

A Flower of the Tropics

**AND OTHER STORIES OF MEXICO
AND THE BORDER**

BY
WARNER P. SUTTON

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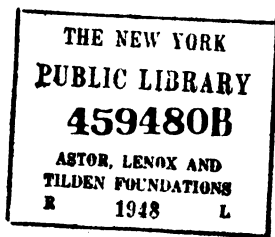
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A Flower of the Tropics,

AND

Other Stories of Mexico and the Border.

I.

A TROPICAL SKETCH.

SOCORRO.

WAKENED by the glare of the sun, he rose to his elbow. His bed had been the sands, his pillow the cork slab that saved him from the waters. Vultures and gulls had watched him.

He was weak from wreck, from fasting and from wounds.

Clearing his dim sight he looked about. The waves which had so recently swept in angrily, now gently lapped the level sands.

To right and left lay the shore line; in front, the tropic sea. Behind was a low plain,

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rising farther into hills. In the background were mountains.

He was dying of thirst and hunger. The sun beat down his eyelids.

Again he fell into exhausted sleep, while the birds of ill-omen resumed their vigil.

A shepherd's crook pulled at his elbow. He opened his eyes on a setting sun, for it was nearly night. The wind had risen to its evening gale, and the tide was coming in. The waves drenched his feet.

The *pastor*, clothed all in skins, stood over him. He was tall and spare, his face was dark and sun-tanned, he spoke a strange speech.

The shepherd lifted him to a burro's back and guided him over the plain. Goats and sheep led the way to the *corral*. Two other men, dressed in tanned leather, helped him to a seat.

An open fire burned; he sank down before it. The night had a sudden chill and he was cold.

The strange, dark-faced men looked at him curiously, and spoke in their native language. Large, wide-brimmed hats covered their black hair. In the gloom their eyes were fierce.

One drew from the fire an earthen jar and poured black, hot coffee into a cup.

A Tropical Sketch.

Sheep and goats looked curiously at them from the sides of the *corral*. Saddled horses waited near, and dogs crowded under their feet.

The stranger was faint and cold. His eyes were dulled, his limbs helpless. The fire did not warm him, as he lay prone before it.

The black-browed men stood over him. They spoke sharply; then one of them raised his head and gave him to drink. It was black and very hot.

He took one long, delicious, scalding draught. Then his whole frame seemed born again. Again he drank. This time he drained the cup.

His head rose from his breast, as new life coursed through his veins. His frame expanded; heat and vigor went to every limb. As his chest swelled, his eyes came out from their caverns. With their new strength he looked around. His wounds pained him, but he was strong again.

He rose to his feet and stretched out his hand to the strange men. Then they all ate goat's flesh and dried meat, and drank more coffee.

He knew not the manner of their speech, nor did they know his; but they gave him coffee, they cooked him food, and he was well content.

They bound up his wounds and gave him a bed of skins. As he slept, the Southern Cross looked

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on his worn face. The North Star hung low in the sky.

In the near *arroyo* a *tigre* fought mountain lions for a dear kid; coyotes barked, and the dogs answered fiercely, while the horses neighed, and the young lambs bleated.

In the *corral's* mouth lay the strange men guarding the flock.

DOLORES.

Dolores is dark of skin, her eyes are large and very black—even blacker than her hair, which, in two braids, falls to her feet. Her limbs and form are rounded by nature's training, and her simple dress reveals more than it conceals.

The *choza* has walls of upright poles. These support a round thatch roof, and through the open top smoke rises. In the fire is an earthen jar—*atole* for the sick man. The stranger lies on the earth floor, for his bed is a pile of skins. His face is as white as is the air of moonlight, and is drawn with pain. He moans and uses an unknown speech. He tosses his arms, and the simple bandages fall from the wounds. He burns with fever.

Dolores kneels at his side and soothes him. Her

A Tropical Sketch.

eyes melt at his wounds, as she gazes fondly at the white, soft flesh. She draws his face to her beating breast. He is white, he is very white. Her tawny lips cover his pale brow with pitying kisses. He is of another blood; perhaps he is one of God's angels.

He opens his eyes and her heart throbs with fear. She smiles over him, and rocks back and forth, soothing him with gentle touches, with soft words and low song.

If he lives she will keep him with her always. There is room, and she will work for him. She will replace the fine raiment, now torn, with new garments like those of her people. He will learn her speech, and perhaps he will teach her his.

But oh, Mother of God, if he die! The lone hill in front is a poor place for his fair body. She will cover it high with stones so the beasts shall not rend it by night; by day she will guard it. His soul—his spirit—that will go to God in Heaven, who lives beyond the mountains.

Her beads press his cheek; he opens his eyes and speaks. She knows not what he says, but her heart beats quicker. She gives him the simple gruel. He seems refreshed; his brow is soft, and moist, and cool. The fever is gone, and he will get well. He will stay with her

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always. God will keep him for her—for her alone.

He presses her hand, looks into her eyes, and smiles. He sleeps in her embrace. He is better; he will get well. He will not leave her; God will keep him. Her beads slip through her fingers, as her lips move in prayer.

Dolores hears a sound at the door. Fear, great and sudden, is on her heart. A step approaches. She bends a fond look on the sleeping face, kisses it, and holds it in her arms.

Manuel stands at the door. His black, swarthy face is livid with rage. His Lola, his Lolita, is mad with love for the fair-faced stranger.

Maldiciones on her father who brought him to the hut. Curse his blue eyes and his white skin! Curse her, too, if she loves him.

Dolores raises her eyes and looks up at the dark, fierce face. The knife gleams in the air. Her lips curl in scorn and defiance, as the eyes above her glare more darkly. Whither will speed the knife?

She puts her fingers to her lips in caution. Once more she bends over the fair, drawn white face, lays back the ruddy curls, and kisses them—*Adios.*

A Tropical Sketch.

The face above her has a devil's fierceness, for *Maya* blood flares quickly and beats hotly. The hand is raised, while the eyes menace.

Dolores raises her head again; her eyes fling back the threat, they blaze with scorn.

Manuel bends lower, and his hand rises higher; her full brown breast is under his knife. A sudden thrust, and then a hasty flight.

Her dark eyes grow dim; defiance melts out of them, and love returns to them. Her head sinks forward. The knife is deep in her breast. The stranger is flooded with her warm blood. But he sleeps softly.

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II.

THE PRESAGE OF BIRTH.

ANITA'S STORY.

A NIGHT in the tropics has a charm and beauty all its own. The soft, languorous breath of the trade winds gives a darker shade to the face, a deeper black to the eyes, and thins the quick-flowing blood, while it soothes the senses to dreamy restfulness.

The *patio* or inner garden of the great *hacienda* was as large as a city block, and filled with flowers, shrubs, trees, and fountains. Around two sides was a gallery with benches, rugs and hammocks.

Across the wide entry the dining-room was lighted by candles, while steaming dishes, borne by Indian servants, carried brave recompense to weary riders in from journey, chase or roundup.

I was the only one of my party who spoke Spanish readily, and was some years younger then than now.

The Presage of Birth.

Thus it chanced that while others prolonged the feast, drank toasts and made merry, I sat with the daughter of the house in the moonlight.

Her face was dark, black were her eyes and hair; the latter having a touch of waviness which suggested a darker than Castilian or Indian blood somewhere in the dim past.

Our talk flowed on in liquid Spanish. My wearied limbs and eyes were resting from saddle, sun and dust; fragments of song and speech came to us from open doors.

The night before, I had slept under blankets, with saddle for pillow, on the mountain summit twenty leagues away to the north.

Ten leagues beyond that were the end of the rails and the last telegraph station. We were beyond the pulse-beat of the modern world, fairly into the old traditional Mexico.

"Yes," she said, "this *hacienda* is very old; older, they say, than the great cities of your country. If you wish it, certainly, but I cannot tell its history as well as mamma. She has a beautiful poem about it, too, written by the Padre Hidalgo."

But I prefer to hear it in her own words.

"Well, as you know, Don Hernan Cortes was the *conquistador*—the man who won all this coun-

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try. After he had done this, the king in Spain, so the story goes, wished to reward one of his captains. Some say it was Bernal Diaz, but others give a different name. At any rate, the honor was accepted, not for himself, but for a relative, a young man just out from the Peninsula—that is Spain, you know. And he was given a great domain, from that mountain peak to another many leagues away, and from that to the river, and then to a lake, and thence back to the mountain. And he was called the Marquis of Aguaya.

“Five hundred square leagues is the tale—larger than many states in that great country of yours. And all this the king gave to one man—people, lands and mines—to do with as he willed.

“Of course, mamma could tell it better, but they say he was very handsome and very wicked, and jealous of his wife; that he used to ride far away, to meet, and gamble, and carouse with other men as bad as he.

“So one evening as he sat at cards with these boon companions, luck went heavily against one of them. In an evil moment this one said something—no one knows just what—about the marquis’ wife—that while *he* neglected her she was well attended by the *mayordomo*.

“The beetle-browed, Moorish-faced marquis

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glared at him; but, to their great surprise, said no word in reply. Perhaps he had heard it before; at any rate, his dark heart was fired with jealousy and murder.

"A little later he pleaded a headache and sought his rooms. Once there he changed his dress, stole softly out, mounted his famous black stallion—the only one in all Mexico—and rode forth to take the evening air.

"After a few moments he turned his horse's head and directed his course towards his—this—*hacienda*. Then he went like the wind.

"Five leagues away he came to the first *remuda*. You must know that in those days, when the master went abroad, a retinue followed with horses, and these were held at a distance of four or five leagues all along the line, so he should have ever at hand fresh horses as he needed them. With each horse at each *remuda*, or station, was an Indian servant.

"At the first, he changed, and, it is supposed, bade the servant care well for the black charger and await his return. On into the night he rode, taking a fresh mount at every *remuda*.

"You see that mountain? Well, he came from far beyond that. No one can tell just whence he came. The *rancho* is gone now, but they say that

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when he broke into the *hacienda* in the middle of the night he had ridden more than thirty leagues.

"When he came in at the great gate his heart was as black as his face, and his eyes glowed like coals of fire.

"What he found no one knows. The story is that he stabbed the guard at the gate, rushed into his wife's room and killed her—some say the *mayordomo* also—and one child. The other, a little girl, fled in terror to the servants' quarters. He then turned, mounted his horse, and went back over the same road.

"Before the early dawn had come, he led his black stallion into the ranch stables, took a bath, dressed in clean garments, and smilingly greeted his companions at the breakfast table. His headache? A thousand thanks; that had passed off; he had taken a little gallop last evening for exercise. Would they like to have their revenge for last night's ill luck?"

"And was nothing done?" I asked.

"Oh, no; there was no proof. The little girl and her nurse could not identify him; his black horse was clean and fresh, and so was he.

"When, later, the news got abroad, he was very angry, and threatened vengeance; but soon after went off to the capital. He died within a year—

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sickness, some say—others have it that he was shot or stabbed.

“One very curious circumstance was noted. Every Indian servant throughout the long line of stations was found dead at his post, and each had died from a knife-stab in the back.

“But,” with a shrug of her pretty shoulders, “he was the great lord, and nothing was ever done about it—except just to tell the story as I have to you.”

“And the little girl that fled with the nurse?” I asked.

“She? Why she married, afterwards, a son of one of the viceroys. You saw her picture in the large parlor—and—I, like her, am called Anita, and she was my grandmother’s great-great-grandmother. I am the ninth of the same name. It was in *that* room he found her; *this* is the ring she wore that night.”

