

distinguish—it would have been better to have brought the Island sheep, as always, instead of going afield to this Los Quitos——”

“Fortunately we have Benito with his knowledge of the old days to make up the difference,” said the Colonel. “This rascal Benito,” he addressed the saturnine Manuelo, “would be relieved of all trouble. He could make a delicious *carne* of a burro.”

The Colonel's little convoy had by now succumbed to various temptations and had scattered. Only remained to him Manuelo and two solemn hounds. The former he dismissed. The latter accompanied him on his return journey.

At the edge of the live oak grove he stopped for a moment and looked abroad, removing his Stetson to allow the wandering breeze to play across his high, narrow forehead and to lift his rather long, silky white hair. Beyond the village of his retainers, beyond the wide low barns and sheds and the whitewashed corrals, beyond the green of the Cathedral Oaks, spread the broad acres of the Rancho. Hill after low hill they rolled, oak dotted like a park, green with the grasses of an abundant year or washed bravely with the brilliant colour of flower-masses as though a gigantic brush had been swept across the slopes. At last they climbed into foothills, and then into the milky slate of mountain ramparts against the sun. But the Colonel knew that they climbed those ramparts and descended part way the other side—thirty thousand of them, these acres. In the opposite direction, across the flat of the valley, across the King's Highway, across the waving of a broad tule marsh, was yet another low rim of hills, also oak-dotted like a park. And over their crest the Colonel could make out a flash which was the sea. Beneath the oaks it was safe to vision the cattle slowly gathering for shade—the Colonel's cattle: and he could only have guessed at the number of them. Up in those sagebrush hills shining gray, up in the chaparral of the rampart mountains, sheep were moving slowly like something molten that flows—the Colonel's sheep.

As the Colonel stood his eye rested on only two evidences of human occupation other than his own. Against the base of a