

## ECHOES IN THE CITY OF THE ANGELS.

THE tale of the founding of the city of Los Angeles is a tale for verse rather than for prose. It reads like a page out of some new "Earthly Paradise," and would fit well into song such as William Morris has sung.

It is only a hundred years old, however, and that is not time enough for such song to simmer. It will come later with the perfume of century-long summers added to its flavor. Summers century-long? One might say a stronger thing than that of them, seeing that their blossoming never stops, year in nor year out, and will endure as long as the visible frame of the earth.

The twelve devout Spanish soldiers who founded the city named it at their leisure with a long name, musical as a chime of bells. It answered well enough, no doubt, for the first fifty years of the city's life, during which not a municipal record of any sort or kind was written—"Nuestra Señora Reina de los Angeles," "Our Lady the Queen of the Angels"; and her portrait made a goodly companion flag, unfurled always by the side of the flag of Spain.

There is a legend, that sounds older than it is, of the ceremonies with which the soldiers took possession of their new home. They were no longer young. They had fought for Spain in many parts of the Old World, and followed her uncertain fortunes to the New. Ten years some of them had been faithfully serving Church and King in sight of these fair lands, for which they hankered, and with reason.

In those days the soft, rolling, treeless hills and valleys, between which the Los Angeles River now takes its shilly-shallying course seaward, were forest slopes and meadows, with lakes great and small. This abundance of trees, with shining waters playing among them, added to the limitless bloom of the plains and the splendor of the snow-topped mountains, must have made the whole region indeed a paradise.

Navarro, Villavicencia, Rodriguez, Quintero, Moreno, Lara, Banegas, Rosas, and Canero, these were their names: happy soldiers all, honored of their king, and discharged with so royal a gift of lands thus fair.

Looking out across the Los Angeles hills and meadows to-day, one easily lives over again the joy they must have felt. Twenty-three young children there were in the band, poor little waifs of camp and march. What

a "braw flitting" was it for them, away from the drum-beat forever into the shelter of their own sunny home. The legend says not a word of the mothers, except that there were eleven of them, and in the procession they walked with their children behind the men. Doubtless, they rejoiced the most.

The Fathers from the San Gabriel Mission were there, with many Indian neophytes, and Don Felipe, the military governor, with his showy guard of soldiers.

The priests and neophytes chanted. The Cross was set up, the flag of Spain and the banner of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels unfurled, and the new town marked out around a square, a little to the north of the present plaza of Los Angeles.

If communities, as well as individuals, are happy when history finds nothing to record of them, the city of the Queen of the Angels must have been a happy spot during the first fifty years of its life, for not a written record of the period remains, not even a record of grants of land. The kind of grant that these worthy Spanish soldiers and their sons contented themselves with, however, hardly deserved recording,—in fact, was not a grant at all, since its continuance depended entirely on the care a man took of his house and the improvement he put on his land. If he left his house unoccupied or let it fall out of repair, if he left a field uncultivated for two years, any neighbor who saw fit might denounce him, and by so doing acquire a right to the property. This sounds incredible, but all the historical accounts of the time agree on the point. They say:

"The granting authorities could, and were by law required, upon a proper showing of the abandonment, to grant the property to the informant, who then acquired the same and no better rights than those possessed by his predecessor."

This was a premium indeed on staying at home and minding one's business—a premium which amounted to coercion. One would think that there must have been left from those days teeming records of alienated estates, shifted tenures, and angry feuds between neighbor and neighbor. But no evidence remains of such strifes. Life was too simple, and the people were too ignorant.

Their houses were little more than hovels, built of mud, eight feet high, with flat roofs made of reeds and asphaltum. Their fields,



THE FOUNDERS OF LOS ANGELES.

with slight cultivation, produced all they needed; and if anything lacked, the rich vineyards, wheat-fields, and orchards of the San Gabriel Mission lay only twelve miles away. These vineyards, orchards, and granaries, so near at hand, must have been sore temptation to idleness. Each head of a family had been

presented, by the paternal Spanish King, with "two oxen, two mules, two mares, two sheep, two goats, two cows, one calf, an ass, and one hoe." For these they were to pay in such small installments as they were able to spare out of their pay and rations, which were still continued by the generous King.

In a climate in which flowers blossom winter and summer alike, man may bask in sun all the year round if he chooses. Why, then, should those happy Spanish soldiers work? Even the King had thought it unnecessary, it seems, to give them any implements of labor except "one hoe." What could a family do, in the way of work, with "one hoe"? Evidently, they did not work, neither they nor their sons, nor their sons' sons after them. For, half a century later, they were still living a life of almost incredible ignorance, redeemed only by its simplicity and childlike adherence to the old religious observances.

Many of those were beautiful. As late as 1830 it was the custom throughout the town, in all the families of the early settlers, for the oldest member of the family—oftenest it was a grandfather or grandmother—to rise every morning at the rising of the morning star, and at once to strike up a hymn. At the first note every person in the house would rise, or sit up in bed, and join in the song. From house to house, street to street, the singing spread; and the volume of musical sound swelled, until it was as if the whole town sang.

The hymns were usually invocations to the Virgin, to Jesus, or to some saint. The opening line of many of them was,

"Rejoice, O Mother of God."

A manuscript copy of one of these old morning songs I have seen, and had the good fortune to win a literal translation of part of it, in the soft, Spanish-voiced, broken English, so pleasant to hear. The first stanza is the chorus, and was repeated after each of the others:

CHORUS.—"Come, O sinners,  
Come, and we will sing  
Tender hymns  
To our refuge.

"Singers at dawn,  
From the heavens above,  
People all regions,  
Gladly we too sing.

"Singing harmoniously,  
Saying to Mary,  
O beautiful Queen,  
Princess of Heaven:

"Your beautiful head  
Crowned we see;  
The stars are adorning  
Your beautiful hair;

"Your eyebrows are arched,  
Your forehead serene;  
Your face turned always  
Looks toward God;

"Your eyes' radiance  
Is like beautiful stars;  
Like a white dove,  
You are true to your spouse."

Each of these stanzas was sung first alone by the aged leader of the family choir. Then the rest repeated it; then all joined in the chorus.

