

# The Miracle of San Juan Bautista



by  
**Madge Morris**

It was on Christmas day it happened—so may be called a Christmas story without violation.

San Juan Bautista was bathed in the full glory of a Christmas sun—the Indian neophytes had bathed in the same.

All resolutely the good padre had conducted the Christmas services unto the least particular and now in the high-walled arena adjoining the church the bull fight was on.

The patio garden was brilliant with its many colored flowers and redolent with the fragrance of them. The great sundial showed it was one and a half past noon. In the patio garden had come the padre, the good Father Anselmo. His back was toward the sundial. His thick, strong white hair divided the blackness of his cap and soutane—a benediction of snow between two flecks of night. It was not time that had bleached Anselmo's locks; he had but reached the strength and prime of middle age.

A solitary black robed figure he stood, gazing out from the beautiful patio garden to the far green valley beyond—upward from which a single round, white column of smoke wafted up and up and up, till it touched the blue of the smiling skies.

The silence of the garden, likewise the contemplation of the priest, were disturbed by a guttural exclamation of surprise and fright. An Indian woman—one of the neophytes—hurried past him. He put out his hand to detain her, but she evaded him and fled from the patio.

The padre turned quickly to see—if he might, what it was that could agitate the stolidity of an Indian.

Among the foliage at the base of the sundial something caught his attention. He stooped to examine it, then touched it to make sure his eyes did not play him a trick. A large crimson flower, flat, broader across than the palms of his two hands, laughed at him from the topmost end of a woody stem. He stooped lower, examining the fact that the root of the sap-  
plication of a smile lurked on his lips when he arose; he was saying softly to himself, "Francisco, thou brave scoundrel, it is thou!" and then, "he must have carried it from Santa Barbara."

The fact that a red flower grew in a garden where was a riot of such color near the whole year round was not of itself a thing to startle or amuse a priest, but the fact of a glowing red poinsettia— which it was—flourishing in the place of his favorite snow-white matilla, which bloomed not natively in the Christmas time, was a different thing.

Father Anselmo was not a superstitious man, notwithstanding the superstitious time and clime in which he dwelt. His quick mind reverted to a day in the spring of the same year when the young Francisco on the very spot had invited Carmela, and he had replied to Francisco, pointing to a great snowy, golden-hearted flower as he spoke: "When the matilla shall blossom red, my son, you may wed Carmela."

Carmela, the beauty of the mission lands; Carmela of the tawny hair that should have been black; Carmela of the fair face that should have been swart.

Well the padre remembered the day on which she was born—scarce fifteen years ago. A sad day it had been; before the sun had made its round her beautiful young mother lay dead and the husband of the beautiful dead woman looking down upon the courageously smiling infant had growled through his set teeth: "Carmela! his hair is gold!" and had impatiently shaken his clenched fist in the direction of the peaceful harbor many leagues away, where passing ships from the outside world anchored at long intervals.

His had laid the babe in Father Anselmo's arms, saying: "Dedicate her to the church," and he had stepped out of the death chamber of his house and gone, no man knew whither.

It was rumored that grief had driven him to mad suicide. Again was it rumored that he had taken ship on an English vessel at the moment of sailing and in a great storm in midocean was swept overboard, together with a young Englishman, who was part owner of the vessel and on his way home to his waiting wife and children. The body of the Englishman had been recovered with a readily gash in the side next the heart, which it was recorded, must have been caused by striking some sharp object on the vessel's side or in the water where he fell. The body of the Mexican was not found.

Carmela inherited his thirty leagues of land and all the kine and horses that grazed thereon. Father Anselmo had given her to the care of her mother's cousin, the rich and powerful Don Ramon, for her bringing up, but never had he lost sight of the trust committed to him. Her land and kine and the horses that had multiplied upon it would come with her to the church.

Thus Carmela's booklet of life was opened for her with love and hate and mystery and treachery and tragedy and death and renunciation already inscribed upon its leaves.

And she, Carmela, laughed and danced and sang, the purest and fairest thing the California sun shone on, with no thought of a future, contrary to the padre's plan-  
gish till that day when Francisco boldly made love to her in the patio garden before the face of the old sundial, within earshot of Father Anselmo himself, and changed all the current of her young vein with his impetuous wooing. Like-  
wise awakened the padre to the realizing it were time she took her vow. It was to be therefore, he knew, his reasoning influence against the unreasoning love of Francisco.

Francisco, the handsome scapegrace, whose knife was as ready to his hand as words were to his tongue; he that gambled many the night till the sun put out the candles, who rode the wildest horses, did the wildest deeds and thrummed his guitar and sang under Carmela's window a song so soft, so sweet and clear the mocking-birds listened to catch the melody of it, and who seldom had a real left

in his pocket when his clothes were paid for.

