

Our Weekly Serial Story Installment

Mistress of Monterey

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WNU Service

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued

"Then," La Perouse continued in Spanish, "it was a surprise to find such luxury in your palais de adobe. It was a surprise to find such wine and such brandy as this, and," raising his glass to La Gobernadora, "it was a surprise and a great pleasure to find the palais, or perhaps I should say the hotel de ville with such a chataleine! Such grace, and if I may be pardoned for speaking so frankly, such beauty, such elegance could scarcely be found in the court of Louis XVI himself, or of your own sovereign, Charles of Spain! But to find it here! Madame! But of course you know how fortunate you are, Monsieur le Gouverneur, to have . . . how do you call her, La Gobernadora? . . . here in the wilderness with you! I envy you, parbleu, I do. You are like the first man and the first woman, Adam and Eve, in this Paradise; your life here must be a perpetual honeymoon!"

Eulalia smiled, with sidelong glances at the two Frenchmen. She studied them carefully. Such fineness! Such fine clothes! And from those curled perukes she was sure there came a faint perfume, very faint to be sure, and very masculine, but unmistakable. Those neat breeches, and buckled shoes.

She studied her husband. Why had she not trimmed his beard that day? And why had she not insisted that he come and change his clothes before the distinguished Frenchmen came ashore? That leather jacket, and those stained leather breeches . . . dusty boots. She shuddered. Ugh, and that faint odor of horses that clung around him always. She sighed deeply.

"Yes," La Perouse was saying to the Governor, "we have with us on this expedition astronomers, philosophers, meteorologists, watchmakers, cartographers, every sort of scientist you can imagine. With your permission we will make a camp near here, and set up a laboratory. There are many things here we wish to study, as well as the Indians, their habits, physical characteristics, and religions."

Eulalia saw her husband lean forward eagerly, with the expression on his face that told her he would soon launch into a lengthy, and to her, uninteresting discourse on his favorite subject, California. She looked at young Dagelet, brooding before the fire, untouched by the spate of unfamiliar Spanish that flowed around him. She moved closer.

"You are very quiet, Monsieur," Dagelet started.

"I am at a disadvantage, Madame, because of my ignorance of your language. But you speak mine so beautifully it would be a charity on your part to talk with me."

"What can I say? I have nothing to tell. There is nothing to talk about in this God-forsaken and lonely country. And I have been here so long that I can hardly remember what the world . . . my world . . . is like. Tell me!" she demanded eagerly.

At the emotion in her voice Dagelet leaned toward her and spoke softly.

"I can hardly imagine, Madame, that you are out of touch with the world. One would not believe it to look at you. But what shall I tell you? Of politics? Wars and rumors of wars? The theater? Opera? Gossip? Scandal?"

The lady's eyes sparkled, and her lips curved in an enchanted smile. "Gossip!" she demanded. "Scandal!"

So while Pedro Fages and the Comte de La Perouse talked of stars and tides, flora and fauna, horses and ships and men, La Gobernadora and young Dagelet talked of modes and manners, the gayest whim of the Queen of France, the newest actress to set Paris by the ears, the brightest songbird to be the toast of the jeunesse dore.

"I am sorry I can tell you nothing

of your own city, Barcelona, Madame, but hope Paris interests you."

"Ah, Paris! I have been there! I love the place . . ."

"Every woman does. Every witty, charming lovely woman anywhere in the world," dared Dagelet. "So you have enjoyed my gossip, my news? Remember, it is not really news, for we have been nearly a year on this cruise since we sailed from France."

Eulalia raised melancholy eyes to him. "But you are going back to your country, your beloved Paris, some time. But I, I never shall return to my home. I shall die here some day, and be buried in the mission graveyard, and forgotten, without ever really having lived." Tears were in her voice, and very near her eyes. Dagelet stirred toward her as though to touch the hand that lay so close to him, with palm upturned appealingly.

"Ah, no, Madame! Do not speak so! There must be some hope that you will. It would be wicked for you to waste your life in a rough outpost like this, a place fit only for men, and strong men, used to danger! Why do you stay?"

Eulalia was about to speak, but noticed the young man's eyes straying from her suddenly. Indizuela had silently entered the room, and was picking up the empty glasses. La Gobernadora spoke sharply.

"No one called you, moza. Leave the room." The girl looked somberly at the Governor, sliding her eyes over the two Frenchmen.

"Ah!" said the Count. "What a specimen!"

"Isn't she?" said the Governor. "One of our finest." The men watched Indizuela as she sidled slowly and insolently out of the room, while Eulalia clung to her outraged dignity with clenched hands.

Later, Eulalia was conscious of speaking farewells as her husband departed to escort the travelers to their long-boat, for they would spend the night aboard their ship.

