

CHAPTER 12

General Manje Writes a Report

[1705]

ACROSS the mountains, in the town of Bacanuche, General Juan Manje sat in the spacious *sala* of the mayor's house one late December afternoon in 1705 and looked about him at a handful of prosperous Spanish gentlemen. They had heard rumors of what Manje was up to and every one of them hoped the rumors were true. They listened expectantly as he began to speak.

"Señores," he said, "I asked His Honor, the Mayor, to bring you here for a special purpose. As you may have heard, I have been writing a report. The last section of it consists of a list of complaints. I believe that they concern not only me, but each of you, as well."

He cleared his throat and tucked his greatcoat around him against a wayward draft.

"In my report," he went on deliberately, "I have

described the Pima missions, and told of their need for more missionaries—”

“What?” cried a handsomely dressed man across the room. “If you ask my opinion, we have too many of them now!”

General Manje said piously, “You must admit that Padres Kino, Campos and Minutuli have done a great work among the Pimas.”

“But, General,” sputtered the mayor, “that is not what I heard you—” he stopped at Manje’s upraised hand.

“I have also written,” he said, “that the Jesuits monopolize the best agricultural lands, leaving to the Spaniards only the poorest, a reason why many of us are unable to maintain ourselves.”

“True, true.” The murmur went around the row of richly dressed Spanish gentlemen.

“There should be a remedy!” cried one of them, tugging impatiently at his glossy black beard.

“I have a remedy.” General Manje looked down at the pages in his hand. “We all know that in some of the older missions the Indian population has greatly declined, so that some of them have a superabundance of lands. In some missions where at first there were ten thousand Indians, now there will be a hundred.”



*General Manje read his report
to the assembly of prosperous
Spanish gentlemen*

A covetous gleam appeared in the dark eyes of a ranch owner. "I am sure that must be true at Dolores," he said. "The last time I was there the population seemed greatly decreased—and it would be such a pity for those fine fields to be neglected."

General Manje shook his head. He would like to keep Padre Kino out of this. For the present, at least, Dolores must be left severely alone.

"The government ought to survey the mission lands," he said, "leave generous fields for the Indians, and assign the rest to the Spaniards."

His listeners gasped at the audacity of the proposal as the general went swiftly on, "After all, we have defended the province at the cost of our estates, with horses, shield, arquebus, and other arms. Since the establishment of the Flying Column thirteen years ago, of course the citizens have left the fighting to the soldiers, but they should be given lands for agriculture to reward them for past services. And besides, we should have the same privilege granted to the settlers of New Mexico."

The ranch owner swore in delight. That meant all the free Indian labor a man needed. What an empire he could build for himself if he could make slaves of these Pimas as the Spanish of New Mexico had en-

slaved the Pueblo Indians. But did Manje dare carry out this plan? What about the Jesuits? How was he going to deal with them?

Manje had worked this out too, it appeared. "The Jesuits," he said, "devote all their attention to the Indians, even though most of the Spanish of Sonora lack spiritual care. Imagine a state as big as this one, twelve hundred and fifty miles around it, and only three priests to minister to us. Sometimes a year passes between visits of the priest, leaving Spaniards without Mass, confession, or communion," he read solemnly. "More parish priests are needed. Anyone can see that."

The mayor broke in, "The Bishop of Durango will send priests of his diocese to parishes if enough money is forthcoming to build churches and pay expenses."

"Who can afford to pay such expenses?" grumbled the rancher.

"We will be able to afford it if my proposals are carried out," said General Manje. "I have one more to offer for your approval," and he read, "Finally, to encourage mining, these Indians who have been Christian for twenty years or more ought to be assigned for labor for the Spanish miners. In this province there are no slaves or other people to work the mines unless it be Indians."

The mine owner touched a lace handkerchief delicately to his nose and murmured, "I am sure the time limit must be up on the royal order protecting the lazy creatures."

The mayor was beaming again. "A splendid work!" he cried. "Señores, we are fortunate in having such a man as General Manje among us. This report of his will have far-reaching results, I am sure."

Manje eyed him. "I have had copies made for the Royal Audencia at Guadalajara and for the Bishop of Durango. To give them the proper emphasis, I think it would be well for each of you to sign these complaints. Then the officials will know that I am informing them of a public grievance."

With some reluctance the mayor took the pen and inscribed his name. The others followed, each wishing he could get out of it somehow, but unable to think of an excuse. Manje's agent, Romo, was last to sign. Then they went out into the brisk winter sunshine, each to his own home, and for the next few weeks waited uneasily to see what would happen.