After a moment she added: “They say that only a small round spot below the heart, with not even a drop of blood, showed where the wicked stiletto had sapped her life. What we well know is this: Each daughter of the race has carried as her birthmark the same tiny scar; and, every Anita since then, has heard the clang of iron hoofs on the

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stones in the passageway at night, as a sign that she is about to usher another soul into being."

In the silence that followed I lived for a space the long-ago, the fierce, primitive life in this far-off corner of the world.

Then, as the *hacienda* bell struck for midnight, from the banquet room came, in Spanish, the voice of the master of the house calling all to drink his toast—the last for the night: "Long live the North Americans! Welcome to the telegraph and the railway."

The Miracle of the Nacimiento.

III.

THE MIRACLE OF THE NACIMIENTO.

I. TOLD FROM THE POMMEL.

AFTER the long ascent we drew rein at the summit and shifted to ease in the saddle.

"Most titles of honor," said my host, "are written in blood. The more blood, the longer the title lasts. A copious flow serves to deepen the tint, to set more fixedly the stains, so that they are less soon effaced by time and the elements."

Like a Mexican Rhoderick Dhu he straightened in the saddle and waved his arm abroad. "Look at this far sweep of country! From yonder peak of the *Pajaro Verde* west to the *Agua Dulce*, south to the *Charco Azul*, east to the *Rio Santos*, and thence by its meanders back to the mountains of the Green Bird, you can ride a day's journey in either direction from the *hacienda*, and never touch the limits of my lands.

"In your country, especially in your cities, you

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count land by acres, by square yards, even by feet, I have heard. But with us, no; here we have room to expand our lungs, to breathe our own pure air. That mountain! It is all my own. Those thousands of sheep and goats that fleck its side like patches of snow, are mine, all mine. You have seen my horses, more than ten thousand, and my cattle, five times as many, on the plains and in the valleys.

"In the droughts my stock feed all day toward the *Charco* or the river for water, and rest at night to graze outward another day. Back and forth they go, never a pasture fence to vex their limbs, never another master to trouble. They are mine, all mine; and the men and women, the children, the old and infirm, all are mine. I give them their rations, their clothing; I pay at their births, at their baptisms, their marriages and their deaths. I pay masses for the souls of their dead.

"Ah! my pale-faced friend from that cold, frozen North, it is well to be born here on this wide expanse, to feel the breath from your own winds, to ride over your own lands, to be bronzed by a prodigal sun, *and to be free.*" The swarthy, black-haired, black-eyed master threw up his arms.

"And my titles, are they not good? Are they

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not stained deep with blood, with the dark red of the brave *sangre* spilled in gaining them? You have seen them; Anita will tell you the story. From the king in Spain they came, through the great *Virey* in Mexico, to His Highness, the first, and last, and only, the Marquis of Aguaya. And from this marquis, this murderer of wife and child, this blackamoor, to my ancestor, the valiant Antonio Navarro.

"I am well stricken in years, but I am still a strong man. I, too, am Antonio Navarro, and for three hundred years there has always been an Antonio Navarro, and he has been master here.

"Only now there will be a break in the name. I have no sons; they are all dead. I have only one slender girl. But she shall marry and keep my name, and she and her sons shall go on owning and being masters here. While these hills last, there shall be Navarros to own them. We bought them; we fought for them; we have held them; they are ours."

II. THE BLOOD-STAINED TITLE-DEEDS.

At night in the *patio* we swing in hammocks, lie on rugs, lean against pillars. The night wind dry and soft, comes from the arid mountain peaks

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over the dry valleys, and stirs the foliage of the garden. The sky is of the deepest, rarest blue. Low down, next to the horizon, lies the North Star, while behind us the diminished glow of the Southern Cross gives faint promise of brighter radiance.

By the wall is a table on which are strewn papers yellow with age and handling. A candle in a glass-covered frame sheds a dim light.

This is the first *Testimonio*, the original grant, from his Most Catholic Majesty, to his beloved subject and vassal, may God preserve his life many years, Severo, First Marquis of Aguaya, to have and to hold forever, for his own use and profit, all this vast domain.

The parchment is old, but strong. There are sinister stains on its pages, but the ink shows clear even after all these generations. In one part is the formal certificate of the Holy Inquisition that the noble marquis is, and has ever been, from earliest youth, an obedient son of the church.

The ancient formulas are not lacking. "Yo el Rey" (I, the King), it begins, and ends with, "By order of His Catholic Majesty." And this gift, this warrant, has held good; it has never been questioned. None has impugned the right of this long-since dead king to give, nor that of the grantee to enter into, hold, and enjoy, transmit to

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his issue, and theirs to transfer to another, all this wealth of lands and flocks and people.

III. AS TOLD BY ANITA.

"*Como Vd. sabe, Señor* (As you know, sir), in those days, after the bad marquis had killed wife and child, after these crimes had been avenged by his own death, there was left of the race one girl, and she, like me, was called Anita, the sole heiress of the *Marquisada*. When this came to pass, the Viceroy in Mexico gave her an *apoderado* (attorney) and sent word here that the great principality was to be divided and sold. Then it was that the wife of the first Antonio Navarro spoke. Her husband was *mayordomo* of this great *rancho*, then, as now, called the 'Nacimiento.' He was a plain, simple, quiet man, who rode his rounds, went to mass twice a year and slept well at night. While he had been a smuggler, and a bandit in youth, in his mature years he had no great ambitions.

"But his wife, she was not like him. Her brother was a bishop, and she had long dreamed of wealth and power. She went often to mass, counted her beads many times each day, and had her head ever filled with plans. When it was known that the

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great *hacienda* of the 'Nacimiento,' with its more than a hundred leagues of land, its lakes, its rivers, its mountains, sheep, goats, horses, and cattle, was to be sold by order of the *Virey* for fifty thousand milled dollars, she felt the hour had come.

"Straightway she ordered her great coach and went in state to Monclova. In the week she stayed there she had long consultations with her brother, the bishop. Then she returned home and sent for her spouse.

"'Go you,' she said, 'and give lawful notice that you, Antonio Navarro, *Mayordomo* that is, of the "Nacimiento," will pay the fifty thousand *duros*, and demand title of the Viceroy.' Antonio was aghast. He had no fifty thousand *duros*, nor had he one thousand, not even a hundred. Who was he, a simple *mayordomo*, that he should buy a great estate? He had a few goats, fewer sheep, and his saddle horses. All else belonged to the *marquisada*.

"Her sharp eyes snapped; her thin, high-pitched voice answered: 'You! you are a dull man, but you are no coward; you are not too old to fight. Do as I bid you.'

"So the offer was sent, and Antonio, trusting all to his wife, went about his duties like one in a dream. Sometimes he would think that he might

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yet be master there, and at such thoughts his heart would pound fiercely against his leathern coat.

"Months passed, for things went slowly in those days, until news came that the *apoderado* was on his way, bringing title deeds and notaries to transfer the property.

"At the appointed time there was a great meeting of people, there were feasts and processions; long documents were read and signed and sealed. Finally came the supreme moment when the money was to be handed over.

"Antonio obeyed his wife; he went to her room and returned bending somewhat under the weight of a sack containing seventy pounds of silver dollars. Fifty times he made the journey, and the price was fairly counted over.

"Then again she spoke. 'It is well,' she said, 'that we recognize the goodness of the Holy Mary, the Mother of God. Therefore, it behooves us to lay a votive offering at the feet of the noble bishop that he may erect a chapel to glorify God. Go you again and bring forth.'

"So he made five other journeys and brought forth a full tithe.

"Thereupon they all rejoiced and gave praise to

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the piety and faith of the new owner, the Master Antonio Navarro, and to Pila, his wife.

"Now, fifty thousand *duros* was a mighty sum in those days. The *pagador* (paymaster) went long journeys with half that sum in hand; even the *Intendente* at Chihuahua would give it respectful attention. Far to the south, in the mines of San Luis or Zacatecas it was only a trifle; but here on these vast wastes there were more cattle than coin. Thus it was not strange that the production of this sum caused much speculation. Many wondered how a poor *mayordomo*, who earned scarce three hundred *duros* for a year's work, obtained such great wealth.

"Only one reasonable solution was offered. Doña Pila was very pious. There was piety, too, in the family. Was not her brother a bishop? The prayers of the righteous avail; God is good to his own. Don Antonio! He was but another Joseph. He little knew the saint he had for a wife. They had seen a miracle; the Holy Mary had done this wondrous thing.

"The *apoderado* set out on his journey back to the capital to deliver Anita's money. With him went his writers, the notaries, even a priest or two, and his guards and servants; in all, a brave retinue of fifty men. Day after day they traveled, climbed

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high ranges, and threaded narrow *arroyos*. At night they made their camp, guarding zealously the ambulance in which was carried the treasure.

"And then one morning at break of day, when all were in the confusion of rising, there came a sudden attack. From the nearby thicket sprang a band of dreaded Indians. With shouts and shots, with spears and knives, they made quick work of the fated travelers. In short space every man was killed and scalped, their horses driven off, coaches burned, and the unburied dead left for the vultures. Weeks afterward the dread story was told the Viceroy, but the Indians were never found. Only whitened bones were silent witnesses of the tragedy. As for the treasure, that was lost from the face of the earth—swallowed up—heard of no more.

"When, next year, the archbishop made his rounds and gathered the offerings of years from the church treasury at Monclova, not a dollar was missing from the store. His holiness did note that the sacks were mostly new and clean, while many of the coins had dark stains upon them. But"—with a shrug—"there was nothing lacking; there was even a new chapel to our Lady. So he blessed everybody and went on his journey."

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IV.

THE LEGEND OF DOÑA ANA.

I HAVE recently been entertaining an old friend from what we here, under the shadows of legislative greatness, vaguely call the Far West. As this was his first visit east of the Mississippi, I took much pleasure in showing him various places and persons of interest.

It really does one good—renews first impressions—to go around with one who sees and hears for the first time. Of course, I put him in at my club, and got friends to do as much at others.

One Sunday evening, within the last few weeks, I announced at dinner that I was going to take him to church. While he still retained his broad-brimmed hat, he had gone in other respects to the fullest requirements of fashionable dress; so that, as he sat in church, only his bronzed face and something of that alertness of vision which marks a stranger was noticeable, even to my observant eye.

The Legend of Dona Ana.

It is a grand church, and the organ is magnificent. The singers, the full choir, the audience, and the pastor, all combined to form a noble occasion. My friend, the captain, took it all in with quick, keen glances from eyes which were more used to scanning brands on horses or cows, or glancing along the polished barrels of a Winchester or a pistol. They are cool, gray eyes—eyes that have faced many a desperate case without a quiver, with never a change more than an added steeliness and a brighter glint, when they have joined hand and brain for instantaneous action in getting there first.

The service was opened by the assistant; there was music, then prayer, more music, and then the pastor began the sermon. I had noticed my friend's keen interest in and appreciation of every detail—the crowded house, the exquisite tones of the great organ, the carefully chosen and perfectly enunciated words of prayer. I saw his estimate of the combination of all these elements in producing a harmonious devotional effect, how he made mental note of and compared it with the rough and ready, the homely, but often effective gospel as given on the plains. With the first words of the preacher, however, I observed a new, a curious look come into his face. He shook himself

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as I have seen him do before when stirred by some strong emotion, and gave his whole attention to the speaker.

At the close we joined in the out-going crowd, but, by accident, found our exit through a door which led us into the parlor in which the pastor and officers of the church met those who wished to speak with them. We stood near the door awaiting a chance to go in, while in the center of the room a little group chatted with Dr. B——, the pastor. The latter glanced our way, and returned my bow by one which also included my companion. A moment later the doctor gave us another glance—this time longer and wholly directed toward the captain. The next instant both had stepped forward, and grasped hands firmly. There was a pleased and interested look in the faces of the bystanders—the crowd deepened a little, and the doctor broke the silence by saying:

“You are with——”(indicating me), and when the captain nodded, “I must see you.”

