

THE ROSE DAWN

17.

one long main street was unpaved, unimproved. All its sidewalks were of wood; and there were no sidewalks except in the "centres of commerce, wealth, and fashion." The buildings in its business part were mostly one-story wooden affairs that pretended to be two-story by means of false fronts. There were, however, a number of pleasing variations, such as a four-storied brick structure with a tower and a loud-belled clock, called the Clock Building. The bank occupied part of its ground floor. All the big men had their offices upstairs; and on its upper floor was located the County Library. There were also a number of wide, deep overgrown old-fashioned gardens with square cupolaed houses—places whose owners had refused to succumb to commercial expansion. Also remained a number of adobe structures with red-tiled roofs, houses that had been there since the earliest Spanish days. Some of these were still occupied by native Spanish California families; but most of the few still remaining on Main Street had become Chinese laundries. Near the head of Main Street, and a block apart, were two hotels. One, called the San Antonio, was three-storied, of brick, sat directly on the street, and had a wooden awning that extended over the sidewalk. The other, called the Fremont, was a huge rambling affair of wooden construction, with broad verandas. It occupied the centre of an extensive garden of palms, rubber, magnolia, and eucalyptus trees, and a great profusion of flowers of both common and rare species. Vines had covered it and shaded it and glorified it with roses, with passion flower, with wistaria, with honeysuckle and many other sweet or brilliant blooms. A half dozen Chinamen were continuously engaged in watering and tending its lawns and gardens. Visitors from the East who had been there more than two weeks knew of a great many especial features to show the newer comers. Such as the black rose; or the LaMarque, whose stem was six inches in diameter; or the cork tree; or the camphor or bay trees, whose leaves you crushed and smelled. And of course they must eat a ripe olive off the tree:—and go around with a very puckered mouth the rest of the morning! You swept into these grounds on a curving, hospitably wide gravelled road and hitched your horse to a heavy rail made of iron pipe.