

Patience Sparhawk and Her Times

BOOK I

I

"OH, git up ! Git up ! Did you ever see such an old slug? Billy ! *Will* you git up?"

"What's the use of talking to him?" drawled a soft inactive voice. "You know he never goes one bit faster. What's the difference anyhow?"

"Difference is my mother wants these groceries for supper. We're all out of sugar 'n flour 'n beans, and the men's got to eat."

"Well, as long as he won't go, just be comfortable and don't bother."

"I wish I could be as easy-going as you are, Rosita, but I can't: I suppose it's because I'm not Spanish. Guess I've got some Yankee in me, if I am a Californian." The little girl leaned over the dash-board of the rickety buggy, thumping with her whip-stump the back of the aged nag. Billy was blind, uncertain in the knees, and as languid as any *caballero* that once had sighed at *doña's* feet in these dim pine woods. As far back as Patience could remember he had never broken his record, and his record was two miles an hour. In a few moments she set the whip in the socket with an irritable thump, wound the reins about it, and sat down on the floor beside her companion. For