Night and morning the far-sounding bell on the little chapel in the garden called the members of the house to worship; and Donna Incarnacion, kneeling, surrounded by her family and servants, read in clear tones the litanies and prayers. Once a week the priest from the neighboring mission visited the house, and then the large drawing-room was fitted up

with altar and lights and flowers, and neighbors, high and low, of all degrees, attended worship.

This, however, did not prevent the family from being as jolly as Spanish people can well be, in this same drawing-room, when Mass was over, and "the things cleared away." Of cold or rainy nights the company resorted to this room, where they had music, conversation, refreshments. But everything had a dash of romance to Nora's unbounded delight. Refreshments were brought in on large trays, borne by dusk, dark-clad women; trays loaded with oranges, pomegranates, figs, the product of the orchards surrounding the house; and wine, sparkling red and clear amber, pressed from grapes gathered in the vineyard that crept close up to the door. It was not only California, but the South, of which Don Pedro had always spoken with such enthusiasm.

"And how enthusiastic he does grow sometimes," said Nora one evening, in the large drawing-room where they were all assembled.

Manuel, who performed on the piano as well as the flute, had just finished a piece of music which Nora had taken from her trunk for him to play, and she had insisted on turning the leaves for him. Don Pedro sat near, and Nora looking up, had caught his eye. "See the enthusiasm in his face," she said to Manuel. "How fond all of you Spaniards are of music."

"You are mistaken in two points, Donna Leonora," the young man replied. "Don Pedro is no Spaniard, he is a Mexican; and

he has not grown enthusiastic over the music – he has seen and has been thinking only of you."

Nora's cheeks burned at something in Manuel's voice; but a grateful feeling stole into her heart. To tell the truth, she had felt a pang of something like jealousy of late, when Narcissa, who, from speaking no English, was thrown on Don Pedro's hands, seemed to take up more of his attention than necessary.

When the weather cleared off, our party began to talk of moving on; Don Pedro's new possession was only one or two days' journey from here, below San Buenaventura. There was to be a Rodeo on the Del Gada ranch, not so much for the purpose of branding young cattle, as to give the different rancheros an opportunity of selecting their own that might have strayed into the mountains and found their way into the Del Gada herds. Nora was for attending the Rodeo; she could hardly form an idea of what it was; but she was sure, as usual, that it must be something "highly romantic."

They were warned that they must get up early in the morning, and seven o'clock found them already on the ground – a little valley, shut in by mountains more or less steep. A small creek, made turbulent by the rains, ran through the valley, where an ocean of stock seemed to roll in uneasy billows. It was all as romantic as Nora's heart could wish. The countless herds of cattle gathered together and kept from dispersing by numbers of *vaqueros*, who darted here and there on their well-trained horses, leaped ditches, flew up the steep mountain-sides after an

escaping steer, dashed through the foaming torrent to gather one more to the fold, and seemed so perfectly one with their horse that from here might have sprung the fable of the old Centaurs.

Eyes sharper than eagles had these people, master and man alike; out of the thousands of that moving herd could they single the mighty steer that bore their brand, or the wild-eyed cow whose yearling calf had not yet felt the searing-iron. Into the very midst of the seething mass would a *vaquero* dart, single out his victim without a moment's halt, drive the animal to the open space, and throw his lasso with unerring aim, if a close inspection was desirable – a doubt as to the brand to be set aside. If a steer proved fractious, two of the Centaurs would divide the labor; and while one dexterously threw the rope around his horns, the other's lasso had quickly caught the hind foot, and together they brought him to the earth, that he had spurned in his strength and pride but a moment before.

Manuel himself could not resist the temptation of exhibiting his skill; and when his father and one of the neighbors – of about fifty miles away – both claimed a large black bull, almost in the centre of the herd, he dashed in among the cattle, drove his prey out on a gallop, flung his lasso around the animal's hind feet, and brought him to the ground as neatly as any *vaquero* could have done.

He saw Nora clap her hands; he saw, too, how every ranchero of the county had his eyes fixed on her, as she sat proudly, yet so lightly, on the showy black horse; and sadly he owned to himself

that he would risk life and limb any time, to gain the little hand that wafted him a kiss. But what was he? A beggar, perhaps, to-morrow, if the suit went against them.

Meantime the sun grew hot, and they all dismounted and left the wagons, and lunch was discussed; the *élite*, Americans and Spaniards alike, assembling around the Del Gada provision wagon, while the *vaqueros* were well satisfied with a chunk of bread, a handful of olives, and a draught of wine, as they leisurely drove the cattle separated from the Del Gada herd to their respective territory.

Then came the parting day. Donna Incarnacion stood on the veranda, as on the day of their arrival, proudly erect, conscious of herself and the dignity she must maintain. Beside her stood her daughter, the spots on her cheeks larger and brighter, but a pained, restless expression in the eager eyes, and printing itself sharply in the lines about the mouth. Her mother seemed not to note the girl's evident distress.

Nora, Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead, and the Don had made their adieux; and Manuel, mounted and ready to escort them, together with some half dozen others, turned once more to the veranda to ask his sister some question. Like a flash the truth broke on him as he caught the eager, straining glance that followed Don Pedro's form, and with a little passionate cry he urged his animal close to Nora's side.

"It is not my heart alone you have left desolate behind you, Leonora. My sister's, too – oh! my poor Narcissa! Now I know

why my mother said that she would not live to see spring again; now I know why she prays to the saints for a 'still heart,' night and morning. Oh, Leonora, think no more of the dagger you have planted in my breast; think of poor Narcissa, and pray for her as you would for one already dead – for the love of a Spanish girl is deep and abiding, and cannot be outweighed by gold and leagues of land and fine clothes."

It was well that Don Pedro came up; Nora was almost fainting in her saddle. He did not catch the import of Don Manuel's words, but, if never before, he recognized in him now a bold and dangerous rival. The confusion attending a general breaking-up had covered this little by-scene, and when the party escorting them turned back, it would have been impossible to discover that one or two hearts throbbed wildly at the parting words.

When they rode into San Buenaventura, with its dingy little mission church fronting on the main street, Nora was not half so much interested as she had been. They were right in the midst of the mission garden. The obtrusive frame houses of the fast-crowding American population had been set up in it; the streets had been laid out through it; the ugly, brick-built court-house stood away down in the lower part of it, where the blue ocean washed the shore, and murmured all day of times long past to the tall-growing palms, that stood desolate and alone.

It made her sad, she said to the Don, when he expressed his surprise at her silence, to see the stately olives of a century's growth spread their great branches over flimsy little shops; to see

the neglected vines trailing their unpruned lengths over rubbish-piled open lots, which a paper placard announced "for sale."

When night came, she retired to her up-stairs room at the hotel, put the light out, and gazed long hours on the placid ocean.

"Let us get on as soon as possible," said Sister Anna, in confidence, to her husband the next morning. "This place seems to have a singular effect on Nora. She says she could not sleep last night, for thinking whether she had a right to barter herself away, body and soul, truth and honor, perhaps, for a grand home and a great deal of money."

So they "got on." Don Pedro was happy to gratify every wish of the ladies, and very willing to enter upon his own territory, which lay so near. The earth looked so smiling to Don Pedro when, together with Nora, a little in advance of the wagons, he crossed the border of his own domain. All the morning they had passed droves of cattle on the road, and flocks of sheep, and the *vaqueros* tending them had still saluted Don Pedro as their master. Shortly they encountered the *mayordomo* of the new ranch, and after a short parley with him, the Don turned to Nora with an apology for discussing business affairs in an unfamiliar tongue in her presence.

"Let us make a compromise," suggested Nora; "do you take me down yonder to that piece of white pebble-beach, by the gray rock, and you may come back and talk to all the *vaqueros* and *mayordomos* in the land."

The *mayordomo* wended his way to where he saw the wagons

halting in a grove, and Nora and the Don pursued their own way. It was quite a distance before they had reached the exact spot that Nora said she had meant – they were out of sight of the rest. The ocean, grand and solemn, lay before them, grassy plains around them, groups of trees and sloping hills in the near distance, and far off the mountains in their never-changing rest.

Lightly Don Pedro sprang to the ground, and detaining Nora one moment in her saddle, he said, impressively: "Now you set foot upon your own land, a territory named after you, 'La Graciosa.'"

Then he lifted her tenderly to the ground, and she sprang lightly away from him, and lavishly praised the beauty of his new possession.

"And it is all like this," he continued, "for miles and miles, good and beautiful, like the one for whom I named it."

"What a flatterer you are," she said, forced at last to take notice of the name. He clasped her hand, but she uttered a little shriek, "Oh! that wicked horse of yours has bitten my poor Rosa." A snort from the black mare seemed to corroborate the accusation, and Nora had gained time – to fight her battle out, and make peace with herself.

"Please get rid of that tiresome *mayordomo* of yours, and come back to me. I want to stay here alone with Rosa and decide whether your ranch has been well named." She could not prevent the kiss he imprinted on her slender hand, but she drew it back impatiently.

"You will stay here till I return, Leonora?" he asked, earnestly.

"Yes, yes," she said, a little fretfully, and waved him off.

He had made fast her horse to the stump of a scrub-oak, that had lived its short, mistaken life here close by the sea; and Nora, when the sound of the other horse's hoofs had died away, stroked the animal's mane approvingly, and patted her neck. Then she turned and walked slowly around the abrupt gray crag, and stopped; she was alone at last. She raised her hand, and looked from under it out on the sunlit sea. The waves came up with a long, gentle swirl, till the light foam splashed against the foot of the crag, then receded, leaving a strip of white, glistening pebble exposed. She watched it silently, then turned her face to let her eyes sweep the plain, the clumps of trees, and the rolling hills.

"'For miles and miles,' he said," she soliloquized, "and that is not all his fortune. And *he* has nothing if the suit goes against them. American cunning matched against Spanish recklessness. But what have I to do with that boy? All I have wanted and prayed for is a home and an honored name; it is within my reach now; why should I let an idle dream stand in my way?"

She stood where the ocean washed up to her feet, and when she looked down she thought she saw two deep-blue eyes, wild with suppressed passion, flashing up from there. She turned, for she thought she heard behind her, in the sighing of the wind and the shriek of the sea-mews, the cry of a tortured heart. But she banished these fancies and forced her thoughts into other

channels. She thought of her past life, of the wish she had had, even as a child, to travel – to see strange lands. She thought of the Pyramids of Egypt, and that her wish to see them could now, perhaps, be gratified – in his company. Well, was it not romantic, after all, to marry the dark-eyed Don, with the haughty bearing and the enormous wealth? She had a lady friend once, a city acquaintance, who had married a wealthy Spaniard. But she had been divorced after a year's time. Divorced! what an ugly sound the word had. Was Don Pedro near? Had his ear caught the sound? No; thank God, she was alone.

And then her thoughts strayed again to the old Gada mansion, and the broken-hearted girl she had left there. "She will die," he had said; and she fell to wondering whether Father Moreno would anoint those wistful eyes with the consecrated oil, in her last hour, and mutter that "they had looked upon unholy things," and touch the little waxen ears "because they had listened to unchaste speech." What a mockery it seemed, in the case of the young innocent girl. "When *I* die – " She stooped suddenly to dip her hand into the water, and dashed it into her face and over her hair. "*Mea culpa!*" she murmured, striking her breast, "*mea culpa! mea maxima culpa!*"

And once more she pressed her hand across her face, for the gallop of approaching hoofs fell on her ear, and directly "Leonora!" rang out in sharp, uneasy tone.

She answered the call, and Don Pedro, panting, but with a happy smile, reached out his hand to draw her away from the

wet sand.

"I felt as though I had lost you. What would life be without you, Graciosa?"

"You would have my god-child left," she replied, laughing.

"It would be worthless without the sponsor. I have acquired it for you. Do you accept it?"

"With you into the bargain?" she smiled gayly as she said it. She hated romance and sentimentality all at once, and when the Don kneeled at her feet to kiss both her hands, she said, with a laugh:

"There will be but one Graciosa, after all, unless you take me to my friends and the lunch-basket. I am almost starved."

"I am your slave," he avowed; "you have but to command."

He lifted her into the saddle, with trembling hands and beaming eyes. "Oh, Graciosa! Rightly named," he cried.

"Meaning me or the ranch?" asked Nora, mischievously; and, with a touch of the whip, she urged Rosa ahead, and threw a kiss over her shoulder to the Don. His eyes followed her proudly awhile, ere he spurred his horse to overtake her, and they joined Sister Anna laughing and happy as she could wish to see them.

They camped out that night, as there was no house on that part of the ranch, though there was one to be erected near the spot where they had joined Sister Anna, for Nora said she liked the view there. Early next morning they left camp, expecting to reach Los Angeles before sunset.

