

gentlemen in California," returned that lady, oracularly.

It was nearly nine when Essex left the restaurant, and passing down Kearny street for a few blocks, turned to his right and began to mount the ascending sidewalk that led to his lodgings. These were in a humble and unfashionable neighborhood in Bush street. The house was of a kind whence gentility had departed. It stood back on the top of two small terraces, up which mounted two wooden flights of stairs, one with a list to starboard so pronounced that Essex had, once or twice, while ascending, thought the city in the throes of an earthquake.

The darkness of night wrapped it none. As it was early a light within shone out dimly through two narrow panes of glass flanking the hall door. He let himself in and mounted a dirtily carpeted stairway. The place smelled evilly of old cooking and the smoke of many and various cigarettes, cigars and pipes. It was a man's rooming-house, and the men evidently smoked where and what they listed. Essex had no idea who they were and had seen only one of them: a man on the same floor with him who, he surmised, by the occasional boisterousness of his entrances, frequently came home drunk.

His room was one of the best in the house, on the front, and with a large bay window commanding the street. It was fairly comfortable and well furnished, and the draft of soft, chill air that crossed it from the opened window kept it fresh. Essex, after lighting the gas in the pendant chandelier, bent and kindled the fire laid in the grate. Like many foreigners, he found San Francisco cold, and after the manner of his bringing up would no more have denied himself a fire when he was chilly than a glass of wine when he was thirsty. Different nations have their different extravagances, and Essex's French boyhood had stamped him with respect for the little comforts of that intelligent race.

He pulled up an easy chair and sat down in front of the small blaze, with his hands out. Its warmth was pleasant, and he stayed thus, thinking. Presently he smiled slightly, his ear having caught the sounds of his fellow lodger's stumbling ascent of the stairs. The man was evidently drunk again, and he wondered vaguely how he ever managed to mount the terrace steps with the list to starboard so pronounced that Essex's French door opened, shut, and there was silence. Essex—an earnest reader—was soon deep in his book. From this he was interrupted by a step in the passage and a light knock on the door. In response to his "Come in," the door opened hesitatingly, and the man from across the hall thrust in his head. It was a head of wild gray hair, with an old yellow face, seamed and shriveled beneath it. The eyes, which were beady dark and set close to the nose, were bloodshot, the lips slack and uncertain. A very dirty hand was curled round the edge of the door.

"Well, what is it?" said Essex. "I've lost my matches again," said the man, in a whiningly apologetic tone. "There are some," said Essex, designating his box on the mantelpiece. "Take what you want." The stranger shuffled in, and after scratching about the box with a tremulous hand, secured a bunch. Essex looked at him with cynical interest. He was miserably dressed, dirty, and ragged. He walked with an apologetic slouch, as if continually expecting a kick in the rear. He was evidently very drunk, and the odor of the liquids he had imbibed compassed him in an ambulating reek.

"Thanks to you, Doc," he said, as he went out. "So long."

A few minutes later Essex heard a crash from his neighbor's room, and then exclamations of anger and dole. These continuing with an increased volume, Essex rose and went to the source of sound. The room was pitch dark, and from it, as from the entrance to the cave of the damned, imprecations and imprecations were issuing in a stentorian flood. With the match he had brought he lit the gas, and turning saw his late visitor holding by the foot-board of the bed, having overturned a small stand, which had evidently been surmounted by a nickel clock.

"What the devil do you mean by making such a noise?" he said angrily. "Pardon, pardon!" said the other humbly, "but I couldn't find the gas this time, Doc. This is a small room, but things do get away somehow."

He looked stupidly about with his bleared eyes. The room was small and miserably dirty and uninviting. "There's a room," he said suddenly in a loud, dramatic tone and with a sweep of his arm, "for a man who might have been a bonanza king!" Essex turned to go.

"If you make any more of this row to-night I'll see that you're turned out to-morrow," he said haughtily.