Now this friend of mine had been a ranchman, a sheriff and a deputy marshal. His whole life had been spent on the plains. He was here in Washington trying to get our great and good friend to make him a United States marshal. To say that I was surprised to find him so warm a friend of

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so eminent a divine, states the case very mildly, indeed.

Half an hour later, in my pleasant quarters, around a cheerful coal fire, with cigars and certain *et ceteras* which touch a plainsman's heart, I broke the silence by:

"Well, old man, what is it?"

With a caressing touch of the ministering implements, he quenched his thirst, and gazed long and critically at the white ash on his cigar.

"I'll have to lay this down, my boy, if I tell the story. I can't talk and smoke at the same time. Say, this is a mighty small world now, isn't it? I hadn't seen the parson in ten years—yes, just about ten years ago—somewhere along in June, 1884. Didn't think I had any acquaintances among your high-up preachers down here in the effete East, eh? Well, he's a brick, all the same. Why, I saw that fellow—but never mind—let me begin at the right end of the trail.

"Let me see. In '84 I was ranching in old Doña Ana county. Along in June I came into Albuquerque to close a deal for 2,000 steers to a Kansas City party. One day the Santa Fé train from the East had an accident west of the pass; burned up a sleeper, killed a few passengers, and all that sort of thing. When the belated train reached

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A. and P. Junction, the 'Overland' had pulled out, so they brought them in to wait over a day. The pilgrims were a rum looking lot, tired and hungry; some wounded and wearing clothes picked up in all sorts of ways to replace the tailor-made truck they wore at home.

"Well, there also had been an incident or two in the old town that morning, and things were in a lively state of eruption. Her sacred soil had been considerably stirred up. Two Mexican gamblers had killed two American monte men, and the latter's friends had rallied to the charge. One of the Mexicans had been killed in the sheriff's hands, and the other stood coolly at bay in the corner of the hotel office, just as our busted tourists arrived.

"Too much excitement, a stab in the right shoulder, and a broken leg had disabled Hank Abram, the sheriff, and I had been called in, with others, to hold the fort and to try to get Antonio safely to jail. I had three or four good boys helping me form a line around Antonio, while about a dozen cowboys, bunco, and such, swore and crowded us."

The old steely glint came into the captain's eyes, his voice hardened, and more of the vernacular of the Border came into his speech.

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"You see, old man, it was hotter than sheol in there just then. You know what that means, as you went through one or two seances with me in Nogales. Nearly or quite twenty men had cocked pistols in their hands, with eyes wide open for the drop when the fun should begin. The leader of the mob was our old friend, Billy the Kid, and he was pleading with me for an even-up funeral.

"There were two dead Americans on the walk outside, one dead Mexican in the room, and he wanted to lay Antonio alongside, so as to keep down competition.

"Antonio! He was the coolest man in the room. He gazed calmly from out his corner, leisurely prepared and rolled a corn-shuck cigarette, struck a light with his flint and fuse, drew in long breaths and slowly expelled the smoke out through his nostrils.

"Billy had just finished his argument, speaking in English, which Antonio pretended not to understand (but I knew he did), and I was declaring my purpose to take our man to jail first, and let them negotiate or fight with the jailor, when a self-cocking revolver whirled by my head. Antonio caught it, butt in hand, and before the brain could digest and act on the incident, the dance was wide open. Antonio's and Billy's pistols popped as one

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sound, and both fell, but Billy got up again, while Antonio did not get up.

"When I saw Antonio catch the gun I knew his friends had rallied. When I saw him fall, I and my boys realizing that the Hamlet had dropped out of our play, ducked our heads and sought a less exposed portion of the frontier next to the lunch counter. Just as the boom was at its highest notch, the front door opened, and the tourists filed into the room—that is, some filed in, while the others fled or got hastily behind the nearest breast-works, on the floor or behind the counter.

"When the incident was closed—it lasted, say, thirty seconds—both parties had retired, leaving their dead for me to care for. Antonio lay face down, gun in one hand, cigarette in the other, not dead, but soon to be. When I turned Antonio and raised his head, he glanced around the field of conflict, and tapping his breast, whence the blood was pouring out, said in fair English, 'Even-up funerals, sure enough.' Then as a sharp pain came, he added in a lower voice, 'Where *curé*?' Poor devil! For the third time in his life—baptism, marriage, and death, you know—he wanted a priest. An inquiry ascertained that the Catholic priest of the town was ill in bed. Antonio could not be carried to him; he was going another way

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too fast. Just then one of those tenderfoot tourists, in a suit of clothes he had purchased from a section foreman, stepped forward and knelt by the poor fellow. He was as cool as a May morning, and as gentle as a nun. Blank me, too, if he didn't speak to him in Latin. I thought first it was Spanish. For two or three moments he talked softly to Antonio. The knot in his forehead smoothed out, his face became calm, and with a gentle gurgle, a murmur of '*Maria Purissima! Dios Poderoso!*' he passed out, leaving his spurs behind him, to try a new life beyond the Apache trail.

"As the parson arose from the floor he looked sharply around, asked if the priest could not attend, and learning the facts, said he would serve.

"We don't stand much on ceremony there. While the boys carried in the two bodies from the street, others brought four plain board coffins from the ever-ready undertaker across the street. In the meantime the coroner, who had been one of those who had held me up, impaneled a jury. These gentry, with only two full stops for drinks, rendered a verdict 'that the whole lot had died violent deaths, caused by pistol shots in hands unknown.'

"In the interval the parson had got some sort

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of a dinner, and just about one hour after he had entered the town, took his place in front of the bar. The room was well filled. In a row at the back end four unpainted dead boxes held all the mortal remains of the toughest lot we had ever worked off at a single roundup. There were widows and brevet widows, a few old women and boys, the division superintendent of the road, the station agent, the barkeep, with apron rolled up to indicate that he was taking a holiday; and a miscellaneous crowd, half of whom would have been more beneficial to their constituents had they also been securely boxed and ready for permanent exit. Over the coffins of the two Mexicans black mourning wreaths had been placed, and later, not to be outdone, the friends of the two Americans had piled on each coffin the gun and spurs of the departed.

“Nice layout, wasn’t it?”

“Now, I had been impressed by the parson’s nerve on entering, his speaking Latin, and kindiy way with Antonio. I was anxious for him to acquit himself well, so as to close the deal in good form. Withal, I was a bit nervous. There were friends of each side in the room, and more outside. One or two of the women were quite capable of raising that horrible Mexican death wail, which,

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while it freezes your heart, prepares other hearts for vengeance and murder; and there might be more bodies than boxes.

"The parson must have felt much of this low barometric pressure, as he stood quietly in front of a dazzling array of assorted liquor until all were seated. My eyes searched him over carefully. Rather under height, he was slightly, even sparsely built; and his large, long, thin nose held a damaged pair of spectacles. Raising both hands, he took a step forward and said, 'Let us all pray.' The tone was very quiet and even, but distinctly audible to all in the large room. Of course, I cannot repeat his words, but they went straight to the point; they were as nearly perfect in their fitness for the occasion as human ingenuity could have made them. When it was finished, we all knew that this tenderfoot parson, one hour in the town, was a dominating, controlling influence.

"He dispensed with singing. There was no grand organ, no choir, not even a soloist. Only the wind from the high plateau, through the open doors and windows, sung a dirge to four souls who had gone out suddenly, violently, like a candle-flame in a gust of wind. There was no hymn, but the wind sighed among the whiskey bottles, over the open mouths of the water jars, and through

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the creaking shutters, as it went out and on across the barren plains to the distant mountains ranges.

“He had no stand at his side; he did have in front men who had failed at Yale, but had earned and received post degrees of wickedness; cow-punchers, corral-born and imported, gamblers, deserters, saloon-keepers, one editor, a few soldiers, scouts, and, outside the front windows, two army officers in a buckboard. In nationality the range was equally liberal—German, French, Greeks, Mexicans, Chinese, English, with, say, one-fifth of our own blood. On those faces and forms were marks of drink, of quarrels, and of wounds. Legs, arms, eyes, were wanting in some cases, while others bore scars of camp-life, roundups, Indian raids, or bar-room bouts.

“What did he say? This I cannot tell; I can only give the general impression. He talked straight ahead, and laid down the plain rules of God’s law, that those who lived by the sword would fall under it. There was no mincing of words, no talking down to, but at us, and the words hit like a blow from the shoulder. More than the words, was the peculiar effect of the voice. His enunciation was simply perfect. Slow, deliberate, no syllable was lost to the most distant ear. With no attempt at eloquence, he tied us hand and foot,

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eye and ear, and carried us whither his mind willed. I knew enough of such things to recognize the perfect finish of his delivery, but to most of the crowd such speech was simply a revelation.

“He traced the route through life of these men; pointed out what they might have been; what hopes, fond mothers had dreamed of innocent, helpless babes, who, through God’s strange providence, had led such lives as theirs; and though he pointed out the law of God, he took upon himself no right to judge or to pronounce a verdict. That he left to Him who guides and guards us in devious ways in our entries and exits on this brief stage. I shall fail to give you an idea of his discourse; but he stirred our hearts to the very depths. As he closed with a deep, earnest prayer, a long, deep sigh passed around the room, and hardened old wretches, whose only thoughts of God were blasphemous, arose, with wet eyes and shaking heads, to file solemnly by the dead to the free air outside.

“While we closed the boxes, Bandy Jim, who kept the ‘Iron Clad’ gambling-house, drenched the coffins with tears, as Green Fisher, an outlaw in half the counties of Texas and all of several other states, remarked: ‘Boys, that parson just ever-

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lastingly knocks the whole underpinning out from under hell.'

"Yes, they buried them. I stayed in town until next day, eating supper and breakfast with the parson. He was a man of few words; he never asked me my name, nor told me his own, nor where he lived. Parson and captain we called each other, and, next morning, he went on to the Coast.

"To-night I heard him at home, in his native element, among his own people, with all the adjuncts of eye and ear to aid devotion. He did well, too; he preached them a good gospel, and talked straight out to the great ones of this world, as you all grade greatness here. He is older and thinner than when I knew him, and the hair has receded from his brow; gray hairs have come to him, but his heart beats squarely, and he is not forgotten.

"Out in old Doña Ana his sermon is a legend among the cowboys; it is discussed in saloons, over monte tables, and around lonely camp-fires. It has helped discouraged missionaries, and, as one of these once said to me, 'It is the seed of God's providence planted by one who builded better than he knew.'"

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The captain took another refresher, lighted a new cigar, and, stretching his limbs, said :

"Do you suppose my name will go in to-morrow?"

Ten days later the *Post* and *Star* published the following notice :

"Capt. Richard P. Heth, of Texas, died in this city yesterday, suddenly, of heart failure, aged forty-eight years.

"Services at Congregational Memorial Church, to-day, at 3 P. M., Rev. Dr. Brighton officiating. Deceased was well known throughout the West, where his high character and kindly disposition made him one of the most popular men west of the Mississippi. He was an applicant for United States marshal, and it is understood, from high authority, that his name had been practically decided upon."

His name did go in.

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V.

THE NORTHER.

ONLY those of us who have lived in low latitudes can fully understand what quarantine and yellow fever means. I put the quarantine first because, in truth, we generally dread it more than the fever. If we get the fever, why—we get the fever. We shrug our shoulders, run our chances, and leave results to "*la voluntad de Dios.*" But the quarantine! *It* cuts us from mails, from supplies, medicines, and sometimes from a good physician. For the merchant it means no importations and no trade; for the poor man, no work, and, consequently, no food.

