

# The Pride of Palomar

By PETER B. KYNE

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For the first time in sixty years, Pablo Artelan, the majordomo of the Rancho Palomar, was troubled of soul at the approach of winter. Old Don Miguel Farrel had observed signs of mental travail in Pablo for a month past, and was at a loss to account for them. He knew Pablo possessed one extra pair of boots which young Don Miguel had bequeathed him when the Great White Father at Washington had summoned the boy to the war in April of 1917, three chambray shirts in an excellent state of repair, half of a fat steer jerked, a full bag of Bayo beans, and a string of red chilli-peppers pendant from the rafters of an adobe shack which Pablo and his wife, Carolina, occupied rent free. Certainly (thought old Don Miguel) life could hold no problems for one of Pablo's race thus pleasantly situated.

Coming upon Pablo this morning, as the latter sat in his favorite seat under the catalpa tree just outside the wall of the ancient adobe compound, where he could command a view of the white wagon-road winding down the valley of the San Gregorio, Don Miguel decided to question his ancient retainer.

**Mourns for Young Son**  
"My good Pablo," he queried, "what has come over thee of late? Thou art of a mien as sorrowful as that of a sick steer. Can it be that thy stomach refuses longer to digest thy food? Come; permit me to examine thy teeth. Yes, by my soul; therein lies the secret. Thou hast a toothache and decline to complain, thinking that, by thy silence, I shall be saved a dentist's bill." But Pablo shook his head in negation. "Come!" roared old Don Miguel. "Open thy mouth!"

Pablo rose creakily and opened a mouth in which not a tooth was missing. Old Don Miguel made a most minute examination, but failed to discover the slightest evidence of deterioration. "Blood of the devil!" he cried, disgusted beyond measure. "Out with thy secret! It has annoyed me for a month."

"The ache is not in my teeth, Don Miguel. It is here." And Pablo laid a swarthy hand upon his torso. "There is a sadness in my heart, Don Miguel. Two years has Don Mike been with the soldiers. Is it not time that he returned to us?"

Don Miguel's aristocratic old face softened. "So that is what disturbs thee, my Pablo?" Pablo nodded miserably, seated himself, and resumed his task of fashioning the hondo of a new rawhide riata.

**Even Quail Migrate**  
"It is a very dry year," he complained. "Never before have I seen December arrive ere the grass in the San Gregorio was green with the October rains. Everything is burned; the streams and the springs have dried up, and for a month I have listened to hear the quail call on the hillsides yonder. But I listen in vain. The quail have moved to another range."

"Well, what of it, Pablo?" "How our beloved Don Mike enjoyed the quail-shooting in the fall! Should he return now to the Palomar, there will be no quail to shoot." He wagged his gray head sorrowfully. "Don Mike will think that, with the years, laziness and ingratitude have descended upon old Pablo. Truly, Satan afflicts me." And he cursed with great depth of feeling—in English.

"Yes, poor boy," old Don Miguel agreed; "he will miss more than the quail-shooting when he returns—if he should return. They sent him to Siberia to fight the Bolsheviks."

"What sort of country is this

where Don Mike slays our enemy?" Pablo queried.

**Always Winter There**  
"It is always winter there, Pablo. It is inhabited by a wild race of men with much whiskers."

"Ah, our poor Don Mike! And he a child of the sun!" "He but does his duty," old Don Miguel replied proudly. "He adds to the fame of an illustrious family, noted throughout the centuries for the gallantry of its warriors."

"A small comfort, Don Miguel, if our Don Mike comes not again to those that love him."

"Pray for him," the old Don suggested piously.

Fell a silence. Then, "Don Miguel, yonder comes one over the trail from El Toro." Don Miguel gazed across the valley to the crest of the hill. There, against the sky-line, a solitary horseman showed. Pablo cupped his hands over his eyes and gazed long and steadily.

"It is Tony Moreno," he said, while the man was still a mile distant. "I know that scuffling cripple of a horse he rides."

Don Miguel seated himself on the bench beside Pablo and awaited the arrival of the horseman. As he drew nearer, the Don saw that Pablo was right.