He wheeled about on the drunkard as he spoke. The man's sodden face was lit with a flash of malevolent intelligence, to be superseded immediately by a wheedling smile.

"I seen you before to-day," he said. "Well, you'll see me again to-night if you don't keep quiet, and this time you won't like it."

"You was with a lady, a fine-looking lady."

"Here—no more of that talk," said Essex threateningly.

The man stopped, looking furtively at him as if half expecting to be struck. Essex turned toward the door and passed out. As he did so he heard him mutter: "And I'd seen her before, too."

Back in his room the young man took up his book again, but the thread of his interest was broken. His mind refused to return to the prescribed channels before it, but began to drift here and there on the wayward currents of memory.

The house was now perfectly quiet. The little fire had fallen together into a pleasant core of warmth that gently diffused its heat through the room. Essex, sprawling in his chair, his long arms following its arms, his finely formed, loose-jointed hands depending over the rounded ends, let his dreaming

stand on this red heart of living coal, while his pipe smokes lay between it and his face in delicate layers.

His thoughts slipped back over childhood memories to his first ones, when he had lived a French boy's life with his mother in Paris.

He remembered her far back in the days when he sat on her knee and was read to out of fairy books. She had been very pretty then and very happy, and had always talked English with him while every one else spoke French. She had been an English woman, an actress of beauty and promise, who in the zenith of her popularity had made what the world called a fine marriage with a rich Venezuelan who lived in Paris. The stories of Essex's doubtful paternity were false. Rose Barry-Rose Essex, on the stage—had been the lawful wife of Antonio Perez, and for ten years was the happy wife as well.

They were very prosperous in those days. Barry had gone to the lycee all week and come back every Friday to the beautiful apartment in the Rue de Ponthieu. There were lovely spring Sundays when they drove in the Bois and sometimes got out of the carriage under the budding trees. And there were even lovelier winter Sundays when they loitered along the boulevards in the crisp, clear cold, with the sky showing leaden gray through the baring of black boughs, and when they came home to a parlor lit with fire and lamplight and had oranges and hard green grapes after dinner.

He had loved his pretty mother devotedly in those happy days, but for his saturnine, dark-visaged father he had only a sentiment of uneasy fear. He was twelve, when at his mother's request he was sent to England to school. He could remember, looking back afterward, that his mother had not been so proud or so happy then.

When he came home from school for vacations she was living at Versailles in a little house that presented a secret, non-committal front to the stony street, but that in the back had a delightful garden full of miniature fountains and summer-houses and grottoes. From the wall he could see the mossy trees and stretches of sun-bathed sward of the Trianon. His father was not always there when he came. One Easter vacation he was not there at all, and when he had asked his mother why she had burst into sudden terrible tears that frightened him.

During the long summer holidays after that Antonio Perez was only there once on a Sunday. Then he did not come again, and Barry was glad, for he had never cared for his father. He passed delightful days in the Trianon Park with his mother, who was very silent and had gray hair on her temples. She walked beside him with a slow step, dragging her rich lace skirts and with her parasol hanging indolently over her shoulder. It pleased him to see the many people looked at her, but she took no notice of them.

When Barry went back to England to school that year he began to feel that he knew what was coming. It came the next vacation. His mother had not dared to tell him by letter. Her husband had deserted her and disappeared, leaving her with a few thousand francs in the bank and no other friend.

After that there were three miserable years when they lived in a little apartment on the Rue de Sevres, up four flights of stairs with a bonne a tout faire. His mother had had to kick in the rear. He was evidently very drunk, and the odor of the liquids he had imbibed compassed him in an ambulating reek.

Their furniture—some of which was rare and handsome—brought them a few hundred francs, and on this he lived for another year, eking out his substance with his first tentative attempt at journalism. When he was twenty-one he received a legal notice that his father had died in Venezuela, leaving him all he possessed, which, debts paid and the estate settled, amounted to about \$10,000.

