

to act as tally-clerk on the wharf, or on board vessels elsewhere in harbour, when the firm had any interest in the cargo. Every sort of life then astir in San Francisco was to be seen there. Still I did not confine myself to one branch, being ready to give a hoist or a shove if necessary, and frequently helping old Mr. Macansh at ready-made shifts of carpentry or engineering, where he was in his glory. He showed a considerable degree of favour for me; when we were at work among the goods together, he would commence to talk about the Scotch highlands, which he had left early in life. I had been partly brought up there, though in a quite different district; and at times I could not help being amused in my own mind by his expecting me to know as much about Balquhiddie as he did. After various anecdotes regarding it, and scraps of old Gaelic, part of which struck me as being more like Indian or Spanish, he would find that he had kept me too late for dinner at my boarding-house, and make me share his own, which he always brought with him; and it could not have been much plainer if he had been still herding cattle in the old spot. A more worthy, honest, hard-working character it would have been hard to find, I should say. He was mostly to be found among the goods, with his apron on, and an old straw hat; and being an elderly little man, with a face very like a Scotch terrier's, his appearance at first did not correspond with one's ideas of a British Consul. At odd times he would sit down in a kindly manner to give me various good advices on my own behalf; such as not to think for a moment of running for the mines, not to drink at restaurant-bars, nor get into rowdy company, but, above all, not to gamble. Mr. Macansh made a point of paying the charge for my board and other expenses every week with his own hand, as he had recommended me to the people, and the house was on his way home at night. This left a small surplus weekly, out of which he would hand me a dollar or so when required, but by no means in the readiest way: his advice decidedly being to let my money run up in his keeping, till I might think what to do with it. He used to ask what family there was of us, inquiring more than once about my mother, and always reminding me that a dollar would go several times as far in the Highlands of Scotland as in California.

I still continued taking charge of young Mr. Malloch's little Spanish mare occasionally, as before, much to my own enjoyment. She had got pretty well broken in, generally speaking; some of her tricks, on the other hand, I could not rid her of, for they were

evidently kept up by habit at other times. These tricks were such as coming to a dead stop at the door of some inland gaming-booth or cock-pit, trying to turn off to some fandango tavern, or making a sudden bolt round the back of one house in particular, where there was a very jealous-looking old Spaniard, apparently ready to jump up at sight of the mare, as if I wanted to steal his fruit. The worst of it was that, owing to her being so often out at nights and kept so long dark when in-doors, there was something odd about her sight. She *would* keep shying in the sun; the dusk evidently made her feel more at home, and she went best in the dark. I soon found how the case stood, being told by a Chileno horsebreaker whom I used to meet on the road to the Mission Dolores, and who knew Juanita and her master perfectly well. He examined her eyes, and said she was day-blind already, and, if not put on free-grazing, would soon be past cure; the sort of food she had got was bad for her, he said, and nothing could have been so bad as rough rice, which was the staple of it. This information I was of course obliged to make known at once to Mr. Oswald. At first he was quite angry; but on trying an experiment or two, as the Chileno had recommended, he seemed not a little cut up about the mare, of which he was really fond. He then ordered me to take her out oftener, and see that she got grass enough.

Business matters in town were meantime becoming more unsettled. The mines had taken a less productive turn, and the import market had got overstocked. It had once or twice been said there was an idea of young Mr. Malloch going over to Monterey, to take charge of a new connexion in the lumber trade; and old Mr. Macansh was now so determined about this, that the change was accordingly carried out. Mr. Oswald, in short, went off early one morning by the up-bay steamer from our wharf. His mother had come down from the hotel with him to the warehouse, and she took care to make sure he was well supplied in every way, as regards luggage. It appeared he was to stay some considerable time, and, besides, he took the favourite mare with him. For my part, I regretted parting from Juanita, but could not say I was sorry otherwise.

He had not been many days gone, when an unexpected incident took place in connexion with him. Luckily it was at dinner-time, when the streets were comparatively empty, I having stopped behind among the goods with Mr. Macansh, as I still sometimes did. A well-dressed Spanish ranchero from the country came riding along in a hurry