All day the road led along the mountain-chain, in the San

Fernando Valley – a soft, warm day, made to dream and reflect. The clear blue haze hung, as ever, on the mountain-ridge, and the plain at the foot was white and odorous with the wild "Forget-me-not" of California. They looked to Nora as though passionate eyes had been raining tears on them till the color had been blanched out; and when Don Pedro gathered a handful and brought them to her, she said, "Don't, please; it hurts me to see you break them off. Throw them away."

"How strange you are," he said, but he obeyed, and did not assert his authority till some hours later, when they reached the crossing of the Los Angeles River. – Had he not said he would be her slave?

The river rushed by them muddy and wild, spread far beyond its allotted limits – an ugly, treacherous-looking piece of water. It was deep, too; and while Don Pedro was giving orders in regard to arranging the contents of the baggage wagon, Sister Anna was trying to persuade Nora to come into their wagon while fording the stream. Nora demurred; but the Don riding up decided the question at once.

"You must go in the wagon, Leonora," he announced, with somewhat pompous authority. "I will not have you exposed to such danger. The river is wide at present, and your head will get light. Mr. Whitehead and I will go on horseback, but you must go in the wagon."

A rebellious gleam shot from Nora's eye, but Sister Anna listened with flushed face, as to something new, but very pleasant

to hear. It proved an ugly crossing, and while the servants were rearranging the baggage, the Don strayed a little apart with Nora, and found a seat under a clump of willows.

"It *is* hard to go down into the floods when there is so much of life and sunshine all around," and with a little nervous shiver she nestled closer to the Don's side. Impelled by a feeling of tenderness he could not control, the stately Don threw his arms around the supple form and pressed the first kiss on her pale lips.

She shrank from him; had any one seen them? There was no need to spring up; she knew he would not attempt to repeat the caress.

The City of the Angels lay before them – a dream realized.

Whatever there was unlovely about the older, *adobe* built portion of the place was toned down by the foliage of waving trees, and warmed into tropical beauty by the few isolated palms, which some blessed hand set out long years ago. Our friends did not pass through the heart of the city, but wended their way to the house of a wealthy Spanish family, which lay among the gay villas and stately residences of the modern portion of the city. Large gardens enclosed them, in many cases surrounded by evergreen hedges of supple willow and bristly osage. Tall spires arising from a sea of green, and imposing edifices, marked the places where the Lord could be worshipped in style. The American element is strong in Los Angeles.

Senor Don Jose Maria Carillo had been looking for his guests, and met them with much state and ceremony on the highway,

conducting them grandly to the gate-posts of his garden, where they were received by Donna Clotilda and a retinue of servants. Even the children, with their governess, were summoned from the school-room to greet the guests, and Spanish courtesy and Californian hospitality were never better exemplified than in the case of our friends.

"Oh, Annie, only look!" exclaimed Nora, clasping her hands in admiration, and pointing through the French window at the back of the double parlors.

The house was an *adobe*, two stories high, which the father of the present inmate had built, and of which the son was properly proud. He would not have it torn down for the world, but it had been modernized to such an extent as to rival in comfort and elegance any of the newer American houses, though the Spanish features were still predominant. The particular feature that had attracted Nora so strongly as to lead her into making the hasty, unceremonious exclamation, was a *remada*, a kind of open roof built of heavy timber beams, at the back of the house, and extending over several hundred feet of the ground. It was covered with the grape, among whose shading leaves and graceful tendrils the sunlight glinted in and out, playing in a thousand colors on clustering vines with bright flowers, that clung to the pillars supporting the roof. Beyond stretched an orange-grove, where yellow fruit and snowy blossoms glanced through the glossy leaves.

"It is beautiful, is it not?" asked a voice at her side. She had

stepped to the open French window, regardless of all etiquette, and Don Pedro led her across the sill into the covered garden.

"Your own home shall be like this, Leonora, only finer and grander; you shall have everything that your heart can wish."

"You are very good." It was not the conventional phrase with her; she meant what she said, for her eyes were raised to his, and tears trembled in the lashes.

It was a charming retreat. Donna Clotilda spoke English, though none of the servants did, except a ten-year old Indian girl, who was detailed to wait on the guests. There was a round of visiting and going through the city, where every one admired Nora, and looked from her to the little Don. And Don Pedro was proud and happy, and always sought new opportunities of passing through the crowded thoroughfares, on foot, on horseback, or in carriage.

"My dear," he said, one day, "I would know how handsome you are from looking at the people who meet us, even though I had never seen your face."

"Yes?" said Nora, a little absent and dispirited, as she sometimes was.

"Yes; one man, standing at the corner there, behind those boxes – you did not see him – opened his eyes very wide and looked hard at you, and then pushed his hat back till it fell to the ground. Then he saw me, and felt ashamed, and turned quick to pick up his hat."

"What a striking appearance mine must be!" laughed Nora,

restored to good-humor, for the time.

It has often seemed to me that all Spanish people, of whatever degree, throughout California, are either related or intimately acquainted with each other. Thus Nora heard from the Del Gadas occasionally; nay, even from the Rodriguez, away back in the Salinas Valley, did they hear news and greeting once. Narcissa del Gada was dying, the Don told her; and the twinge that had distorted his features when he first mentioned her name again passed over them.

But all the time of our friends was not given to pleasuring; many a long morning did Brother Ben and the Don pass together at the Court-House, the Hall of Records, and other places where titles are examined and the records kept. A ranch of twenty or thirty thousand acres is well worth securing, so that through no loophole can adverse claimant creep, or sharp-witted land-shark, with older title, spring on the unwary purchaser.

In the meantime spring was growing into summer; the sun began to burn more fierce, and Nora, always fond of out-doors, had made the *remada* her special camping-ground. She sat there one morning, after having declined to go on a shopping expedition with Sister Anna. It had seemed rather ungracious, too; but Brother Ben had come to the rescue, as usual, and had taken Nora's place. Now she sat here, pale and listless, her hands idly folded, her eyes wandering among the shadows of the orange grove.

There had been an arrival at the house, she thought, for she

heard the tramp of a horse as it was led around to the stables; but she took no heed. After a while she heard the noise of one of the long windows opening, and soon she heard steps behind her. Then a low voice said "Leonora!" and Manuel, pale and haggard, stood before her.

All her listlessness vanished in an instant, and she would have flown into his arms, but for something that seemed to make him unapproachable.

"Narcissa is dead," he said, monotonously, "and since coming to town I have learned that I am a beggar; we are all homeless – outcasts."

"Oh, Manuel!" she cried, laying her hand on his arm, "my poor, poor boy. Come with me into the open air – this place chokes me. And now tell me about Narcissa." She drew him out into the sunshine, and back again to the fragrant shadows of the orange grove. She sought a rustic seat for them, but he threw himself on the sod beside it.

"Wrecked and lost and lonely," he groaned, "it is well that Narcissa is dead; and yet she was our only comfort."

"Poor Manuel!" she repeated, softly; "my poor boy." Her fingers were straying among the sunny waves of his hair, and he caught her hand suddenly, and covered it with a frenzy of kisses.

"Leonora!" he cried, all the reckless fire of his nation breaking into flames, "come with me, and we will be happy. You do not love your wealthy affianced, you love me. Be mine; I will work and toil for you, and you shall be my queen. Oh, Nora, I love you

– I love you – I love you."

Poor Nora! why should stern reality be so bitter? "Foolish boy," she said, disengaging her hand, "you are mad. What if Don Pedro – "

"Ah, true; I had forgotten – you are an American. Go, then, be happy with your wealthy husband; Manuel will never cross your path again."

"Manuel!" she cried, and she stretched out her arms towards the spot where he had just stood, "come back, for I love you, and you alone." But a rustling in the willow-hedge only answered to her passionate cry, and she cowered on the garden-bench, sobbing and moaning out her helpless grief.

The rustling in the willow-hedge behind her grew louder, so that even she was startled by the noise.

"Ho, Nell!" The words fell on her ears like the crack of doom, her face grew white to the very lips, and a great horror crept into her eyes. She turned as if expecting to meet the engulfing jaws of some dread monster, and her eyes fell upon the form of a man, whose slovenly dress and bloated features spoke of a life of neglect and dissipation – perhaps worse.

"Why, Nell, old girl," he continued, familiarly, "this is a pretty reception to give your husband. I'm not a ghost; don't be afraid of me."

"Wretch!" she cried, trembling with fear and excitement. "How dare you come here? Go at once, or I shall call for help."

"No, you won't. I'm not afraid. Come, you can get rid of me

in a minute. The truth is, I'm d – d hard up; got into two or three little unpleasantnesses, and got out only by a scratch. I want to get away from here – it's unhealthy here for me – but I've got no money. Saw you down town with that pompous Greaser the other day; know him well; he's got lots of money; and I thought that, for love and affection, as they say in the law, and in consideration of our former relations, you might help me to some of his spare coin."

"You miserable man," she cried, beside herself, "is it not enough that you blasted my life's happiness? Must I be dragged down to the very lowest degradation with you? Oh, Charlie," she added, in changed, softened tones, "what would your mother say to all this?"

"And my daddy the parson," he laughed, hoarsely. "Yes, we know all that. But here, Nell," he went on, while a last glimmer of shame or contrition passed over his once handsome face, "I don't want to hurt you, my girl; you've always been a trump, by G – ; I am willing you should become the respected wife of Don Pedro Lopez, but I must have money, or money's worth. That cluster-diamond on your finger; tell the Greaser you lost it. Or pull out your purse; I know it is full."

"Nothing," she said, slowly and determinedly, "nothing shall you have from me – a woman you have so wronged and deceived – "

"Stop, Nell; I haven't time to wait for a sermon. Give me what you've got – Oh, here's h – to pay and no pitch hot," he

interrupted himself; "there's the Don, and he's heard it all."

He spoke true; Don Pedro stood beside them, frozen into a statue. At last he breathed.

"Yes, heard all. And I would have made you my wife – you a divorced woman. Oh, Santa Maria! She divorced of such a man – for I know you, Randal," he continued, lashing himself into a fury – "horse-thief, stage-robber, gambler. It was you who killed my friend Mariano Anzar after robbing him at cards – murderer! You shall not escape me as you escaped the officers of the law. *Hombres!* catch the murderer!" he shouted towards the house, as he made a dart at the man, who turned at bay, but halted when he saw that the Don was not armed.

"Stop your infernal shouting and don't touch me," he said, in a low, threatening voice. But the Don was brave, and his blood was up; he sprang upon the man, shouting again; they closed and struggled, and when the man heard footsteps swiftly approaching, he drew back with an effort, and hissing, "You *would* have it so, idiot," he raised his pistol and fired.

Before the smoke cleared away he had vanished, and the people who came found Don Pedro stretched on the ground. His life was almost spent, but his energy had not deserted him. He gave what information and directions were necessary for the prosecution of his murderer, and Manuel, who was among the excited throng, threw himself on his horse to head the fugitive off. The others lifted the wounded man tenderly from the ground, bore him gently into the house, and frowned with hostile eyes

upon Nora; it had taken possession of their minds at once that, in some unexplained manner, the Gringa was the cause of all this woe.

Nora followed them like an automaton; she saw them carry him through the open door-window into the back parlor, and lay the helpless figure on a lounge. A messenger had already been despatched for priest and doctor, and the servants, who were not admitted into the room, lay on their knees outside.

Then the priest came, and Nora, in a strange, dazed way, could follow all his movements after he went into the room. The odor of burning incense crept faintly through the closed doors, and she wondered again – did the priest touch the white lips and say, "for they have uttered blasphemies." The fingers were stiffening, she thought; would the priest murmur now – "for with their hands do men steal;" the eyelids were fluttering over the glazed eyes; the cleansing oil was dropped upon them, for "they had looked upon unholy things."

She saw it all before her, and heard it, though her eyes were fast closed, and her ears were muffled, for she had fallen, face down, by one of the pillars supporting the *remada*, and the thick-growing tropical vine, with its bright, crimson flowers, had buried her head in its luxuriant foliage, and seemed raining drops of blood upon the wavy dark brown hair.

Thus Manuel found her when he returned from the pursuit of the fugitive. He raised her head, and looked into large, bewildered eyes. "What is it?" she asked; "have I been asleep?

Oh, is he dead?"

"The wretched man I followed? Yes; but my hand did not lay him low. The sheriff and his men had been hunting him; he attempted to swim the river at the ford; the sheriff fired, and he went down into the flood."

Nora's eyes had closed again during the recital, and Manuel held a lifeless form in his arms, when Sister Anna and her husband came at last. They had heard of the shooting of Don Pedro in the city, and the carriage they came in bore Nora away to the hotel. Manuel did not relinquish his precious burden till he laid the drooping form gently on the bed at the hotel. Then the doctor came, and said brain-fever was imminent, and the room was darkened, and people went about on tip-toe. And when the news of the death of Don Pedro Lopez was brought down to the hotel, Nora was already raving in the wildest delirium of the fever.

Weeks have passed, and Nora has declared herself not only well, but able to return home. Manuel has been an invaluable friend to them all, during these weeks of trial, and Nora has learned to look for his coming as she looks for the day and the sunshine.