This might have been a fortune to the youth, but the bitter bread he had eaten had soured the best in him. He took his legacy and resolved to taste of the joy of life. For several years he lived on the crest of the wave, now and then diverting himself with journalism, the only profession that attracted him and one in which his talents were readily recognized. He saw much of the world and its ways, living in many cities and among many people. He tried to cut himself off from the past, adopting, after his mother's death, her old stage name of Essex.

Then, his money spent, there had been a dark interval of bad luck and despondency, when Barry Essex, the brilliant amateur journalist, had fallen out of the ranks of people that are seen and talked about. Without means, he sank to the level of a battered and out-at-elbows Bohemian. There was a year or two when he swung between London and Paris, making money as he could, and not always frequenting creditable company. Then the tide of change struck him and he went to New York, worked there successfully till once again the Wanderlust carried him farther afield.

He had now arrived at the crucial point of his career. In his vagabond past there many episodes best left in darkness, but nothing that stamped him as an outcast by individual selection. Shady things were behind him in that dark, morose year when he found disreputable company to his taste. But he had never stepped quite outside the pale. There had always been a margin.

Now he stood on that margin. He was thirty years old with shame and bitterness behind him, and before him the dead monotony of a lifetime of work. He hated it all. No memory sustained him. The past was as sore as dwell on as the future was sterile. It was the parting of the ways. And where they parted he saw Mariposa

standing drawing him by the hand one day, while he gently but persistently drew her the other.

In his softly lit library in his great house at Menlo Park another man was at that time also thinking of Mariposa. He had been thinking of her off and on ever since he had hidden her good-by that afternoon at Mrs. Willers'.

As the train had whirled him over the parched, thirsty country, burnt to a drouth, he had no thought for anything but his newly discovered daughter. His glance dwelt unseeing on the tanned fields with their belts of olive, eucalyptus woods and the turquoise blue of the bay beyond the painted marsh. Men descending at way stations raised their hats to him as they mounted into the handsome carriages drawn up by the platform. His return to their salutes was a preoccupied nod. His mind was full of his child—his splendid daughter.

Jake Shackleton had not forgotten his first wife and child, as Dan Moreau and Lucy had always hoped. He was a man of many and secret interests, pulling many wires, following many trails. He knew their movements and fortunes under the period of their marriage in Hangtown. At first this secret espionage was due to fear of their betraying him. He had begun to prosper shortly after his entrance into the State, and with prosperity and the slackening of the strain of the trip across the desert came a realization of what he had done. He saw quickly how the selling of his wife would appeal to the California mind, in those days fantastically chivalrous to women. He would be undone.

With stealthy persistence he followed the steps of the peaceful couple who had it in their power to ruin him. Serenely began to come to him as he heard that the union was singularly happy. That Moreau confident no one would molest them, had gone through a ceremony of marriage with Lucy, and that the child was being brought up as their own.

As wealth came to Shackleton he thought of them with a sort of jealous triumph. With his remarkable insight into men he knew that Dan Moreau would never make money; that he was one of the world's predestined poor men. Then as riches grew and grew, and the emigrant of the fifties became the bonanza king of the seventies, he should have burst into a fit of rage when they would turn to him.

He would have liked it, for under the cold indifference of his manner the transaction at the cabin in the Sierra forever haunted him with its savage shamelessness. It was the one debasing blot on a career which, hard, selfish, often unprincipled, had yet never, before or after, sunk to the level of that base action.

When Moreau died at Santa Barbara Shackleton heard it with a sense of relief. He was secretly becoming anxious to see that child. Bessie had borne her two children, a boy and a girl, and it was partly the disappointment in these that made him desirous of seeing Mariposa. He knew and Bessie knew that she was his only legitimate child. Though he had virtually entered California with but one wife, and the blot of Mormonism had been wiped from his record before he had been two days in the State, the rumor that he had once been a Mormon still carelessly passed from mouth to mouth. Should it ever become known that there had been a former wife, Bessie and her children in mind and body, while Winslow was in the State, slow-witted, characterless youth, either the will, energy or initiative of either of his parents. Affection not grounded on admiration was impossible to Shackleton, who sometimes in his exasperation—for the successful man bore disappointment ill—would say to himself:

"But they are not my real children; I have only one child—Dan Moreau's daughter."