Then she hurried into her room and picked up her tiring glass. She stroked the color that still flamed in her cheeks. For a few minutes she looked into her own eyes. Then she put the mirror down and, lifting the sweeping lengths of flowered brocade that made her skirt, danced a slow minuet with her shadow, to an air she had heard years ago in Paris.

CHAPTER XIX

Pedro Fages looked with awe and curiosity at the collection of esoteric instruments scattered around the tent which La Perouse had had erected on the beach for a laboratory.

"You will pardon me, Senor el Conde," he said with a twinkle. "but these look strange to me. I have not found such things necessary in my study of this country and people."

The French scientist straightened up from the microscope into which he had been peering, and laughed as he stretched himself. His place at the instrument was immediately taken by a pale lank-haired scholar who adjusted it to his sight with the loving care of a fanatic.

"And how do you study them, mon ami?" he asked.

The Governor looked puzzled.

"I do not really know. I just live with the country, and the people. And if the things that they do seem odd to me, I take them for granted, ask them no questions. But I feel as though I know and understand them. As for the country, I know I understand it. Oh, I don't mean your botanical names and terms. But I know an oak tree, a sycamore, an alder when I see it. I know the birds . . . but all by little Spanish names that would seem strange to you . . . I know the animals and their habits . . ."

"In fact you know much more than

I and my two shiploads of scientists would ever know with all their instruments if they stayed here a quarter of a century."

The two men strolled away from the tent, and the Governor rolled La Perouse a cigarette from his supply of cornhusks and tobacco.

The Frenchman inhaled deeply. "You must give me some of these to take with me," he said. "Now I have here a list of things I was to ask you." He looked over some notes. "Hum-m-m. These were some questions that the medical profession was interested in. The answers will no doubt be simple for you. What is the relation of the color of the skin of the natives to the fluids in their bodies?"

The Governor took his cigarette from his mouth and stared at his questioner, with open mouth.

"How should I know?" he said at last. "How should . . ."

"How should you indeed! Hum. That is one question our medical



Her Horse Slid on Its Haunches
Straight Down the Bank.

brethren will have to find out for themselves. Revenons a nos moutons . . . hum."

While Don Pedro and La Perouse were discoursing, La Gobernadora and young Dagelet walked their horses to the edge of a shallow cliff, where gnarled cypress writhed in distorted attitudes away from the sea, and sat silently a moment looking at the scene beneath them. A score of servants were preparing a merienda . . . a picnic . . . on the shore. Against a blackened rock, where savage people of ages past had baked food salvaged from the sea, a fire had dwindled into glowing coals, the correct temperature for cooking.

"I see Angustias, managing everything," said Eulalia, pointing at the scene with her riding whip. "And there is Indizuela," she went on with a sidelong glance at her cavalier. "Don't you see her?"

Dagelet reached for her reins, and pulled Eulalia's mount closer to him. "I see only you. You are indeed Queen of California in your green habit of regal velvet, except that you have a very chic hat with a sweeping plume instead of a crown. Do you ever wear a crown?"

Eulalia sighed inwardly with delight at the compliment.

His look strayed over her from trembling plume to the restless toe of her riding shoe.

"You were made to be a queen. It would not matter where you were, you would have to be a queen. But it seems to me you could have chosen a better domain to reign over than this California. You should be . . ." he hesitated delicately, but the lady's deepened color and attentive eyes gave him per-

mission to speak farther, ". . . queen of a court of love and beauty."

Eulalia only sighed, and stared out at the turquoise waters of the cove. Dagelet drew nearer and took her hand gently. He stripped the embroidered gauntlet from the relaxed fingers. Leaning over suddenly, he kissed her palm.

She did not start, but withdrew her hand, still staring across the waters. Dagelet was modishly silent for a few moments before he spoke.

"Yes, there it lies, the ocean," he said at last following her gaze. "And in two days there shall be I, upon those heaving waters wafted hither and thither by all the winds of heaven, drifting to strange isles and distant lands."

"But you will be on your way home . . . to your Paris . . . with its life and color and music. Where the lights twinkle at night on the boulevards. And where there is gaiety. Al, Dios de mi alma!" she sighed, speaking in Spanish, "I would I were going too!"

The young Frenchman was staring strangely into the distance. "Perhaps I shall see Paris again, perhaps not . . . who can say? It is half around the world or more from here, and many things can happen. But I wish you were."

He stopped suddenly. "Pardon me," he mumbled. "I forget myself."

"No," said Eulalia excitedly, "say what you were going to say. Did you not understand what I said in Spanish just now? I said I would I were going with you! There . . . I have said it."

"Come!"