To him, too, was allotted the task to impart to Nora what it was thought necessary for her to know – the death of Don Pedro and the finding of the body of the other, caught against the stump of an old willow, where the water had washed it, covered with brush and floating *débris*. But he had glad news to impart, too;

the report of an adverse decision from Washington on the Del Gada suit had been false, and circulated by the opposing party in order to secure better terms for withdrawal.

One morning Nora expressed her wish to leave Los Angeles, and Mr. Whitehead did not hesitate to gratify her wish. An easy conveyance was secured, the trunks sent by stage, and a quick journey anticipated. Manuel went with them only as far as San Buenaventura, he said, for it was on his way home. But when they got there, he said he must go to Santa Barbara, and no one objected. At Santa Barbara Nora held out her hand to him, with a saucy smile:

"This is the place at which you were to leave us; good-by."

"Can you tolerate me no longer, Nora?"

"You said at San Buenaventura you would try my patience only till here. How long do you want me to tolerate you, then?"

"As long as I live. Why should we ever part? Be my wife, Nora," and he drew her close to him, pressing his lips on hers; and she did not shrink away from him, but threw her arm around his neck, to bend his head down for another kiss.

"But you would never have married me – a poor man," he says, bantering.

"Nor would you have married me – a divorced woman," she returns, demurely.

JUANITA

"Every man in the settlement started out after him; but he got away, and was never heard of again."

I had listened quietly to the end, though my eyes had wandered impatiently from the face of the man to the region to which he pointed with his finger. There was nothing to be seen out there but the hot air vibrating over the torn, sandy plain, and the steep, ragged banks of the river, without any water in it – as is frequently the case at this season of the year. The man who had spoken – formerly a soldier, but, after his discharge from the army, station-keeper at this point – had become so thoroughly "Arizonified" that he thought he was well housed in this structure, where the mud-walls rose some six feet from the ground, and an old tent was hung over a few crooked *manzanita* branches for a roof. There was a wide aperture in the wall, answering the purpose of a door; and a few boards laid on trestles, and filled in with straw, which he called his bunk. He had raised it on these trestles, partly because the snakes couldn't creep into the straw so "handy," and partly because the *coyotes*, breaking down the barricade in the doorway one night, hunting for his chickens, had brought their noses into unpleasant proximity with his face while lying on the ground. He had confided these facts to me early in the morning, shortly after my arrival, continuing his discourse by a half-apology for his naked feet, to which he pointed with the

ingenuous confession that "he'd run barefooted till his shoes wouldn't go on no more." He held them up for my inspection, to show that he had them – the shoes, I mean, not the feet – a pair of No. 14's, entirely new, army make.

We had arrived just before daybreak, my escort and I having made a "dry march" – which would have been too severe on Uncle Sam's mules in the scorching sun of a June day – during the night. The morning, flashing up in the East with all the glorious colors that give token of the coming, overpowering heat, brought with it also the faint, balmy breath of wind in which to bathe one's limbs before the sun burst forth in its burning majesty. Phil, the ambulance-driver, and my oracle, said I could wander off as far as I wanted without fear of Indians; so I had ascended the steep hill back of the station, and, spying what looked like a graveyard at the foot of it, on the other side, I had immediately clambered down in search of new discoveries. I knew that there had formerly been a military post here: it is just so far from the Mexican border that fugitives from the law of that country would instinctively fly this way for refuge; and just near enough the line where the "friendly Indian" ceases to be a pleasant delusion, to make the presence of a strong military force at all times necessary for the protection of white settlers. But there are none; and Uncle Sam, protecting his own property "on the march" through here as well as possible, allows the citizen and merchant to protect himself and his goods the best way he can. Why the camp had been removed, I cannot tell – neither, perhaps, could those who

occupied it – but I am pretty sure they were all very willing to go. I've never seen the soldier yet that wasn't glad of a change of post and quarters.

There were quite a number of graves in this rude burying-ground (I don't like that name, on the whole; but it seemed just the proper thing to call this collection of graves), and among them were two that attracted my attention particularly. The one was a large, high grave, with rather a pretentious headstone, bearing the inscription:

"To the Memory of James Owens,

Who came to his death May 20, 186-."

The other seemed smaller, though it was difficult to determine the exact dimensions, on account of the rocks, bones, and dry brush piled on it. It is the custom of the Mexicans in passing by a grave to throw on it a stone, a clump of earth, or a piece of brush or bone, if they have nothing else, as a mark of respect: so I concluded at once that some one of that nationality lay buried here. One, too, who had some faithful friend; for there was a look about the grave that spoke of constant attention and frequent visits to it.

On my return, having done justice to the breakfast the station-

keeper had prepared (and for which he had killed one of his chickens, in order to "entertain me in a lady-like manner," as he said to Phil), I questioned him about the American whose grave I had seen out there. Before he could answer, a shadow fell across the doorway, and I half rose from the ambulance-cushion I was occupying, when I saw an Indian, a young fellow of about twenty, stand still in front of it, half hiding the form of an aged crone, on whose back was fastened a small bundle of fire-wood, such as is laboriously gathered along the beds and banks of water-courses, in this almost treeless country. The Indian stooped to lift the load from the woman's back; and she turned to go, without even having lifted her eyes, either to the ambulance that stood near the doorway, the soldiers that lounged around it, or myself. The station-keeper seized an old tin-cup, filled it with coffee, piled the remains of the breakfast on a tin-plate, and disappeared in the doorway. Returning, he answered me, at last:

"The grave you saw was dug for a man that lived here while I was yet a soldier in the – Infantry at this camp. He had brought a Spanish woman with him, his wife, with whom he lived in one of those houses, right there, on the bank of the river. He had sold some horses to the Government, at Drum Barracks, and was sent out here with them; and seeing that it was quite a settlement, he thought he'd stay. *She* was a mighty fine-looking woman – a tall, stoutish figure, with as much pride as if she had been a duchess. Among the Mexicans in the settlement was a man who, they said, had been a brigand in Mexico, had broken jail, and come here,

first to hide, and then to live. It warn't long till he began loafering about Owens' place; and one night, while Owens was standing in his door, smoking, there was a shot fired from the direction of the hill, behind this place, and Owens fell dead in his own doorway. There was no doubt in anybody's mind who the murderer was, for his cabin was empty, and he could be found nowhere about camp. The soldiers, as well as the other fellows, were determined to lynch him, and every man in the settlement started out after him; but he got away, and no one ever heard of him again."

"And the woman?" I asked.

"Oh, nobody could hurt her; and she raved and ranted dreadful for awhile. But she turned up absent one morning, about a week after we had put him under the ground, and her husband's watch and money had gone with her."

"But," said I, impatiently, "where is the settlement you speak of? I have not found a trace of it yet."

"Well, you see, they were *adobe*-houses that they built, and the rains were very heavy last year, and the Gila commenced washing out this way; the banks caved in and carried the rubbish away. They hadn't been occupied for some time; but the house where Owens lived is just right across there – if you go near the bank you can see where he built a good, solid chimbley, like they've got at home. The camp used to be down the flat apiece. I had my house there last year; but it washed away with the rain: so I built up here, where there's better shelter for my chickens. They're my only friends, besides Bose, and I've got to be choice of 'em. I

don't see a white face for months, sometimes, since the war is over, and it keeps me company kinder, to see the places where the houses used to be."

"And the other grave – that with the bones and rocks piled on it?"

The man threw a look toward the doorway, and put his hands in his pockets.

"That's Juanita's grave. She was an Indian girl."

He walked out of the door; and, as I had nothing better to do, I too stepped out, thinking to go as far to look for the ruins of that "chimbley" as the blazing sun would permit. The first I saw when I came out of the doorway was the old Indian woman, sitting on the ground in the shade of the house, her back against the wall, her knees drawn up, her elbow resting on them, the doubled fist supporting the face, while the other hand hung listlessly across them. The face was aged and wrinkled, the hair a dirty gray, and the eyes seemed set – petrified, I had almost said – with some great, deep sorrow. Beside her stood the tin-cup, untouched and unnoticed; the tin-plate had been almost emptied of its contents; but a drumstick in the hands of the young Indian, and a suspicious glossiness about his mouth and chin, seemed to mark the road the chicken had taken. The station-keeper stood by the woman, and said something to her in a jargon I could not understand; but she took no more notice of him or what he said than if it were a fly that had buzzed up to her. She moved neither her eyes nor her head, looking out straight before her. I walked as far as the banks

of the river, failed to discover the remains of the "chimbley," and turned back to the house. The station-keeper was not to be seen; the Indian boy paused from his labors to take a look at me; but the woman seemed to be a thousand miles away, so little did she take heed of my presence.

It was nearly noon, and I concluded to pass the rest of the day in sleep, as we were to leave the station at about ten in the night, when the moon should be up. The "whole house" had been given up to me, and a comfortable bed arranged out of mattress and wagon-seats, so that I felt comparatively safe from prowling vermin, and soon went to sleep. I awoke only once, late in the afternoon; the station-keeper was saying something in a loud voice that I could not understand, and, directly, I saw two pair of dusky feet passing by the space that the blanket, hung up in the doorway, left near the ground. After awhile I raised the blanket, and saw the Indians trudging along through the sandy plain, the woman following the tall, athletic form of the man, the yellow sun burning fiercely down on their bare heads, scorching the broad, prickly leaves of the cactus, and withering its delicate, straw-colored, and deep-crimson flowers. I dropped the curtain, panting for breath: it was too hot to live while looking out into that glaring sunshine.

Later, when I could sleep no more, and had made my desert toilet, I stood in the doorway, and saw the two Indians coming back as in the morning: the woman with a bundle of fire-wood on her shoulders, the man walking empty-handed and burdenless

before her. I turned to the station-keeper, and pointing to the bundle she had brought in the morning, and which lay untouched by the wall, I said, indignantly:

"It seems to me you need not have sent the poor woman out in the blazing sun to gather fire-wood, when you had not even used this. You might have waited till now."

"She – she would have been somewhere else in the blazing sun; she was just going – " And he stopped – as he had spoken – in haste, yet with some confusion.

I cast a pitying look on the woman, which, however, she heeded no more than the rose-pink and pale-gold sunset-clouds floating above her, and then wandered slowly forth toward the hill, which I meant to climb while the day was going down.

When I reached the top, the light, flying clouds had grown heavy and sad, and their rose hue had turned into a dark, sullen red, with tongues of burning gold shooting through it – the history of Arizona, pictured fittingly in pools of blood and garbs of fire. But the fire died out, and a dim gray crept over the angry clouds; and then, slowly, slowly, the clouds weaved and worked together till they formed a single heavy bank – black, dark, and impenetrable.

Just as I turned to retrace my steps, my eyes fell on a group of low bushes, which would have taken the palm in any collection of those horribly dead-looking things that ladies call phantom-flowers. So pitilessly had the sun bleached and whitened the tiny branches, that not a drop of life or substance seemed left;

yet they were perfect, and phantom-bushes, if ever I saw any. How well they would look on those graves below, I thought, as I approached to break a twig in remembrance of the strange sight. But how came the red berries on this one? I stooped, and picked up – a rosary; the beads of red-stained wood, the links and crucifix of some white metal, and inscribed on the cross the words, "*Souvenir de la Mission*." How had it come there? Had ever the foot of devout Catholic pressed this rocky, thorny ground? Of what mission was it a gift of love and remembrance? Surely it had not lain here a hundred years – the gift of love from one of the Spanish *padres* of the Arizona Missions to an Indian child of the church! Or had it come from one of those California Missions, where the priests to this day read masses to the descendants of the Mission Indians? Yonder, in the west, with the purplish mists deepening into darkness in its cleft sides, was the mountain which to-morrow would show us "Montezuma's face," and here lay the emblem of peace, of devotion to the one living God. Perhaps the station-keeper could solve the mystery; so I hastened back through the gloom that was settling on the earth, unbroken by any sound save the distant yelping of a *coyote*, who had spied me out, and followed me, as though to see if I were the only one of my kind who had come to invade his dominion.

"See what I have found!" I cried exultingly, when barely within speaking distance of the station-keeper, who stood within the doorway.

In a moment he was beside me, calling out something in his

Indian-Spanish, which seemed to electrify the woman, who still sat by the *adobe* wall. Springing up with the agility of a panther, she was by my side, pointing eagerly to my hand holding the rosary.

"What does she want?" I asked, in utter consternation.

"The rosary; give her the rosary" – the barefooted man was speaking almost imperiously – "it's hers; she has the best right to it."

"Gladly," I said; but she had already clutched it, and turned tottering back to the mud-wall, against which she crouched, as though afraid of being robbed of her new-found treasure.

The man turned to me in evident excitement: "And you found it! Where? She has been hunting for it these years – day after day – in the blazing sun and streaming rain; and *you* found it. Well, old Screetah's eyes are getting blind – she's old – old."