"Now, what news does that vagabond bear?" he muttered. "Assuredly he brings a telegram; otherwise the devil himself could not induce that lazy wastrel to ride twenty miles."

**Telegram Received**  
"Of a truth you are right, Don Miguel. Tony Moreno is the only man in El Toro who is forever out of a job, and the agent of the telegraph company calls upon him always to deliver messages of importance."

With the Don, he awaited, with vague apprehension, the arrival of Tony Moreno. As the latter pulled his sweating horse up before them, they rose and gazed upon him questioningly. Tony Moreno, on his part, doffed his shabby sombrero with his right hand and murmured courteously,

"Buenas tardes, Don Miguel." Pablo he ignored. With his left hand, he caught a yellow envelope as it fell from under the hat.

"Good-afternoon, Moreno," Don Miguel returned his salutation with a gravity he felt incumbent upon one of his station to assume when addressing a social inferior.

"You bring me a telegram?" He spoke in English, for the sole purpose of indicating to the messenger that the gulf between them could not be spanned by the bridge of their mother tongue. He suspected Tony Moreno very strongly of having stolen a yearling from him many years ago.

Tony Moreno remembered his manners, and dismounted before handing Don Miguel the telegram. "The delivery charges?" Don Miguel queried courteously.

"Nothing, Don Miguel," Moreno's voice was strangely subdued. "It is a pleasure to serve you, senior."

"You are very kind," and Don Miguel thrust the telegram, unopened, into his pocket. "However," he continued, "it will please me, Moreno, if you accept this slight token of my appreciation." And he handed the messenger a five-dollar bill. The don was a proud man, and disliked being under obligation to the Tony Morenos of this world. Tony protested, but the don stood his ground, silently insistent, and, in the end, the other pouched the bill, and rode away. Don Miguel seated himself once more beside his retainer and drew forth the telegram.

**Bad News Received**

"It must be evil news," he

murmured, with the shade of a tremor in his musical voice; "otherwise, that fellow could not have felt so much pity for me that it moved him to decline a gratuity."

"Read, Don Miguel!" Pablo croaked. "Read!"

Don Miguel read. Then he carefully folded the telegram and replaced it in the envelope; as deliberately, he returned the envelope to his pocket. Suddenly his hands gripped the bench, and he trembled violently.

"Don Mike is dead?" old Pablo queried softly. He possessed all the acute intuition of a primitive people.

Don Miguel did not reply; so presently Pablo turned his head and gazed up into the master's face. Then he knew—his fingers trembled slightly as he returned to work on the hondo, and, for a long time, no sound broke the silence save the song of an oriole in the catalpa tree.

Suddenly, the sound for which old Pablo had waited so long burst forth from the sage-clad hillside. It was a cock quail calling, and, to the majordomo, it seemed to say: "Don Mike! Come home! Don Mike! Come home!"

"Ah, little truant, who has told you that you are safe?" Pablo cried in agony. "For Don Mike shall not come home—no, never any more!"

His Indian stoicism broke at last; he clasped his hands and, sobbing aloud,

it will require about 30 days to complete this kiln and when finished it will mean that the company has six kilns in operation.

Yes; it was true. It was from Washington, and signed by the adjutant-general; it informed Don Miguel Jose Farrel, with regret, that his son, First Sergeant Miguel one Maria Federico Noriega Farrel, Number 755,438, had been killed in action in Siberia on the fourth instant.

"At least," the old don murmured, "he died like a gentleman. Had he returned to the Rancho Palomar, he could not have continued to live like one. Oh, my son, my son!"

He rose blindly and groped his way along the wall until he came to the insect gate leading into the patio; like a stricken animal retreating to its lair, he sought the privacy of his old-fashioned garden, where none might intrude upon his grief.

