

"Hot day," he announced. "Cunnel go catch thin coat. That one too thick. I fix um on bed. You go puttum on."

## II

IN THE meantime the mounting sun was beginning to burn away the layer of high fog that had overhung the town. Each night, at this time of year, this blanket crept in from the sea and gathered out of nothing in the coolness of dawn. To one in the town it exactly resembled heavy rain clouds. Indeed, it was always difficult to persuade the tourist that his umbrella and mackintosh were unnecessary, that with absolute certainty it could be stated that those threatening, lowering clouds contained not one drop of rain. To one who had arisen early enough to have ridden up the Sur, it would have looked like a tumbled, shining silver sea through which thrust the peaks of higher hills. From either point of view it appeared a solid and permanent bit of weather that would take some time and doing to alter.

Nevertheless, about nine o'clock a weird brilliance appeared all at once to permeate the air. The heavy, inert dead clouds seemed suddenly infused with life. A glimpse of overhead blue was hinted and instantly obliterated. A phantom half-suggestion of a mountain peak in full sunshine showed for a moment through a gauze of white misty light. Then between two minutes simultaneously, all over the cup of the heavens, the dark clouds thinned to a veil. The veil was rent in two, twenty, a hundred places. It dissolved. A few shreds, drifting down a new freshness that arose from the sea, alone remained and they melted to nothing before one's eyes. Magically the blue sky was clear, and the sun was sending down its showers of golden warmth. The semi-circle of mountains rose hard and clear in the sparkling air; the sea twinkled with a thousand eyes; the surf lay white along the yellow shore. And none more foolish than the distrustful tourist compelled to convey past concealed contempts his umbrella and his mackintosh.

The town of Arguello began then, as it does now, in a wharf; a long wharf that reached a half mile to find its deep water. It ended indeterminately in open country after two miles. Its