"But her son might have found it, if he had looked; for I found it just up on the hill there," I suggested.

"He's not her son; only an Indian I kept to look after her, kinder; for she's been brooding and moping till she don't seem to notice nothing no more. But now she's found it, maybe she'll come round again, or go on to Sonora, where, she says, her people are."

"How came she to lose it, then, if it was so precious?"

"She didn't lose it – but, I forget everything; supper's been waiting on; if you'll eat hearty, I'll tell you about those beads after a while. The moon won't rise till after ten, and you've good three

hours yet."

I was so anxious to hear about the beads, that I would not give the man time to wash dishes; though he insisted on putting away the china cup and plate, which he kept for State occasions, when he saw my disposition to let Bose make free with what was on the table – table being a complimentary term for one of the ambulance-seats.

In the days when this had been a military post, garrisoned by but one company of the – Infantry, the station-keeper had been an enlisted man, and the servant of Captain Castleton, commanding the camp and company. Young, handsome, and generous, the men were devoted to their captain, though as strict a disciplinarian as ever left the military school. The little settlement springing up around the camp was chiefly peopled by Indians and Mexicans, and only two or three Americans. When Captain Castleton had been here just long enough to get desperately tired of the wearisome solitude and monotony of camp, and had put in motion whatever influence his friends had with the authorities at head-quarters to relieve him of the command of the post and the inactive life he was leading, an Indian woman and her daughter came into the settlement one evening, and found ready shelter with the hospitable Mexicans. That she was an Indian was readily believed; but that the girl with her belonged to the same people, was not received with any degree of faith by those who saw her. She was on her way back to Sonora, she said, to her own people, from whence she had

come with her husband, years ago, along with a pack-train of merchandise, for some point in Lower California. From there she had gradually drifted, by way of San Diego, into California, up to Los Angeles, and on to some Mission near there, where she had lived among the Mission Indians, after her husband's death, and where Juanita had been taught to read, write, and sing by the Mission priests.

At last Screetah had concluded to go back to Sonora, and had drifted downward again from Los Angeles, to Temescal, to Temacula, to Fort Yuma, and through the desert, till, finally, some compassionate Mexicans had carried her and the girl with them through the last waterless stretch to this place. The girl, with her velvety eyes and delicately turned limbs, soon became the favorite and the adored of every one in camp and settlement; and, though that branch of her education to which her mother pointed with the greatest pride – reading and writing – had never taken very deep root in the girl's mind, she sang like an angel, and looked "like one of them pictures where a woman's kneeling down, with a crown around her head," while she was singing. Indeed, the religious teachings of the good priests seemed to have sunk deeply into the gentle heart of Juanita, and her greatest treasure – an object itself almost of devotion – was a rosary the priest had given her on leaving the Mission. It had been impressed on her, that "so long as these beads glided through her fingers, while her lips murmured *Aves* and *Pater-nosters*, night and morning, so long were the angels with her. Did the angels

take the rosary from her – which would happen if Juanita forgot the teachings of the priests, and no longer laid her heart's inmost thoughts before the Blessed Mother – then would she lose her soul's peace and her hopes of heaven; and she must guard the sacred beads as she would her own life."

There was no point of resemblance between Juanita and the old Indian woman; and the girl, though warmly attached to her, declared that she was not her mother, only her nurse or servant. Her mother, she said, had been a Spanish Doña, and her father a mighty chief of his tribe, whose head had been displayed on the gate of some Mexican fortress for weeks after it had been delivered to the Government by some treacherous Indian of his band. Juanita's personal appearance, the fluency with which she spoke Spanish, her very name even, seemed to confirm her accounts, dim and confused as the recollections of her earliest childhood were; nevertheless, she had "Indian in her," as the man said, for she proved it before she died.

But to return to the time of their arrival in camp. Screetah seemed in no hurry to resume her journey through the burning desert; and, as Captain Castleton said, he would no doubt have retained her by force rather than let her drag the poor child through the waterless wastes into sure destruction. He had given them an old tent after they had been with their Mexican friends for nearly a week; and when these same Mexicans left the camp, the two women were given possession of their house. Here it became a source of never-ending delight to the old Indian that all

the choice things by which she set such store, and which among her "civilized" Indian friends had been so scarce, as coffee, sugar, and bacon, were served out to her as though they rained down from the sky. But to do Screetah justice, the sweetest side of bacon and the biggest bagful of sugar never gave her half the pleasure that she felt when one of the soldiers gave to Juanita a lank, ragged pony, which, on a scout, he had bought, borrowed, or stolen from an Indian at the Maricopa Wells. Her time was now pretty equally divided between the rosary and the pony, which, in time, lost its ragged, starved appearance, under her treatment, and retained only its untamable wildness, and the unconquerable disposition to throw up its hindlegs when running at full tilt, as though under apprehension that the simple act of running did not give an adequate idea of its abilities. At first, Captain Castleton, highly amused, would call for his horse when he saw Juanita battling with her vicious steed on the plain near camp, in order to witness the struggles of "the wild little Indian" near by. But, after awhile, they would ride forth together, and dash over the level ground or climb up to the highest point of the hill – Juanita's voice ringing back to the camp almost as long as she was in sight, chanting some wild anthem, in which seemed blended the joyous strains of the heavenly band and the wild song of the savage when he flies like an arrow through his native plains.

Old Screetah's low-roofed *adobe* had assumed quite an air of comfort through the exertions of some good-natured soldiers, and more particularly through the manifestations of Captain

Castleton's favor. From a passing pack-train, laden with Sonora merchandise, he had bought the matting that covered the mud-floor; the sun-baked pottery-ware was Screetah's greatest boast, as it came from the same province – her birthplace; and the bright-colored Navajo blanket had been bought with many a pound of bacon and of coffee – articles more precious far in this country than the shining metal which men risk their lives to find here. No wonder that the captain passed more of his time in Screetah's hut than in his white wall-tent, where the sun, he said, blinded him, beating on the fly all day long; and where the slightest breeze brought drifts of sand with it. That Juanita seemed to live and breathe only for him had come to be a matter of course. Among the Mexicans it was accepted that at a certain phase or change of the moon there had been some words spoken, or some rite performed, by old Screetah, which, according to their belief, constituted Indian marriage; and both seemed happy as the day is long.

Like a thunderbolt from the clear sky it struck him one day, when the mail-rider brought official letters advising him of the change that had been made in his favor. He was directed to proceed at once to Drum Barracks, there to await further orders! It was, perhaps, the first time that he experienced the curse of having his most ardent wishes gratified. For days he wandered about like the shadow of an evil deed – restless from the certainty of approaching judgment, and fainting with the knowledge that he was powerless to ward off the coming blow. It was hard

to make Juanita understand the situation, and the necessity of parting; but when she had once comprehended that she was to be abandoned – a fate which, to her, meant simply to be thrust out on the desert and left to die – the Indian blood flowed faster in her veins, and rose tumultuously against the fair-faced image that her heart had worshipped. What was life to her with the light and warmth gone out of it? He was leaving her to die; and die she would.

When the little cavalcade, ready and equipped for the march, was about to leave the camp, Juanita was nowhere to be found. For hours the captain sought her in every nook they had explored together, and called her by every endearing name his fancy had created for her. Juanita's pony was gone from his accustomed place, and he knew it would be useless to await her return. Captain Castleton was not a coward; the searching glances he sent into every *cañon* they passed, and among the sparse trees on their road, were directed by the burning desire to meet the dearly loved form once more; but they would not have quaked had the arrow Juanita knew so well to speed, sank into his heart instead.

Days passed ere Juanita returned; and, though Screetah grovelled at her feet with entreaties not to leave her again, and the soldiers showed every possible kindness and attention to the girl, she was seldom seen among them. Sometimes, at the close of day, she was seen suddenly rising from some crevice in the hill, where she had clambered and climbed all day; but oftener she was discovered mounted on her pony, her long, black hair

streaming, her horse in full gallop, as though riding in pursuit of the setting sun. No word of complaint passed her lips; no one heard her draw a sigh, or saw her shed a tear; and none dared to speak a word of comfort. But when Screetah tried to cheer her, one day, she held out her empty hands, saying, simply, "I have the rosary no more!" Then Screetah knew that all hope was lost, and she pleaded no more, but broke the beautiful, sun-baked pottery, tore the matting from the floor, and crouched by the threshold from noon to night, and night till morning, waiting quietly for the silent guest that she knew would some day, soon, enter there with Juanita.

One day, she came slowly down from the hill and entered the dark *adobe*, where Screetah sat silent by the door.

"A little cloud of dust is rising on the horizon," she said to the old Indian, "and I must prepare;" and Screetah only wailed the death-song of her race.

Though Juanita had returned on foot, she had ridden away on the pony the day before, and the soldiers started out to look for the animal, thinking it had escaped from her, or had been stolen by some marauding Indian. But they found the carcass not far from camp – with Juanita's dagger in the animal's heart. The next day she went to the top of the hill again, and when night came, she said, "The cloud grows bigger." On the third day, when Juanita lay stretched on the hard, uncomfortable bed, denuded of all its gay robes and blankets, a sudden excitement arose outside, such as the signs of anything approaching camp always create. A

hundred different opinions were expressed as to what and who it could be. Nearer and nearer came the cloud of dust, and a cry of surprise went up, as the horse fell from fatigue on the edge of the camp, and the rider took his way to old Screetah's hut.

What passed within those dark, low walls – what passionate appeals for forgiveness, what frantic remorse and bitter self-accusations they echoed – only Screetah and the dying girl knew. The old Indian was touched, and tried to plead for him; but Juanita seemed to heed neither the man's presence nor the woman's entreaties. She died "with her face to the wall," and the words of forgiveness, which he had staked life and honor to hear, were never uttered by those firmly-closed lips.

With the day of Juanita's death commenced the old Indian woman's search for the rosary, and she tore her hair in desperation when they laid the girl in her narrow cell before she had found it. Day after day, the search was continued. Was it not the peace of Juanita's soul she was seeking to restore? After awhile the camp was broken up, by orders from district head-quarters, and a forage-station established. Our friend, whose term of service had expired, was made station-keeper, and, one by one, the people from the settlement followed the military, till, at last, only he and old Screetah were left of all the little band that once had filled the dreary spot with the busy hum of life.

HETTY'S HEROISM

"But, father, you don't really mean to watch the old year out, do you? It's only a waste of candles, and the boys won't want to get up in the morning."

"Mebbee so, mother; but New Year's Eve don't come every day; so let's have it out." And old man Sutton tipped back his chair, after filling his pipe, and looked contentedly up at the white ceiling of the "best room."

Johnny, the younger son of the family, whistled gleefully, threw more wood on the blazing pile in the fire-place, and then, resuming his oft-forbidden occupation of cracking walnuts in the best room, said:

"Don't the wind howl, though? Just drives the rain. Golly, ain't it nice here?"

"You're not to say bad words," broke out his mother, sharply. "Father, why don't you correct the boy? Such a night as this, too, when – "

"What's that?" interrupted the oldest son, springing from his seat, and showing a straight, manly form and clear, deep eyes, as he stood by the door in a listening attitude.

"Coyotes, brother Frank; the ghosts don't come round this early, do they?" laughed the younger.

"Hush, Johnny! It's some one crying for help – a woman's voice!"

"Tut, tut! where would a woman come from this time o' night, and not a house within miles of us?"

"A woman's voice, I'll stake my head," insisted Frank, after a moment's silence in the room.

The mother had laid down her glasses. "Wonder if the boy thinks Lolita is coming through the storm to watch the old year out with him?" She laughed as at something that gave her much pleasure, though the rest did not share her merriment.

They were all three listening at door and window now, and when Frank threw the one nearest him quickly open, there came a sound through the din and fury of the rain-storm that was neither the howling of the wind nor the yelp of the coyote.

"Now what do you say?" asked Frank; and he had already passed through an inner apartment, and in a moment stood on the porch again, swinging a lantern and peering out into the dark and rain, listening for that cry of distress. It came in a moment – nearer than they had expected it.

"Help! help! oh, please come and help!"

"The d – l!" was old man Sutton's exclamation; not that he really thought the slender little figure perched on the back of the tall horse was the personage mentioned – it was only a habit he had of apostrophizing.

The horse had stopped short and was breathing hard, and the prayer for help was frantically repeated by the rider. "Come quick, and help the poor fellow; I've been gone so long from him – oh! *do* come!"

"What poor fellow – and where is he?" asked the old man, in bewilderment.

"The stage-driver – and he's lying near the old Mission, with his leg broken. The horses shied in the storm and overturned the stage, and I was the only passenger, and I crept out of it, and the driver couldn't move any more, and told me to unhitch the horses and come this way for help, and – oh! *do* come now!" She ended her harangue, delivered with flying breath and little attention to rhetoric or inter-punctuation.

"And you came those nine miles all alone, gal?" asked the old man.