After the death of Moreau he learned that Lucy and Mariposa were in San Francisco. There he lost trace of them and was forced to consult a private detective who had done work for him before. It was an easy matter to find them, and only few letters passed between him and the detective. In these the man gave the address and financial condition of the ladies, and added that the daughter was said to be "a beautiful, estimable and accomplished young woman." This fired still further the father's desire to see her. He learned, too, of their crippled means and it pleased him to think that now they might be dependent on him. But he shrank from an unspeakable repugnance from the thought of seeing Lucy again, and he was for weeks trying to find some way of meeting Mariposa without meeting her mother. It was at this stage that, purely by accident, he learned that Mrs. Willers' daughter was one of Mariposa's pupils. A day or two after he summoned Mrs. Willers to the interview that finally brought about the meeting.

Satisfied pride was still seething in him when he alighted from the train and entered the waiting carriage. This magnificent girl was worthy of him, worthy of the millions that were really hers. She had everything the others lacked—beauty, charm, talents. Her whole air, that regality of aspect which sometimes curiously distinguishes the simple women of the West, appealed passionately to his ambition and love of success. She was born to conquer, to be a queen of men. The image of Maud rose beside her, and seemed clumsier and commoner than ever. The father felt a slight move-

ment of distaste and irritation against his second daughter, who had supplanted in his home and in the world's regard his elder and fairer child.

The carriage turned in through a lofty gate and rolled at a slackened pace up a long winding drive. Jacob Shackleton's Menlo Park estate was one of the showy ones of that gathering place of rich men's mansions.

The road wound for some half mile through a stretch of uncultivated land, dotted with the forms of huge live oaks. The grass beneath them was but of gray and was brittle and slippery. The massive trees, some round and compact and so densely leaved that they were as impervious to rain as an umbrella, others throwing out long, gnarled arms as if spellbound in some giant throes of pain, cast vast slanting shadows upon the parched ground. Some seemed, like trees in Dore's drawings, to be endowed with a grotesque, weird humanness of aspect, as though an imprisoned dryad or gnome were struggling to escape, causing the mighty trunk to bow and writhe, and sending tremors of life along each convulsed limb. A mellow hoariness marked them all, due to their own richly subdued coloring and the long garlands of silvery moss that hung from their boughs like an eldritch growth of hair.

A sudden greenness in the sward and brilliant glimpses of flower-beds peered in between dark tree-trunks, told of the proximity of the house. It was a massive structure, architecturally ugly, but gaining a sort of majesty from its own ponderous bulk and from the splendor of lawns and trees about it. The last level rays of the sun were now flooding grass and garden, piercing bosky thickets where greens melted into greens and sleeping on stretches of tree-cropped emerald turf. From among the smaller trees the lordly blue pines—that with the oaks were once the only denizens of the long rich valley—soared up, lonely and somber. Their crests, stirred by passing airs, emitted eolian murmurs, infinitely mournful, as if repining for the days when they had ruled alone.

At the bend in the drive where the road turned off to the stables Shackleton alighted and walked over the grass toward the house. The curious silence that is so marked a characteristic of the California landscape wrapped the scene about him like an enchanted palace held in a spell of sleep. Not a leaf nor pendant flower-bell stirred. In this hour of warmth and stillness evanescent breaths of fragrance rose from the carpets of violets that were beginning to bloom about the roots of the live-oaks.

As he reached the house Maud and a young man came round the corner and approached him. The girl was dressed in a delicate and elaborate gown of pale pink tinted with much lace, and with the grill of falling ribbons gleaming here and there. She carried a pink parasol over her shoulder, and against the background of variegated greens her figure looked modish as a fashion-plate. It was a very becoming and elegant costume, and one in which most young girls would have looked their best.

