the calm, bland white-clad Chinaman on the doorstep was as blank as still water; yet the sensitive would have distinguished accusation and reproof. Sing Toy had a queue, as did all the Chinamen of those days. It was almost as expressive in some ways as a dog's tail. The rest of Sing Toy remained as immovable as a bronze Buddha, but the tip of his queue wriggled ever so slightly, and in some subtle manner disapproval of all who investigated his domain overcast the day.

Thus roused the Colonel stepped out more briskly. He passed the large stables and their neatly whitewashed corral fences with hardly more than a glance, opened two big swing gates and proceeded with brisk steps between a double row of small houses toward another group of live oaks beyond it and atop a small, flat hill.

But he was not to be permitted to pass unchecked. A bevy of very small brown children swooped down on him noisily, came to a dead halt and an equally dead silence a few paces from him and stared, round-eyed and expectant. They were very handsome children, somewhat grimy, with sketchy garments and bare feet. The Colonel thrust his hands behind the coat-tails of his frock coat and contemplated them gravely. They stared back without either embarrassment or impertinence.

"*Buenas dias, niños,*" observed the Colonel at last.

"*Buenas dias, Don Ricardo!*" returned the little group in chorus.

From this point you are to consider the Colonel as speaking in the soft and beautiful language of California, with a deepening and mellowing of his natural manner. The Colonel continued to survey them for some moments, his blue eyes twinkling, the fine network of lines deepening. The children stared back.

"I will wish you good day," said the Colonel at last, moving as though to pass.

The great soft Spanish eyes about him clouded with dismay, the red full lips drooped at the corners, but the polite chorus came bravely back:

"God be with you, *señor.*"

The Colonel laughed aloud, thrust his hand in his coat-tail