"Oh, I think I must have come a hundred miles," she replied, with a wild look at the faces on the porch and in the open doorway; "and it is so cold!" She drew the dripping garments closer about her, while father and son consulted together, with their eyes only, for a brief moment. Then the old man said she must be taken in, and they must get the wagon ready, and waken Pedro and Martin.

Without a word Frank gave a lantern to Johnny, lifted the girl from the horse and carried her into the room, brushing the drenched hair back from her face, when he sat her down, as he would have done a child's. But she pleaded excitedly, "Indeed I cannot stay – let me go back, and you can follow."

"So you shall go back, my gal," said Mr. Sutton, "as soon as the wagon is ready. See how she's shivering, mother; get her some hot tea, and give her your fur sack – for she'll go back with us

or die."

"My fur sack?" repeated the old lady, incredulously; "my best sack – out in this rain!"

"Best sack be – ," he shouted, angrily; "I'll throw it in the fire in a minute!" And the best sack quickly made its appearance, in spite of the threat of speedy cremation.

The tea was brought by Johnny, hastily drank, and then the girl repeated her wish to move on. Frank's own cloak was thrown over "the best fur sack" – not, I fear, so much from a desire to save this garment as from the wish to keep the shrinking form in it from shivering so painfully.

It was New-Year's day – though the light had not yet dawned before the sufferer was comfortably lodged at the Yedral Ranch, and Hetty, as well as the Sutton family, slept later into the morning than usual. The sun had risen as serenely cloudless as though no storm had passed through the land but yesternight; and Father Sutton, thinking he was the first one up, was surprised to encounter Hetty with Johnny, her new-found cavalier. He hailed her in his unceremonious fashion: "I'm glad to see you up bright and early, gal – make a good farmer's wife some day. Did you come down this way to live on a ranch?"

"No, sir; I came to teach school. Your name is among those of the gentlemen who engaged me."

"The – ! Are you the new school-marm? Then you're Miss – "

"Hetty Dunlap is my name."

He held out both hands. "A happy New-Year to ye, Hetty

Dunlap – and happy it'll be for all of us, I'm thinking; for a gal that's got so much pluck as you is sure to know something about teachin' school. Here, Johnny, how d'ye like your teacher?"

Now, Johnny had drawn back with some slight manifestation of disfavor when Hetty's true character came to light. But she laid her hand on his shoulder in her shy yet frank manner, and said quickly:

"I had already selected Johnny as a sort of assistant disciplinarian. I am so little that I shall want some one who is tall and strong to give me countenance;" which at once restored the harmony between them. They went in to breakfast together, during which meal it was decided by Father Sutton that Hetty was to live in his family, though "the Price's" was the place where, until now, the teachers had made their home, being nearest to the school.

"But then," said the old man, "if the Rancho Yedral can't afford a mustang for such a brave little rider every day of the year, then I'll give it up;" and he slapped his hat on and left the house.

"Yes," Frank commented rather timidly, "you are brave – a perfect heroine. And yet you are so very small." She was standing in just the spot where he had brushed the hair out of her face last night, and perhaps his words were an apology.

"True," she assented, "I am small; not much taller than my sister's oldest girl, and she is only twelve."

"You have a sister?"

"Yes, in the city; and she has six children." Her voice

was raised a little, her nut-brown eyes looked into his with an unconscious appeal for sympathy, and her delicate nostrils quivered as in terror – which the bare recollection of the little heathens seemed to inspire her with.

"And did you live at her house? – have you neither father nor mother living?"

"Neither. How happy you must be – you have so kind a father and so good a mother – "

The "good mother" came in just then, shaking her best sack vigorously, and lamenting, in pointed words, the "ruination" of this expensive fur robe – calling a painful blush to Hetty's cheek as well as Frank's. The young man tried vainly to make it appear a pleasant joke. "Indeed, mother, you ought to look upon that piece of fur as a handsome New-Year's gift – you have my promise of a new fur sack as soon as I go to the city. And isn't my word good for a fur sack?" he asked, laughingly.

"Yes," said the good mother. "I know your extravagance well enough; but, to my notion, you can afford such things better after you've married Lolita, than before."

Frank bit his lips angrily, and turned away – but not before Hetty had seen the hot red that flushed his cheek.

Toward noon there was loud rejoicing on the porch, and Hetty, looking from her window, saw Mrs. Sutton welcoming a tall, dark-eyed girl of about twenty, whose companion – her brother, to all appearance – seemed several years her senior.

This girl, Lolita Selden, the daughter of an American

father and a wealthy Spanish mother, was a fair specimen of the large class represented by her in California. Generous and impulsive, as all her Spanish half-sisters are, neither her piecemeal education, nor the foolish indulgence of the mother, had succeeded in making anything of her but an impetuous, though really kind-hearted woman. In the brother's darker, heavier face, there was less of candor and sympathy, and his figure – though he had all the grace and dignity of the Spaniard – was lacking in height and the breadth of shoulder that made Frank Sutton look a giant beside him.

It was some time before our heroine was introduced to the pair; not, indeed, till dinner was on the table, though Frank had repeatedly hinted to his mother that Hetty might not feel at liberty to make her appearance among them without being formally invited – to which he received the cheering response that "he was always botherin'."

When they met, it was hard to say whether Hetty was more charmed with Lolita's stately presence and simple kindness, or Lolita with Hetty's heroism. The brother, too, seemed lost in admiration of Hetty's heroic conduct or Hetty's pretty face – a fact which escaped neither Frank nor his mother, for she commented on it days afterward. "What a chance it would be for a poor girl like this 'ere one, if she could make a ketch of young Selden, and he married her!"

"What! that black-faced Spaniard?" but Frank's generous heart reproached him even while he spoke, and his mother took

advantage of his penitence and charged him with a message to Lolita, that needed to be delivered the same day. When, therefore, after school-hours, Frank returned bringing with him both Hetty and Lolita – the latter was visiting her new friend at the school-house – the mother was well pleased, and spoke more kindly than she had yet spoken to the new teacher.

"Old man" Sutton, too, had many a pleasant word for both young girls; and altogether Hetty soon realized that home could be home away from her sister's house and the six plagues it held.

Spring came into the land, dressing in glossier green the grayish limbs of the white-oak in the valley, opening with balmy breath the blossoms of the buckeye by the stream, and covering with gayest flowers the plain and the hillside; while in some shady nook the laurel stood, shaking its evergreen leaves in daily wonderment at the dress changes and the youthful air all nature had put on. The wild rose creeping over the veranda of the Yedral Ranch shed its perfume through the house, and cast its bright sheen upon the very roof-tree, a passion-vine, in sombre contrast, rearing its symbolic blossom cheek to cheek with the rosy flower-face of the gay child of Castile.

Long since had the stage-driver left the Yedral Ranch, grateful for kind treatment received, his head and heart full of a firm conviction on two points: The first, that there was just one man good enough to be Hetty Dunlap's husband, and that that man was Frank Sutton: the second, that there was only one woman good enough to be Frank's wife, and she Hetty Dunlap.

He had resumed his old post, and many a pleasant word and startling bit of news did he call out to Hetty and her friends when they were down by the "big gate," as he drove by very slowly, so as to enjoy conversation as long as possible. George was a deal pleasanter when Hetty was there by herself, or at least without Lolita; and once, when, by chance, Hetty and Frank were there alone together, he called down, regardless of the staring passengers in the coach, "That's the way I like to see things; two's good company, and three's none. Don't see what you want to be luggin' that Spanish gal round with you for, Frank; she ain't none o' your'n nohow, and never will be, nuther."

Before the flush had died on her face, Hetty found her arm drawn through Frank's, and as they slowly bent their steps homeward, the mind of each seemed absorbed in the contemplation of some intricate puzzle, on the solving of which depended their whole future welfare. Then Frank raised his merry, twinkling eyes and charged her with being hopelessly enamored of George, the stage-driver, defying her to say that she had not just then been thinking of him, as he knew by her absent looks.

"I – I was only looking down that way, and thinking there is no lovelier spot on earth than Yedral Ranch." She stopped abruptly; what she was saying now to cover her confusion, she had said a few days ago, from the fulness of her heart, to Lolita, strolling along this same road; and the Spanish girl had answered impulsively, "Yes; and you shall always make your home here

when I – " Then she had stopped, crimson in the face, and Hetty had not urged her to finish the sentence.

But Frank, with quickly altered tone, asked softly, "Do you like it so well, Hetty – really and truly? And have you not wanted often to go back to the city?"

"To the city?" she repeated, with a little shiver; "no – no!"

The call of a partridge from behind the nearest *manzanita* bush warned them that young Johnny was there, and the next moment he appeared before them – his mother's ambassador to Hetty. "Would she be kind enough just for once to help with the cake? His mother had burnt her right hand, and she could not stir the batter with her left."

"And could not you have done it 'just for once' as well?" asked Frank, impatiently; at which question Johnny opened his eyes wide.

"She didn't ask me," he said; and then they all went silently to the house.

To do Mrs. Sutton justice, she was loud in her praises of Hetty's obliging disposition, and Hetty's proficiency in cake-baking, that evening at tea; and particularly to Julian Selden, who was there with his sister, did she untiringly sing Hetty's perfections. This seemed to have the effect of making the young Spaniard bolder and more desirous of pushing his suit, for the very next evening they came home from Hetty's school *a partie carrée*– Lolita, her brother, Hetty and Frank.

The facts of the case were that, following a suggestion of

Frank's, Johnny, on Julian's second attempt to escort Hetty home, had kept close by her side during the whole ride, much more to Hetty's delight than Julian's. In consequence, Julian had been wise enough to bring Lolita with him; and Frank, though chagrined, was better pleased to find them both at Hetty's school than one alone.

Through the spring and far into the summer they met almost daily in this way; and sometimes, though Mother Sutton's invitations to Lolita and her brother to "come every day – every day," were loud and vociferous, the brother and sister would return to their own home after a protracted ride, leaving Hetty and Frank to find their way back to Yedral Ranch alone. Hetty thought she could see a cloud on Mrs. Sutton's brow whenever this happened; and dear as those rides were to her, she avoided them whenever she could. Unhappily (Frank did not consider it so), while out alone together one day, Hetty's saddle-girth broke, and though she sprang quickly to the ground, Frank's nerves were so unstrung, he declared, that he could not at once repair the damage, but had to convince himself, by slow degrees, that she really was not hurt or frightened. Consequently, it was later than usual when they reached home; and Mother Sutton, darting a quick look to see that the door had closed behind Frank, who had explained the cause of delay, muttered something about "cunning minxes, who had neither gratitude nor shame," and then tramped out of the room, leaving Hetty with cheeks burning and eyes strangely bright under the tears rising in them.

Next morning she made much ado over a sprained ankle, which was not so painful as to keep her at home, but just bad enough to cause her to ride slowly to school with Johnny and home again before school-hours were fairly over. I fear that she was a "designing minx," for, if she managed, by keeping her room to evade Frank's questioning glance and Mother Sutton's hostile looks, she managed no less to escape an honor which, according to this good lady's statement, corroborated by Lolita's more than usual tenderness, Julian Selden had meant to confer upon her. But she could not stay in her room forever; and Father Sutton dragged her out of it one day, challenging her to tell the truth ("and shame the devil"), by acknowledging that something had hurt her beside the sprained ankle. Had Mrs. Sutton shown no spite openly against "the gal" before, it broke out now, in little sharp speeches against women "tryin' to work on the sympathy of foolish young men. Her boys, she knew, couldn't never be ketched that way by no white-faced – "

"Will yer be still now!" thundered the old man, taking the pipe from between his lips and pointing with it to Hetty, who at this moment was really the white-faced thing the old lady had meant to call her.

"Johnny," said Hetty, next morning, on their way to school, "I think – I'll go home when vacation begins, and – "

"Why, what d'you mean?" asked the boy, startled out of all proper respect.

"Just what I say;" and she enumerated her reasons for

considering it her duty to return to her lonely sister and the six pining children; and it was a matter of doubt whether Johnny's lips quivered more during the recital, or Hetty's. But when the school-house was reached, Johnny was a man again; and if he did blubber out loud when he told his elder brother of it, late in the evening, down by the big gate, nobody but Frank heard him, and *his* lips were rather white when next he spoke.

"You asked me for that Mexican saddle of mine some time ago, Johnny. You are welcome to it."

"I don't want no Mexican saddle," replied Johnny, in a surly tone, and without grammar; but looking into his brother's face, he said, "Thank you, Frank. I'd say you're 'bully,' only Hetty said it wasn't a nice word."

In the course of the week Father Sutton, in his character as such, and as school director, was made acquainted with Hetty's intention. In both characters he protested at first, but yielded at last. He walked out with "the gal" one evening, as though to take her over the ranch for the last time, and then artfully dodged away when Frank – by the merest accident – came to join them. Left alone with this young man, Hetty trembled, as she had learned to tremble under his mother's scowling looks and half-spoken sentences. He spoke quietly, at first, of her going away; but her very quietness seemed after a while to set him all on fire.