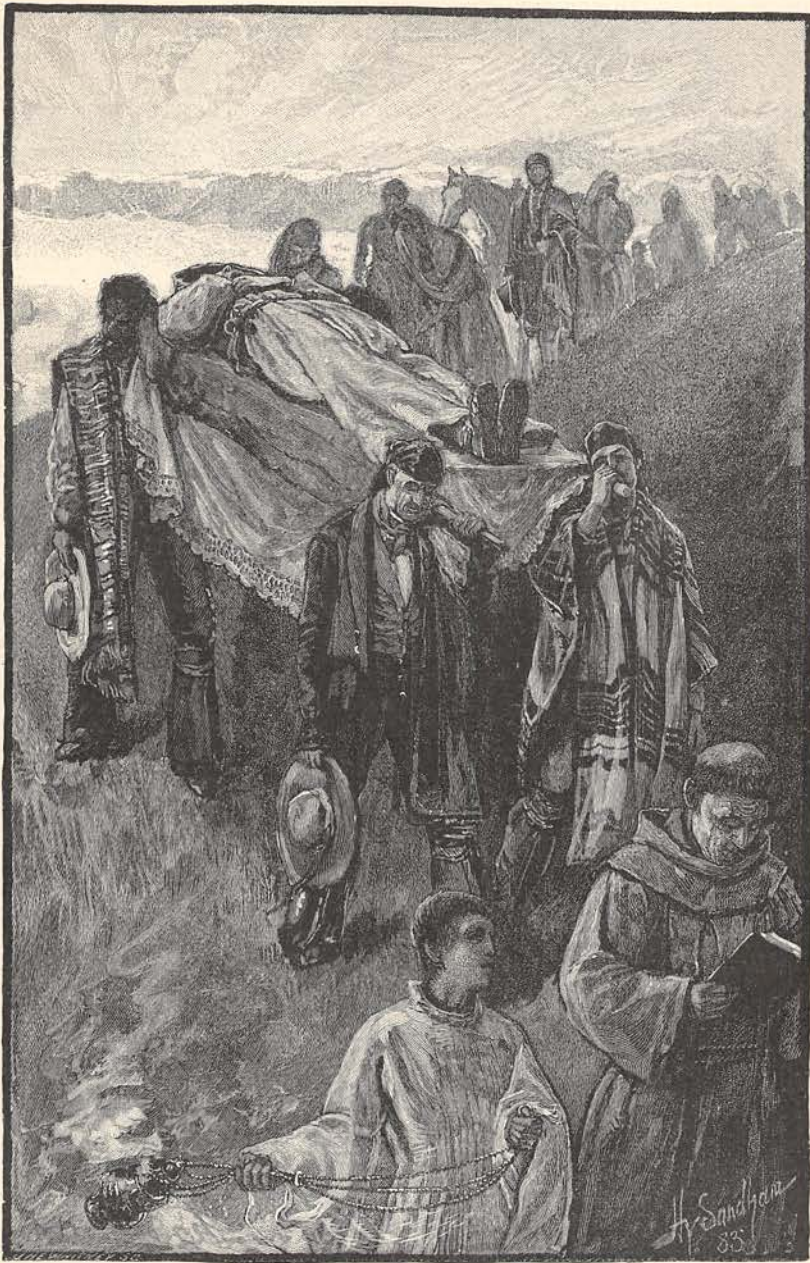
It is said that there are still to be found, in lonely country regions in California, Mexican homes in which these sweet and holy "songs before sunrise" are sung.

Looking forward to death, the greatest anxiety of these simple souls was to provide themselves with a priest's cast-off robe to be buried in. These were begged or bought as the greatest of treasures; kept in sight, or always at hand, to remind them of approaching death. When their last hour drew near, this robe was flung over their breasts, and they died happy, their stiffening fingers grasping its folds. The dead body was wrapped in it, and laid on the mud floor of the house, a stone being placed under the head to raise it a few inches. Thus the body must lie till the time of burial. Around it, day and night, squatted, praying and singing, friends who wished not only to show their affection for the deceased, but to win indulgences for themselves; every prayer said thus, by the side of a corpse, having a special and specified value.

A strange demarkation between the sexes



AN INDIAN STIRRUP.



THE BURIAL OF A FOUNDER.

was enforced in these ceremonies. If it were a woman who lay dead, only women might kneel and pray and watch with her body; if a man, the circle of watchers must be exclusively of men.

A rough box, of boards nailed together, was the coffin. The body, rolled in the old robe whose virtues had so comforted its last conscious moments, was carried to the grave on a board, in the center of a procession of

friends chanting and singing. Not until the last moment was it laid in the box.

The first attempts to introduce more civilized forms of burial met with opposition, and it was only by slow degrees that changes were wrought. A Frenchman, who had come from France to Los Angeles, by way of the Sandwich Islands, bringing a store of sacred ornaments and trinkets, and had grown rich by sale of them to the devout, owned a spring-

wagon, the only one in the country. By dint of entreaty, the people were finally prevailed upon to allow their dead to be carried in this wagon to the burial-place. For a long time, however, they refused to have horses put to the wagon, but drew it by hand all the way; women drawing women, and men drawing men, with the same scrupulous partition of the sexes as in the earlier ceremonies. The picture must have been a strange one, and not without pathos,—the wagon, wound and draped with black and white, drawn up and down the steep hills by the band of silent mourners.

The next innovation was the introduction of stately catafalques for the dead to repose on, either in house or church, during the interval between their death and burial. There had been brought into the town a few old-fashioned high-post, canopied bedsteads, and from these the first catafalques were made. Gilded, decorated with gold and silver lace, and hung with white and black draperies, they made a by no means insignificant show, which doubtless went far to reconcile people's minds to the new methods.

In 1838 there was a memorable funeral of a woman over a hundred years old. Fourteen old women watched with her body, which lay stretched on the floor, in the ancient fashion, with only a stone beneath the head. The youngest of these watchers was eighty-five. One of them, Tomasa Camera by name, was herself over a hundred years old. Tomasa was infirm of foot, so they propped her with pillows in a little cart, and drew her to the house that she might not miss of the occasion. All night long, the fourteen squatted or sat on rawhides spread on the floor, and sang, and prayed, and smoked: as fine a wake as was ever seen. They smoked cigarettes, which they rolled on the spot, out of corn-husks slit fine for the purpose, there being at that day in Los Angeles no paper fit for cigarettes.

Outside this body-guard of aged women knelt a circle of friends and relatives, also chanting, praying, and smoking. In this outer circle, any one might come and go at pleasure; but into the inner ring of the watching none must come, and none must go out of it till the night was spent.

With the beginning of the prosperity of the City of the Angels came the end of its primeval peace. Spanish viceroys, Mexican alcaldes and governors, United States commanders, naval and military, followed on each other's heels, with or without frays, ruling California through a succession of tumultuous years. Greedy traders from all parts of the world added their rivalries and interventions

to the civil and military disputation. In the general anarchy and confusion, the peaceful and peace-loving Catholic fathers were robbed of their lands, their converts were scattered, their industries broken up. Nowhere were these uncomfortable years more uncomfortable than in Los Angeles. Revolts, occupations, surrenders, retakings, and resurrenders kept the little town in perpetual ferment. Disorders were the order of the day and of the night, in small matters as well as in great.

The Californian fought as impetuously for his old way of dancing as for his political allegiance. There are comical traditions of the men's determination never to wear long trousers to dances; nor to permit dances to be held in houses or halls, it having been the practice always to give them in outdoor booths or bowers with lattice-work walls of sycamore poles lashed together by thongs of rawhide.

Outside these booths the men sat on their horses looking in at the dancing, which was chiefly done by the women. An old man standing in the center of the inclosure directed the dances. Stopping in front of the girl whom he wished to have join the set, he clapped his hands. She then rose and took her place on the floor: if she could not dance, or wished to decline, she made a low bow and resumed her seat.

To look in on all this was great sport. Sometimes, unable to resist the spell, a man would fling himself off his horse, dash into the inclosure, seize a girl by the waist, whirl around with her through one dance, then out again and into the saddle, where he sat, proudly aware of his vantage. The decorations of masculine attire at this time were such as to make riding a fine show. Around the crown of the broad-brimmed sombrero was twisted a coil of gold or silver cord; over the shoulders was flung, with ostentatious carelessness, a short cloak of velvet or brocade; the waistcoats were embroidered in gold, silver, or gay colors; so also were the knee-breeches, leggings, and stockings. Long silken garters, with ornamented tassels at the ends, were wound round and round to hold the stockings in place. Even the cumbrous wooden stirrups were carved in elaborate designs. No wonder that men accustomed to such braveries as these saw ignominy in the plain American trousers.

