

for the time being, of his air of dictator and watchful ambition, a man of the world taking an enthusiastic part in the hilarity of the hour, but never sacrificing his dignity by assuming the rôle of chief entertainer, there grew within him a dull sense of inferiority; he felt, rather than knew, that neither the city of Mexico nor gratified ambitions would give him that assured ease, that perfection of breeding, that calm sense of power, concealing so gracefully the relentless will and the infinite resource, which made this most un-Californian of Californians seem to his Arcadian eyes a being of a higher star. And hatred blazed forth anew.

As the men rose, finally, to go to the drawing-room, he asked Estenega to remain for a moment. "Thou wilt keep thy promise soon, no?" he said, when they were alone.

"What promise?"

"Thy promise to send me as diputado to the next Mexican Congress."

Estenega looked at him reflectively. He had little toleration for the man of inferior brain, and, although he did not underrate his power for mischief, he relied upon his own wit to circumvent him. He had disposed of this one by warning Santa Ana, and he concluded to be annoyed by him no farther. Besides, as a brother-in-law, he would be insupportable except at the long range of mutual unamiability.

"I made you no promise," he said deliberately; "and I shall make you none. I do not wish you in the city of Mexico."

Reinaldo's face grew livid. "You dare to say that to me, and yet would marry my sister?"

"I would, and I shall."

"And yet you would not help her brother?"

"Her brother is less to me than any man with whom I have sat to-night. Build no hope on that. You will stay at Santa Barbara and play the grand seigneur, which suits you very well, or become a prisoner in your own house." And he left the room.