

Our Weekly Serial Story Installment

Mistress of Monterey

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WNU Service

CHAPTER XXVII—Continued

The priests at Mission Carmelo were shocked and horrified when La Gobernadora was delivered to them, no longer hysterically screaming as when she left the presidio, but cold and icy, sitting regally before the bewildered soldier on his horse. If she had been as the Governor had last seen her, good Fray Fermín would have feared her less, and thrown her to the tender mercies of the matron of the monjera for discipline.

But this cold haughty queen, who held her head so high and comported herself like a prisoner of state was someone to be feared.

So they put her quietly into the monjera, which Junipero Serra had long ago called a dove-cote . . . and there, through the long spring days, she lived with the Indian girls, under the chaperonage of the ancient Dona Maria. Dona Maria took a certain grim pleasure in watching over the proud Gobernadora, and though she did not exceed her duties in regard to her, she did not neglect any discipline which she considered necessary. Eulalia wove and sewed, sang psalms and prayed, outwardly as quiet as the stupidest Indian girl.

But when she lay at night on the pallet they had made for her on the floor, with a barred window high above her head, she would cram the coarse sheet into her mouth to keep from screaming. She boiled and seethed with rage, despair, outrage. Sometimes it was directed against the Governor, then it turned most bitterly against herself.

"Fool! Fool!" she muttered to herself. "Silly fool, to allow this to happen to me! Al, Dios! Madre de Dios!"

There was one rule she refused to obey. And that was to attend the masses at the church. When this duty was urged upon her, she was silent, but drew her brows together dangerously. Then the priests and the matron were glad to leave her alone.

One day the Fray Presidente called for her, and Dona Maria escorted her to his quarters. She stood uncompromisingly stiff before him, but he motioned her to a chair.

"Be seated, Senora la Gobernadora," he murmured.

Eulalia smiled at the title. In the monjera she had been simply Dona Eulalia.

The father leaned back and looked at her curiously.

"I have been studying you since you have been here, my daughter," he said, "and I must say that I have found your conduct most exemplary."

Eulalia inclined her head. He continued. "You have been docile, obedient, silent amid a discipline that must have been a severe punishment to you. And I should say that you have been very brave. Now, I do not know what the private difficulties are between you and his Excellency. I have heard, of course, of the events that led to your being brought here. Not officially, for his Excellency did not communicate them to me. But I can not help feeling that there is some grave misunderstanding between you that caused you to . . . to do as you did."

Eulalia leaned toward him, her hands gripping the arms of the chair. "Al, Padre mio," she breathed, "if you only knew . . ."

But the priest silenced her. "I was going to say that I am sure the fault does not lie with you, whatever it is. For you have behaved under this punishment only as one who suffers unjustly, and is innocent of wrongdoing."

Eulalia leaned back and stared at him breathlessly. "As your spiritual father, I tell you this. And as the spiritual father of his Excellency, Don Pedro, I must speak to him as I have spoken to you."

"Ah, no!" she cried suddenly.

Then at the surprised expression on the priest's face, she controlled herself hastily.

"You think, then," she said haltingly, "that perhaps Don Pedro's conduct is . . ."

"Extraordinary, to say the least," Eulalia smiled a secret smile of triumph.

She rose.

"Is that all, Father?" she asked meekly.

"That is all, for the present. But I am going to ask you one thing. Come to the early mass Sunday."

"Very well."

When, on the next Sunday, she entered the church with the Indian women she was trembling nervously. No comfortable chair was placed for her, as when she had been there before, and she needs must stand on the cold dirt floor, and kneel upon it, without any cushion. With her head wrapped in a coarse black rebozo, her face shone out, white and drawn with the strain of her incarceration. Dona Maria looked at her and compressed her lips.

"I am afraid for that one," she thought to herself. "She looks ill."

With shaking knees and voice, Eulalia followed the service. Her thoughts flew back to the first time she had taken part in the services in the church of Mission San Carlos.



He Lifted Her in His Arms.

los, and Junipero Serra . . . She bent her head.

There at her feet, actually beneath her where she stood, lay his bones.

Junipero Serra, Junipero Serra! She nearly screamed the words aloud. Through the wood of his rough coffin, through the dirt that covered him, his eyes seemed to stare at her reproachfully, blazing at her from fleshless sockets . . . The strength of pride and will that had kept her suffering nerves in leash these two long months deserted her, and weeping hysterically, she collapsed on Junipero Serra's tomb.

When the Governor reached the presidio, almost the first report he had was from Angustias who told him accusingly that La Gobernadora, imprisoned in the monjera at Carmel, had been very ill, but was now better.