They seem to have been a variety of Centaur, these early Californian men. They were seldom off their horses except to eat and sleep. They mounted, with jingling silver spur and glittering bridle, for the shortest distances, even to cross a plaza. They paid long visits on horseback, without dismounting. Clattering up to the window or door-sill,

halting, throwing one knee over the crupper, the reins lying loose, they sat at ease, far more at ease than in a house. Only at church, where the separation was inevitable, would they be parted from their horses. They turned

Los Angeles, the same merry outdoor party broke every window and door in the building, and put a stop to the festivity. They persisted in taking this same summary vengeance on occasion after occasion, until, finally, any



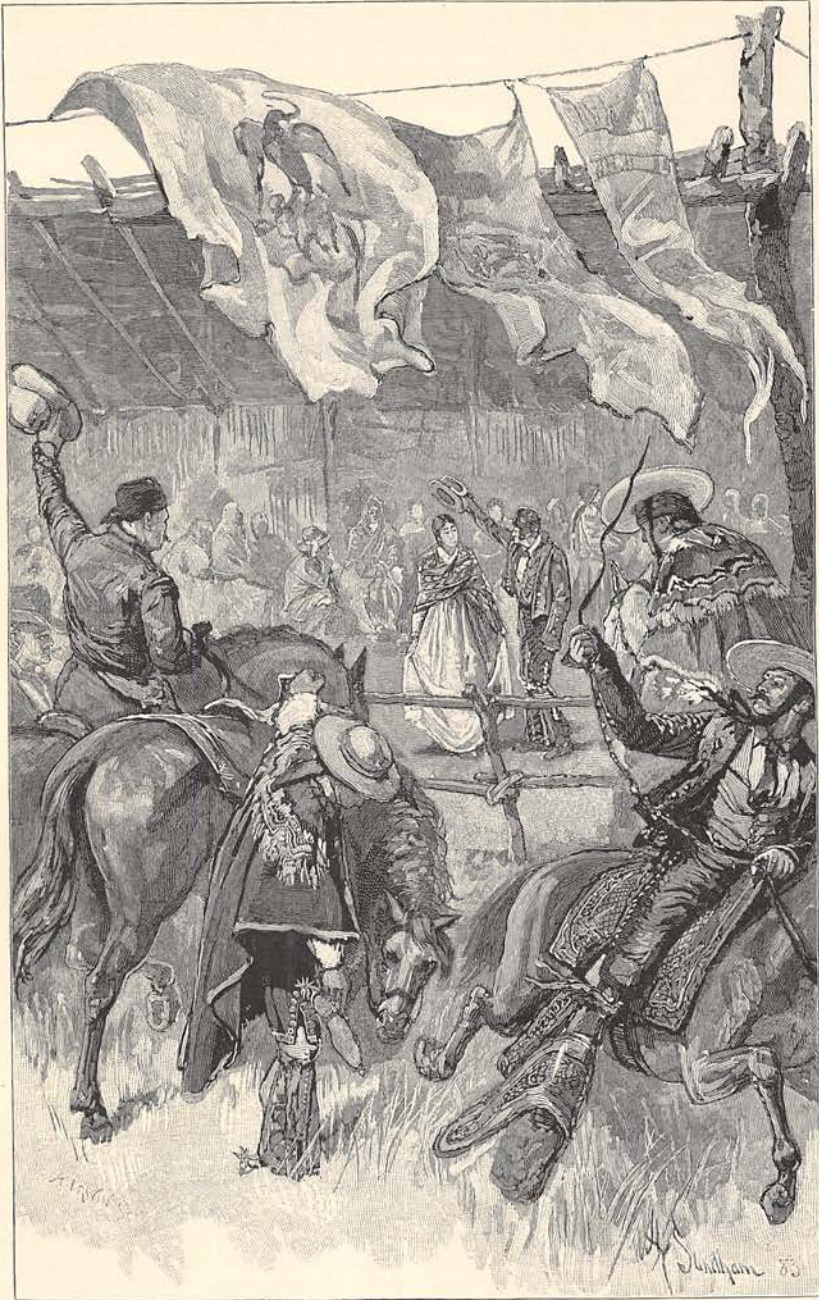
THE OLD MEXICAN WOMAN.

the near neighborhood of a church on Sunday into a sort of picket-ground, or horse-trainers' yard, full of horse-posts and horses; and the scene was far more like a horse fair than like an occasion of holy observance. There seems to have been a curious mixture of reverence and irreverence in their natures. They confessed sins and underwent penances with the simplicity of children; but when, in 1821, the church issued an edict against that "escandalosisima" dance, the waltz, declaring that whoever dared to dance it should be excommunicated, the merry sinners waltzed on only the harder and faster, and laughed in their priests' faces. And when the advocates of decorum, good order, and indoor dancing gave their first ball in a public hall in

person wishing to give a ball in his own house was forced to surround the house by a cordon of police to protect it.

The City of the Angels is a prosperous city now. It has business thoroughfares, blocks of fine stone buildings, hotels, shops, banks, and is growing daily. Its outlying regions are a great circuit of gardens, orchards, vineyards, and corn-fields, and its suburbs are fast filling up with houses of a showy though cheap architecture. But it has not yet shaken off its past. A certain indefinable, delicious aroma from the old, ignorant, picturesque times lingers still, not only in by-ways and corners, but in the very centers of its newest activities.

Mexican women, their heads wrapped in black shawls, and their bright eyes peering



CROWNING THE FAVORITE.

out between the close-gathered folds, glide about everywhere; the soft Spanish speech is continually heard; long-robed priests hurry to and fro; and at each dawn ancient, jangling bells from the Church of the Lady of the Angels ring out the night and in the day. Venders of strange commodities drive in stranger vehicles up and down the streets:

antiquated carts piled high with oranges, their golden opulence contrasting weirdly with the shabbiness of their surroundings and the evident poverty of their owner; close following on the gold of one of these, one has sometimes the luck to see another cart, still more antiquated and rickety, piled high with something—he cannot imagine what—terra-

cotta red in grotesque shapes; it is fuel—the same sort which Villavicencia, Quintero, and the rest probably burned, when they burned any, a hundred years ago. It is the roots and root-shoots of manzanita and other shrubs. The colors are superb—terra-cotta reds, shading up to flesh pink, and down to dark mahogany; but the forms are grotesque beyond comparison: twists, querls, contortions, a boxful of them is an uncomfortable presence in one's room, and putting them on the fire is like cremating the vertebræ and double teeth of colossal monsters of the Pterodactyl period.

The present plaza of the city is near the original plaza marked out at the time of the first settlement; the low adobe house of one of the early governors stands yet on its east side, and is still a habitable building.

The plaza is a dusty and dismal little place, with a parsimonious fountain in the center, surrounded by spokes of thin turf, and walled at its outer circumference by a row of tall Monterey cypresses, shorn and clipped into the shape of huge croquettes or brad-awls standing broad end down. At all hours of the day idle boys and still idler men are to be seen basking on the fountain's stone rim, or lying, face down, heels in air, in the triangles of shade made by the cypress croquettes. There is in Los Angeles much of this ancient and ingenious style of shearing and compressing foliage into unnatural and distorted shapes. It comes, no doubt, of lingering reverence for the traditions of what was thought beautiful in Spain centuries ago; and it gives to the town a certain quaint and foreign look, in admirable keeping with its irregular levels, zigzag, toppling precipices, and houses in tiers one above another.

