

Our Weekly Serial Story Installment

Mistress of Monterey

Virginia Stivers Bartlett

© Virginia Stivers Bartlett
WNU Service

CHAPTER XXIV—Continued

"No," she replied boldly, "I will not come. Are you really going . . . actually going to leave me here, sick and miserable, with an ailing child, and a couple of silly women to take care of me? Are you really going?"

"Pues, my dear, you are not ill. You are just unhappy, you should . . ."

"Not ill! How can you say that? What do you know of me? I am ill. I am dying, I tell you! Hour by hour, day by day, I am dying in this place! Yet you will leave me, to go to your fiestas, and your mission foundations, and let me die alone!"

"Eulalia, this is not true. Control yourself!"

"Control myself!" She rose to her feet. "How dare you say that to me? What have I been doing, but controlling myself, my thoughts, my unhappiness, all this time! I am sick, I tell you . . . I am dying!"

She was crying, hysterically, uncontrollably. Pedro reached to take her into his arms, but she evaded him, screaming out at him unintelligibly.

"Eulalia . . . Eulalia . . ." he said.

But she was in the full sway of her emotions, a flood of feeling was carrying her along, and she did not struggle against the tide.

"Miserable, unhappy place!" she screamed. "I want to get away from this California! Never see it again! If I don't, I tell you, I shall die, or kill myself! No, don't touch me . . . keep away from me! Go to your Mission Santa Barbara, go . . . go. Al, Dios!" She flung her hands above her head and clasped them, for the moment utterly bereft of her reason. As her husband came near to her, she leaped suddenly backward. "Beast! Devil!" she screamed, and crashed to the floor.

Her head struck a corner of the heavy table, and as she lay on the dirt floor, blood streamed from her temple.

Her screams had at last brought Angustias, frightened, into the room, and she was on her knees beside the now motionless figure before Fages.

"She has fainted," exclaimed Angustias breathlessly, "and cut her head . . . pobrecilla."

Pedro Fages threw his hat, gauntlets and riding whip into a corner. "Oh, God!" he muttered. "Oh, my God!" Then he lifted the lady in his arms and carried her to her bed.

So the Mission of Santa Barbara was founded without the Governor of California being present.

But when the mission was already ten days old, the Governor, his son and a small party arrived at the place. Another ceremony was carried out in solemn reverence, at which the Governor attended with a stern set face. And when the rites were over, he knelt for a long time before the crude altar. Those who watched near him said when he arose, his face was wet with tears.

"He was Junipero Serra's good friend," they explained to one another pityingly. "He is thinking of him now no doubt."

So, though the legal date of the founding of the Mission Santa Barbara was the fourteenth of December, that being the day when the Governor was present, the Governor always insisted that the real founding was on the Feast of the Lady Santa Barbara herself, that being December fourth.

The Governor lingered not for celebrations nor fiestas, but returned at once to Monterey.

"Now," he said to himself, looking back at the little spot where the church was to stand. "Now, at last, Padre Junipero, your prayers are answered, and my vows are kept."

CHAPTER XXV

For nearly three years, ever since Don Pedro had gone south to the founding of the Mission Santa Barbara, Eulalia had lived in as chaste a state as the old Spanish virgin. At first she had denied herself to him through sheer lassitude, then, realizing his need of her, his seeming dependence upon her, she had purposely withheld herself. She had determined that there should be favor for favor. For the privilege of holding her in his arms, he was to return with her to Mexico.

The plan had seemed beautifully simple to her, but when she mentioned it to her husband he had turned on her a strange unbelieving look, tugged his beard, muttered something about prostitution, and set up a camp cot in his office by the presidio gate.

So three years had passed. Don Pedro grew a little leaner, and his face a little wolfish with gleaming eyes and grizzled beard, but always stern, uncompromising. And Eulalia, with everything at stake upon her attractiveness, grew more beautiful, but nervously alert. Her black eyes were wary and predatory.

One day Angustias marched boldly toward her with a determined tread that bespoke some matter of import brewing in her mind.

"Nina!" she spoke sharply, standing with arms akimbo. "You will pardon me for speaking to you this way: God is my witness, I have kept quiet long enough. But this thing goes too far!"

"What thing?" murmured Eulalia easily.

"You know well enough. This thing of Don Pedro, bless his heart, sleeping down at his office. Three years! Humph!" She snorted loudly. "Perhaps it is not fitting that a single woman, such as I, should speak of such things. Indeed it is painful, difficult, for me to do so, but I must . . ."

Eulalia smoothed an eyebrow with a finger-tip. "Um-m-m," she murmured. "I think I shall take a walk. Across the presidio. And call on his Excellency in his office." She rose grandly and, holding her skirts aloof from the dust, walked erectly across the parade-ground.