One year my health had been so bad that we had gone North for the summer. Two weeks after we left Matamoros yellow fever broke out, and a terrible epidemic followed. We returned late in November to miss many a familiar face, and to hear again and again the history of that dreadful season. Early in the following year I was taken

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seriously ill of a fever. I had been away the year before, and it was generally believed that there were always cases the year after an epidemic. These three—two facts and one general opinion—almost created a panic. People recalled the terrible deaths from the worst form of the *vomito* which had occurred the previous year in the very room in which I lay. I well knew as I went to bed, that if I did have the yellow fever, my doctor would leave me, that we would be shut off by quarantine from even a lemon or a pound of ice, and my wife and three little children would be in the midst of it. Not a cheering outlook, surely. Fortunately I did not have the yellow fever that time, and, after a long struggle, began to gain slowly. It was five weeks before the fever left me, and by that time the season was well along. The city had a quarantine against Vera Cruz, and so long as I could certify as to its continuance and to the health of the city, we would be all right. This quarantine was maintained in spite of strong opposition, and without legal authority. If I add that it was my official duty to report the first failure of the quarantine, or the first case of yellow fever in the city, it will be seen that my situation was not particularly pleasant.

The long, hot summer passed very slowly.

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Spring begins in February, and April brings summer heat. Quarantine went on in May. In May, June, July and August the heat is blinding and steady. It comes down like a blow on the head. Every Monday I went over the death-rate, watching for suspicious cases. September, the most dangerous month of all, had passed safely, although not without many alarms. With the first days of October, counting the days to safety had become a habit. All through the month we had looked and hoped for a good norther. No wonder we longed for this wonderful wind. It would cool the air, thicken our thinned blood, and, better still, sweep away all malarial diseases, and render a further quarantine unnecessary. We had a slight one late in September, which, while very hot and lasting only a few hours, had set us all hoping. Early in August I had brought my family back from the Lower Gulf coast. After that date was *chubasco* weather, when safety from storms and tidal waves lay in our solidly built brick house.

Day after day in October we had looked at the barometer and had studied the northern sky, hoping for signs. Day after day we had been disappointed. The barometer never changed a point, the sky was clear, and the sun shone with a pitiless glare. On the thirtieth I noticed a bank of

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clouds to the north, but the barometer showed no change. The thirty-first, all was clear again, and we seemed destined to another month of the same weather. That day the death-rate looked suspicious, and I had to hunt up information as to two or three deaths from *fièvre perniciosa*. Pernicious fever might easily develop into yellow fever. I returned from my search about dinner time, having decided to wait one more day to see if other cases developed in the same locality, before reporting. After the four o'clock dinner was finished, I saw that the thermometer registered 99° Fahrenheit, or two degrees more than usual. Turning to the barometer, a small aneroid, I noticed that it had gone up about three-tenths, reading a little over thirty. This was good news, and, hastening to the balcony, after a sharp search we saw, low down in the northern sky, a bank of dark clouds. Then we felt certain that the norther was coming.

Ah! how hot it was! Ninety-nine at 5 P. M., and the trade wind, which all summer had made life endurable, had stopped entirely. In a climate where, for nine months each year, paper-weights are a necessity, and where you lay a book down with the bound edge to the south, a dead calm is very strange. It was too hot to walk or ride, and

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by six o'clock we were all on the north balcony watching. About half-past six, a telephone message from the Signal Service Office on the other side notified me that a norther was coming, but we knew it already. As the sun went down in a dark-red sky, there was no cloud in sight except the motionless, hand-sized spot in the north. After sunset it spread to right and left, and an occasional flash of heat lightning was seen. Up and down *Calle Abasolo* work was over, and the inhabitants stood in open doors or sat chatting on the *banqueta*. Fragments of various languages reached us—Spanish by the natives, French or German, and occasionally a few words of "United States." For the first time in many months the tall cabbage palms were motionless. Chickens and dogs, and even the General's pea-fowls, were very quiet. The air was oppressive. We could not get full, satisfactory breaths, and perspiration oozed out of us as we sat in the open air of the evening. When the children went to bed at eight o'clock, the barometer had gone up two more points, and I then felt sure the storm would come late and strong. It was a fine time for the mosquitoes. The trade wind, which usually swept through the sitting-room where we read evenings, and drove them off, was gone now, and they had full sweep.

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Moths, cockroaches, beetles, and a vast number of new and curious insects and bugs, thronged around the lamp and crawled over us.

When the cathedral clock struck half-past nine I left my reading, and again sat on the balcony. The small cloud had spread until it covered from east to west, and as high as forty degrees. Low down in the north it was very black, but the upper portions were lighter in color. Off to the northwest came almost continual flashes. Another system of flashes extended from the crest of the cloud in front clear around toward the east. That which had seemed to be only heat lightning, now seemed to have become both sheet and forked lightning, but no sound of thunder was heard. Sitting on the balcony, and looking up and down the street, a curious night scene was before me. The flat, tile-roofed brick houses, and the steep, thatch-roofed *jacals* emerged from the darkness with each flash, to fall back into deeper shadow. In the garden to the northeast were fig trees, and farther away *sauz* (a sort of willow), *fresno* (ash), *palo blanco* (hack-berry), *anhacua* and *mezquite*. The street lights showed the fronts of the houses flush with the sidewalk. The iron-barred windows and transoms, and the heavy, wooden doors, now closed, gave a prison-like look

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to the almost silent streets. A few belated parties woke the echoes as they passed along the brick pavement, chatting and giving quick glances at the dark clouds which foretold "*El Norte*." It was not band night, so no music came from the "*plaza mayor*," a block away. But, as usual, several serenaders had gathered in a house near by, and were making the night merry by celebrating a *cumpli-años*, or Saint's Day. They had several instruments, among which were a piano and a flute, and the soft, dreamy, queer-timed Mexican music floated far and wide on the night air. Just then, the quick, heavy tread of mules and rumbling of a *diligencia* came around a corner, and the whole train, outrider ahead at a gallop, seven mules, two drivers and a heavy road carriage, rattled briskly up toward the market square. Each mule was on a run, one driver guiding, and the other plying the whip. As they passed up the street, doors were cautiously opened to enable inmates to peer out. Two blocks away the equipage came to a noisy halt. The outrider rode up to the great *zaguan*, and, after a few knocks, calls and replies, the wide doors were opened, and all safely housed. A *baile*, the music from which I had heard at intervals from over near the "*Plaza de la Capilla*," where they have the bull fights,

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broke up at an unusually early hour, and the guests scattered quickly to their homes. I leaned back against the wall, with my feet on the iron railing, and watched the northern sky. The flashes of lightning had little of that vivid brightness common in northern latitudes. It was whiter, but vigorous and active.

I was thinly clad, yet very warm, but in those dark clouds lighted by almost momentary flashes, was an abundant supply of cold, pure air. I walked to the east end, to get a better view, and to see the first approach of the wind.

Away to the north lay the Rio Bravo, and beyond it I could occasionally see the keeper's house in the National Cemetery, and the long line of quarters of Fort Brown. While I stood there the clock struck half-past ten. As the single stroke died away, the *sereno* at the corner walked out into the center of the street, and, after flashing his bull's-eye light toward the police headquarters, gave a long, shrill whistle. That over, he opened wide his mouth, and in a high, long-drawn-out cry, called, "*Las-dí-ez-y-mé-dio-y-nu-blá-do!*" Other *serenos* took up the whistle, and then the cry, until a wild chorus of yells came from near and far, and all the sleeping city might know that it was "the tens-and-a-half-and-a-cloud-y." The

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uproar excited the ambition of one of the city scavenger-mule two blocks to the east, and his mournful wails went abroad on the night air. Burros followed with their mighty voices, roosters crowed, dogs barked, and for a few moments all the city resounded with their noise. The sharp, hoarse challenge of the soldier on guard at the military barracks of "*Quien vive!*" to a belated passer-by, closed the list, and all was quiet again. The center of the cloud was now nearly over my head, and seemed quite ready to begin operations. Low down near the northwest and northeast were two other projecting portions, while the play of lightning was almost continuous.

Suddenly I noticed the curved space left on either side of the central cloud filling up with a confused, surging mass of clouds. This was the sign of the coming. A dull roar far away to the north came nearer. A flock of *urracas* (a sort of blackbird) fled from their roost in the trees and scurried away to the south, uttering harsh cries of alarm. A cloud of dust came up the street, and with it came the mighty wind. The dust filled the air, and light pieces of wood and rubbish were carried along with it. In a moment we were shutting doors and blinds to keep out the wind and dust. Its first onset was perfectly dry, but

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within five minutes came a burst of rain, and for some hours it rained and blew fiercely. That night I rested as I had not before for many months. How delicious, how soothing the cold air which came through the open spaces of the doors and transoms! Never has the first spring heat after a Northern winter pleased the body as did the strange and delightful sensation of being actually cold. Outside the wind raged, took off poor roofs, tore down signs, felled weak trees, and played havoc generally. Once in the night a great crash outside awoke me, and as I lay listening to and enjoying the storm, the clock struck. I waited for the call of the *sereno*, who is usually near my house. Above the roar of the wind the whistle sounded, shorter than usual, and then the faithful night guardian tried to call the hour. He started out bravely, but he was too cold. The wind was too strong, and he stopped short before I heard the hour.

In the morning the sky was covered with a dull, gray mass of clouds, through which the sun did not pierce. The rain had ceased, and the air was not only cold but very dry. At ten o'clock I went out for a walk against the gale of the wind. The white duck suit, with linen undergarments, of the previous day, had been laid aside. Good,

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warm, woolen clothing was very welcome, and even then the wind seemed to penetrate the body. At night the wind grew stronger, and while the carpenter told me that glue dried before he could join the pieces of wood, yet a dim mist of rain filled the air. The temperature, ninety-nine degrees the day before, was down to forty-two degrees. How the wind cut! I was warmly dressed, with a heavy overcoat and mittens. The poor street-car driver was shivering in his thin clothes, despite all the blankets he could get to wrap around his head and shoulders. I sent him inside and took the lines. The strong, hardy little mule could hardly pull the car against the wind. Through my overcoat, through all the other warm, woolen garments, went the cold, damp wind. When it struck my body it gave me a little chill, and then, seemingly, went right on through and came out on the other side. My face got cold; I was numbed and chilled all over, and only got up a good circulation by walking back a couple of miles with the wind behind me.

The second day was cloudy, and the wind held its force, but after the third day the sun shone, and the next two weeks, with clear skies and pure, cool air, were delightful.

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VI.

'AN EPISODE OF STATE.

THE United States is a great nation, and the Secretary of State its third officer. He occupies, in some respects, a most unique position, due largely to his intimate relations with other governments and his supervision of our citizens residing in foreign countries. In his office he is hedged about with more of the visible evidences of power than are other secretaries, and while in reality only the spokesman of the Chief Executive, he is usually far better known beyond our own domains than the President. The person—the real man—filling this office, changes, of course, with time and administrations and party policies; but the rank, the perfume of power and the routine exercise of his duties are fixed by the sacred and unchanging traditions of the Department.

At the time of which I write, the Secretary might fairly have been called the foremost typical representative of his race. Well advanced in years,

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his health was much broken, while his life's pathway was strewn with great triumphs, each of which had carried him nearer to the goal of his highest ambition, only to leave him now, empty-handed, at the closed portal. Tall and of commanding presence, his unrivaled faculties were still, while often fitful, often at their brightest and their best.

