

But if the Colonel had cared to turn around he could have seen the houses of Arguello only a mile away, with the white Mission on the hill, and again the gleam of the sea, where the coast swept back almost at right angles to form the harbour.

The Colonel did not turn around, however. He stood there straight and slim in his long frock coat, with his fine, lean, kindly old face raised to the sun and the breeze, and his white hair stirring softly. The sky was very blue, and in its deeps swung buzzards in wide, stately circles. The air was warm and fragrant, and on it floated the clear liquid songs of the meadow larks and the quick buzzy notes of the quail. The sun's warmth fell softly like an essence in suspension, and the Colonel seemed to himself to be soaking it into his physical being as though it were indeed an ethereal, permeating substance. And the Colonel in his simple old heart found it good and thanked his God.

But now on a sudden he waked as though he had been called, and with an appearance of almost guilty haste he strode down the hill. The two hounds, who had been patiently awaiting his pleasure, yawned, stretched and followed after. The Colonel walked briskly around the house to the front door. To the handle of the bell-pull hung a turkey-feather duster as though left by a careless housemaid. It was there a-purpose, however, as it was there on all the bell-pulls in Southern California; and the Colonel put it to its appointed use on his boots.

He crossed the little hallway in two strides and entered the dining room.

His wife Allie sat already at table behind a silver coffee service beneath which burned an alcohol lamp. She was a small, plump, merry looking woman, with black hair in which appeared no thread of white. Her dress was of heavy fine black silk, relieved with white lace. Its cut was very plain and old-fashioned, but possessed a chic of its own that placed Allie definitely above the class of commonplace, small plump women. Her air was of brisk, amused tolerance, with a background of fine competence. Though she did not wear a bunch of keys at her girdle, one felt that it would have been symbolically appro-