One comes sometimes abruptly on a picture which seems bewilderingly un-American, of a precipice wall covered with bird-cage cottages, the little, paling-walled yard of one jutting out in a line with the chimney-tops of the next one below, and so on down to the street at the base of the hill. Wooden staircases and bits of terrace link and loop the odd little perches together; bright green pepper-trees, sometimes tall enough to shade two or three tiers of roofs, give a graceful plumed draping at the sides, and some of the steep fronts are covered with bloom, in solid curtains, of geranium, sweet alyssum, heliotrope, and ivy. These terraced eyries are not the homes of the rich: the houses are lilliputian in size, and of cheap quality; but they do more for the picturesqueness of the city than all the large, fine, and costly houses put together.

Moreover, they are the only houses that

command the situation, possess distance and a horizon. From some of these little ten-by-twelve flower-beds of homes is a stretch of view which makes each hour of the day a succession of changing splendors. The snowy peaks of San Bernardino and San Jacinto in the east and south; to the west, vast open country, billowy green with vineyard and orchard; beyond this, in clear weather, shining glints and threads of ocean, and again beyond, in the farthest outing, hill-crowned islands, misty blue against the sky. No one knows Los Angeles who does not climb to these sunny outlying heights and roam and linger on them many a day. Nor, even thus lingering, will any one ever know more of Los Angeles than its lovely outward semblances and mysterious suggestions, unless he have the good fortune to win past the barrier of proud, sensitive, tender reserve, behind which is hid the life of the few remaining survivors of the old Spanish and Mexican régime.

Once past this, he gets glimpses of the same stintless hospitality and immeasurable courtesy which gave to the old Franciscan establishments a world-wide fame, and to the society whose tone and customs they created an atmosphere of simple-hearted joyousness and generosity never known by any other communities on the American continent.

In houses whose doors seldom open to English-speaking people, there are rooms full of relics of that fast vanishing past. Strongholds also of a religious faith, almost as obsolete, in its sort and degree, as are the garments of the aged creatures who are peacefully resting their last days on its support.

In one of these houses, in a poverty-stricken but gayly decorated little bedroom, hangs a small oil painting, a portrait of Saint Francis de Paula. It was brought from Mexico, fifty-five years ago, by the woman who still owns it, and has knelt before it and prayed to it every day of the fifty-five years. Below it is a small altar covered with flowers, candlesticks, vases, and innumerable knickknacks. A long string under the picture is hung full of tiny gold and silver votive offerings from persons who have been miraculously cured in answer to prayers made to the saint. Legs, arms, hands, eyes, hearts, heads, babies, dogs, horses,—no organ, no creature, that could suffer is unrepresented. The old woman has at her tongue's end the tale of each one of these miracles. She is herself a sad cripple; her feet swollen by inflammation, which for many years has given her incessant torture and made it impossible for her to walk, except with tottering steps, from room to room, by help of a staff. This, she says, is the only



thing her saint has not cured. It is her "cross," her "mortification of the flesh," "to take her to heaven." "He knows best." As she speaks, her eyes perpetually seek the picture, resting on it with a look of ineffable adoration. She has seen tears roll down its cheeks more than once, she says; and it often smiles on her when they are alone. When strangers enter the room she can always tell, by its expression, whether the saint is or is not pleased with them, and whether their prayers will be granted. She was good enough to remark that he was very glad to see us; she was sure of it by the smile in his eye. He had wrought many beautiful miracles for her. Nothing was too trivial for his sympathy and help. Once, when she had broken a vase in which she had been in the habit of keeping flowers on the altar, she took the pieces in her hands, and standing before him, said:

"You know you will miss this vase. I always put your flowers in it, and I am too poor to buy another. Now do mend this for me. I have nobody but you to help me." And the vase grew together again whole while she was speaking. In the same way he mended for her a high glass flower-case which stood on the altar.

Thus she jabbered away breathlessly in Spanish, almost too fast to be followed. Sitting in a high chair, her poor distorted feet propped on a cushion, a black silk handkerchief wound like a turban around her head, a plaid ribosa across her shoulders, contrasting sharply with her shabby wine-colored gown, her hands clasped around a yellow staff, on which she leaned as she bent forward in her eager speaking, she made a study for an artist.

She was very beautiful in her youth, she said; her cheeks so red that people thought they were painted; and she was so strong that she was never tired; and when, in the first year of her widowhood, a stranger came to her "with a letter of recommendation" to be her second husband, and before she had time to speak had fallen on his knees at her feet, she seized him by the throat and, toppling him backward, pinned him against the wall till he was black in the face. And her sister came running up in terror, imploring her not to kill him. But all that strength is gone now, she says sadly; her memory also. Each day, as soon as she has finished her prayers, she has to put away her rosary in a special place, or else she forgets that the prayers have been said. Many priests have desired to possess her precious miracle-working saint; but never till she dies will it leave her bedroom. Not a week passes without

some one's arriving to implore its aid. Sometimes the deeply distressed come on their knees all the way from the gate before the house, up the steps, through the hall, and into her bedroom. Such occasions as these are to her full of solemn joy, and no doubt, also, of a secret exultation whose kinship to pride she does not suspect.

In another unpretending little adobe house, not far from this Saint Francis shrine, lives the granddaughter of Moreno, one of the twelve Spanish soldiers who founded the city. She speaks no word of English; and her soft black eyes are timid, though she is the widow of a general, and, in the stormy days of the City of the Angels, passed through many a crisis of peril and adventure. Her house is full of curious relics, which she shows with a gentle, half-amused courtesy. It is not easy for her to believe that any American can feel real reverence for the symbols, tokens, and relics of the life and customs which his people destroyed. In her mind Americans remain to-day as completely foreigners as they were when her husband girded on his sword and went out to fight them, forty years ago. Many of her relics have been rescued at one time or another from plunderers of the missions. She has an old bronze kettle which once held holy water at San Fernando; an incense cup and spoon, and massive silver candlesticks; cartridge-boxes of leather, with Spain's ancient seal stamped on them; a huge copper caldron and scales from San Gabriel; a bunch of keys of hammered iron, locks, scissors, reaping-hooks, shovels, carding-brushes for wool and for flax; all made by the Indian workmen in the missions. There was also one old lock, in which the key was rusted fast and immovable, seemed to me fuller of suggestion than anything else there of the sealed and ended past to which it had belonged; and a curious little iron cannon, in shape like an ale mug, about eight inches high, with a hole in the side and in the top, to be used by setting it on the ground and laying a trail of powder to the opening in the side. This gave the Indians great delight. It was fired at the times of church festivals, and in seasons of drought to bring rain. Another curious instrument of racket was the *matrara*, a strip of board with two small swinging iron handles so set in it that, in swinging back and forth, they hit iron plates. In the time of Lent, when all ringing of bells was forbidden, these were rattled to call the Indians to church. The noise one of them can make when vigorously shaken is astonishing. In crumpled bundles, their stiffened meshes opening out reluctantly, were two curious rush-woven nets which had been used by Indian

women fifty years ago in carrying burdens. Similar nets, made of twine, are used by them still. Fastened to a leather strap or band passing around the forehead, they hang down behind far below the waist, and when filled out to their utmost holding capacity are so heavy that the poor creatures bend nearly double beneath them. But the women stand as uncomplainingly as camels while weight after weight is piled in; then, slipping the band over their heads, they adjust the huge burden and set off at a trot.

