

thing, however; and very much they all wondered what it was that made the handsome, sad Mexican gentleman so anxious to find this Indian.

Felipe wasted weeks in Monterey. Long after he had ceased to hope, he lingered. He felt as if he would like to stay till every ship that had sailed out of Monterey in the last three years had returned. Whenever he heard of one coming into harbour, he hastened to the shore, and closely watched the disembarking. His melancholy countenance, with its eager, searching look, became a familiar sight to every one; even the children knew that the pale gentleman was looking for some one he could not find. Women pitied him, and gazed at him tenderly, wondering if a man could look like that for anything save the loss of a sweetheart. Felipe made no confidences. He simply asked, day after day, of every one he met, for an Indian named Alessandro Assis.

Finally, he shook himself free from the dreamy spell of the place, and turned his face southward again. He went by the route which the Franciscan Fathers used to take, when the only road on the California coast was the one leading from Mission to Mission. Felipe had heard Father Salvierderra say that there were in the neighbourhood of each of the old Missions Indian villages, or families still living. He thought it not improbable that, from Alessandro's father's long connection with the San Luis Rey Mission, Alessandro might be known to some of these Indians. He would leave no stone unturned; no Indian village unsearched; no Indian un-questioned.

San Juan Bautista came first; then Soledad, San Antonio, San Miguel, San Luis Obispo, Santa Inez; and that brought him to Santa Barbara. He had spent two months on the journey. At each of these places he found Indians; miserable, half-starved creatures, most of them. Felipe's heart ached, and he was hot with shame, at their condition. The ruins of the old Mission buildings were sad to see, but the human ruins were sadder. Now Felipe understood why Father Salvierderra's heart had broken, and why his mother had been full of such fierce indignation against the heretic usurpers and despoilers of the estates which the Franciscans once held. He could not understand why the Church had submitted, without fighting, to such indignities and robberies. At every one of the Missions he heard harrowing tales of the sufferings of those Fathers who had clung to their congregations to the last, and died at their posts. At Soledad an old Indian, weeping, showed him the grave of Father Sarria, who had died there of starvation. "He gave us all he had, to the last," said the old man. "He lay on a raw hide on the ground, as we did; and one morning, before he had finished the Mass, he fell forward at the altar and was dead. And when we put him in the grave his body was only bones, and no flesh; he had gone so long without food to give to us."

At all these Missions Felipe asked in vain for Alessandro. They knew very little, these northern Indians, about those in the south, they said. It was seldom one from the southern tribes came northward. They did not understand each other's speech. The more Felipe inquired, and the longer he reflected, the more he doubted Alessandro's having ever gone to Monterey. At Santa Barbara he made a long stay. The Brothers at the College welcomed him hospitably. They had heard from Father Salvierderra the sad story of Ramona, and were distressed, with Felipe, that no traces had been found of her. It grieved Father Salvierderra to the last, they said; he prayed for her daily, but said he could not get any certainty in his spirit of his prayers being heard. Only the day before he died he had said this to Father Francis,

a young Brazilian monk, to whom he was greatly attached.

In Felipe's overwrought frame of mind this seemed to him a terrible omen; and he set out on his journey with a still heavier heart than before. He believed Ramona was dead, buried in some unknown, unconsecrated spot, never to be found; yet he would not give up the search. As he journeyed southward, he began to find persons who had known of Alessandro; and still more, those who had known his father, old Pablo. But no one had heard anything of Alessandro's whereabouts since the driving out of his people from Temecula; there was no knowing where any of those Temecula people were now. They had scattered "like a flock of ducks," one Indian said—"like a flock of ducks after they are fired into. You'd never see all those ducks in any one place again. The Temecula people were here, there, and everywhere, all through San Diego County. There was one Temecula man at San Juan Capistrano, however. The Senor would better see him. He no doubt knew about Alessandro. He was living in a room in the old Mission building.

It was late at night when Felipe reached San Juan Capistrano; but he could not sleep till he had seen this man. Here was the first clue he had gained. He found the man, with his wife and children, in a large corner room opening on the inner court of the Mission quadrangle. There was no light in the place, except the little which came from the fire. "I am sorry I have no candle, Senor," said the man, as he came forward.

"No matter," said Felipe, his hand already at his purse. "I only want to ask you a few questions. You are from Temecula, they tell me."

"Yes, Senor," the man replied in a dogged tone—no man of Temecula could yet hear the word without a pang "I was of Temecula."

"I want to find one Alessandro Assis who lived there. You knew him, I suppose," said Felipe eagerly.

At this moment a brand broke in the smouldering fire, and for one second a bright blaze shot up; only for a second, all was dark again. But the swift blaze had fallen on Felipe's face, and with a start which he could not control, but which Felipe did not see, the Indian had recognised him. "Ha, ha!" he thought to himself. "Senor Felipe Moreno, you come to the wrong house asking for news of Alessandro Assis!" (TO BE CONTINUED)

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