At such times, what eye could so well read the future of his people, or what mind so clearly foresee the destiny of this crude, growing, peaceful nation? Not in his time was this unconscious giant to rouse to vigorous action and stamp its individuality upon the world. But the day will come which he foresaw, indeed it has come; but he who would have been the natural leader, who would have rushed with ardor into the conflict, already has passed into victory.

This day he sat as usual at the east end of the long table in the famous diplomatic reception room. Here he worked quite alone. In these later years he was more difficult of access; he grew weary more quickly, and he was very much occupied with great international questions.

Senators, congressmen and an hundred lesser lights have been turned away from his closed door. Many of these have been received by the

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Assistant Secretary, and their matters turned over to appropriate bureau chiefs.

Up and down the marble corridors the crowds ebb and flow, like the currents of a sea.

There are haste and waiting; hope buoyant and hope deferred; ~~wealth~~ and rank, over against the rude, unlettered ~~and~~ vulgar; place-seekers and patriots, cranks and diplomats, savants and sight-seers make up the motley throng. Cards have been delivered; there have been usherings in and out; appointments kept ~~and~~ made; messengers have hurried hither and ~~thither~~; it is two by the great clock.

The chief messenger has just informed a large group that no more cards, except to keep appointments, will be taken in to-day.

"Try it again to-morrow, sir," he says, to a strong-lunged Western Congressman. He dislikes to say "no" to any one, because, "Who knows but that same party, sir, may walk right in here some fine morning, take a high-up seat and go to giving orders, and then—well, he'll remember my face and what I did for him, sure."

At three o'clock the crowd had greatly diminished, and cards were fewer.

At this moment a tall, spare woman in country

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dress advanced to the Secretary's door, and addressed the messenger.

"If you please, sir, I am Margaret Doyle; I am from Washington county, Pennsylvania, and have come all this way to speak a word to the Secretary." There are civilly expressed regrets, but the Secretary will see no one; he is very busy, and he dared not take in her name. As she stands quietly, he continues: "Didn't you see all those gentlemen go away just now? There was a senator and a general, and lots of judges in that crowd. So you see, madam, there is no chance for any one to-day. To-morrow, perhaps."

But some appeal in Margaret's face, somewhat of her patient, hopeful waiting gave to her case an interest more distinct and personal than to any of the hundreds which had that day been thrust upon him by eager seekers. He consulted with the private secretary, who came out and endeavored to get a statement of what she wished; even the Assistant Secretary had her brought into his room and questioned.

To all she insisted that she must see the Secretary. When told repeatedly that he could not be seen, and that another could as well attend to her business, she shook her head. "He will see me if

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he knows I am here, and no one else can do me any good.'

It was now after four o'clock. The main force of officials and clerks had gone, and only a few, more or less connected with the Secretary's office, remained. The army of scrubwomen had already invaded the corridors, and the messengers were anxious to get rid of old Margaret.

They counselled her to try again next day, well knowing that it would be an idle, hopeless quest. How many like her had they put off with specious kindness! How many had come day after day, showing their simple faith on their faces, as did this poor woman.

"No," she said, "if he is in that room, he will come out. I will wait here, and when he does come, he will stop and hear my story."

Alas! They had heard such words, and about other secretaries as well, hundreds of times. They knew to a shade the varying phases of doubt and of fading hope which would come over her old face, when the great man finally should pass with only a cold, impersonal glance. They had seen such things so often that their hearts failed to respond.

As Margaret finished speaking, a slight, pale young man, with an active, but serious, look ap-

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proached. There was a hasty parting, the door was opened with alacrity, and he stood in the entrance.

"What is it," he asked, in a low voice of a messenger. He meditated a second, surveyed each one of the group, letting his glance fall last on her; then, with changed manner and courteous words, approached her, saying:

"What can I do for you, madam?"

She replied, "I am Margaret Doyle; I am from Washington county, Pennsylvania, and"—after a steady glance at his face—"I wish to see your father."

To him, in that place, his father was always "The Secretary," so he seemed surprised at the direct mention of the relationship. "The Secretary," he answered, "is very busy; he has an engagement shortly at the White House." There were patient lines in the faded old face, and tears were softly running down her cheeks.

"Sure, sir,"—and now the brogue was plainer, and the words came hurriedly—"it's hard me case is. And it's all about Jimmy, me boy, he that was named after him, and no one else can help me." Here her voice broke and sobs stopped her story.

The young man pondered a moment, glanced again around the group, and, with something of

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sternness in voice and manner, said: "Madam, I will take you in—now—this way."

The great Secretary was signing his mail as the two entered behind his back, and, going softly to the east window at his left, waited for him to speak. Deftly the attendant drew from the pile and blotted each document as it was signed.

When all were finished, the Secretary looked up to the son he so loved and trusted, with a smile which carried so much of weariness, that it seemed a crime to add another burden to his over-tasked mind.

"This lady has some matter, very important to her, which she will not intrust to the rest of us."

With a visible effort the Secretary drew himself up and turned in his chair to look at his caller.

Her gaze was full upon him, and for a space their eyes met. Then she said: "It's fifty years since——"

But at her words he rose, slowly, yet with nervous haste, and exclaimed, "Margaret Doyle!" Then with hearty hand-clasp he led her to a seat, while with the zest and vigor of youth, he recalled boyish memories and friendships.

It pleased the son to see the older man's face light up; to hear his voice come forth again full

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and strong and hearty; to see half a century lose its grip, if but for a moment. He thought, calculatingly, how much of vital force, measured by days of life, was spent in such a rally.

"Now, then, Margaret, tell me all your trouble."

"Well, you see, sir, it's all on account of Jimmy—the boy we named for you. You see, sir, I married Tim Daly, and he was a good man, but weak, and drank some. The boy, he was weak, too, and high spirited, and he died—that is, Tim died. Drink did it mostly, sir, and I had me boy and the wash-tub; and afterwards I married O'Hoolihan, and he was bad to me, and worse to Jimmy. He beat us, he did, both of us, and he drove Jimmy away from home; cut him once with a knife, and so Jimmy, he was that high-spirited, he just ran away, and he took O'Hoolihan's watch, and borrowed some money in the town the day."

The listener's face followed her story with close interest; his eyes darkened at the recital of her wrongs.

"And now," she added, "O'Hoolihan was dead this ten years," and had left her a pension. She had a small cottage, and Molly Maguire, a girl Jimmy had loved, lived with her, and they wanted him to come home. He used to be delicate and have a cough.

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"Yes, yes," said the Secretary, "and where is the boy now?"

"Here are the papers, your honor, and they be going to kill the boy, and that, too, for no fault of his."

"Going to kill him! What for?"

The Secretary reached impulsively for the papers.

"They do say he was with the train robbers," sobbed Margaret, "an' down in that furrin country they shoot them without any trial at all."

The Secretary was greatly excited; he stood erect; his eyes shone with too strong a light.

"Father," said the young man in low tones, "we will take this up at once; justice shall be done."

"But I want more than justice," he shouted; "I want mercy. I want her boy saved and brought back to her alive. Alive—do you hear?"

"Mrs. Doyle," said the son, "come to my room to-morrow. My father, the Secretary, is very tired. He will put your case in good hands. See! I am his son; I will do what he would if he were well."

The Secretary was indeed weary. In a moment he was deftly guided to the elevator, thence to the waiting carriage.

Margaret's papers went downstairs to a corner

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room; the light was turned on; correspondence on file called for, and a group of officials went vigorously to work.

The first document was from our Consul General at San Fernando.

"No. 527.

"CONSULATE GENERAL, U. S. A.,

"SAN FERNANDO, December 19, 18—.

"HONORABLE — — —,

"ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE,

"WASHINGTON, D. C.

"SIR: My No. 524 of the 10th confirmed my telegrams of the 8th and 9th instant, and gave a brief account of the attempted train wrecking and robbery at La Golondrina, a station 200 miles east on the San Fernando railway. The following additional details I have obtained from a careful examination of the place, from railway officials and others:

"There were ten in the party of bandits. Of these, two were killed in the running fight, and seven more, who had hidden in a cave near by, were captured early in the morning by the *rurales*.

"On board the train an engineer was killed, two guards and two passengers slightly wounded.

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"Under the provisions of the new train robbery law—copy and translation enclosed in my No. 488, of August 10th last—these seven were promptly marched back to the place, stood in line—back to the mountain, face to the precipice down which they had planned to throw the train—and, in the vernacular of the division superintendent of the railway, 'pumped so full of lead they couldn't float.' The tenth man was found next day, in a crevice of the rocks near the lower switch, seriously wounded. By that time the *rurales* were far away and the local authorities were afraid to apply the summary law. Then, too, he was an American; so they loaded him into the baggage car and consigned him to the Federal judge in this city.

"By the courtesy of this official I have visited the jail and seen that the prisoner is attended by a competent physician.

"You will recall that the attempt failed, though the engineer was killed; and that an extra engineer, hidden in the tender, brought the train safely down the mountain.

"The railway has recently been carrying large amounts of silver dollars and bullion *en route* to the United States and Asia. The train in question had some 200,000 eagle dollars and \$50,000 of our money. Under these circumstances they

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asked for a guard, and Colonel Valdez had put on board a force of fifteen *rurales* to make the run over the mountains.

"La Golondrina is merely a turn-out along a narrow ledge, on a heavy grade, near the summit. There are neither telegraph office, section houses, nor switch lights. It is a most desolate spot—sheer mountain walls on one side, and a fall of nearly one thousand feet on the other—a breathing-place where trains may pass, or rest, or leave a portion of their load.

"Like all on the mountain, this is a cut-switch; that is, besides the two spring switches, one at each end, and each operating two rails, there is another, the cut switch-stand, near the lower end of the side track, and operating only the outer rail of the siding. By this, any car or train breaking loose, when thus shunted off, will derail before reaching the main track. As a matter of course, this always stands open except when in actual use by moving trains.

"The scheme of the robbers seemed to have been to turn the train on to the upper end of this siding as it came down from the summit, and shoot the engineer when he tried to stop.

"The side track is very short, only a little more than a train length, so that it would be impossible

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to come to a stop before reaching the cut-switch. Train men tell me only a slight headway would be needed to carry the train over to the first ledge, some one hundred feet, while a little more—probably the slowest the engineer could command in so short a distance—would suffice to plunge it clear over and down more than one thousand feet to the valley.

“The engineer had been cautioned, and had an extra along. When he found himself turned on to the siding, he was going about twelve miles an hour. He promptly applied the rest of the air; but it was misty, the rails were damp, and the grade over three per cent.

“Then came a volley of Winchesters, and when he fell, the extra engineer took his place. As the last cars of the train cleared the main line, the wheels shot forward as though they had been oiled.

“While waiting for the shock, the extra tells me that he recited portions of the marriage service used by the clergyman at his wedding twenty years before, while the fireman struck wildly at the dial of the air register because the brakes did not stop the train.

“As the pieces of glass fell on the hearth, there was a heavy lurch, and both prepared to jump,

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when, to their surprise, the engine rounded the curve, bumping a little on the safety rails, to the main track, carrying the train safely after it.

"The *cut-switch* was closed and the line of both rails continuous. The train soon came to a halt; the dead engineer and two bandits were placed in the baggage car, and, leaving the *rurales*, the run was finished without incident.

"The court has held Daly for trial. There is no question as to his guilt, and sentence will be given as promptly as the forms of law admit.

"You will note that the process against Daly is the regular, not the summary one.

"The other seven were treated to that most effective *ley fuga*. As Colonel Valdez puts it: 'They were guilty; they were caught in the act, and they were shot. There were no lawyers, no appeals and no costs.'

"One curious circumstance has been developed by the surgeon's examination. Daly's wounds are all cuts; no pistol was used on him, while it is known that the *rurales* did not draw their knives. There are no less than five wicked slashes on his body; he is now unconscious, and may die.