"This is the squaw's horse," said an Indian woman in the San Jacinto Valley one day, tapping her forehead and laughing good-naturedly, when the shop-keeper remonstrated with her husband who was heaping article after article, and finally a large sack of flour, on her shoulders; "squaw's horse very strong."

The original site of the San Gabriel Mission was a few miles to the east of the City of the Angels. Its lands are now divided into ranches and colony settlements, only a few acres remaining in the possession of the church. But the old chapel is still standing in a fair state of preservation, used for the daily services of the San Gabriel parish; and there are in its near neighborhood a few crumbling adobe hovels left, the only remains of the once splendid and opulent mission. In one of these lives a Mexican woman, eighty-two years old, who for more than half a century has washed and mended the priests' laces, repaired the robes, and remodeled the vestments of San Gabriel. She is worth crossing the continent to see: all white from head to foot, as if bleached by some strange grammar; white hair, white skin, blue eyes faded nearly to white; white cotton clothes, ragged and not over clean, yet not a trace of color in them; a white linen handkerchief, delicately embroidered by herself, always tied loosely around her throat. She sits on a low box, leaning against the wall, with three white pillows at her back, her feet on a cushion on the ground; in front of her, another low box, on this a lace-maker's pillow, with knotted fringe stretched on it; at her left hand a battered copper caldron holding hot coals to warm her fingers and to light her cigarettes. A match she will never use; and she has seldom been without a cigarette in her mouth since she was six years old. On her right hand is a chest filled with her treasures,—rags of damask, silk, velvet, lace, muslin, ribbon, artificial flowers, flosses, worsteds, silks on spools; here she sits day in, day out, making cotton fringes and, out of shreds of silk, tiny embroidered scapulars, which she sells to all devout and charitable people of the region. She also teaches the children of

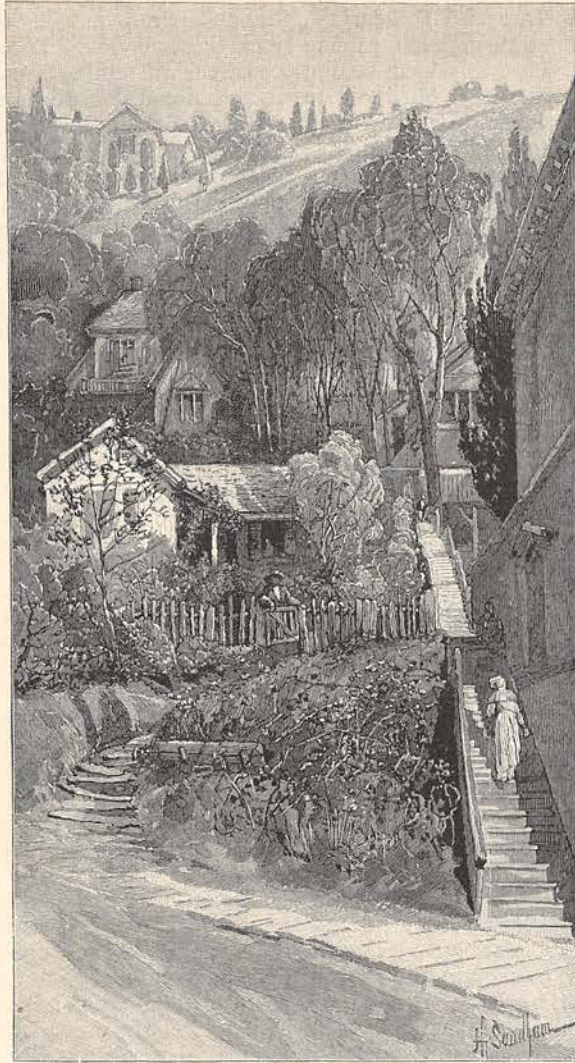
the parish to read and to pray. The walls of her hovel are papered with tattered pictures, including many gay-colored ones, taken off tin cans, their flaunting signs reading drolly,—“Perfection Press Mackerel, Boston, Mass.,” “Charm Baking Powder,” and “Knowlton's Inks,” alternating with Toledo Blades and clipper-ship advertisements. She finds these of great use in both teaching and amusing the children. The ceiling, of canvas, black with smoke, and festooned with cobwebs, sags down in folds, and shows many a rent. When it rains, her poor little place must be drenched in spots. One end of the room is curtained off with calico; this is her bed-chamber. At the other end is a raised dais, on which stands an altar, holding a small statuette of the Infant Jesus. It is a copy in wood of the famous Little Jesus of Atoches in Mexico, which is worshiped by all the people in that region. It has been her constant companion and protector for fifty years. Over the altar is a canopy of calico, decorated with paper flowers, whirligigs, doves, and little gourds; with votive offerings, also, of gold or silver, from grateful people helped or cured by the Little Jesus. On the statuette's head is a tiny hat of real gold, and a real gold scepter in the little hand; the breast of its fine white linen cambric gown is pinned by a gold pin. It has a wardrobe with as many changes as an actor. She keeps these carefully hid away in a small camphor-wood trunk, but she brought them all out to show to us.

Two of her barefooted, ragged little pupils scampered in as she was unfolding these gay doll's clothes. They crowded close around her knees and looked on, with open-mouthed awe and admiration: a purple velvet cape with white fringe for feast days; capes of satin, of brocade; a dozen shirts of finest linen, embroidered or trimmed with lace; a tiny plume not more than an inch long, of gold, exquisitely carved,—this was her chief treasure. It looked beautiful in his hat, she said, but it was too valuable to wear often. Hid away here among the image's best clothes were more of the gold votive offerings it had received: one a head cut out of solid gold; several rosaries of carved beads, silver and gold. Spite of her apparently unbounded faith in the Little Jesus's power to protect her and himself, the old woman thought it wiser to keep these valuables concealed from the common gaze.

Holding up a silken pillow, some sixteen inches square, she said:

“You could not guess with what that pillow is filled.”

We could not, indeed. It was her own



A STREET IN LOS ANGELES.

hair. With pride she asked us to take it in our hands, that we might see how heavy it was. For sixteen years she had been saving it, and it was to be put under her head in her coffin. The friend who had taken us to her home exclaimed on hearing this, "And I can tell you it was beautiful hair. I recollect it forty-five years ago, bright brown, and down to her ankles, and enough of it to roll herself up in." The old woman nodded and laughed, much pleased at this compliment. She did not know why the Lord had preserved her life so long, she said; but she was very happy. Her nieces had asked her to go and live with them in Santa Ana; but she could not go away from San Gabriel. She told them that there was plenty of water in

the ditch close by her door, and that God would take care of the rest, and so he had; she never wants for anything; not only is she never hungry herself, but she always has food to give away. No one would suppose it; but many people come to eat with her in her house. God never forgets her one minute. She is very happy. She is never ill; or if she is, she has two remedies, which, in all her life, have never failed to cure her, and they cost nothing: saliva and ear-wax. For a pain, the sign of the cross, made with saliva on the spot which is in pain, is instantaneously effective; for an eruption of any skin disorder, the application of ear-wax is a sure cure. She is very glad to live so close to the church; the father has promised her this

room as long as she lives; when she dies, it will be no trouble, he says, to pick her up and carry her across the road to the church. In a gay painted box, standing on two chairs, so as to be kept from the dampness of the bare earth floor, she cherishes the few relics of her better days: a shawl and a ribosa of silk, and two gowns, one of black silk, one of dark blue satin. These are of the fashions of twenty years ago; they were given to her by her husband. She wears them now when she goes to church; so it is as if she were "married again," she says, and is "her husband's work still." She seems to be a character well known and held in some regard by the clergy of her church. When the bishop returned a few years ago from a visit to Rome, he brought her a little gift, a carved figure of a saint. She asked him if he could not get for her a bit of the relics of Saint Viviano.