Yet Father Anselmo loved Francisco well. There was another who loved Francisco; none less was she than the proud daughter of Don Ramon himself, and third cousin to Carmela. And it was the son of Don Ramon—his only but long and bitterly estranged son—that was the famous torador who to-day had pitted himself against the bull—the terrible El Toro Diablo—which he was fighting with its horns unsawed, a thing that had never before been done in the California.

Don Ramon, nursing the unhappiness of his estrangement and long separation from his son, was, nevertheless, among the spectators, watching the combat with hungry eyes.

"These six—the padre, Carmela, Francisco, Don Ramon, his daughter and his son—were the actors in the drama that Christmas day when the miracle came to San Juan Bautista. The hundreds of gorgeously apparelled Californians, the hundred of semi-civilized neophytes, the soldiers from the barracks, the scouts from the mountains, the few Americans, the few English, Germans, French, Russians, Portuguese, each in the garb of his country or calling—all of these were only the background of the show. A murmur of voices, which deepened to a roar of applause, smote upon the padre's ear.

The bull fight was on and the sport waxed great. And pretty Carmela, with Carmela, she was there among them. She had sweetly resisted all the good father's endeavor to make her forget Francisco, even when Francisco had gone away and left the word of his going nor sent back word of his return. But

Francisco, with the confidence of youth, had promised in those first weeks of his absence: "If Francisco had not returned when the vespers ring on Christmas day, I will take my vow."

Father Anselmo knew she would keep her word. The day was here, it lacked but a few hours of the time; Francisco had not come nor sent her word or sign. Yet now as the padre thought of all that rich young beauty and luscious life and love cloistered away forever from the world, he thought it almost a pity. The vestment of the priest does not shut out thought. Thought is free—the only free thing in the boundless universe.

Again a tumult of applause reached the

ear of the padre, and through it and above it pierced the shrill scream of a woman. Father Anselmo walked quickly to the side of the patio next the arena and unlocking a small door in the wall he stepped into the dark narrow opening. At the farther end of it was another door, in the top of which was fixed a white cross. Over and under the arms of the cross the sunlight came into the wall, but penetrated only a few inches into the seven feet depth of adobe.

Only the priest knew of this door; from the arena it appeared but a cross in a niche in the wall. Standing where he was the padre could see while remaining

himself unseen. Let it not be said of Father Anselmo that he looked upon the sanguine sport in secret for the appetite of his pleasure. It was not he

of them gazed securely into his thick hide. They fluttered from his sides and the top of his back as well, and goaded him to bellowing rage. He had many

gashes on his body. His sleek hair was soiled with dust and blood. Five horses he had run through in this fight; with the last one the torador had saved his own life by a second time. It was then that a woman had screamed and he had seen the padre.

The gate swung open, the torador rearing a fresh horse came into the ring again. Again El Toro Diablo tossed his long curving horns and lunged to the battle. A shout greeted the torador.

He flouted his red flag and made his feet and passes; once he gave El Toro Diablo a good spear thrust in the flank, once the tip of a horn ripped the flank of his horse.

Two minutes ago they had plunged through the body of a horse; plowed up the ground beneath it, and hooked it aside. His strength was satanic. He stood in the middle of the arena tossing his head in magnificent defiance at the throng circled above him. The expression of his eyes was terrifyingly human. Such a bull as Jupiter turned himself into, the padre thought. Boldly had it been said of him that he was a devil and no animal at all but in shape, and thus had he been named.

His great neck was covered with the gay fluttering banderillas; the sharp ends

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## RIVERS OF INK AND MUCILAGE USED BY UNCLE SAM

HERE must be a great flowing river of ink annually spilled in Washington, to say nothing of the forests of cedar and mines of lead and graphite used in pencils, and many tons of horses' hoofs and of gum arabic in the clarified form of mucilage," remarked inquiringly a gentleman to a friend in the United States capital the other day.

The gentleman addressed, who happened to be a contractor for Government supplies, replied: "It would be comparatively easy to answer your question as regards one or two departments, but to furnish a grand aggregate total would stump a statistician or expert mathematician in any one of the bureaus."

"The information your question suggests is of local and general interest, but information has never been compiled as the job is incommensurate with the results. However, I happen to have made your query the subject of recent investigation, and I can give you an answer which will be approximately correct. The amount of stationery, etc., used by the different departments is enormous, so much so that if I am a few hundred gross, more or less, out of the way from the official figures it will make little difference.

"In the War Department there are used annually about 5832 gross of pens, or 561,496 pens, 36,500 pencils, 127 quarts of mucilage and 454 quarts of black ink and 3167 bottles of red ink.

"When these figures are digested, the public can draw a conclusion as to what is doing in Washington in only five lines of supplies for Government. The reams of paper and the thousands of envelopes consumed can best be imagined, and it runs into the hundreds of thousands in a year, if not into the millions. The War Department alone uses 550 great gross and 7000 gross of rubber bands.

"The Postoffice Department uses so many rubber bands that it buys by the thousands of pounds in a bunch, and it consumes about 250 pounds of these useful little elastic strips in a year.