Messengers were swift, but distances great and official procedures ponderously slow. It took some months for news of Manje's report to reach the ears of the Jesuit Father Visitor. Besides the parts Manje

had read to his friends, he had aired the controversy between the Jesuits and the Bishop of Durango and made it appear that the Jesuits were entirely in the wrong. Padre Picolo read the report, sat himself down and wrote to the governor of Sonora protesting the calumny.

"If something is not done about this," he finished, "I will order all the father missionaries to leave the province!"

The governor was shocked and frightened. If the Jesuit padres left Sonora there might be another bloody Indian uprising. That must be prevented at all costs. General or no general, Manje had no business stirring up trouble like this. The governor ordered him arrested and brought to Parral, a capital city of the northwest province of New Spain.

One bright spring afternoon not long after Manje's arrest, a small boy at Dolores sought Padre Kino and found him at the corrals, directing the Indians as they cut out cattle for the ranch at Cocóspora. His faded black robe was patched and dusty, his weather-lined face smeared with dirt.

"You say someone must see me? It is urgent?" Kino looked at the milling herd, gave a few crisp instruc-

tions to a foreman and headed for his house at a half trot. There were a thousand things to do at this time of year around the ranches, but an urgent message from one of his Pimas could stop him any time.

It was, however, no Indian who waited in the little whitewashed *sala*, but a well-dressed Spanish lad. Padre Kino frowned, but the boy jumped to his feet before the padre was through the door.

"Have you heard what has happened?" cried the boy. "Do you know what they have done to General Manje?"

"No," said Kino calmly, "no, my son. What has happened to my friend, Manje?"

"Your f-friend? Then you have not heard about his report?"

Kino shrugged. "I have not read it, but yes, I have heard about it. Manje is young. All you young people are apt to grow a little rash. Perhaps he wrote some unwise things, but I am sure no harm will come from them in the end. Now, if you will excuse me, the men are waiting. I must get back to them."

"Will you let General Manje rot in jail, then?"

"Jail? What jail?"

So, Padre Kino had not heard! His father, the Señor Romo, had been right to send him to Dolores, thought

the young man, and swiftly recounted the details of the shameful arrest. "And they sent a mere corporal to arrest General Manje, put him on a strange mule and led him back to Parral—five hundred miles to Parral, Señor Padre, and they would not even let him ride his own horse. And now a señor captain is at Bacanuche, asking questions of everyone. My father is the general's agent and him the captain questions most of all. My father says that General Manje must have your help."

"Of course." Padre Kino nodded. There were orchard trees to prune, the grass was springing green in the pastures, and all the fences had to be repaired. There were horses to round up and calves to brand. And many Pimas would be here for Mass tomorrow. But he would write the Father Visitor, ask him to put in a good word for young Manje."

"Go home," he said kindly. "Tell your father I will do what I can."

Young Romo rode away from Dolores marveling at what he had seen and heard. This shabby padre with a dirty face the richest man in Sonora? That was what his father, the Señor Romo, had said when he sent his son on this mission. "Padre Kino is the richest, most powerful man in Sonora," those had been his very words.

Young Romo had been trained to carry out orders without asking questions, but that morning a question had burst from his lips, "My father, if General Manje quarrels with the Jesuits, is it likely that one of them will help him?"

"Go quickly, my son," had come the answer, "for it is Padre Kino's habit to embrace those who mistreat him!"

Whether it was Kino's influence or not cannot be proven. Perhaps the governor felt Manje had been punished enough for the trouble he had caused. At any rate he was ordered out of jail and told to return to his home without saying any more about the matter. The hot-blooded general would have none of that. He met the governor in the plaza shortly after his release and poured out his rage at—of all people—the Jesuits.

"They are too sure of themselves. I had a letter from Sonora saying that as soon as I was made a prisoner the Jesuits brought all the Indians together and told them they could do anything they wished—and they cited my arrest as an example."

"Can you prove that?" asked the governor.

"I certainly can!"

"Produce the letter, then."

"I do not wish to do so," said Manje defiantly.

The governor met anger with anger. "You will show me the letter or you will go back to jail!"

"You may do as you please, even to cutting off my head," flared Manje, "but in that case you may look for the revolt and loss of the whole province of Sonora."

It sounded like an idle threat to the governor. Back to jail went Manje. And this time he stayed there until by some means peace was made with the missionaries he had attacked. A long time afterward he prepared a revised edition of the offensive report, omitting the complaints against his Jesuit friends, but adding that because of the stand he took, "part of the reforms which I urgently requested were made as a necessary remedy."

If it were not Kino who interceded in Manje's behalf, then why did the general go on to speak so well of the padre? Certainly whatever breach there was between the two of them was completely healed. How could it be otherwise? Manje might have grown stubborn, calculating, even a little greedy as his worldly goods increased, but he could not help loving this padre who "made it a habit to embrace those who mistreated him."