"No wonder," snorted the old woman. "With no decent food or clothes. I went over to Carmel several times to brush her hair, and that old beldame, Maria, wouldn't let me!"

It was his first impulse to run to her swiftly. Suddenly, more than anything in the world, he wished to hold her in his arms, to comfort her as though she were a little girl.

His flower, his Eulalia! Why, it was because she was such a spirited, fiery little thing that he had fallen in love with her and married her. And after he had married her, he had spoiled her, and been away from her too long; was her fiery spirit broken after these two long months in the monjera to which he had sentenced her?

He sent a messenger to her to tell her to come to him as soon as she was able.

For he could not trust himself to go to her.

And Eulalia, in the austere monjera, wept.

Suddenly, to her, nothing seemed so desirable as to be in her husband's arms, wherever he might go, whatever he might be.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Waiting restlessly for Eulalia to come to him, Don Pedro rode out to his vineyard in the bright spring morning. He left his horse and walked alone among the green vines. Tenderly he looked at them, admiring their robust growth, touching a tendril here, stroking a glossy leaf there. He knelt down on the earth beside a young vine and picked a bit of soil up in his fingers, as was his habit.

Over him the sky was unusually blue for this coastal region, and the sun was high and hot. A little in the distance he could see his orchard, some of the trees in early green, some still rosy with blossoms. And where the land was not cultivated it bloomed with wild-flowers.

"California!" he breathed. "She has given herself to me like a woman. Give her smiles and her tears and fruits of her body. I shall not leave such a fruitful mistress."

A single horse and rider came rapidly toward the vineyard. It was Eulalia.

Pedro Fages rose to his feet and looked about him.

"The vines are young," he murmured. "Next spring they will be young again. Ten springs . . . a score of springs, and they will still be young. But Eulalia . . ." He watched, almost in fear, as she slipped lithely from her horse and came toward him, at first slowly, then as she caught sight of him when he stood upright, in a little run, holding up her skirts, laughing like a girl, shading her eyes with her hand.

"But Eulalia is young now!" he cried to himself. "Ten springs, a score of springs . . . and then . . . NO!" Suddenly he brushed the soil of California from his fingers and sprang toward her. Dimly he noticed that her feet crushed the young vines as she ran.

"Pedro! My Pedro!" She sank at his feet in the dirt, laughing, weeping. "Pedro, oh, my Pedro!"

He lifted her in his arms, then put her on her feet, and knelt before her, swinging off his sombrero. He clasped her knees, looking up into her face. "Eulalia, my dear, my flower . . . you are beautiful, and pale. You have suffered . . ." He kissed her little shoe, and noticed the pungency of the vines she had crushed.

She pulled him upright to her, and took his face between her hands. "Pedro, my great bear, you are so brave, so strong . . . so cruel to me . . ."

"I am a great fool!" He groaned, straining her to him. "Eulalia, I have something to tell you. I am resigning as Governor of the Californias, and . . ."

"And?" she exclaimed, flushing suddenly, radiantly, "and we are going away from here . . . back to Mexico . . . Spain?"

Over her head he looked at the hills, the sky, the distant mountains, the sea, the orchards, the beloved vineyard. Tears filled his eyes and blurred the scene.

"Yes . . . away from here," he said.

CHAPTER XXIX

Triumphantly Eulalia sailed on the first ship that put out from Monterey, with the two children and Angustias. From the shore Pedro Fages watched the ship as far as he could see it, then turned and rode madly to the Mission Carmelo. He went into the little church, and kneeling by the tomb of Junipero Serra talked with his old friend.

It would be a year before his successor would arrive. And the time was all too short in which to say his farewells to the land he had loved so faithfully, so he had hastened first to the old missionary.

He spent the year putting his affairs in order, tending, with an aching heart, his trees and vines.

And at the end of the year his successor came. On board the old San Carlos arrived his old friend Capitan Romeu, who had persuaded Eulalia so long ago to come to California.

A few days later the San Carlos was due to sail. On that same day the great Spanish explorer Malaspina put the frigate Descubierto into the harbor of Monterey. Those on shore watched her launch a longboat among the frisking whales.

When the long-boat landed there was a bundle wrapped in sail cloth.

"A dead sailor," said the captain. "We wish to bury him ashore."

So he was buried. Pedro Fages and the new Governor of the Californias paused by his grave on their way to the beach from where Don Pedro was to be rowed to the San Carlos. They examined the slab of oakwood that bore his epitaph.

"John Graham, a seaman. Born in Boston, Massachusetts . . ."