"Oh, let alone!" he replied; "give you relics? Wait a bit; and as soon as you die, I'll have you made into relics yourself."

She laughed as heartily, telling this somewhat unecclesiastical rejoinder, as if it had been made at some other person's expense.

In the marvelously preserving air of California, added to her own contented temperament, there is no reason why this happy old lady should not last, as some of her Indian neighbors have, well into a second century. Before she ceases from her peaceful, pitiful little labors, new generations of millionaires in her country will no doubt have piled up bigger fortunes than this generation ever dreams of, but there will not be a man of them all so rich as she.

In the western suburbs of Los Angeles is a low adobe house, built after the ancient style, on three sides of a square, surrounded by orchards, vineyards, and orange groves, and looking out on an old-fashioned garden, in which southernwood, rue, lavender, mint, marigolds, and gillyflowers hold their own bravely, growing in straight and angular beds among the newer splendors of verbenas, roses, carnations, and geraniums. On two sides of the house runs a broad porch, where stand rows of geraniums and chrysanthemums growing in odd-shaped earthen pots. Here may often be seen a beautiful young Mexican woman, flitting about among the plants, or sporting with a superb St. Bernard dog. Her clear olive skin, soft brown eyes, delicate sensitive nostrils, and broad smiling mouth, are all of the Spanish madonna type; and when her low brow is bound, as is often her wont, by turban folds of soft brown or green gauze, her face becomes a picture indeed. She is the young wife of a gray-headed Mexican señor, of whom — by his own most

gracious permission — I shall speak by his familiar name, Don Antonio. Whoever has the fortune to pass as a friend across the threshold of this house, finds himself transported, as by a miracle, into the life of a half century ago. The rooms are ornamented with fans, shells, feather and wax flowers, pictures, saints' images, old laces and stuffs, in the quaint gay Mexican fashion. On the day when I first saw them, they were brilliant with bloom. In every one of the deep window-seats stood a cone of bright flowers, its base made by large white datura blossoms, their creamy whorls all turned outward, making a superb decoration. I went for but a few moments' call. I staid three hours, and left, carrying with me bewildering treasures of pictures of the olden time.

Don Antonio speaks little English; but the señora knows just enough of the language to make her use of it delicious, as she translates for her husband. It is an entrancing sight to watch his dark, weather-beaten face, full of lightning changes as he pours out torrents of his nervous, eloquent Spanish speech; watching his wife intently, hearkening to each word she uses, sometimes interrupting her urgently with "No, no; that is not it"; for he well understands the tongue he cannot or will not use for himself. He is sixty-five years of age, but he is young: the best waltzer in Los Angeles to-day; his eye keen, his blood fiery quick; his memory like a burning-glass bringing into sharp light and focus a half century as if it were a yesterday. Full of sentiment, of an intense and poetic nature, he looks back to the lost empire of his race and people on the California shores with a sorrow far too proud for any antagonisms or complaints. He recognizes the inexorable nature of the laws under whose workings his nation is slowly, surely giving place to one more representative of the age. Intellectually he is in sympathy with progress, with reform, with civilization at its utmost; he would not have had them stayed, or changed, because his people could not keep up, and were not ready. But his heart is none the less saddened and lonely.

This is probably the position and point of view of most cultivated Mexican men of his age. The suffering involved in it is inevitable. It is part of the great, unreckoned price which must always be paid for the gain the world gets, when the young and strong supersede the old and weak.

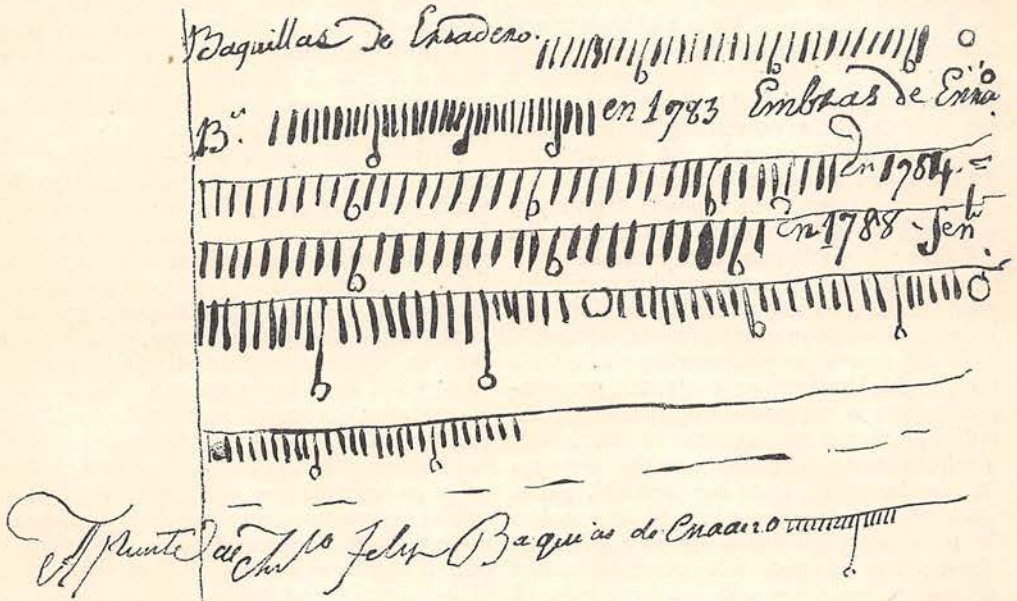
A sunny little south-east corner room in Don Antonio's house is full of the relics of the time when he and his father were foremost representatives of ideas and progress in the City of the Angels, and taught the first

school that was kept in the place: This was nearly a half century ago. On the walls of the room still hang maps and charts which they used; and carefully preserved, with the tender reverence of which only poetic natures are capable, are still to be seen there the old atlases, primers, catechisms, grammars, reading-books, which meant toil and trouble to the merry, ignorant children of the merry and ignorant people of that time.

The leathern covers of the books are thin and frayed by long handling; the edges of

tables, music, and bundles of records of the branding of cattle at the San Gabriel Mission, are among the curiosities of this room. The music of the first quadrilles ever danced in Mexico is here: a ragged pamphlet, which, no doubt, went gleeful rounds in the City of the Angels for many a year. It is a merry music, simple in melody, but with an especial quality of light-heartedness, suiting the people who danced to it.

There are also in the little room many relics of a more substantial sort than tattered



COPY OF A PAGE FROM A REGISTER OF BRANDED CATTLE. EVERY TENTH ONE BELONGED TO THE CHURCH.

the leaves worn down as if mice had gnawed them: tattered, loose, hanging by yellow threads, they look far older than they are, and bear vivid record of the days when books were so rare and precious that each book did doubled and redoubled duty, passing from hand to hand and house to house. It was on the old Lancaster system that Los Angeles set out in educating its children; and here are still preserved the formal and elaborate instructions for teachers and schools on that plan; also volumes of Spain's laws for military judges in 1781, and a quaint old volume called "Secrets of Agriculture, Fields and Pastures," written by a Catholic father in 1617, reprinted in 1781, and held of great value in its day as a sure guide to success with crops. Accompanying it was a chart, a perpetual circle, by which might be foretold, with certainty, what years would be barren and what ones fruitful.