"In the meantime, I have a pathetic letter from his mother, who signs Margaret Doyle, copy of which, and my reply, I inclose herewith.

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"The local and judicial feeling is very strong against him. Nine natives have been shot, while he, the only American, is reserved for the slow processes of the regular criminal law."

The law officer of the department had listened attentively to the reading of this long despatch. Then turning to a stenographer he dictated the following telegram:

"BLANK, CONSUL GENERAL, SAN FERNANDO.

"Daly evidently innocent—exert all your influence to secure his acquittal. Employ best attorneys, and, if convicted, use personal letter from me by mail to-morrow to secure his pardon from President. I want Daly sent home to his old mother in Pennsylvania."

In a moment the written copy was before him. Reading it over carefully he made a marginal note, and beckoned to a waiting messenger:

"Take this straight to the Secretary, no matter where he is, whether at dinner or in bed, do you understand, and bring it back signed. Be quick!"

In the court below was the waiting carriage; without a moment's hesitation he took the risk, saying, "Orders from Mr. Walker," and was

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whirled swiftly away. At the outer door of the historic old red brick mansion, in the reception room, through the library and down the dining hall filled with guests, the same words smoothed his way.

The great Secretary begged pardon, adjusted his glasses and read.

"Mr. Walker, sir," murmured the boy; "there are his initials in the corner," and reading approval in his eyes, deftly removed the soup plate with one hand, while the other proffered a ready-inked pen.

With a low bow the sable youth effaced himself from the room so softly that scarcely a guest noted the interruption.

As the great man ate an olive he thought, for a moment, of a pink-faced Irish girl in the far-off days of youth; in the next he bent in graceful attention to the words of a fair guest. But his eyes were heavy; he was weary and longed to be alone and at rest.

Ten days later came a reply from our representative at San Fernando:

"Engaged best attorneys, gave my personal supervision, but case hopeless. Daly sentenced to be shot. Feeling very strong against him, but

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have become convinced of his comparative innocence. Await, as only resource, letter from Secretary asking pardon as personal favor. Daly's statement by to-day's steamer."

The statement, omitting preliminaries, was as follows:

"After discharge from the road last month I had been drinking and in bad company. I took part in one or two robberies; later I went into the mountains with the gang, but was full of *mezcal* all the time. For some days we lay in hiding near La Golondrina; one evening they told me their design. The awfulness of the crime astounded me, but my objections were met with such sharp threats, that I dared say no more.

"They knew I had my switch key, and made me give it up. After my refusal to join in the affair, they disarmed, and even debated shooting me; but finally left me down the siding under guard.

"I had been bad enough, but this last act was too bad for even my worst impulses. I could drink, quarrel, rob; I might even kill in a fight—I did shoot a Chinaman once in Torreón—but to send a train load of innocent passengers down there; only devils in hell could do that.

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"While I sat thus under guard I heard, around a distant curve, the locomotive working wide open up to the summit.

"When I heard the train coming I resolved to kill the guard at the cut-switch and try to wrench it shut. I found a large rock and made out the man's location. If I failed I would go over with the train.

"The gang were up and at their posts as the engine, clearing the summit, began the descent without steam, and held back by the air brakes. I saw their outlines as the train rounded the curve, where the head-light searched the far-off valley down which it was so soon to plunge.

"When they fired on the engineer I seized the stone with both hands and struck down my guard. I had but a moment to save a hundred lives. As I reached the switch, the glare of the head-light showed me what they had not seen. The switch had been locked, *but the bar was out of the slot.*

"With a mighty effort I turned the lever and the break in the track was closed.

"My hands dropped to my side as the huge machine, grinding, groaning, and crunching, passed, and, pounding a little on the safety-rail at the main line, rounded the curve, carrying the train safely after it.

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"That's the last I knew until I came to in jail."

COMMENT.

"This is, as near as I can write it down, the substance of Daly's remarkable story. One of the bandits carried a bloodstained knife which could have made Daly's wounds.

"However this may be, he was with the gang, and had been for some time. The judge takes the common view held here. He holds it proven that Daly was present, and not proven that he had repented, or that he changed the switch so as to save the train.

"He says, frankly, that what he depends upon is the evidence. On that he holds him guilty, and sentences him to be shot, as is his duty under the law."

Margaret Doyle came every day to the Department, but now she stopped below in the Consular Bureau.

Weeks wore away, but her face was placid; her confidence serene and unbounded.

"The Secretary of State, God bless him! has Jimmy's case on his mind, and he's that good and that great that the boy'll be saved to me.

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I've a letter from the Consul down there—God bless him!—too. Jimmy'll never walk much. Wounds he got a-savin' a train full of passengers; but I don't mind that at all. What with the pension—the only good turn O'Hoolihan ever did me and mine—and me stout arms, and Molly waiting for him, we'll care for him all right. Maybe those railroads will give him a pension after awhile."

She had been told only what was necessary, and of this she had soon forgotten all that was unpleasant.

One day came a telegram:

"Circuit court approves sentence. No appeal possible. No other remedy than pardon. Personal letter received. Entirely satisfactory. Will use discreetly. Plenty of time before sentence becomes effective. Am confident of success."

Margaret was now told she could go home and await further advices.

In the corridor she met a kindly face, an entire stranger, but he would listen.

"The Secretary—God bless him! he never forgets the friends of his youth. He's that tender,

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for all he's so great, and it's thinking of my case he is every day."

A month later came the final report. Among the inclosures was one of which I give fully as much as I feel authorized to make public:

Translation.

A seal which reads: Private and confidential correspondence of the President of the United States of . . .

"MY DEAR SIR AND FRIEND: I have attentively read the personal letter from ———, which you were kind enough to hand to me.

"I have also carefully considered all the evidence in the case, the petition for pardon, and your statement. . . . relating to the case of James Daly, American citizen, one of a gang of train robbers, sentenced to be shot for effecting the death of an engineer, and attempting to wreck and rob a train at La Golondrina last December.

"I fully recognize the wisdom of extending executive clemency in certain cases, and have not failed to note the criminal's claim that he refused to take part in the vile act, and changed the cut-switch so as to save the train.

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"I much regret, however, that I find no corroborative evidence on this point, except, perhaps, that he was wounded by the rest of his party; and that I can find no just grounds to base sufficient reasons for remitting the extreme sentence of death, already suffered by the others.

"I always have, however, fully recognized, and throughout my life sought to follow, the very laudable custom of remembering the friends of youth, and those who, by personal association or favors rendered, have a just claim upon my sympathy and protection.

"In this sense I accept the personal letter from ———, and in compliance therewith, have this day given orders that pardon shall issue to the criminal, James Daly, conditioned on his leaving the national territory.

"Accept, ...
"————."

"Shall we copy all the papers for Mrs. Doyle?"

"No," replied the chief, "just notify her of the general result. Express Department's hearty gratification and so forth."

"Any report up to the Secretary?" added the clerk.

"I think not," responded the chief. "I will

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make a verbal report to him. Just put the papers into the hopper. The files will show if he wishes to know the details."

"Hold on!" he called, as the clerk was leaving the room.

"Here's something else to go with those papers—just came in—a telegram from Blank. Good God, read that!"

"Daly died of wounds this morning. Got special permit, and am sending the body and pardon to his mother."

In an obscure Pennsylvania town an old woman and a younger one wear mourning for the boy who lost his life in a foreign land to save a train load of passengers.

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VII.

KEELEY-CURE PAHSON.

A BORDER SKETCH.

WHEN I had gone down into Sonora three months before, this narrow valley had been a sheep range. On my return, human wolves were searching fiercely for that yellow metal which the Almighty had cached in the nearby hills.

Sitting on the piazza of the unpainted wooden edifice called the "Two Republics" hotel, Captain Drawfirst told me the stirring history of the new town. He was Marshal of that part which lay on the American side; and while he had acquired new forms of expression along the border, he still kept the soft, slow, half-lisping drawl of his Texan home. This is his version of one of these incidents.

"It kem about jes' this-a-way. I war a-strollin' down the avenue—this yer trail heah—a-pickin' my teeth an' feelin' right peart. Lon Sing hed

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filled me plum up with his hull *menoo* an' throwed in a Guaymas seegah toe settle my intel-lee' with. Halfway down I hed killed a rattler which hed jes' crawled out toe git the noon sun uv Arizona. When he'd retired toe his hole in December, he lef' a desert; but when he kem out in Maach, he broke intu the upper wave uv sassiety, an' it dazzled him. So I pinned him neat.

"Right along thar, jes' in frent uv the 'Glass Eye' saloon, Mexican Lupe war a-standin' at ease an' ragged out fit toe kill. With a new sombrero, high boots with red tops, big spurs, yellow banda an' so forth, he looked like he reely thought he wuz surely the on'iest ha'r in the hull dish uv hash, er, as the Mexicans say, the on'y bug in the blanket.

"Seein' as how I wuz a freshly digestin' uv a squar meal, an' a-smokin' uv a seegah, the gray matter di'n't work quick, an' I missed some uv the preliminaries. But jes' then they wuz several pops uv guns in the saloon, afore the tent-flaps opened up suddin toe relieve the inside pressure. Two Mexicans got out first, each carryin' a bag uv coin in one han' an' a smokin' gun in the other. They wuz a-pullin' uv they freight mighty fas', but they couldn't oncouple f'um two cowboys who wuz right ontoe they trail. They Mexicans' de-

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sires wuz to git across toe *they* side uv the line, amongst they frien's, an' whar I couldn't 'rest 'em.

"Nachelly I pulled my gun an' stopped they leetle game. I 'rested all four uv 'em, an' Lupe, too, though he stood mighty quiet; but his gun wuz empty an' a-smokin', an' two streams uv blood war a-flowin' down an' a s'ilin' uv his raiment.

"I wuz guidin' uv the party toe the jail, an' a-lookin' out fo' some uv my deputies, when Lupe's gal kem a-flyin'. Her ha'r wuz loose, her eyes wide open; she wuz a yellin' murder an' loaded fo' b'ar. 'Thout stoppin' toe argy anythin' she opened up an' began pumpin' lead at me. Uv co'se, I couldn't shoot back at a woman, so I tried toe grab her han's.

"When I let go uv Lupe he made a break fo' the 'Land uv God an' Liberty,' which caused hostilities toe begin agin quite gineral. Sech a incident changed conditions somewhat, an' so, when the game wuz closed, it wuzn't necessary toe continue on to'des the jail. We di'n't need no jail any mo'. Consekently, I tole the boys toe gather up the fruits uv the conflic' an' bring 'em intoe the 'Two Republics' bar-room.

"Then I rustled fo' the two coroners, one f'um

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each side uv the line, an' hed 'em summons a jury. I helt thet the affair should be closed with the fohms uv of the law.

"Queer 'bout crowds, now, very! When you don't want 'em they is numerous; but soon's the lead begins toe break loose, they scatters with extreme vi'lence an' haste. Uv co'se, this don't count the officers uv the law, ez they plays out they han's regardless; nur yet them thet think they hez a special invitation fer thet perticular function, but on'y the gineral an' miscellaneous part uv a crowd.

"Jes' one feller out uv the hull lot hadn't lit out when the shootin' broke loose, but stood there quiet, though a-shakin' an' a-tremblin' all over. This wuz a loony cuss we gineraly called Keeley-Cure Pahson. When we war ready toe begin the inquestin' he did a mos' considerate thin'. His exac' words war: 'Gentlemen, afore we investigate, le's irrigate,' which is a techin' an' feelin' remark at a proper moment.