Maud, who was not pretty, was the type of woman who looks least well in handsome habiliments. Her irrepressible commonness seemed thrown into higher prominence by adornment. The softly-tinted dress robbed her pale skin of all glow and made her lifeless brown hair look duller. She had a round, expressionless face, prominent pale blue eyes, and a chin that receded slightly. She was not so plain as she was with that vivacity, interest or sparkle of youth. With her matter-of-fact manner, heavy figure, and large, unamiable face she might have been forty instead of twenty-one.

She was somewhat laboriously coquetting with her companion, a tall, handsome young Southerner, some six or seven years her senior, whom her father recognized as one of his superior clerks and shrewdly suspected of matrimonial designs. At sight of her parent a slight change passed over her face. She smiled, but not so spontaneously; her speech faltered, and she said, coming awkwardly forward:

"Oh, Popper! you're late to-day; were you delayed?"

"Evidently, considering I'm an hour later than usual. Howdy, Latimer; glad to see you down."

He stopped and looked at them with the slightest inquiring smile. Though he said nothing to indicate it, both, knowing him in different aspects, felt he was not pleased. His whole personality seemed to radiate a cold antagonism.

"It's good you got down anyhow," said Maud constrainedly. "This is much nicer than town isn't it, Mr. Latimer?" All the joy had been taken out of Latimer by his chief's obvious and somewhat terrifying displeasure. Had he been alone with Maud, he would have known well how to respond to her remark with Southern fervency of phrase. But now he only said with stiff politeness:

"Oh, this is quite ideal!" and lapsed into uncomfortable silence.

"Was it some one interesting that made you late?" queried Maud, as her father made no attempt to continue the conversation.

"Very," he responded; "handsome and interesting."

"Won't you tell us about them?" the girl asked, feeling that the word "handsome" contained a covert allusion to her own lack of beauty of which she was extremely sensitive.

"Not now, and I don't think it would interest you much, anyway. Is your mother indoors?"

The girl nodded and he turned away and disappeared round the corner of the house. She and Latimer sauntered on.

The handsome and interesting person doesn't seem to have made any paternal any fuller of the milk of human kindness," said the young man, whose suit had progressed further than people guessed.

"Popper's often like that," said Maud slowly—and in a prettier and more attractive girl the tone and manner of

the remark would have been charmingly plaintive—"I don't know what makes him so."

"He can be more like a patent congealing ice-box when he wants to be than anybody I ever saw. But I don't see why he should be so to you."

"I don't either, but he is often. He never says anything exactly disagreeable, but he makes me feel sort of—mean. Sometimes I think he doesn't like me at all."

"Oh, bosh!" said Latimer gallantly; "if that's the case he's ripe for a commission of lunacy."

Shackleton meantime had entered the house and ascended to his dressing-room. He was in there making the small change which marked his dinner from his business toilet when his wife entered.

The years had turned Bessie into a buxom, fine-looking matron, fashionably dressed, but inclined to be very stout. Her eye and its glance were sharp and keen-edged, still alight with vigor and alertness. It was easy to see why Jake Shackleton, the reader of character, had set aside his feeble first wife for this dominating and forceful partner. He had been faithful to her; after a fashion had loved her, and certainly admired her, for she had the characteristics he most respected.

In his success she had been the same assistance that she had been in his poverty. She had climbed the social heights and conquered the impregnable position they now occupied. Her rich dress, her handsome appearance, her agreeably modulated voice, all were in keeping with the position and great wealth that were theirs. The house of which she was the mistress was admirably ordered and sumptuously furnished. She had only disappointed him in one way—her children.

"What made you late?" she, too, asked; "several people came down this afternoon."

"I was detained—a girl Mrs. Willers wanted me to see; who's here?"

"Latimer and Count de Lamolle and George Herron and the Thurston girls; and the Delanceys are coming over to dinner."

