

those passionate Spanish songs with a peculiar throbbing cadence, which he emphasized by sharply ringing his spurs.

These Californian scoundrels are invariably light hearted; crime cannot overshadow the exhilaration of out-door life, remorse and gloom are banished like clouds before this perennially sunny clime.

As the soft, full tones of my bandit died in distance, I went for Kaweah, and rode rapidly westward in the opposite direction, bringing up soon in the outskirts of Millerton, just as the last gamblers were closing up their little games, and about the time the drunk were conveying one another home.

Kaweah being stabled, I went to the hotel, an excellent and orderly establishment, where a colored man of mild manners gave me supper and made me at home by gentle conversation, promising at last to wake me early, and bidding me good night at my room door with the tones of an old friend.

I think his soothing spirit may partly account for the genuinely profound sleep into which I quickly fell, and which held me fast bound, until his hand on my shoulder and "Half past four, sir," called me back, and renewed the currents of consciousness.

After we had had our breakfast, Kaweah and I forded the San Joaquin, and I at once left the road, determined to follow a mountain trail which led toward Mariposa.

The trail proved a good one to travel, of smooth, soft surface, and pleasant in its diversity of ups and downs, and with rambling curves which led through open regions of brown hills, whose fern and grass were ripened to a common yellow brown, then among park-like slopes, crowned with fine oaks, and occasional pine woods, the ground frequently covering itself with clumps of such shrubs as chaparral, and the never-enough-admired manzanita.

Yet I think I never saw such facilities for an ambuscade. I imagined the path went out of its way to thread every thicket, and the very trees grouped themselves with a view to highway robbery.

I soon, though, got tired looking out for my Spaniards, and became assured of having my ride to myself when I studied the trail, and found that Kaweah's were the first tracks of the day.

Riding thus in the late summer along the Sierra foothills, one is constantly impressed with the climatic peculiarities of the region. It is as if our August should grow rich and ripe, through cloudless days and glorious warm nights, on till February, and then wake as from sleep, to break out in the bloom of May.

I was delighted to ride thus alone and expose myself, as one uncovers a sensitized photographic plate, to be influenced.

Behind me in distance stretched the sere plain where Kaweah's run saved me. To the west, fading out into warm, blank distance, lay the great valley of San Joaquin, into which, descending by sinking curves, were rounded hills, with sunny brown slopes softened as to detail by a low clinging bank of milky air.

Nor was there any element of incongruity at the *rancheria*, where I dismounted to rest shortly after noon. A few sleepy Indians lay on their backs dreaming; the good-humored, stout squaws nursing papposes, or lying outstretched upon red blankets. The agreeable harmony was not alone from the Indian summer in their blood, but in part as well from the features of their dress and facial expression. Their clothes, of Caucasian origin, quickly fade out into utter barbarism, toning down to warm, dirty umbers, never failing to be relieved here and there by ropes of blue and white beads, or head-band and girdle of scarlet cloth. I saw one wo-

man, of splendid mould, soundly sleeping upon her back, a blanket covering her from the waist down in ample folds, her bare body and large full breasts kindled into bronze under streaming light; the arms flung out wide and relaxed; the lips closed with grave compression, and about the eyes and full throat an air of deep, eternal sleep. She might have been a casting in metal but for the rich hot color in her lips and cheeks.

Toward the late afternoon, trotting down a gentle forest slope, I came in sight of a number of ranche buildings grouped about a central open space. A small stream flowed by the outbuildings, and wound among chaparral-covered spurs below. Considerable crops of grain had been gathered into a corral, and a number of horses were quietly straying about. Yet, with all the evidences of considerable possessions, the whole place had an air of suspicious mock-repose. Riding into the open square, I saw that one of the buildings was a store, and to this I rode, tying Kaweah to the piazza post.

I thought the whole world slumbered when I beheld the sole occupant of this country store, a red-faced man in pantaloons and shirt, who lay on his back upon a counter fast asleep, the handle of a revolver grasped in his right hand.

It seemed to me if I were to wake him up a little too suddenly he might misunderstand my presence and do some accidental damage; so I stepped back and poked Kaweah, making him jump and clatter his hoofs, and at once the proprietor sprung to the door, looking flustered and uneasy.

I asked him if he could accommodate me for the afternoon and night, and take care of my horse; to which he replied, in a very leisurely manner, that there was a bed, and something to eat, and hay, and that if I was inclined to take the chances I might stay.

Being in mind to take the chances, I did stay, and my host walked out with me to the corral, and showed me where to get Kaweah's hay and grain.

I loafed about for an hour or two, finding that a Chinese cook was the only other human being in sight, and then concluded to pump the landlord. A half-hour's trial thoroughly disgusted me, and I gave it up as a bad job.

I did, however, learn that he was a man of Southern birth, of considerable education, which a brutal life and depraved mind had not sufficed fully to obliterate. He seemed to care very little for his business, which indeed was small enough, for during the time I spent there not a single customer made his appearance.

The stock of goods I observed on examination to be chiefly fire-arms, every manner of gambling apparatus, and liquors; the few pieces of stuffs, barrels and boxes of groceries appeared to be disposed rather as ornaments than for actual sale.

From each of the man's trousers pockets protruded the handle of a derringer, and behind the counter were arranged in convenient position two or three double-barrelled shot-guns.

I remarked to him that he seemed to have a handily arranged arsenal, at which he regarded me with a cool, quiet stare, polished the handle of one of his derringers upon his trousers, examined the percussion cap with great deliberation, and then, with a nod of the head to convey great force, said, "You don't live in these parts," a fact for which I felt not unthankful.

The man drank brandy freely and often, and at intervals of about half an hour called to his side a plethoric old cat named "Gospel," stroked her with nervous rapidity, swearing at the same time in so *distract* and unconscious a manner that he seemed mechanically talking to himself.

Whoever has travelled on the West Coast has not