In his office the Governor was puzzling over a letter he had received by a courier from San Francisco. So that when Eulalia swept imperiously into the office, he greeted her absently although surprisedly.

Eulalia sat impatiently in the chair he offered her, and looked around the office while the Governor talked excitedly. The white-washed walls were hung with maps, crisscrossed with marks of trails over unknown country which Don Pedro himself had explored. His few books, which he had moved from the palace, were on a rough shelf. And in one corner was his camp cot. She lifted her nose disdainfully at the crude furnishings as she remembered the splendid fittings of the viceregal palace at Mexico City. A fine office for the Governor of all the Californias!

She fretted uneasily, but the Governor did not notice her.

"So they dare!" he was saying, "they dare, these rash new people, to send ships to our Pacific Coast, which they must well know is territory of the King of Spain! What kind of people are they, in God's name! Are they not contented with the whole Atlantic Coast, that they must send ships here! I do not mind confessing to you, gentlemen, that I fear these people. They will make us trouble some day, mark my words. This continent, large as it is, is not large enough to hold us all. We should exterminate them."

Several officers nodded anxiously in assent.

"Well, these ships from . . . what is it they call themselves?"

"Los Estados Unidos de America."

"The United States of America! What blasted effrontery! I suppose we are included in these United States! Subject to their king!"

"He is not a king, your Excellency. He calls himself a president."

"Pah! Not even a king! What is his name?" He examined the papers again. "Washington, General George Washington! Whew!" His tongue struggled with the English words. Now I am sending word to Don Jose Dario Arguello at San Francisco that if these two ships, the Columbia and the Lady Washington, put into San Francisco bay they are to be seized, and their captains—what are their unholy names? Captain James Kendrick and Captain Robert Gray—are to be thrown in prison."

The officers bowed and departed. Don Pedro turned toward his wife



"Very Well! Do as You Please!"

with inquiring eyes. She rose slowly and began moving about the little room.

"I remember the first time I saw a map like this," she said, pausing before the map of the Californias. "It was in the palace of the Viceroy." She traced a trail with her finger. "And they told me I could ride to Monterey in my coach. Hum. Liars!" she hissed suddenly.

Fages said nothing. She circled till she reached the cot. She sat down upon it.

"You have that old robe of pelican down on your cot!"

"So you remember it?" asked Don Pedro.

"Ah, yes . . . What a hard little bed," she murmured. "And so narrow." She raised her eyes to him. "It is as narrow as the grave," replied Don Pedro. "And as hard as stone. But I am used to sleeping on it. I am as calloused as a Franciscan."

"It could hardly hold two people, could it? No matter how fond their love."

Don Pedro looked at her strangely.

"Two could sit upon it, side by side, and still be strangers," he said, and walked slowly to her.

She looked up at him invitingly. "Sit down then," she said, patting the robe of down, "and let us see if we two can not sit here and be friends."

He hesitated, then sank beside her.

"Querido . . . you great bear," she said, "come to your own room tonight . . . and let us talk."

He drew away from her.

"About what?" he asked suspiciously.

"About going back to Mexico together. You and I and the children. You have too many anxieties here . . . and we are not happy here together. Come, let us go back. Let us be happy the rest of our lives. You, and I too, have done our duty by our King in this California Come!"—she caressed him—"and the rest of our lives will be a honey-

moon. Do you not desire that?"

For an unhappy moment Don Pedro stared into his wife's flushed pleading face, then abruptly jerked away from her and stood in the center of the room, fists clenched, brows knotted.

"Duty! Who are you to speak of duty! You do not know the meaning of the word! Wheedling me, deceiving me, trying to seduce me from what I consider right!"

Eulalia sprang to her feet.

"Very well! Do as you please!"

As the door closed behind her the Governor, with a curse, swept his desk clean with one hand. Papers, books, quills and ink scattered on the floor.

"Damn her!" he said fervently.

"Damn her! What is it Indizuela called her? Cold, cruel Spaniard! Yes, the coldest and cruellest I ever knew. Why can not I be left in peace? I only ask to be alone to do my duty . . . I do not want to go back to Mexico, or to Spain!" He flung the words at the silent walls as though someone had challenged him.

Then Eulalia's words came back to him. "To live a honeymoon the rest of our lives . . . a little comfort . . . a little ease . . ." They sounded reasonable when he said them to himself.

"Fifty years . . ." he muttered, "I am over fifty years, and the best of those years have been given to this siren, California. Why not go back?"