**MILL AT DALLAS CLOSES**  
Dallas, Or., Dec. 23.—The big mill of the Willamette Valley Lumber company closed down Saturday evening, December 23, and will remain in that condition until January 2. This gave about 170 employes a chance to observe the holidays in any way they chose. The planing mill and shipping department remained open, keeping about 50 men at work, and only closing on Christmas day. Present indications point strongly to the resumption of work at the company's logging camp at Black Rock shortly after Christmas. The camp has been closed for about two weeks on account of the snow, which at one time had reached a depth of three feet. A crew is now at work constructing a new dry kiln which is to be 100x15 feet in size with a capacity of 15,000 feet of lumber each eight hours. It is estimated that

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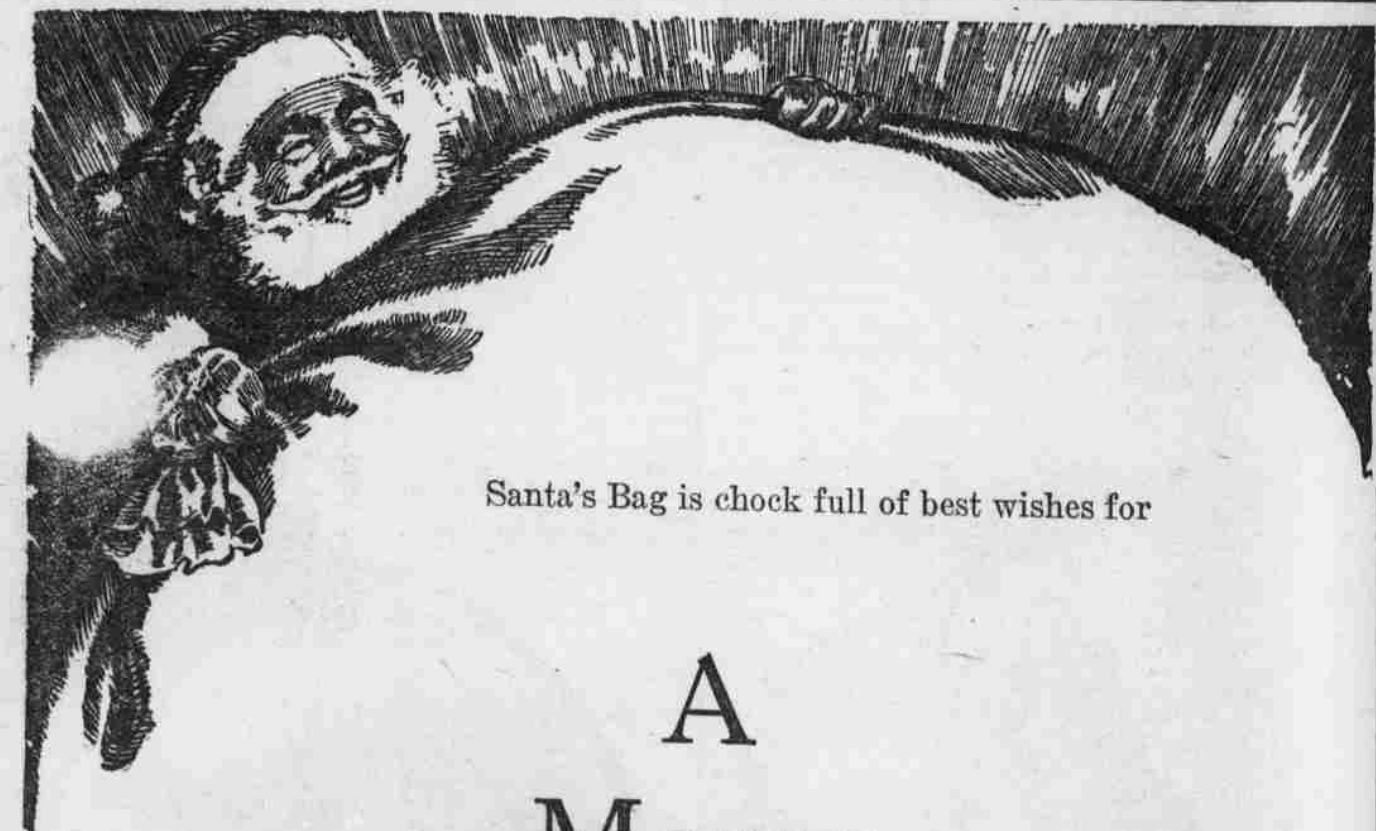
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