"Hetty," he cried, "are you then so anxious to go – so unwilling to stay, even for a day, after the school closes? Is there nothing – is there no one here you regret to leave behind you?"

Poor little Hetty! How they had praised her for her heroism once. There was no praise due her then, as she had protested again and again. Now she was the heroine, when she answered, though with averted face and smothered voice, "Nothing – no one;" adding, quickly, "you have all been so kind to me that naturally I shall feel homesick for the Yedral Ranch, and shall be so glad to see any of you when you come to the city."

Frank had heard "the tears in her voice," and though he turned from her abruptly, it was not in anger, as she fancied.

"Father," he said, a day or two later, "I don't know but I'll take a run over the mountains, now harvesting is over, and there seems nothing particular for me to do."

"Please yourself and you'll please me, Frank," was the answer. "Got any money? You kin git it when you want it."

Then there was nothing more said about the journey, and Frank, making no further preparations, seemed to have forgotten all about it.

When Hetty was lifted into the little wagon that took herself and trunk to the big gate, she repeated her hope of sooner or later greeting the members of the Sutton family in San Francisco.

"Not soon, I'm afeard, Miss Hetty; me an' father and Johnny never goes to the city, and as for Frank – I reckon he'll want to git married first, and bring Lolita 'long with him."

Martin, who was driving, probably knew the meaning of the fire in the old man's eye, for he whipped up the horse and drove off, as though "fearing to miss the stage," as he explained at the

turn of the road.

Altogether, George showed neither as much surprise nor pleasure as Hetty had faintly expected him to evince. When they reached the first town he came and stood by the open coach window, after the customary halt, drawing on his gloves first, and then pointing out, with great exactitude, where the old *adobe* tavern had formerly stood, on the opposite side of the street.

During this interesting conversation, some tardy passengers came out of the hotel, with hasty steps, and mounted to the top of the stage with much hurried scrambling. Then George left Hetty's window, mounted his throne, and drove on.

We need not say how Hetty's heart sank with the sinking sun; and only when George came out of the station-house where they had taken supper, ready and equipped for the night's drive, did a light rise in her eyes.

"I thought you stopped at this station," she said, as he again leaned at her window, while the same hasty steps and confused scrambling on the top of the stage fell, half unconsciously, on her ear.

"Well – yes. As a general thing, I do. But me and Dick's changed off to-night, so't I can see you into the cars to-morrow morning."

"How tired you will be," she remonstrated.

"Well – mebbe so. Howsomever, Miss Hetty, you didn't stop to think whether you'd be tired when you started out to find help for me, last New-Year's eve." And Hetty blushed, as she always

did, when her heroism was spoken of.

George's eyes did look heavy the next morning; but he still kept the lines, lounging up to the coach-window about the time the stage was ready to start, and always pointing out something of interest on these occasions. Once, indeed, when she fancied that her ear caught the sound of a familiar footfall on the porch of the tavern they were about to leave, he was so anxious she should see the owl just vanishing into the squirrel-hole, on the opposite side of the road, that he laid his hand on her arm to insure her quick attention, just as she was about to turn her head back in the direction of the porch. Then came the usual climbing and scrambling overhead, and directly George mounted, too, and drove on.

The shrill whistle of the locomotive seemed to cut right through Hetty's heart; and the loneliness she had never felt away down the country, now suddenly took possession of the girl's soul. No one could have been more attentive than George; the best seat in the cars was picked out for her; the daily papers laid beside her, and then – then she was left alone. George only, of all her down-country friends, had made the unconditional promise to visit her in San Francisco. She was thinking of this after he had left her, and she sat watching the cars filling with passengers for the city – travellers gathered together here from watering-place and pleasure-resort, from dairy-ranch and cattle-range. Was there another being among these all as lonely as she? And she turned her face to the window, and looked steadily over

toward the hills, yellow and parched now, in the late summer – so fresh and green from the winter's rains when she had last seen them. It looked as if her life, too, were in the "sere and yellow;" the heavy, throbbing pain that was in her heart and rising to her throat – would it ever give place again to the bright fancies she had indulged in when coming this way – oh! how many weeks ago? She tried to count; but counting the weeks brought the events of each in turn before her, and she desisted; she must keep a calm face and a clear eye.

She heard the cry of the fruit-venders outside, and saw their baskets laden with fruits, tempting and delicious, raised to the car-windows, where passengers had signified their wish to purchase. Mechanically, her eyes followed the movements of the young man in front of her. Grapes, with the dew still on them; apples, with one red cheek, and peaches with two; plums, larger than either, and far more luscious, were transferred from the heavy basket into the lap of the lady beside him – evidently his new-made wife – who said, "Thanks, dear," with such a happy, grateful smile, that Hetty grew quite envious. She tried to think it was of the fruit; but pending the decision she laid her head on the back of the seat in front of her, and before she thought of what she was doing, the tears were trickling down her cheeks. Then her shoulders began to jerk quite ridiculously, and she was ready to die of shame, when a light hand was laid on them, and her name was spoken.

"Hetty!" the voice said again; but she did not raise her head,

only answering, "Yes," as she would have done in a dream.

"Hetty!" once more, "see what I have brought you." Apples, and peaches, and plums – all these things were showered into her lap, and when she raised her head, she looked at them steadily a moment, and then said, with a long breath, "Oh, Frank!" before she turned to where he sat. As she stretched out both hands to meet his, the fruit, now forgotten, fell plump, plump, to the floor, and rolled all over the cars; and when the train moved slowly away from the depot a little later, Hetty, looking up at the lady in front of her, said to herself, that she envied her no longer – neither the apples nor – . She made a full stop here; perhaps because of George's sudden appearance, and the hilarity in which he and Frank indulged.

"Oh, Miss Hetty!" he laughed; "I couldn't make you see that owl this morning, could I?"

"No; but I think I must have been as blind as an owl myself, not to have seen whom you were hiding," she answered, taking the contagion.

Again shrieked the locomotive, but not with the "heart-rending" cry of a while ago; and George, bringing their hands quickly together in his parting clasp, sprang from the cars and left Frank and Hetty there.

Loud was the anger of good Mrs. Sutton on discovering that Frank had accompanied Hetty to San Francisco. In vain Father Sutton disclaimed all fore-knowledge of the young man's intention, and asserted that Frank had never mentioned a tour to

the city. Mrs. Sutton said she knew the old man was in league with him. At the end of a week Frank returned without so much as bringing the fur sack as a peace-offering. In course of time he reconciled his mother to some extent by again carrying messages to Lolita, and sometimes bringing Lolita herself in return, just as in Hetty's time.

Autumn came; and still, to the determined schemer's dissatisfaction, Frank had not yet secured the prize she so coveted for him. The season brought with it many cares as well as pleasures to the ranchero. At a *rodeo*, looked upon by the young people generally as a pleasant entertainment, Frank was the admired of many eyes, as his lasso unfailingly singled out the animal "in demand," among the dense herds moving in a circle. The horse he rode was full of fire, and more impetuous, if possible, than his rider; and Lolita, who was among the guests at the Yedral Ranch, had never thought Frank so handsome and so well worth winning before.

To Hetty the white walls and the spacious rooms of the grammar-school, to which she had returned, seemed a prison and a wilderness in one. Her sister's house, with the six young Tartars, was more like Bedlam than ever; but Hetty had grown older and firmer, and she declared, to her sister's amazement, that unless she could withdraw herself from the mob unmolested, at her option, she should seek a home with more congenial associates. The sister opened her eyes wide, as if only now discovering that Hetty was full-grown; and she assented silently.

First, after her return, letters from Frank lighted up her life at intervals. But when the early rains of autumn, after an Indian summer full of sunny days and glorious memories of vanished springs, turned to the settled melancholy of "a wet winter," these letters ceased, leaving in Hetty's existence a blank that nothing else could fill. Christmas came, with its vacations and merry-makings, and beside the dull, deep pain in Hetty's heart, there was still the unselfish wish to give others pleasure, though she herself could never again feel that glad emotion. From morn to night her deft hands flew, sewing, stitching, sketching – busy always, yet never for herself.

It was very near Christmas now – so near that Hetty, eager to have all things ready for the joyous eve, had sat down to her work without the usual care for neat appearance. Perhaps it was because her curls were a little neglected, and her collar was not pinned on with the usual precision, that her face looked worn this morning; her eyes were languid, and the flush on her cheeks could not cover the deficiency of flesh which became painfully visible.

Thus she sat, stitching, ever stitching. The silent parlor, with its covered furniture and light carpeting, seemed the right place for ghosts to flit through, and peer, mayhap, with dull, glazed eyes into the fire, as Hetty caught herself just now. But she drove back the ghosts – are they not always our own memories, woven out of unfulfilled wishes, useless regrets, and profitless remorse? – and hastily resumed her work. The ringing of the

door-bell seemed so much the doing of one of these ghosts, that she paid no attention to it, but kept on stitching, quietly stitching. Directly the parlor-door was thrown open, and the Mongolian servitor, looking with calm indifference on the little streams of muddy water oozing at every step from the boots of the new-comer, returned to the kitchen, heedless, to all appearances, of the scream with which Hetty flew to meet the stranger.

"George!" she cried, "oh! George!" and she clasped the damp arm of the man, gotten up on the grizzly-bear pattern, as though there could be no pleasure greater than this in all the world.

Though a man, George was wise enough to know that he was not indebted to his personal attractions for this affectionate greeting; but taking both her hands in his, he said, "Yes, Miss Hetty, I've come to tell you all about it."

At the fall *rodeo* on the Yedral Ranch, Frank's horse had fallen, covering its rider with its weighty body. He recovered from a death-like swoon with wandering mind; and the spine being injured, according to the doctor's statement, it seemed doubtful that he would ever leave his bed, except as imbecile or cripple. Reason returning, Frank felt that his friends' fears of his remaining a cripple were not without foundation, and a hopeless gloom settled on his spirit. Many a time, when George had made "fast time" and spent the half-hour gained at Frank's bed, did Hetty's name rise to his lips; but it was never pronounced. Only this: looking up out of deep sunken eyes, one day, quite recently, Frank had said to him, "George, I shall get well, and not be a

cripple. If only – " "It's all right," had been George's answer; and he had hurried from the house as though charged with the most urgent commission.

After an hour's conversation, Hetty had only one question to ask. Looking up with shy eagerness, she almost said below her breath, "And Lolita?"

For answer, George took the flushed face between his hands. "You've grown mighty thin, Miss Hetty," he simply said. Then he continued, with great *nonchalance*, "Lolita got stuck after the new schoolmaster – they've got a man in your place. But come, Miss Hetty, you 'peared to me last New-Year's eve like an angel, in my distress; suppose you do as much now for Frank Sutton. We can get down there on New-Year's eve, and give you lots of time to spend Christmas here first. What d'ye say?"

No lover could have pleaded more earnestly. All her objections were overruled, and when at last she said, almost breathlessly, "Oh, but his *mother*, George!" he answered, with all his honest heart: "It's my firm belief, Miss Hetty, that you were cut out for a real hero-ine; and a hero-ine you've got to be to the end of the chapter – which I don't say but the last trial of your hero-ism will be greater than the first."

And sure enough, on New-Year's eve, came the rumbling of wheels and the tramp of horses' hoofs close up to the veranda of the ranch-house on the Yedral. None of the inmates seemed startled, though none had expected company. Without a word Father Sutton sprang to the door – alas! that the old man was

swifter of foot now than the young giant of a year ago – caught the lithe figure that sprang from the stage in his arms and set her down, as Frank had done, in the middle of the room. But she was not cold, dripping wet now, only blinded by the light one moment, and the next on her knees by the lounge, where a pale, haggard man lay stretched. He half raised himself to catch her in his arms, and for a wonder did not sink back with the moan that had become so painful to his father's ears. For once Hetty had cast aside all timidity, and she looked up brightly into Father Sutton's face, while one arm circled Frank's neck and the other hand lay unresistingly in his.

"Hey!" shouted the old man; "now we know whose gal you are; I used to call you mine once. Mother, get some supper; I reckon she is wellnigh starved and perished with the cold. Lively, Johnny! bring some more wood; Hetty'll stay for good, and you'll get time enough to hang 'round the gal to-morrow."

And what a bright to-morrow it was! Such a New-Year's day had never dawned on Yedral Ranch before. Every one seemed to have found a treasure, even to Mrs. Sutton. Together with Hetty's trunk had come a large, promising-looking box, and when Father Sutton presented this to his better-half, she almost screamed —

"Oh, I know! it's my new fur sack!"