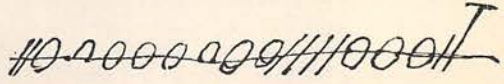
Almanacs, histories, arithmetics, dating back to 1750, drawing-books, multiplication-

papers and books: a branding-iron and a pair of handcuffs from the San Gabriel Mission; curiously decorated clubs and sticks used by the Indians in their games; boxes of silver rings and balls made for decorations of bridles and on leggings and knee-breeches. The place of honor in the room is given, as well it might be, to a small cannon, the first cannon brought into California. It was made in 1717, and was brought by Father Junipero Serra to San Diego in 1769. Afterward it was given to the San Gabriel Mission, but it still bears its old name, "San Diego." It is an odd little arm, only about two feet long, and requiring but six ounces of powder. Its swivel is made with a rest to set firm in the ground. It has taken many long journeys on the backs of mules, having been in great requisition in the early mission days for the firing of salutes at festivals and feasts.

Don Antonio was but a lad when his father's family removed from the city of Mexico to California. They came in one of

the many unfortunate colonies sent out by the Mexican Government, during the first years of the secularization period, having had a toilsome and suffering two months, going in wagons from Mexico to San Blas, then a tedious and uncomfortable voyage of several weeks from San Blas to Monterey, where they arrived only to find themselves deceived and disappointed in every particular, and surrounded by hostilities, plots, and dangers on all sides. So great was the antagonism to them that it was at times difficult for a colonist to obtain food from a Californian. They were arrested on false pretenses, thrown into prison, shipped off like convicts from place to place, with no one to protect them or plead their cause. Revolution succeeded upon revolution, and it was a most unhappy period for all refined and cultivated persons who had joined the colony enterprises. Young men of education and breeding were glad to earn their daily bread by any menial labor that offered. Don Antonio and several of his young friends, who had all studied medicine together, spent the greater part of a year in making shingles. The one hope and aim of most of them was to earn money enough to get back to Mexico. Don Antonio, however, seems to have had more versatility and capacity than his friends, for he never lost courage; and it was owing to him that at last his whole family gathered in Los Angeles and established a home there. This was in 1836. There were then only about eight hundred people in the pueblo, and the customs, superstitions, and ignorances of the earliest days still held sway. The missions were still rich and powerful, though the confusions and conflicts of their ruin had begun. At this time, the young Antonio, being quick at accounts and naturally ingenious at all sorts of mechanical crafts, found profit as well as pleasure in journeying from mission to mission, sometimes spending two or three months in one place, keeping books, or repairing silver and gold ornaments.

The blow-pipe which he made for himself at that time his wife exhibits now with affectionate pride, and there are few things she enjoys better than translating, to an eager



TRACING FROM A MISSION CASH-BOOK: A CIPHER STANDS FOR ONE MEXICAN SILVER DOLLAR, A HALF CIPHER STANDS FOR HALF A DOLLAR, AND A STROKE STANDS FOR A QUARTER.

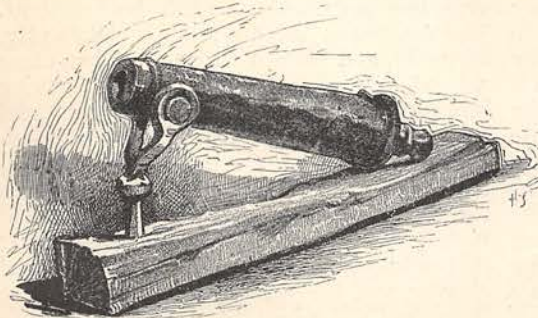
listener, his graphic stories of the incidents and adventures of that portion of his life.

While he was at the San Antonio Mission, a strange thing happened. It is a good illustration of the stintless hospitality of those old missions, that staying there at that time were a notorious gambler and a celebrated juggler who had come out in the colony from Mexico. The juggler threatened to turn the gambler into a crow; the gambler, after watching his tricks for a short time, became frightened, and asked young Antonio, in serious good faith, if he did not believe the juggler had made a league with the devil. A few nights afterward, at midnight, a terrible noise was heard in the gambler's room. He was found in convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and crying:

"Oh, father! father! I have got the devil inside of me! Take him away."

The priest dragged him into the chapel, showered him with holy water, and exorcised the devil, first making the gambler promise to leave off his gambling forever. All the rest of the night the rescued sinner spent in the chapel, praying and weeping. In the morning, he announced his intention of becoming a priest, and began his studies at once. These he faithfully pursued for a year, leading all the while a life of great devotion. At the end of that time, preparations were made for his ordination at San José. The day was set, the hour came: he was in the sacristy, had put on the sacred vestments, and was just going toward the church door, when he fell to the floor, dead. Soon after this the juggler was banished from the country, trouble and disaster having everywhere followed on his presence.

On the first breaking out of hostilities between California and the United States, Don Antonio took command of a company of Los Angeles volunteers, to repel the intruders. By this time he had attained a prominent position in the affairs of the pueblo; had been alcalde and, under Governor Michelorena, inspector of public works. It was like the fighting of children, the impetuous attempts that heterogeneous little bands of Californians, here and



SWIVEL GUN. FIRST CANNON TAKEN INTO CALIFORNIA.



A VERANDA IN LOS ANGELES.

there, made to hold their country. They were plucky from first to last, for they were everywhere at a disadvantage, and fought on, quite in the dark as to what Mexico meant to do about them—whether she might not any morning deliver them over to the enemy. Of all Don Antonio's graphic narratives of the olden time, none is more interesting than those which describe his adventures during the days of this contest. On one of the first approaches made by the Americans to Los Angeles, he went out with his little haphazard company of men and boys to meet them. He had but one cannon, a small one, tied by ropes on a cart axle. He had but one small keg of powder which was good for anything; all the rest was bad, would merely go off "pouf,

pouf," the señora said, and the ball would pop down near the mouth of the cannon. With this bad powder he fired his first shots. The Americans laughed; this is child's play, they said, and pushed on closer. Then came a good shot, with the good powder, tearing into their ranks and knocking them right and left; another, and another. "Then the Americans began to think, these are no pouf balls; and when a few more were killed, they ran away and left their flag behind them. And if they had only known it, the Californians had only one more charge left of the good powder, and the next minute it would have been the Californians that would have had to run away themselves," merrily laughed the señora as she told the tale.

This captured flag, with important papers, were intrusted to Don Antonio to carry to the Mexican head-quarters at Sonora. He set off with an escort of soldiers, his horse decked with silver trappings, his sword, pistols—all of the finest: a proud beginning of a journey destined to end in a different fashion. It was in winter time; cold rains were falling; by night he was drenched to the skin, and stopped at a friendly Indian's tent to change his clothes. Hardly had he got them off when the sound of horses' hoofs was heard. The Indian flung himself down, put his ear to the ground, and exclaimed, "Americanos! Americanos!" Almost in the same second they were at the tent's door. As they halted, Don Antonio, clad only in his drawers and stockings, crawled out at the back of the tent, and creeping on all fours reached a tree up which he climbed, and sat safe hidden in the darkness among its branches listening, while his pursuers cross-questioned the Indian, and at last rode away with his horse. Luckily, he had carried into the tent the precious papers and the captured flag: these he intrusted to an Indian to take to Sonora, it being evidently of no use for him to try to cross the country thus closely pursued by his enemies.