He nodded at the names—Bessie knew well how to arrange her parties. The Thurstons were two impoverished sisters of great beauty, and that proud Southern stock of which early California thought so highly and rewarded in most cases with poverty. Count de Lamolle was a distinguished foreigner that she was considering for Maud.

The other two young men filled in nicely. The Delanceys were a brother and sister, claimants of the great Delancey grant which was now in litigation. It had come into their possession by the marriage of their grandmother, the Senorita Concepcion de Briones, in '36, to the Yankee skipper Jeremiah Delancey.

"Who was the girl Mrs. Willers wanted you to see?" Bessie asked.

"Oh, I'll tell you about her to-morrow. It's a long story and I don't want to be hurried over it."

He had made up his mind that he would tell Bessie he had seen and intended to assist his eldest child. He had always been frank with her, and he was not going to dissemble now. He knew that with all her faults she was a generous woman.

CHAPTER IV.  
A GALA NIGHT.

He looked at her as a lover can; she looked at him as one who awakes.

From his first meeting with her, Barry Essex had conceived a deep interest in Mariposa. He had known women of many and divers sorts, and loved a few after the manner of his kind, which was to foster indolently a selfish caprice. Marriage was out of the question for him unless with money, and some instinct, perhaps inherited from his romantic and deeply loving mother, made this singularly repugnant to his nature, which was neither sensitive nor scrupulous. The mystery and hazard of life appealed to him, and to exchange this for the dull monotony of a rich marriage was an unbearably irksome thought to his unrestrained and adventurous spirit.

Mariposa had struck him deeply. He had never before met that combination of extreme simplicity of character with the unconscious majesty of appearance which marked the child of the far West. He saw her in that Europe, which was his home, as a conquering queen; and he thought proudly of himself as the owner of such a woman. Moreover, he was certain that her voice, properly trained and directed, would be a source of wealth.

She seemed to him the real vocal artist, stupid in all but one great gift; in that, pre-eminence.

Mariposa was trembling on the verge of a first love. She had never seen any one like Essex, and regarded him as the most distinguished and brilliant of beings. His attentions flattered her as she had never been flattered before, and she found herself constantly wondering what he saw in a girl who must appear to him so raw.

Her experience of men was small. Once in Sacramento, when she was eighteen, she had received an offer from a young lawyer, and two years ago, in Santa Barbara, she had been the recipient of a second, from a prosperous rancher. Both had been refused without hesitation and had left no mark of imagination or heart. Then, at a critical period of her life—lonely, poor, a stranger in a strange city—she had fallen in with Essex, and for the first time felt the thrill of the sound of a footstep, the quickening pulse and flushing cheek at the touch of a hand that she had read of in novels. She thought that nobody had seen this; but the eyes of the dangerous man under whose spell she had fallen were watching her with wary yet ardent interest.

He had known her now for three months and had seen her frequently. His visits at the Pine-street cottage were augmented by occasional meetings at Mrs. Willers', when that lady was at home and receiving company, and by walks together. Of late, too, he had asked her to go to the theater

with him. Lucy was always included in these invitations, but was unable to go. The theater was an untarnished delight to Mariposa, and to refuse her the joy of an evening spent there was not in the mother's heart. Moreover, leaving the girl alone in the world, watched Essex with a desperate anxiety trying to fathom his feelings. It seemed to the unworried woman, that this attractive gentleman might have been sent by fate to be the husband who was to love and guard the child when the mother was gone.

A few days after the party at Mrs. Willers' rooms Essex had invited Mariposa to go with him to a performance of "Il Trovatore," to be given at Wade's Opera-house. The company, managed by a French man called Lepine, was one of those small foreign ones that in those days toured the West to their own profit and the pleasure of their audiences. The star was advertised as a French diva of European renown. Essex had heard her on the Continent, and pronounced her well worth hearing, if rather too fat to be satisfying to the esthetic demands of the part of Leonora. Grand opera was still something of a rarity in San Francisco and it promised to be an occasion. The papers printed the names of those who had bought boxes. Mariposa had read that evening that Jacob Shackleton would occupy the left-hand proscenium box with his wife and family.