A WOMAN'S TREACHERY

"How much you resemble Mrs. Arnold!" exclaimed the Doctor's wife, after an hour's acquaintance, the day we reached Fort – . It was not the first time I had heard of my resemblance to this, to me, unknown lady remarked on. A portion of the regiment of colored troops to which Doctor Kline belonged, and which we met on their way in to the States, as we were coming out, had been camped near us one night; and a colored laundress, who had good-naturedly come over to our tent to take the place of my girl, who was sick, had broken into the same exclamation on first beholding me. Captain Arnold belonged to the same regiment, and was expecting, like all the volunteers then in the Territory, to be ordered home and mustered out of service, as soon as the body of regular troops, to which my husband belonged, could be assigned their respective posts. Their expectations were not to be realized for some time yet; and when I left the Territory, a year later, a part of these troops were still on the frontier.

Fort – was not our destination; to reach it, we should be obliged to pass through, and stop for a day or two at, the very post of which Captain Arnold had command – which would afford me excellent and ample opportunity for judging of the asserted likeness between this lady and myself. I must explain why we were, in a measure, compelled to stop at Fort Desolation (we

will call it so). It was located in the midst of a desert – the most desolate and inhospitable that can be imagined – in the heart of an Indian country, and just so far removed from the direct route across the desert as to make it impracticable to turn in there with a command, or large number of soldiers; for which reason, troops crossing here always carried water-barrels filled with them. A small party, however, such as ours was then, could not with any safety camp out the one night they must, despite the best ambulance-mules, pass on the desert.

With most pardonable curiosity, I endeavored to learn something more of the woman who was so much like me in appearance; and I began straightway to question Mrs. Kline about her. The impression of a frank, open character, which this lady had made on me at first, vanished at once when she found that Mrs. Arnold was to be made the subject of conversation between us.

"Is she pretty?"

"Yes – quite so." Ahem! and looked like me. But my mother's saying, that there might be a striking resemblance between a very handsome and a very plain person, presented itself to my memory like an uninvited guest, and I concluded not to fall to imagining vain things on so slight a support.

"What kind of a man is Captain Arnold?"

"The most good-natured man in the world."

"Oh!" Something in the manner of her saying this in praise of Captain Arnold made me think she wanted to say nothing

further; so I stopped questioning.

We left the Doctor and his wife early the next morning, and reached Fort Desolation at night-fall. The orderly had preceded us a short distance, and, when the ambulance stopped at the Captain's quarters, Mrs. Arnold appeared on the threshold, holding a lantern in her hand. She raised it, to let the light fall into the ambulance; and as the rays fell on her own face, I could see that she looked like – a sister I had. The Captain was absent, inspecting the picket-posts he had established along the river, and would return by morning, Mrs. Arnold said; and she busied herself with me in a pleasant, pretty manner. She could not resemble me in height or figure, I said to myself, for she was smaller and more delicately made; nor had any one in our family such deep-blue eyes, save mother – we children had to content ourselves with gray ones.

The night outside was dark and chilly; but in the Captain's house there were light and warmth, and it was bright with the fires that burned in the fireplaces of the different rooms – all opening one into the other. I was forcibly struck with the difference between the quarters at Fort – and Mrs. Arnold's home at Fort Desolation. Comforts (luxuries, in this country) of all kinds made it attractive: bright carpets were on the floors here; while at the Doctor's quarters at Fort – , one was always reminded of cold feet and centipedes, when looking at the naked *adobe* floors. Embroidered covers were spread on the tables and white coverlets on the beds; while at the Doctor's all these things were

made hideous by hospital-linen and gray blankets. Easy-chairs and lounges, manufactured from flour-barrels, saw-bucks, and candle-boxes, were made gorgeous and comfortable with red calico and sheep's-wool; but the crowning glory of parlor, bed-room, and sitting-room was a dazzling toilet-set of china – gilt-edged, and sprinkled with delicate bouquets of moss-roses and foliage.

"Where *did* you get it?" I asked, in astonishment —*not* envy.

"Isn't it pretty?" she asked, triumphantly. "The Captain's quartermaster, Lieutenant Rockdale, brought it from Santa Fé for me, and paid, a mint of money for it, no doubt."

At the supper-table I saw Lieutenant Rockdale, who commanded the post in the Captain's absence, being the only officer there besides the Captain; and, as he messed with them altogether, I need not say that the table was well supplied with all the delicacies that New York and Baltimore send out to less highly favored portions of the universe, in tin cans. Lieutenant Rockdale was a handsome man – a trifle effeminate, perhaps, with languishing, brown eyes, and a soft voice. He seemed delighted with our visit, and took my husband off to his own quarters, while Mrs. Arnold and I looked over pictures of her friends, over albums, and at all the hundred little curiosities which she had accumulated while in the Territory. The cares of the household seemed to sit very lightly on her; a negro woman, Constantia, and a mulatto boy, of twelve or thirteen, sharing the labor between them. The boy seemed to be a favorite with Mrs.

Arnold, though she tantalized and tormented him, as I afterwards found she tormented and tantalized every living creature over which she had the power.

I had noticed, while Constantia and Fred were clearing off the table, that she had cut him a slice from a very choice cake, toward which the child had cast longing looks. Placing it carefully on a plate, when he had to leave it for a moment to do something his mistress had bidden him, in the twinkling of an eye she had hidden it; and when the boy missed it, she expressed her regret at his carelessness, and artfully led his suspicions toward Constantia. Hearing him whimpering and sniffling as he went back and forth between dining-room and kitchen, his childish distress at losing the cake seemed to afford her the same amusement that a stage-play would, and she laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks. Later, he was summoned to replenish the fire; and, knowing the little darkey's aversion for going out of the house bare-headed (he had an idea that his cap could prevent the Indian arrows from penetrating his skull), she hid the cap he had left in the adjoining room, and then laughed immoderately at his terror on leaving the house without it. The next morning, she led me out to the stables to show me her horse – a magnificent, black animal, wild-eyed, with a restless, fretful air. Crossing the space in front of the house, she called to a soldier with sergeant-chevrons on his arms – a man with just enough of negro blood in his veins to stamp him with the curse of his race.

"Harry!" she called to him, "Harry, come hold Black for me;

I want to give him a piece of sugar." She opened her hand to let him see the pieces, and he touched his cap and followed us. He loosened the halter and led the horse up to us, but the animal started back when he saw Mrs. Arnold, and would not let her approach him. Harry patted his neck and soothed him, and Mrs. Arnold holding the sugar up to his view, the horse came to take it from her hand; but she quickly clutched his lip with her fingers, and blew into his face till the horse reared and plunged so that Harry could hold him no longer. Laughing like an imp, she called to Harry:

"Get on him and hold him, if you cannot manage him in that way: get on him anyhow, and let Mrs. – see him dance."

The mulatto's flashing black eyes were bent on her with a singularly reproachful look; but the next moment he was on the horse's back, the horse snorting and jumping in a perfectly frantic manner.

When Mrs. Arnold had sufficiently recovered from her merriment, she explained that the horse had not been ridden for a month; the last time she had ridden him he had thrown her – she had pricked him with a pin to urge him on faster.

About noon the Captain arrived; and I found him, as Mrs. Kline had described, "the most good-natured man in the world," and, to all appearances, loving his wife with the whole of his big heart. He was big in stature, too, with broad shoulders, pleasant face, and cheerful, ringing voice. The shaggy dog, who had slunk away from Mrs. Arnold, came leaping up on his master when

he saw him; the horse he had ridden rubbed his nose against his master's shoulder before turning to go into his stable, and Constantia and Fred beamed on him with their white teeth and laughing eyes from the kitchen-door. Later in the afternoon, he asked what I thought of his quarters, and told me how hard his colored soldiers had worked to build the really pretty *adobe* house in strict accordance with his wishes and directions. But I could not quite decide whether he was more proud of the house or of the affection his men all had for him. Then he told me the story of almost every piece of furniture in the house; and, moving from room to room, we came to where their bed stood. Resting beside it was his carbine, which the orderly had brought in. Taking it in his hand to examine it, he pointed it at his wife's head with the air of a brigand, and uttered, in unearthly tones:

"Your money, or your life!"

With a quick, cat-like spring, she was by the bed, had thrust her hands under the pillow, and the next instant was holding two Derringers close to his breast. Throwing back her head, like a heroine in velvet trousers on the stage, she returned, in the same strain:

"I can play a hand at that game, too, and go you one better!"

She laughed as she said it – the laugh that she laughed with her white teeth clenched – but there was a "glint" in her eye that I had never seen in a blue eye before.

When once more on the way, my husband asked me how I liked Mrs. Arnold. "Very well," said I; "but – ," and I did not

hesitate to tell him of the peculiarities I had noticed about her. He himself was charmed with her sprightliness, so he only responded with, "Pshaw! woman!" after which I maintained an offended (he said, offensive) silence on the subject.

Not quite four months later, my husband was recalled to Santa Fé, and we again crossed the desert, with only three men as escort. I had heard nothing from either Mrs. Arnold or the Captain in all this time, for our post was farther out than theirs; indeed, so far out that nothing belonging to the same military department passed by that way. It was midsummer, and the dreary hills shutting in Fort Desolation, and running down toward the river some distance back of the place, were baked hard and black in the sun; the little stream that had meandered along through the low inclosure of the fort in winter time was now a mere bed of slime, and the plateaux, which had been levelled for the purpose of erecting the Captain's house and the commissary buildings on them, could not boast of a single spear of grass or any other sign of vegetation. The Captain's house lay on the highest of these plateaux; lower down, across the creek, were the quartermaster and commissary buildings (here, too, were Lieutenant Rockdale's quarters); and to the left, on the other side of the men's quarters, was the guard-house – part *jacal*, part tent-cloth.

How *could* any one live here and be happy? Black and bald the earth, as far as the eye could reach; black and dingy the tents and the huts that strewed the flat; murky and dark the ridge of

fog that rose on the unseen river; murky and silent the clefts in the rocks where the sun left darkness forever.

It might have been the fading light of the waning day that cast the peculiarly sombre shadow on the Captain's house as we drew up to it; but I thought the same shadow must have fallen on the Captain's face, when he appeared in the door to greet us. Presently Mrs. Arnold fluttered up in white muslin and blue ribbons; and both did their best to make us comfortable. How my husband felt, I don't know; but they did not succeed in making me feel comfortable. Perhaps the absence of the bright fire made the rooms look so dark, even after the lights had been brought in – there was certainly a change. Supper was placed on the table, but I missed Constantia's round face in the dining-room. In answer to my question regarding her, I was told she had expressed so strong a desire to return to the States that she had been sent to Fort – , there to await an opportunity to go in. Lieutenant Rockdale's absence I noticed also. He did not mess with them any more, I was informed.

My attention was attracted to a conversation between Captain Arnold and my husband. The guard-house, he told him, was at present occupied by two individuals who had made their appearance at Fort Desolation several days ago, and had tried to prevail on the Captain to sell them some of the government horses, and arms and ammunition, offering liberal payment, and promising secrecy. They were Americans; but as the number of American settlers, or white settlers, in this country is so small,

it was easy for the Captain to determine that these were not of them, and their dress and general appearance led him to suspect that they belonged to that despicable class of white men who make common cause with the Indian, in order to rob and plunder, and, if need be, murder, those of their own race. Of course they had not made these proposals directly and openly to the Captain – at first representing themselves as members of a party of miners going to Pinos Altos; but they soon betrayed a familiarity with the country which only years of roaming through it could have given them. He had felt it his duty to arrest them at once, but had handcuffed them only to-day, and meant to send them, under strong escort, to Fort – , where their regimental commander was stationed, as soon as some of the men from the picket-posts could be called in.

It was late when we arose from the supper-table, and the Captain and my husband left us, to go down to the guard-house, while Mrs. Arnold led me into the room where their bed stood. This room had but one window – of which window the Captain was very proud. It was a *French* window, opening down to the ground. Throwing it open, Mrs. Arnold said:

"What a beautiful moon we have to-night; let us put out the candle and enjoy the moonshine" – with which she laughingly extinguished the light, and drew my chair to the window.

From where I sat I could just see the men's quarters and the guard-house, though it might have been difficult from there to see the window. We had not been seated long when I fancied

I heard a noise, as though of some one stealthily approaching from somewhere in the direction to which my back was turned; then some one seemed to brush or scrape against the outside wall of the house, behind me. "What's that?" I asked in quick alarm. It had not remained a secret to Mrs. Arnold that I was an unmitigated coward; so she arose, and saying, "How timid you are! – it is the dog; but I will go and look," she stepped from the low window to the ground outside, and vanished around the corner of the house. Some time passed before she returned, and with a little shudder, sprang to light the candle.

"How chilly it is getting," she exclaimed; and then continued, "it was the dog we heard out there. Poor fellow; perhaps the cook had forgotten him, so I gave him his supper."

Rising from my seat to close the window on her remark about the cold, I stepped to the opposite side from where I had been sitting; and there, crossing the planks that lay over the slimy creek, and going towards the commissary buildings, was a man whose figure seemed familiar: I could not be mistaken – it was Lieutenant Rockdale. No doubt the man had a right to walk in any place he might choose; but, somehow, I could not help bringing him in connection with "the dog, poor fellow," for whom Mrs. Arnold had all at once felt such concern.