All night he lay hidden; the next day he walked twelve miles across the mountains to an Indian village where he hoped to get a horse. It was dark when he reached it. Cautiously he opened the door of the hut of one whom he knew well. The Indian was preparing poisoned arrows: fixing one on the string and aiming at the door, he called out, angrily, "Who is there?"

"It is I, Antonio."

"Don't make a sound," whispered the Indian, throwing down his arrow, springing to the door, coming out and closing it softly. He then proceeded to tell him that the Americans had offered a reward for his head, and that some of the Indians in the rancharia were ready to betray or kill him. While they were yet talking, again came the sound of the Americans' horses' hoofs galloping in the distance. This time there seemed no escape. Suddenly Don Antonio, throwing himself on his stomach, wriggled into a cactus patch near by. Only one who has seen California cactus thickets can realize the desperateness of this act. But it succeeded. The Indian threw over the cactus plants an old blanket and some refuse stalks and reeds; and there once more, within hearing of all his baffled pursuers said, the hunted man lay, safe, thanks to Indian friendship. The crafty Indian assented to all the Americans proposed, said that Don Antonio would be sure to be caught in a few days, advised them to search in a certain rancharia

which he described, a few miles off, and in an opposite direction from the way in which he intended to guide Don Antonio. As soon as the Americans had gone, he bound up Antonio's feet in strips of raw hide, gave him a blanket and an old tattered hat, the best his stores afforded, and then led him by a long and difficult trail to a spot high up in the mountains where the old women of the band were gathering acorns. By the time they reached this place, blood was trickling from Antonio's feet and legs, and he was well-nigh fainting with fatigue and excitement. Tears rolled down the old women's cheeks when they saw him. Some of them had been servants in his father's house and loved him. One brought gruel; another bathed his feet; others ran in search of healing leaves of different sorts. Bruising these in a stone mortar, they rubbed him from head to foot with the wet fiber. All his pain and weariness vanished as by magic. His wounds healed, and in a day he was ready to set off for home. There was but one pony in the old women's camp. This was old, vicious, blind of one eye, and with one ear cropped short; but it looked to Don Antonio far more beautiful than the gay steed on which he had ridden away from Los Angeles three days before. There was one pair of ragged shoes of enormous size among the old women's possessions. These were strapped on his feet by leathern thongs, and a bit of old sheepskin was tied around the pony's body. Thus accoutered and mounted, shivering in his drawers under his single blanket, the captain and flag-bearer turned his face homeward. At the first friend's house he reached he stopped and begged for food. Some dried meat was given to him, and a stool on the porch offered to him. It was the house of a dear friend, and the friend's sister was his sweetheart. As he sat there eating his meat the women eyed him curiously. One said to the other, "How much he looks like Antonio!"

At last the sweetheart, coming nearer, asked him if he were "any relation of Don Antonio?"

"No," he said. Just at that moment his friend rode up, gave one glance at the pitiful beggar sitting on his porch, shouted his name, dashed toward him, and seized him in his arms. Then was a great laughing and half-weeping, for it had been rumored that he had been taken prisoner by the Americans.

From this friend he received a welcome gift of a pair of trowsers, many inches too short for his legs. At the next house his friend was as much too tall, and his second pair of gift trowsers had to be rolled up in thick folds around his ankles.

Finally, he reached Los Angeles in safety. Halting in a grove outside the town, he



waited till twilight before entering. Having disguised himself in the rags which he had worn from the Indian village, he rode boldly up to the porch of his father's house, and in an impudent tone called for brandy. The terrified women began to scream; but his youngest sister, fixing one piercing glance on his face, laughed out gladly, and cried:

"You can't fool me; you are Antonio."

Sitting in the little corner room, looking out, through the open door on the gay garden and breathing its spring air, gay even in midwinter, and as spicy then as the gardens of other lands are in June, I spent many an afternoon listening to such tales as this. Sunset always came long before its time, it seemed, on these days.

Occasionally, at the last moment, Don Antonio would take up his guitar, and, in a voice still sympathetic and full of melody, sing an old Spanish love song, brought to his mind by thus living over the events of his youth. Never, however, in his most ardent youth, could his eyes have gazed on his fairest sweetheart's face with a look of greater devotion than that with which they now rest on the noble, expressive countenance of his wife, as

he sings the ancient and tender strains. Of one of them, I once won from her, amid laughs and blushes, a few words of translation:

"Let us hear the sweet echo  
Of your sweet voice that charms me.  
The one that truly loves you,  
He says he wishes to love;  
That the one who with ardent love adores you,  
Will sacrifice himself for you.  
Do not deprive me,  
Owner of me,  
Of that sweet echo  
Of your sweet voice that charms me."

Near the western end of Don Antonio's porch is an orange tree, on which were hanging at this time twenty-five hundred oranges, ripe and golden among the glossy leaves. Under this tree my carriage always waited for me. The señora never allowed me to depart without bringing to me, in the carriage, farewell gifts of flowers and fruit; clusters of grapes, dried and fresh; great boughs full of oranges, more than I could lift. As I drove away thus, my lap filled with bloom and golden fruit, canopies of golden fruit over my head, I said to myself often: "Fables are prophecies. The Hesperides have come true."

H. H.

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## ONE CHAPTER.

It was a very short chapter, and I often wish there had been more of it. But this is all there was. It was while I was at Wiesbaden. The doctors sent me there when my rheumatism got so bad; and though I had my faithful Cummings with me,—she is an excellent creature, though a little short-spoken and careless about candle-ends,—I should have been lonely enough but for Phil Merritt. Phil was an American, and that is what she said they called her, though her real name was Phyllis—much prettier and more lady-like, to my notions. But American ways are, of course, not our ways, and I suppose I should only be thankful she had a Christian name at all. However, I'm old-fashioned, and have never been out of England before, and may not be quite up with the age. Anyway, I was particularly glad that Phil was an American, for, while I know more about that country than most English women, having read those remarkable works of Mrs. Whitney's and Mrs. Stowe's and Miss Wetherell's, still it is always pleasantest to study the peculiarities of other nationalities from personal observation.

Well, Phil and I were great friends, in

spite of my sixty winters and her twenty-four summers. We first met in the hall of the Hôtel des Quatre Saisons, as I was toiling laboriously upstairs one day after my mineral bath, and thinking what a wonderful cook Dame Nature was to contrive chicken broth out of pure chemicals, with not so much as the ghost of a hen thrown in; and Phil, being naturally a very good-hearted, amiable girl, always on the lookout to do a kind deed, gave me her arm to my room, which chanced to be quite near hers; and after that not a day passed but she ran in to see me.

She was an orphan, living with her uncle and aunt—enormously rich people, I presume, for all Americans are millionaires. Why, as a sample, there's one family named Vandertilt, all whose men are common engineers and dine every day in their smocks, whose wealth exceeds that of the Rothschilds and the crowned heads of Europe taken together. But Phil dressed as simply as any English girl, and though she must, of course, have had a trunkful of diamonds somewhere, she never appeared in them, or at least never when I saw her. Uncommonly quiet, pretty taste she had. She was a little bit of a thing,