"His daughter," said Mariposa, standing in front of the glass as she put on finishing touches, "is ugly, Mrs. Willers says. I think that's the way it ought to be. It wouldn't be fair to be an heiress and handsome."

"It wouldn't be fair for you to be an heiress, certainly," commented the mother from her armchair.

"You don't think I abuse the privilege a penniless girl has of being good-looking?" said Mariposa, turning from the glass with a twinkling eye.

She looked her best and knew it. Relics of better days lingered in the bureau drawers and jewel boxes of these ladies as they did in the small parlor. That night they had been mustered in their might for Mariposa's dressing. She was proud in the consciousness that the dress of fine black lace she wore, through the meshes of which her staturesque arms and neck gleamed like ivory, was made from a shawl that in its day had been a costly possession. Her throat was bare, the lace leaving it free and closing below it. Where the black edges came together over the white skin a small brooch of diamonds was fastened. Below the rim of her hat, her hair glowed like copper, and the coloring of her lips and cheeks was deepened by excitement into varying shades of coral.

As they entered the theater, Essex was aware that many heads were turned in their direction. But Mariposa was too imbued with the joyous unusualness of the moment to notice it. She had forgotten herself entirely, and sitting a little forward, her lips parted, surveyed the rustling and fast-filling house.

The glow of the days of Comstock glory was still in the air. San Francisco was still the city of gold and silver. The bonanza kings had not left it, but were trying to accommodate themselves to the palaces they were rearing with their loose millions. Society yet retained its cosmopolitan tone, careless, brilliant, and unconventional. There were figures in it that had made it famous—men who began life with a pick and shovel and ended it in an orgy of luxury; women whose habits of early poverty dropped from them like a garment, and who, carried away by their power, displayed the barbaric caprices of Roman empresses.

The sudden possession of wealth had intoxicated this people, lifting them from the level of the commonplace into a saturnalia of extravagance. Poverty, the only restraint many of them had ever felt, was gone. Money had made them lawless, whimsical, bizarre. It had developed all-conquering personalities, potent individualities. They were still playing with it, wondering at it, throwing it about.

Essex let his glance roam over the audience, that filled the parquette, and the three horseshoes above it. It struck him as being more Latin than American. That foreignness which has always clung to California was curiously pronounced in this gathering of varied classes. He saw many faces with the ebony hair and olive skins of the Spanish Californians, lovely women, languid and fawn-eyed, badly dressed—for they were almost all poor now, who once were lords of the soil.

The great Southern element which, in its day, set the tone of the city and contributed much to its traditions of birth and breeding, was already falling into the background. Many of its women had only their beauty left, and this they had adorned, as Mariposa had hers, with such remnants of the days when Plancus was consul, as remained—bits of jewelry, old and unmodish, a cumbersome handsome, edgings of a pale-colored feather in an old hat, a crape shawl worn with an air, a string of beads carried bravely, though beads were no longer in the mode.

Essex raised his glass from the pursuit of the sea of faces, to the box which the Shackleton party had just entered. There was no question about the Americanism of this group, the young man thought, as he stared at Jake Shackleton.

The two ladies in the front of the box were Mrs. and Miss Shackleton. They were Mrs. and Miss handsome, almost aristocratic, the gazer thought, looking at her firmly modeled, composed face under its roll of gray hair. The daughter was very like her father, but ugly. Even in the costly French costume she wore, with the gleam of diamonds in her hair, about her neck, in the lace on her bosom, she was ugly. Essex, with the thought of marrying money in the background of his mind, scrutinized her. To rectify his fortune in such a way became more repugnant than ever. If Mariposa had only been Jake Shackleton's daughter instead!

Continued Next Sunday.