"In brief, in evidence of the big quantities of supplies Uncle Sam has to buy for his postal branch, 300,000,000 printed facingslips for general use in the department and in postoffices were asked for this year. This department orders paper by the thousands of reams in a single specification. It uses 3500 dozen of indelible pencils and about 25,000 dozen of 240,000 of the ordinary black and colored pencils, in addition, annually. It buys over 13,325 gross of pens, or close to 2,600,000 pens in a year, and about 300,000 pencilers, each one of which is stamped 'Prop-

erty of the U. S. P. O. Department.' It uses about 12,000 quarts of black ink annually and 1,300,000 pounds of small fatc twine put up in half-pound balls. Over 3500 steel erasers are annually bid for over use of clerks in the postal system. For 2,228,000 black carbon sheets of paper are yearly used, mostly in the money order system.

"In short, the supplies ordered from Washington for use in the Postoffice Department alone keep thousands of operations busy in the various trades all the year round all over the country.

"The furnishing of supplies to the Government of the kind I speak of is a great business in itself. If all the ink used in the executive departments was poured down Pennsylvania avenue at one time the people would have to take to small boats, while the mucilage used would make a good sized pond, for, in addition to that used in the departments in the usual course of business, all of the hundreds of millions of postage stamps annually turned out are gummed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

"Millions of pins are used annually. It has been noticed that almost invariably when these coffee drinkers reach the age of 40 or 45 their eyesight begins to fail, and by the time they get to be 50 years of age they become blind. One is forcibly impressed by the number of blind men that are seen about the streets of the city of Fez, the capital of Morocco. It is invariably attributed to the excessive use of coffee. This opinion has been confirmed by the opinion of European physicians living there.

tacks, used by draftsmen and to tack down blotters, in lots of 3000 dozen at a time.

"The Interior Department is one of the largest in the city and it uses annually 145,000 lead pencils, 825 gross of steel pens, 5000 quarts of black ink and 3500 quarts of mucilage.

"The Treasury Department and the other departments use supplies in relative proportion to the figures I have given you. Supplies of the kind mentioned are ordered by the gross and by the thousand gross in a lump. When it is remembered that these great quantities of supplies are mostly consumed in Washington and are renewed every year, some faint idea may be obtained as to what the grand aggregate amounts to at the close of every fiscal year on June 30."

It is well known that the Moors are inveterate coffee drinkers, especially the merchants, who sit in their bazaars and drink coffee continually during the day. It has been noticed that almost invariably when these coffee drinkers reach the age of 40 or 45 their eyesight begins to fail, and by the time they get to be 50 years of age they become blind. One is forcibly impressed by the number of blind men that are seen about the streets of the city of Fez, the capital of Morocco. It is invariably attributed to the excessive use of coffee. This opinion has been confirmed by the opinion of European physicians living there.

ing the most beautiful of waving, curled venerating material of great dimensions, are utterly neglected because there are no means provided for handling them. There is a fortune in the stripage alone, in one of these forests, under intelligent and economical management. Great limbs, too, aggregating twice the amount of the stem and of equal utility as timber, are allowed to rot untouched where they fall; and last, but not least, not a sign of replanting or of cultivation. First destruction; then abandonment. And in thinking of this, it must be remembered that where mahogany grows, there too grows cocobolo, the wood which is as beautiful as rosewood, dark red, shaded and lined with black, as heavy as boxwood and so valuable that it is used only for the most exclusive purposes. Rubber trees also are common, with an indigenous in a mahogany forest, and are treated in the same thoughtful way as is everything else.

The tools employed in lumbering are of the most primitive—an ax of a strange unwieldy form, a two-man saw, some blocks and tackle, and oxen or bullocks for power. Not a derrick, a steam hoist or a sawmill within a week's journey; not even rollers, except of the roughest. And yet individual trees are worth what it would cost to build an industrial (narrow gauge) railway to some large stream. And for fuel, the tops of the felled trees alone would furnish enough and to spare.

When felled, squared and cut into lengths, the sticks are hauled by cattle, inch by inch, to the nearest stream which is large enough to float them down high water. This hauling must usually be in the rainy season in order (save the mark) that the ground shall be slippery and furnish its own lubrication. The cattle are a sad lot, rather small, but well looking enough when they are first set to work; but what a change in the two months! Galls to skin and bone and covered with worms and open sores where the eggs of insects have been deposited and nurtured. These wretched beasts typify and express the whole mistaken method as nothing else could.

The smaller streams, which the logs first enter, are mere dry cracks in the country, with an occasional stagnant pool, during most of the dry season, but when the rains have lasted for a fortnight they become torrents and, except the very smallest, will float the largest logs. Exactly as in our own pipe and trench forests, the logs gradually find their way to some river where there is less current and more water, and here they are caught by a "boom," collected into rafts, and so to the sea and the hold of a ship.

THE BELLOW OF EL TORO DIABLO ENDED IN A SHRILL QUAVERING WAIL