

**THEIR MARIPOSA
LEGEND: A ROMANCE
OF CATALINA**

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Their Mariposa Legend: A Romance of Catalina by Charlotte Herr

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“The vessel came slowly on and dropped anchor in the Bay of Moons.”

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CATALINA



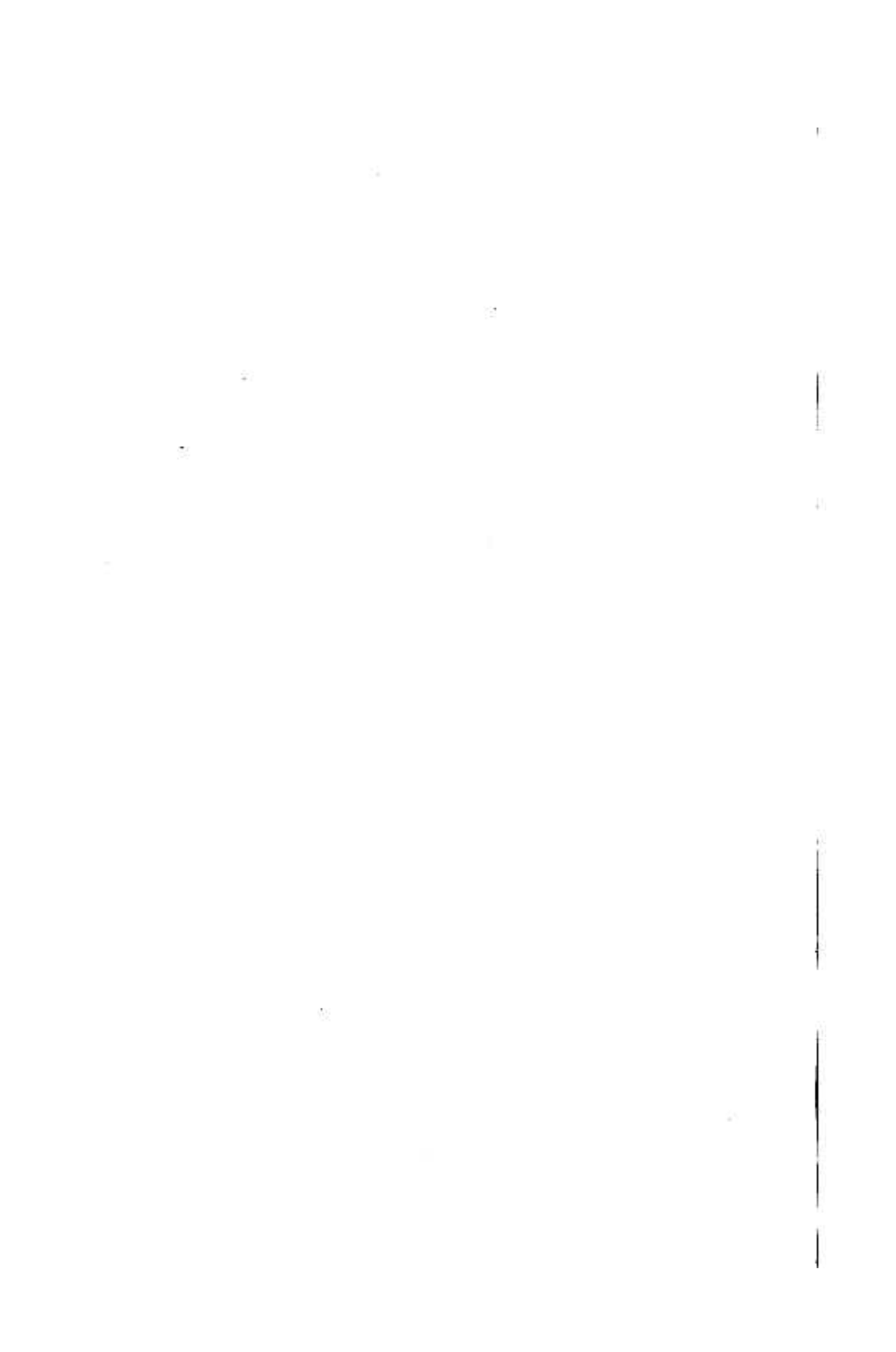
BY *B. Herr*
CHARLOTTE HERR

— Univ. of
CALIFORNIA

ILLUSTRATION BY ORRIN WHITE

**TO LITTLE BRUCE PARKER
WHO LOVED STORIES**





PART I

SIR FRANCIS STARTS IT

IT BEGAN to happen a long time ago, centuries ago, when, in a fragrant rush of rain, spring came one day to Punagwandah, fairest of the Channel Islands. Beneath the golden mists of sunrise danced a radiant sea. On steeply sloping hillsides where thickets of wild lilac bloomed, the lark shook from his tiny throat a tumult of glad music. In shadowed niches of the canyons lilies waited to fill with light their gleaming ivory cups. Spring in very truth was there.

And looking down upon it from her cavern bower high above the beach, watched the Princess Wildenai. Kneeling there, the light of dawn shining on her long black hair, she was, herself, the sweetest blossom of the spring. Loveliest was she among all the maidens of the Mariposa and of royal blood besides; although of this the great chief Torquam, who even at that moment lay sleeping in his lodge

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of deerskin on the crescent beach below, knew more than he had ever told.

With eyes rapt, her breath scarcely stirring the folds of softest fawnskin drawn across her breast, the princess bent her gaze to where the waves ran silver on the ocean's distant rim. There she knew the sun must rise and, as the first dazzling ray sparkled across the water, she rose slowly until she stood erect, a slender, graceful figure against the dim, gray rocks, and stretching her arms toward the East, spoke in the musical words of her people.

"Oh, Waken-ate, great spirit-father," she pleaded, "have mercy on me. Grant to me, thy humble daughter, one only boon. Grant, I pray thee, that it need not be I wed with Torquam's friend, the pale-face stranger. Well knowest thou I would not disobey my father, him the bravest and most powerful of all thy warriors, him whom his people delight to honor, and whom I strive to please. All the more I feel my duty since, many moons ago, they laid my mother underneath the flowers. Yet, even so, I cannot find it in my heart to wed with Don Cabrillo, dearly as does my father wish it. Can'st thou not then, in thy great

power, turn his heart, oh lord of spirits, that he no longer may desire it? Help me in this, my only trial, I pray thee, and in all else will I be indeed his loyal daughter,—in all else save alone in this one thing!"

Her arms fell. Slowly she sank again to her knees, bending her head until her forehead touched the ground. For many minutes she lay thus prostrate while the glory of the rising sun bathed the sea in splendor. Yet, when at last she rose, her eyes were dim with tears.

But now from the beach below there drifted up to her the sounds of a village astir. Shri11 voices of women mingled with the crackling of freshly kindled fires. A canoe, pushed hastily into the water, grated harshly on the pebbles. Still the maiden did not stir. Leaning against the rocky ledge, her chin in her hands, she gazed listlessly out over the shining sea. If any interests lived for her among the dark-skinned people beneath the cliffs, for the moment at least she gave no sign.

Then, suddenly, above the ordinary din of the Indian village, rose the hoarse shouting of men. Wildenai lifted her eyes,—eyes that widened first with wonder, then with fear. For