His foot rustled against the map that lay crumpled on the floor. He picked it up and smoothed it across the desk. As he did, his fingers almost unconsciously began tracing trails which he had traveled. Here was the mysterious country across the bay from San Francisco, the tule country, and a hundred spots where his camp-fires had been. Here were crosses that marked mission sites that he had helped dedicate; here was where he had the fight with the bears . . . Again he leaned his head in his hands and groaned.

"Al, Dios mio, I can not leave my California! I would be lost anywhere else in all the wide world, this country only is my home, the home of my heart."

"I will not leave it!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Why should I sit here sniveling in my beard because my woman torments me? What has come over me? Am I no longer a man, and governor of California? Ha!" He smote his chest. "I shall go now, this very day, this very hour on a long visit. I shall go to Santa Barbara, and San Gabriel and San Diego, and have some festivities. And I shall leave Eulalia here alone. I shall be stern and hard . . . hard as my bed." He kicked the overturned cot.

"Come to her bed! Not I! I will

go out and seek the company of worthy priests and good soldiers, pioneers all, and we will talk man talk, and drink deeply together."

He took his gun down from the wall and cuddled it in his arm.

"And you shall go with me, my friend, and we will kill the hugest bear in all California!"

In her room at the palacio Eulalia was writing a lengthy document. When she had finished it, she poured sand over the paper, then read the contents carefully. What she read evidently pleased her, for she smiled many times. Then she called for a servant, and the letter was delivered to a courier riding south with official dispatches.

"Where is the Governor's frank on this?" inquired the courier when he received it.

"It is from her Excellency," murmured the servant.

"Humph," grunted the courier, and tucked it carefully away in his bag.

CHAPTER XXVI

Eulalia watched the Governor preparing for his departure without a word. His impedimenta seemed to consist mainly of small casks of aguardiente, and skins of wine; of guns and ammunition. He wore his disreputable leather jerkin, and roughest boots. He packed a few other belongings haphazardly into his knapsack.

When he was ready, he bowed before his wife ironically and said with mock reverence.

"La Senora la Gobernadora! I go, and I know not when I return. Do not grieve for me, but control your impatience for my company until I return, which will be in due time, and according to my own free will. Adios!"

Eulalia said nothing, but drew her brows together darkly.

She watched Don Pedro and his party gallop away across the parade-ground toward the great gate which was swung open and ready for them.

A few miles outside the presidio, the Governor and his gay party came upon the mail courier, lying beneath a tree, his head pillowed on the sack of mail.

"Ho!" cried his Excellency. "What is this? Is it in such a manner that the King's business is carried on? But never mind," he added hastily as the fellow scrambled to his feet guiltily. "Never mind. Do not disturb yourself. I would like to lie down and rest too. Let us all rest, caballeros, and let us wash some of this dust out of our throats!"

All dismounted.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Boulder Dam Required an Expenditure of \$165,000,000 Before It Was Completed

Boulder dam was built between the rock walls in Black canyon on the Colorado river, that same treacherous torrent which carved out the Grand canyon and which forms the Arizona-Nevada boundary line near Las Vegas, Nev.

Such a project to control the dangerous floods of the Colorado, and to provide against the drouth periods which ensue after its spring-time rush to the gulf with the melting Rocky mountain snows had been conceived many years before it was begun.

Even the location in Black canyon or in Boulder canyon, 18 miles up the river, had been agreed upon by engineers. But there was no way of financing the project, which cost \$165,000,000, until the demand for power in the rapidly growing southern California cities and the intermediate area made it feasible.

It is to be paid for entirely out of earnings. Actual work on the main project was completed in five years, two years less than anticipated. At times there were more than 5,000 workmen employed in the night-and-day operations, and trucks, machinery and other equipment of unheard-of proportions were built just for the project.

The dam face is 726 feet high.

From a bottom thickness of 660 feet it tapers to a top thickness of 45 feet, and this mass of solid concrete has pushed back the waters of the Colorado to form Lake Mead, the largest artificial body of water in the world. It is 115 miles in length, will attain a maximum depth of 585 feet, and varies in width from the narrow Boulder canyon gorge which separates the two main lake sections to expanses of water many miles across. Its fjord-marked shoreline eventually will be 550 miles long.

Origin of the "Annie Oakley"

According to "American Tramp and Underworld Slang," edited by Godfrey Irwin, the phrase "Annie Oakley" means a free ticket or pass to an amusement or entertainment. The passes were punched with holes to prevent their being sold as regular tickets and to prevent money being refunded if the show did not go on, as is customary with paid admissions. Thus, they resemble the cards that were used for targets, after the famous rifle shooter, Annie Oakley, finished shooting at them. Annie Oakley performed with the Buffalo Bill circus for 17 years. The term originated in the circus world, but is now included in common slang.