"This same feller hed allus skeered like a jack-rabbit when they wuz any shootin' a-goin' on ; said he wuz a preacher back home, an' consekently a man uv peace. As toe drinks, he hed never done a gineral treat afore fo' nigh two months—drank by hisse'f, er sponged mos'ly—an' a-knowin' uv

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his finances, I wuz dead s'prized that he hed the 'come down' toe injuce the barkeep toe set 'em up.

"Pahson seemed mighty rattled, but he stood up an' took his *mezcal* with the crowd; an' paid fo' it like a born gent, throwin' the change out the do' toe the Mexican boys. His eyes war glittery, but his legs did they duty by him, though his han's shook an' his ole an' frekent frien', the jimjams, seemed toe be gettin' a clost holt on him.

"After we-uns hed all flushed the sluices at Pahson's expense, we tuhned in toe perfohm our melancholy duty an' vindicate the majesty uv the law.

"Uv co'se, five deaders all toe onct sort uv broke the record even fo' a new town, but the jury rassled with it steady an' give in a verdic' thet: "The five honored an' lamented feller citizens, bein' two uv the United States uv America, an' three uv the United States uv Mexico, now a-lyin' asleep afore us, kem toe occupy this untimely situation by tryin' toe break jail, against the fohms uv law made an' pervided in sech instances, an' no fu'ther legal perceedin's is necessary."

"When Al Slade read this in English, an' Manuel give it toe the others in Spanish, Pahson clim' up on the table, puts it toe a vote an' declares it

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kerried unanimus. Then he announced thiet this wuz a special occasion, thiet the sperrit wuz a-movin' uv him, an' he perposed toe close out the deal with a few remarks. He give the frien's uv the deceased one hour toe arrange the corpses an' dig the holes on the mounting-side, after which time the aujience would please rally toe display they respec's toe the remains.

"Now you may bline my trail er shif' my pack-loads ef this town di'n't do itse'f proud. Five beautiful corpses wuz laid out, two on one side uv the room, in the comin' State uv Arizona, an' the other three on the other side in the 'Free an' Independent State uv Sonora,' with a devout an' solemn aujience in the middle. On'y one on each side wuz properly boxed, but they separate *compadres* wuz planked under an' blanketed above, black handkerchiefs an' hats over they faces an' spurs toe they feet. Hit done much credit toe the departed an' toe the town.

"As fo' the ofisiater ontoe these remnants, Keeley-Cure Pahson, he hed blossomed out gorgeous. A pipe hat lef' f'um the effec's uv a tin-horn gambler, who had been laid away a day er two befo'—with the bullet-holes in it patched with black cloth—high collar an' tie as white as his coat wuz black, he war a shinin' light.

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His nose wuz redder than common, they wuz red spots on both cheeks, his eyes war uncommon glittery, whilst his long, thin han's an' fingers shook like he war loaded with liquor an' excitement. When he lay his tile an' black snuffer on the monte-table in frent uv him, we all lets go uv our pistils an' jines him in a fetchin' pra'r.

"He begun his talk by brief remarks on the names, nationalities an' entitlements uv our frien's whose lamps hed gone out in this fitful wind uv the desert; alludin' in a mos' techin' manner toe the fac' thet each one uv the Sister Republics wuz called on toe mo'n the loss uv favorite sons. Not being any widders an' orfans toe mention, he had toe fall back on the beloved bretheren racket, an' about they bein' co-workers in the development uv this gem uv the great Southwest. 'Whilst its mines,' he said, 'wuz the richest under the sun, its life-givin' breezes war the salvation uv many whose span would be cut short by any others in the world. Some uv of our frien's mus' hev lef' tender ties back home'—an' heah his voice faltered, an' he stopped toe git a refresher f'um the bar behin' him—"ties which the cruel necessities uv health, an'—other circumstances—had caused toe be broken.'

"Though he wuz gettin' mo' an' mo' nervous an'

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shaky, everythin' he teched, he teched delicate-like, so as not toe wound any feelin's amongst the livin', er show any disrespect toe the departed. Any leetle break on Pahson's part jes' then would hev opened the incident an' increased the round-up indefinite. When he spoke some feelin' words 'bout our brothers f'um the 'Land uv God an' Liberty,' half a dozen Mexican women, with Lupe's gal a-leadin' uv 'em, threw back they black shawls an' give the death wail. Every mother's son uv us gripped they wepins fo' a second, but we eased off an' smiled when he put in some remarks 'bout the gallant defenders uv the Stars an' Stripes, as a delicate way uv alludin' toe the fac' thet one uv ours wuz a deserter f'um the army.

"To'des the close the Pahson got mo' excited. Seem like he los' holt on hisse'f several times, an' hed toe brace up f'um the bar befo' he could proceed. He got toe mixin' his languages, too, which is a bad sign, talkin' English toe the Mexicans, an' Spanish toe us.

"Leanin' away fohward an' gazing at Bill Ahms, the owner uv the 'Two Republics,' whose hospitality we wuz enjoyin' at the moment, he said:

" 'Dearly beloved bretheren, we hev, all of us, been harmless, innercent, suckin' babes at one

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period uv of our lives er another. Mos' of us hev lived various, as I may say. Quite various, ef I may be allowed toe mention it; an' I, perhaps, hev lived mo' various than any uv you. When we-uns are well mounted an' well ahmed, when we got enough liquor toe be healthy an' not toe much toe kerry easy, when we breathes this invigeratin' air uv the comin' great State uv Arizona, why, then, thin's look one way toe us.

“But, my bretheren, when our hoss throws a foot in a gopher hole, er a pistil pops a hole inter us, er any sech leetle incident thet is app'inted toe arrive, does arrive, why, then, they is clouds in a dry sky, an' thin's look differunt. When a man is a-huntin' aroun' on his body toe fin' jes' whar he is a-bleedin' at, when his strength is a-failin' uv him, an' his eyes caynt keep the trail, then he thinks uv his ole mother—God bless her!—an' his wife, ef he's got one, an' mebbly uv his kids back in the States, an' he wishes some thin's hed gone differunt than what they hev gone.’

“Here the Pahson stopped toe choke down some-thin', whilst several uv his aujience hed difficulty the same way. But his wuz wu's than ours wuz. The bracer di'n't seem toe help him this time. He helt tighter ontoe the monte-table an' glared hard, first on one side uv the room, an' then on

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the other side. Finally, a-directin' uv his remarks at me an' Bill, he closed with these words:

"'Mos' uv us lives a long time an' does thin's which, in common like, he kin fix up ef so be he desires. But, my beloved bretheren, *when a man goes an' dies, he has toe do it fo' a long time, an' fo' quits*, an' he haint got no mo' shots in his gun, ner cartrayges in his belt, neither, an' he's jes' nachelly at the eend uv his'—He stopped short toe avoid usin' a inconvenient word, but his voice riz up, high-like—'He's los' on the desert an' he's got no water, an' he's tired an' faint, night hez come, the wolves an' the c'yot's ar' drawin' nigher—an'—my be-lov-ed—bretheren, I am a chief sinner!'

"Jes' heah his voice pinched plum out. His eyes hed been gittin' mo' glassy-like, his fingers wuz a-twitchin', an' when he stopped fo' a minute he gripped the table, an' leant fohward, an', sof' an' gentle, thar poured f'um his white lips a stream uv thin red blood. Then he slid sof'ly toe the floor.

"Kem West toe late, I reckon. Mos'ly folks does wait toe long, an' when they does peg out that-a-way, they frien's lays it up toe the climate."

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VII.

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A SHRILL cry for rescue rouses the slumbering camp. We roll from our blankets, and, while gathering our wits from the land of slumber, locate the direction of the alarm. Then in a moment I and my band take to horse, and with pistols in belt and carbines in hand, dash away down the narrow pass. As we rush on I peer ahead through the thin moonlight. Yonder are the bandits and their victims near the overturned coach. Now I hear a woman's cry of defiance as she waves a glittering poniard above her head and dares them to do their worst.

As we come nearer she says—and in French:

"Take my money! Take my life! Do not touch me, or I strike!"

The stiletto is raised above her breast while she waves back the bandit leader. All her party are lying near the coach, and she has backed to the wall of the pass. The robber leader has sought

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for more than booty, and, bidding his gang plunder the coach, has followed her. But he is too late! Our yell of defiance rings and returns against the high, narrow walls as we sweep down upon them. A few sharp volleys given and received, a sting in my bridle arm, and, as we dismount, three bandits lie dead at our feet. One of my men is seriously wounded, and as I lean over him, another strikes down the leader, who, escaping the volley, has turned upon me.

Then the lady springs forward, and in a fury, and still in French, says: "He sought my honor, Monsieur! Take his life!"

I look carefully at the fallen robber, and recognize his face and name—one of the worst in all Mexico. We had met before.

"Yes, Señor victor, I am he, and I defy you still!"

Manuel, my brave, trusty old Manuel, who has so often risked his life to save my own, stands beside us. I see the inquiry in his swarthy face and his long knife poised in air. He knows not the language of the Frenchwoman, but he *does* know the language of my eyes. As I glance from the robber at my feet to the lady at my side my eyes pass his. Did I nod my head? If not, I nodded my eyes; old Manuel knows what they

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mean. As I turned my back, there was a flash of steel, a gush of blood, and one more bandit's soul had gone to its account.

We buried the bodies of the bandits and two servants, placed that of her dead husband in her carriage, and gave her an escort to the next city. Before starting she looked to my wounded arm, and asked my name and nationality. As she put them down in her notebook she said sharply: "So you are an American! Well, you are a brave man, and you come of a good race."

Manuel, with the two assistants, accompanied her to the city, where they stopped at the front door of a grand mansion until servants came to admit her. Early the next day a messenger from the house of La Pierre sought them out and presented each man with a fine pistol and carbine, and one hundred silver dollars. While they were looking over the gifts, doubting a little if they should take them, the messenger added that there was a note to be read to them, and sent on to the gentleman. It was in English, but the messenger translated it for them. When Manuel heard it, he said:

"It is well; we accept her kind gift, and will deliver her note."

Here it is, as I have it pasted in a little book:

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"The Frenchwoman thanks you all for her life, and will give hers, if needful, for the young American."

The writing is in an angular, uniform, feminine hand. There is no signature or date.

I hardly know why I put down all these details. I have had so much of adventure and of danger here in this strangely old-new land, that I might have taken any of many others instead of this.

Ah, well! That happened some three years ago. Since that I have run lines, and then waited, and then located them; and have turned and toiled, seeking to find paths for the steel ribbons of this later civilization through these everlasting mountains. Then in May I went into the "*Huasteca*" to trace a line nearly parallel to the Telfener survey. After a few weeks in that low, damp, hot climate I fell ill of what we justly call *fiebre perniciosa*.

As soon as quinine and whiskey and nature had reduced the furnace in my veins to about the torrid heat of the atmosphere, they started me in the ambulance for the coast. They said I needed salt air and sea baths.

We are at a little hamlet of half a dozen houses, on a point of the mainland, with a shallow lagoon

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and low islands between us and the ocean, a place where a few nearby families come for baths. I am to take my first one this evening.

As I lie half asleep in my hammock, I am greatly surprised to hear a voice in the next yard sing:

*"My ship goes sailing down the bay,
Good-bye, my lover, good-bye;
We may not meet for many a day,
Good-bye, my lover, good-bye."*

Plain "United States," as we say of English, in this faraway land of the Montezumas, and sung, too, by a merry, ringing, melodious voice.

"Who speaks English down here?" I ask of Manuel, who sits by my side.

"Well, Señor, there is a family in the next house, also taking the baths. They came from Linares, but the name—that I do not know."