Before there was time for further speech the Governor, La Perouse and his French gentlemen on their horses, Fray Fermin Lasuen and some priests from San Carlos at Carmel on their mules came upon them.

"Ah, here is our hostess, La Reine herself!" exclaimed La Perouse.

The Governor looked quickly from his wife to young Dagelet, and crowded his horse beside his wife's.

"Why are you not seeing that everything is ready for our guests?" he asked shortly. "Why are you . . ."

But Eulalia, after a moment's silence in which she summoned flying senses and thoughts back to her, threw back her head with a ringing laugh.

"Come, my merry gentlemen!" she cried gaily. "Come, the fiesta awaits your pleasure! Follow me, Senores!"

Her horse slid on its haunches straight down the bank in a cloud of flying sand and dust. Soldiers, scientists and priests followed her waving hand, infected by her gaiety.

From the lady's mood the merienda took its tone. Music was wild and abandoned, jests in Spanish and French were bandied about with great good humor, whether any un-

derstood them or not. Don Pedro had sent hasty messages to San Francisco and to the Presidio at Santa Barbara inviting the officers of the two garrisons to the celebration, and they had arrived with their wives and children. There were the officers of the Presidio of Monterey and their families.

And there were the wife and children of the Governor. He looked around for them. The children were playing wildly with other children, and La Gobernadora was talking and laughing vivaciously. He frowned. There was something almost hysterical about her manner. Ah, he had enjoyed the visit with the Frenchmen but was privately thankful they would soon be gone.

While the party was progressing noisily Eulalia retreated into her own thoughts. What had she said to Dagelet? And what had he said to her?

"Come!" Could she? Was it possible? Her breath came more quickly at the thought. Her mind painted a picture for her, moving rapidly into a nebulous future; she saw herself wrapped in a mantle . . . slipping across the sand . . . lifted into a boat. She could even hear the sound of muffled oars. Then she was on a ship. But here the vision broke. She would be seasick!

But she braced herself. Seasick or no seasick, she would go. Must go! California would be left behind, and the world would be before her! "I must," she whispered to herself. "I shall!"

Engrossed in her dream, unconscious that the picnic party was moving away, she found herself with her husband, the priest Lasuen, and La Perouse. The Governor silently lifted his lady to her saddle, and the four rode to the top of the cliff. When they reached there, the Governor turned his horse toward the ocean where the sinking sun was suspended between two banks of clouds like a glowing Chinese lantern.

"I almost wish I were sailing away into that sunset with you, Senor el Conde," he said wistfully. "I wish I were."

"Ah, the sunset makes me sad, homesick!" sighed Eulalia.

"That is natural," said the priest quietly. "I too am homesick."

"You?" asked Eulalia. "For what place?"

"For my heavenly home," murmured the old man.

"I am homesick also." La Perouse spoke in a low tone. "I am homesick for my native land, which is so far from me. La Belle France!"

"I am homesick for my homeland to, Senor el Conde," replied Eulalia. "For Spain, the province of Catalonia, Barcelona."

"We all seem homesick," observed La Perouse, "except his Excellency. Are you not homesick too?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Santa Barbara Priest Grows Roses That Tower Thirty Feet Into the Sky

An ordinary little garden in Santa Barbara, Calif., is crowded with potentialities for tomorrow's science and realities in horticultural miracles says Popular Mechanics Magazine. In it are roses which grow nowhere else on earth, roses with unbelievable colors and shapes, giants and dwarfs, roses with strange histories and stranger uses.

The garden, which is one of the outposts in the struggle for scientific knowledge, represents the life work of a priest. He says that the world is full of theories of how plants get their characteristic colors, shapes and smells, of how those characteristics may be changed from generation to generation and it is the business of science to find out how these things work, and to theorize afterwards.

Down the center of the garden runs a double row of rose trees. They tower thirty feet into the sky, as tall as a row of pine saplings. There is something unbelievable about them. Yet these giants of the rose family are not budded. They were grown from seed. A long history of careful breeding for a single

characteristic, height, lies behind their gigantic size.

Close to the avenue of giant rose trees is an insignificant bush. It blooms irregularly, but when it does, the world sees a black rose. Only a tiny bit of dark red on the edge of some of the petals shows how it has been bred from crossing the very dark-red plants.

Of the creation of this bud, the grower says: "It is only logical to presume that if two very dark roses were crossed the next generation would contain a rose darker than either of the originals. Remember, that is only a theory. Science is not made of theories, but of facts. So I made my experiments and eventually succeeded."

Industrial Fruits

Industrial fruits are those products of the soil which are sown and planted and upon reaching maturity are garnered or harvested, such as grain, vegetables and other crops. They are distinct from the natural fruits, such as trees, grass, etc., and are considered as personal and not real property.