"Our first American," murmured Romeu.

Pedro Fages looked east across the mountains. In his mind's eye he saw higher ranges of mountains, deserts, prairies, rivers, more mountains and great inland lakes. And across that country, men hastening to the call of the siren, California, and her golden lure.

"You are right," he said, "our first. But not, O Governor of all the Californias, our last."

Then he hastened to the waiting lancha and, turning his back resolutely on the land, was rowed to the waiting San Carlos. Soon the sails filled and Romeu, watching on the shore, saw the gallant old paquebot, which had borne Pedro Fages to California, slowly turn with the tide to bear him away.

(THE END)

SACRIFICE By MYRA A. WINGATE

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HIS name was Baggs, though Rags would have been more appropriate. He was sadly in need of a bath, a shave, and a haircut, was Baggs. Youth would never again be his, yet, even in approaching age, fortune had come to him on the wings of the storm. There were blisters on the leathery palms from long hours of handling the snow shovel, and in his pocket a \$5 bill, product of his own painful toil. It meant food and warmth for several days to come, and beyond that Baggs did not think.

He stopped in a doorway as a police officer strolled along. The instinct for freedom was strong in his breast, and he had his reasons for avoiding notice from the watchful eyes of the law.

Isabel Morrison passed his shelter, hastening toward her room in a cheap boarding house, down a side street. Baggs' eye appraised and labeled her "country-bred," by signs as unmistakable as those that proclaim the city-bred to the villagers.

Baggs had come from the country himself, in the long ago, every whit as buoyant and hopeful as this girl. The association of ideas caused him a vague discomfort of mind. He stood shivering against the wall, waiting for the officer to pass. His breath caught convulsively in his throat at the thought of four smothering walls.

Isabel came back to the crossing in front of the doorway. She hugged tightly under her arm the paper bag containing her cheap and tasty supper of rolls and hot dogs, while she fumbled in her pocketbook for a few pennies to buy the evening papers from a newsie. The "Help Wanted" columns were of grave interest to her.

Her cheeks were pink, and tiny, curly tendrils escaped from under the close hat. Her eyes were bright with the hope of the young, and this in spite of the fact that she was down to her last five dollars.

While the newsboy pocketed from her paper bag a still warm roll with its enclosed, spicy morsel. On a winter's night what worker would not share with another?

"Aw, gee, lady! I call that white," said the boy, his eyes glistening.

"Two left," laughed Isabel. "And what lady would eat three?"

Baggs laughed, in sympathy with the newsboy and the girl. It was sheltered in the doorway and he still lingered. He had no home, nor even a cheap room down a side street, though he knew where he could spend the night for a few cents.

Fully 15 minutes had elapsed when the man emerged once more. His breathing was better for the rest and he could move briskly.

Crossing the street, retracing her steps, came Isabel. The color and the smile were gone from her face. As she looked searchingly about the spot where she had stood with the newsboy, her eyes were wide and anxious. She touched them with her handkerchief, but when she saw old Baggs looking at her, she tried to appear composed and indifferent.

"Lost something, young lady?" he asked.

"Nothing of importance," she answered bravely. Then her trouble overcame her dignity. "Oh, yes, I have. I've lost a \$5 bill and it was all I had. It had to last me until I found work. You did not see anyone pick it up? I must have lost it here, where I bought the papers."

Baggs knew there wasn't a chance in the world that she would ever find it. He hesitated a pardonable moment, while visions of food and warmth tempted him. He had had very little of either in the past two weeks. A life, young, good and beautiful was weighed in the scales against a life old and worthless and ugly—and the decision went against him.

"Why, lady, I picked it up myself," he lied blithely. "Lucky you happened to come along. Here it is."

He drew it from his pocket and handed it to her. Her face lighted with relief.

"You ought to have part of it," she said quickly, her eyes noting his rags. "If you'll wait until I change it—"

"Just earned one myself," he told her. "Shovelin'. Keep it all, girl. You'll need it."

Nodding in answer to her eager thanks, he slouched away, hands deep in his bottomless pockets, pondering what he might do.

Dark was coming down as he went cautiously back to his gloomy hallway. He threw down the newspapers and burrowed among them for such comfort as he could find. The drowsiness increased. He grew warm and light, and drifted slowly away—away. He did not return.

Found in Eastern Alps

The yellow primrose, sometimes called the cowslip in Europe, is a common wild flower, says Nature Magazine. Primula veris is one of the characteristic flowers of the eastern Alps, where it proves its cosmopolitan character by adapting itself to mountain conditions. This hardy primrose also is fitted for rock garden planting.