Soon the gentlemen returned, and we repaired to the parlor, where a game of chess quickly made them inaccessible to our conversation. The game was interrupted by a rap at the front door, and Harry, the sergeant whom Mrs. Arnold had compelled

to mount her black horse that day, appeared on the threshold. In his face there was a change, too; his eyes flashed with an unsteady light as he opened the door, and ever and again, while addressing the Captain – whose thoughts were still half with the game – his looks wandered over to where Mrs. Arnold sat. We were so seated that the Captain's back was partly toward her when he turned to the sergeant; and he could not see the quick gesture of impatience, or interrogation, that Mrs. Arnold made as she caught the mulatto's eye. Involuntarily, I glanced toward him – and saw the nod of assent, or intelligence he gave in return.

The sergeant had come to report that the prisoners in the guard-house had suddenly asked to see the Captain: they had disclosures to make to him. When Captain Arnold returned, his face was flushed.

"The villains!" he burst out. "They had managed to hide about five thousand dollars in United States bank-notes about them, when they were searched for concealed weapons, and they just now offered it to me, if I would let them escape. Not only that, but from something one of them said, I have gained the certainty that they are implicated in the massacre of the party of civilians that passed through here about two months ago: you remember, the General ordered out a part of K company, to rescue the one man who was supposed to have been taken prisoner. The wretches! But I'll go myself, in the morning, to relieve the men from picket-duty, and select the best from among them to take the scoundrels to Santa Fé!"

When about to begin my toilet the next morning, I gave a start of surprise. Was *that* what had made the house look so dark and changed? Before me stood a large tin wash-basin – of the kind that all common mortals used out here – and the beautiful toilet-set of china, with its splendors of gilt-edge and moss-roses, had all disappeared – all save the soap-dish and hot-water pitcher, which were both defective, and looked as though they had gone through a hard struggle for existence.

When our ambulance made the ascent of the little steep hill that hides Fort Desolation from view, I saw three horses led from the stable to the Captain's house – the Captain's horse and two others. He was as good as his word, and before another day had passed, the two men penned up in that tent there would be well on their way to meet justice and retribution. A solitary guard, with ebony face and bayonet flashing in the morning sun, was pacing back and forth by the tent; and walking briskly from the commissary buildings toward the men's quarters, was Harry, the mulatto sergeant.

From the first glance I had at Mrs. Kline's face, when we reached Fort – , I knew that the mystery of the change at Fort Desolation would be solved here. Constantia was there, and acting as cook in Dr. Kline's family. She was an excellent cook, and we did ample justice to her skill at suppertime. The gentlemen leaving the table to smoke their cigars, Mrs. Kline and I settled down to another cup of tea and *médisance*. From what Constantia had stated on coming to Fort – , it would seem

that in some way Captain Arnold's suspicions had been aroused in regard to the friendship of Lieutenant Rockdale for his wife. About two months ago, he one day pretended to start off on a tour of inspection to the picket-posts; but returned, late the same night, by a different road. Stealing into the house through the kitchen, he had, rather unceremoniously, entered the bed-room, where he found Lieutenant Rockdale toasting his bare feet before the fire. Raising his carbine to shoot the man, Mrs. Arnold had sprung forward, seized his arms and torn the gun from him. In the confusion that followed, the toilet-set referred to, and other articles of furniture, were demolished: but Constantia, who had crept in after the Captain, to prevent mischief, if possible, gave it as her opinion that Mrs. Arnold "had grit enough for ten such men as him an' de leftenant."

"If you did but know the ingratitude of the creature," continued Mrs. Kline, "and the devotion her husband has always shown her!" And she gave me a brief sketch of her career: Married to Arnold just at the breaking out of the war, and of poor parents, she had driven him almost to distraction by her treatment, when thrown out of employment some time after. At last he went into the Union forces as substitute – giving every cent of the few hundred dollars he received to his wife, who spent it on herself for finery. Later, when for bravery and good conduct he was made lieutenant in a negro regiment, she joined her husband, and finally came to the Territory with him. In their regiment, it was well known that he had always blindly worshipped his wife;

and that she had always ruled him, his purse, and his company, with absolute power.

Before retiring for the night, we debated the question: Should we remain the next day at Fort – , or proceed on our journey? The mules needed rest, as well as the horses, for the quartermaster could not furnish fresh mules, which we had rather expected; still, my husband was anxious to reach Santa Fé as soon as possible – and we left the question of our departure where it was, to settle it the next morning at breakfast. The news that came to Fort – , before the next morning, made us forget our journey – for that day, at least. Captain Arnold had been murdered! The big, true-hearted man was lying at Fort Desolation – dead – with his broken eyes staring up to the heaven that had not had pity on him – his broad breast pierced with the bullet that a woman's treachery had sped!

Before daybreak, a detachment of six men had come in from Fort Desolation to Fort – , to report to the commander of their regiment that Captain Arnold had been assassinated, and Sergeant Henry Tulliver had deserted, taking with him one horse, two revolvers, and a carbine. Captain Arnold had started out the morning before, with only two men, to call in the picket-posts. An hour later, the two men had come dashing back to the fort, stating that they had been attacked, and Captain Arnold killed, by the two white men who had been confined in the guard-house. It was ascertained then, for the first time, that the prisoners had made their escape. A detachment of men was sent out with a

wagon, and the Captain's body brought in – the men, with their black faces and simple hearts, gathered around it, with tears and lamentations, heaping curses on the villains who had slain their kind commander.

Suddenly a rumor had been spread among them that Harry, the sergeant, had set the prisoners free; and instantly, a hundred hoarse voices were shouting the mulatto's name – a hundred hands ready to take the traitor's life. Vainly Lieutenant Rockdale – who, after the Captain's departure, had at once repaired to his house – tried to check the confusion, that was quickly ripening into mutiny: the excitement only increased, and soon a crowd of black soldiers moved toward the men's quarters, with anything but peaceful intentions. Perhaps Harry's conscience had warned him of what would come, for while the mob were searching the quarters, a lithe figure sprang over the planks across the creek, ran to the stables below the Captain's house, and the next moment dashed over the road, mounted on a wild-looking, black horse.

Could they but have reached him – the infuriated men, who sent yells and carbine-balls after the fugitive – he would have been sacrificed by them to the *manes* of the murdered man; and perhaps this effect had been calculated on, when the fact of his having liberated the prisoners had been brought, to their ears.

"How did it come to their ears?" I asked of the Doctor, under whose care one of the six men, overcome with fatigue and excitement, had been placed. It seems that Mrs. Arnold had expressed her conviction of the sergeant having liberated the

prisoners to Lieutenant Rockdale in little Fred's hearing, and the boy had innocently repeated the tale to the men.

In the afternoon of the same day, the detail had been made of the men who brought the news to Fort – ; but when the detachment had been only an hour or two on the way, they found the trail of the escaped prisoners. The men could not withstand the temptation to make an effort, at least, to recapture them. They knew them to be mounted, for the two horses which Sergeant Tulliver had that morning separated from the herd were missing; but the trail they followed showed the tracks of *three* horses, which led them to suppose that Harry had found the men and joined them.

But the trail led farther and farther from the road, and fearing to be ambushed, they turned back, leaving the man who had been driven from the companionship of his brethren by a woman's treachery, to become one of the vultures that prey on their own kind.

THE GENTLEMAN FROM SISKIYOU

In Gilroy, when the sun lies hot and yellow on the roofs of the frame-built houses and the wide meadows, waving with grain or cropped short by herds of grazing cattle, the eye turns instinctively to the mountains, where the dreamy mid-day atmosphere seems to gather coolness from the dark woods that crown its summit.

"Over that way lie the Hot Springs," says one or the other, pointing out the direction to the stranger who comes for the first time to Santa Clara Valley.

If he wait till the early train of the Southern Pacific Railroad comes in from San Francisco, he will see any number of passengers alighting at the depot, whose dress and belongings speak of a residence in a place somewhat larger and wealthier than the pretty little town of Gilroy. After a comfortable dinner at either of the two hotels, carriages, stages, and buggies are in readiness to convey those in search of either health or pleasure on to the Springs.

It is too early in the season yet to feel much inconvenience from the dust; and the drive through the precincts of what is called Old Gilroy is a charming trip. The modest but cheerful houses are just within sight of each other, separated by orchards,

grainfields, vineyards; a grove of white oaks here and there, a single live oak, and clumps of willow and sycamore, make the landscape as pleasing as any in the country. Nearer the first rise of the mountain, the view of grainfields, fenced in by the same dry board fence, would become monotonous were it not for the ever-fresh, ever-beautiful white oak that stands, sentinel-like, scattered through the golden fields, its lower branches sometimes hidden in the full-bearing garbs.

First we hardly notice that the road ascends; but soon, as the foot-hills leave an open space, we can see a vast plain lying beneath us, and then the climb begins in good earnest. "Round and round" the hill it seems to go – a narrow road cut out of the long-resisting rock – the wounds which the pick and shovel have made overgrown by tender, pitying vines, that seek to hide the scars on the face of their fostering mother. Trees high above us shake their leafy heads, and the wild doves who have their nests in the green undergrowth, croon sadly over the invasion of their quiet mountain home. Vain complainings of tree and bird! When the eyes of man have once lighted on nature in her wild, fresh beauty, they are never withdrawn, and they spare not the bird on her nest, nor the tree in its pride.

Here opens a mountain valley before us, and, nestled in the shadow of sycamore and alder, a cosy, home-like cot. The peach and grape-vine cluster by the door; and where a rude tumble-down fence encloses the fields, the Rose of Castile, the native child of California, creeps picturesquely over the crumbling rails,

and fills the air with its own matchless fragrance. Bees are drawing honey from geranium and gilli-pink, and the humming-bird, darting through space like a flash one moment, hangs the next, with a quivering, rapturous kiss, in the petals of the sweet-breathed honeysuckle.

Then the road winds higher, and the hills and rocks above grow steeper, bearing aloft the laurel tree and manzanite bush, the madrone tree and the poison ivy. There is not an inch of ground between the wheels of the stage and the steep declivity; and once in a while a nervous passenger of the male gender turns away with a shudder, while the female hides her eyes in her veil or handkerchief, never heeding the sight of the bare, bald crags, and the pine-covered heights far above and in the dreamy distance.

As we enter the heart of the *cañon*, the rocky, vine-clad walls on either side seem to reassure the nervous passenger and the half-fainting lady; and the grade being very easy for quite a while, there is no more lamentation heard till the horses dash full-speed through a laughing, glittering mountain stream, the head-waters of the Cayote, throwing its spray merrily in at the open window. Again and again the brook is crossed, as it makes its quick, flashing way through blackberry clumps and wild grape-vines, glancing up at sycamore and buckeye tree as it hastens along. Suddenly the driver strikes one of the shining white rocks on which the water breaks into foam, and then a general commotion ensues in the stage, and before the passengers have settled back in their original places, a soft, sad music seems to float toward us

on the air – the rustling of the gray-green pines that overhang the last rise in the road, and shade so romantically the white cottages clinging to the mountain-side, and built on the plateau that is crowned by the hotel and gardens of the Gilroy Hot Springs.

The stage halts, and after shaking hands with the dozen friends one is sure to find, and partaking of the dinner, which is consumed with ravenous appetite after the drive of two or three hours, it is still early enough for a walk to the Springs before the balmy moonlit night sets in. The terrace-like walk, partly cut out, partly filled in on the steep mountain-side, is overhung by hills rising again on hills; tiny cottages peering out here, there, and everywhere, from out manzanite, laurel and pine trees. Beneath, the mountain falls off into a deep, narrow valley, clothed in luxuriant green, a towering mountain rising on the other side.

There are thousands of silver trout in the streams in the valley; there is an abundance of game in the wild, rugged, but beautiful mountains back of and above the Springs. As in some cases, however, a horrid, vicious-looking lamprey-eel has been found on the rod, instead of a speckled-back trout, so in other cases have brave hunters returned from the chase with blanched faces and reports of startling sights of huge bears and California lions, instead of the tamer game they had expected to bag.

"But it is delightful here for all that!" is the almost involuntary exclamation of those who, on some bright June morning make their way slowly, slowly – drinking their fill of nature, sunshine, and mountain air – to the bubbling, hissing, seething Springs.

We hear this same remark just now from the midst of the group of ladies who are making their way around the gentle curves of the terrace-walk to the Springs; and as the words come from the lips of one who is to figure as the heroine of our short but veracious story, we must take a closer look at her, as she sweeps by, moving along with the rest, yet always a little apart from them. She is carelessly swinging her hat by the strings, and the sun, now and again, as they round some curve in the road, kisses the auburn of her curls into ripples of golden bronze. The *nonchalance*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.