As this does not help me much, I swing my hammock where I can command a view of the stolid brick wall which shuts off my next door neighbors. A little later it comes again, as clear and rippling as a mountain rill. Only a simple song, *but it is English*, which is very unusual here, while the voice would make anything sweet.

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It is broken off halfway in a second verse, by some one calling "Panchita" from the *patio*. I hear an answering shout, and the owner of the voice, who seems to be a girl of some sixteen years, climbs down from her perch in the *mezquite* tree, the top of which I can see over the wall, and with a "*Voy, voy, si, voy!*" goes somewhat crossly into the house.

One morning about daylight I heard the double doors of the great *zaguan* creak on their hinges, and a five-mule team went out on the jump. Manuel informed me, as he gave me my coffee and roll, that the master and his wife had gone to the *hacienda*, leaving the *mayordomo* and several servants in charge of the ladies. He added that as he now bought goat's milk of the *mayordomo's* wife, he could soon give me much information. He had already learned that the voice which has always called "Panchita" from her perch on the tree, belongs to a *señorita* named Amparo.

"She," he says, "is very white, and her voice is like the nightingale before the sun rises." As I have nothing to do except eat, bathe occasionally, and lie in my wind-swung hammock, I enjoy all the gossip old Manuel can give me.

After my noon breakfast of oysters and red-fish, I was about dropping off in a siesta when I

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heard the rustle in the branches, which presaged Panchita. This time she climbed higher, so that I caught glimpses of a small dark face, with long, black braids of hair swinging with the movement of the lithe little body. She never looked down toward me, but, like a born coquette that she is, off, far away to the laguna and beyond to the ocean. This time she sang her song clear through. She seems to know only two verses, and as her last strain of "good-bye" faded away, like a flash she changed into "El Telélé."

It burst out like a hurricane in high treble, and as she went on with the second verse, mimicking at the same time the unfortunate victim of Saint Vitus who has died, she fell from her perch. Her cries brought to the rescue the whole now awakened family, dogs and all.

Among the various tones I recognized the one which Manuel said was like the nightingale, giving mild reproof, and Panchita's subdued replies.

There was no more singing until toward night, and then it was in a mulberry tree on the other side of the yard. There she was bolder, and poured forth her plaintive "Good-bye" in English, buried her victim of the Telélé in Spanish, and sang a little French song about a dog who loved

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the moon so well that he barked his soul out to her, and was forever after dumb.

The next morning Panchita had been going over her repertoire in the *mezquite* tree, holding the parrot in one hand and making him fill up the breaks in her song. When I came out to my hammock she was in full view facing toward me. Of course I could do no less than raise my hat and give her a "*muy buenos dias, Señorita.*" With a quick, backward glance, which apparently showed no one near, she responded in very pretty English: "Oh, Señor, I am very glad to make your acquaintance. We are so lonely here, and your hammock in plain sight. Manuel told our *mayordomo* that you were Don Juan, and that you spoke Spanish. So I am going to speak nothing but Spanish to you. You see," she said, changing into the Spanish, "I always knew this, but the others! I had to learn them, and oh, *Dios, how hard* and bad they are!"

But before I give any more of her speech let me describe how she looked to me. A pair of tiny, high-heeled gaiters, with red and black stockings, led up to a scanty skirt of black cloth. A trim, perfectly rounded, dainty form supported a small head burdened by two long braids of black hair reaching to her feet.

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Her eyes were black and big and solemn until they lighted up, then they were like the sun ripples on the waters of the laguna. Her face was dark and sun-kissed to the extreme point of beauty.

"You have been sick, Don Juan, and I—we, I mean, are so sorry." The merry light went from the black eyes and into them came the pitying, compassionate look of the women of her race. No other women in the world can do this like the Spanish-American, and Panchita, gay-hearted, light-headed as she is, excels all of her countrywomen that I have ever seen. When I said something about her sympathy making my illness light, she smiled again, and leaning over the limb, fixed her eyes upon my face for a moment before she replied:

"Oh, yes, we are very sympathetic, and I, I think, am more so than anyone else. I have always been sympathetic toward gentlemen, and nearly always have been in love. It is so nice to be in love, don't you think? The first time I was ever in love was with Blas. Poor boy! he was a *pastor*, and while he talked with me the *tigre* ate up the lambs, and the *mayordomo* whipped him, and then he ran away to be a mule driver for the smugglers. Then I was in love with the band-

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master of the Fourth Battalion, and was very happy. He would stand just across the way for hours, watching to get a sight of my face. But one day his regiment was ordered to Tampico, and I never saw him again. Ah, well! and the last one was a doctor, and an Irishman, and he spoke the Spanish with such a beautiful accent. But he never knew me, and I never spoke to him at all, but just saw him across the street. And then he went away. But now—now, it's you—and I am sitting here on this limb looking at you and talking to you, and it's so nice. I mean now just to love you always, always, and forever. Won't that be beautiful?"

Her charming, piquant face, turned toward me, was clear and pure as a child's, but warm and intense as a woman's.

Before I could find words to answer, a voice from the *patio* called her to come in to breakfast.

"Ah!" said Panchita, "it is she, the *Niña*, the child, though she is not a child at all, but we all call her so. Now don't stop loving me, please, and—yes—you can love *her*, too, if you choose." So with an *adios*, and a radiant smile, she slid down and ran away.

I think I should have fallen deeply in love with

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Panchita had I not that evening met them all out walking on the beach.

Milkins, my assistant, old Manuel and I, had gone across the laguna to the island, and leaving our boat, walked over to the shore of the gulf. We had rested and taken our bath, and at about seven were slowly walking back when we saw the other party. They had bathed on the island south of us, and had afterward come over to pick up shells. As we passed, it was awkward not to salute them, and, as etiquette in this country gives gentlemen the privilege, I lifted my hat and bade them all good evening. As I looked squarely at them for a second I got a full, laughing glance from Panchita. With her were three others—a woman carrying the bundles, an elderly, plain featured lady of forty-five years, and Amparo.

How the face of Amparo startled me! She is a vision and a dream, and the realization of a dream. I cannot describe her, so I can only give my poor ideas. She is very fair. Her eyes are a deep blue, and her hair waits between the dull brown of Andalusia and a sunny yellow that is found along the Rhine. In her cheeks was a faint flush of color, which deepened and spread as she very slightly returned my greeting. She is tall and

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fully proportioned, with a grace of step and bearing that is simply perfect.

This was all I saw—what she wore or how she wore it, I hardly know, but, as I looked back, her golden-brown hair, all unbound, and wet with salt water, nearly touched the ground.

The next, and every day for a week, I chatted in the morning with Panchita, and in the evening for a moment met Amparo with the rest on the beach. Panchita grew more charming every day, and made love over the wall with all her heart. She was not exclusive. After demanding if I was always going to love her really and truly as she loved me, she would break into her little *chanson* about the dog who barked his soul away to the moon. She would often stop and say that she was throwing her heart at me, and feared I would toss it to the trade wind to be wafted far away. "But," she would add, "you must love the *Niña*, too. If you should love her better than me, I will forgive you. Ah, the *Niña*, she is divine! She is an angel!"

One day she told me her full name, and all her little history, so far as she knew it. Her mother was a native of Havana. Educated in part abroad, she had sung in Italy and Spain, and once, said Panchita, with bated breath, in

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Nueva Orleans, in the United States of the North. Then she had married a general, and he had used her badly. He was a *Maximilianista*, and at the fall of the empire had fled and left the mother with Panchita and a broken voice. Oh, yes, she had sung, and Panchita had gone with her up and down the long journeys from one capital to another, all over these Americas. And one sad day—they were at Mazatlan then—the fever had taken her poor mother, and she was left alone. That was five years ago, and when she had been an orphan eight days there came a telegram from oh! a faraway place—from somewhere in Spain—where Don Santos was then on a visit, to the *Jefe Politico*, ordering that the daughter of “La Corona,” as her dead mother had been called, should be sent with all care to his *hacienda*. Just why he had done this she could not say, though Doña Ana, Don Santos’ sister, once, when she, Panchita, was ill of the fever and like to die, had answered her pleadings by saying that Don Santos had once loved her mother. “He has many children, and he loves his wife. But she—she—does not love me too much, though she is kind and generous. She says,” innocently added my *confidante*, “that I look too much like Don Santos to suit her.”

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"But, Panchita," I said one day, "tell me about Amparo."

"Ah, my heart!" she cried, "you are now planning to desert me and lay siege to my precious one. But I will tell you. You can only be friends. Her father will never, never, never let her marry an *Americano*. He is a German, and her mother, now dead ten years, was a Spaniard, and born in Cadiz, as was Amparo. Her mother was delicate, and only lived for her daughter, whom she named thus because she was a stay and support and comfort to her. You see, her father is Don Emil Becker, and he was one of the *Junta* who favored *Maximiliano*. So, one day—he was a rich merchant, you know—a great convoy of his goods was going under imperial protection from Vera Cruz, when the Liberals, under Don Porfirio, or some of his generals, captured them all. And Don Emil—he was, oh! so angry, and tried to have the *Americanos*, so Doña Ana says, to make them give the goods up. But the general of the *Americanos* only laughed and said it served him right. So it made him fierce against the *Juaristas* and the *Americanos*, and he would never set foot in either country for years and years. We got a letter from him this morning," she broke out, "and that is what Amparo has been reading. Look

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at her now; isn't she beautiful? Don Juan, do you know the songs of the *pastores*? Those they sing in the Christmas times? Yes? Well, she reminds me always of the chorus. You see they walk around, and around, and around 'The Babe' and sing verse solos. But the chorus is always this:

“*Gloria á Dios, en las alturas,
Y paz á los hombres de buena voluntad!*”

and then she sang it, circling and putting out her round brown hands toward me the while. Now slow, now fast, and finally, forgetting, raised her voice so high as to attract Amparo's attention. The latter hastily left the hammock, and getting out of sight in the *patio*, called rather sharply in German for Panchita.

“Ah, now, she's cross?” said the latter, as she started away. “She's always cross in German and in French, but she's always nice in your language, *Señor mio*—and I rather suspect it's because—because—but you can never marry her, Don Juan, so you had better love me.”

As I stood on the middle bar taking the breakers, I could see their heads appear and disappear

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in the surf. How clear the blue of the sky! How balmy the south wind! The lines of green waves, with their foam-capped crests as they broke on the outer bar were like white-maned steeds racing to the finish. Back to the west lay the long line of sand rising to little mounds, mostly wind-swept, but covered in protected nooks by sea grasses and vines with yellow and scarlet flowers. Above, on the edge of the water, were low flying pelicans; while sea-gulls, tireless of wing, and fearless of man, filled the air with their sharp cries.

On the return I walked with Amparo and Panchita, while the rest came behind. We talked of the sea, of wrecks, of bandits, and of the great world from which we were so far away, until Amparo said:

"It is hardly courteous that we should speak only in Spanish."

"Yes," said I, "let us talk English. You are always so nice when you speak the language of the Americans."

How she colored! Not quickly as do our white-and-pink-faced girls, but slowly, and with a deeper red which glowed as it spread over her face and temples, and ears and neck. As she flushed she

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looked from me to Panchita, and said to the mischief:

"So you have been talking to the Señor about me!"

"No, *Señorita mia*, at least I can't remember now." Then she dropped back to where old Milkins was lugging bundles of wet bathing suits, and, seizing one from him, fairly, as he said that night, chatted his old heart quite out of him. She was so happy *they* were friends, that she must beg him to let her sing for him, and thereupon she ran through her little list of songs, from grave and pathetic to the quaintly gay notes of "*El Telélé*."

"She can't hear," said she, as she finished the song and dance on the hard beach, "and her eyes—*they* are looking down now. Don't you think they are to love each other? But they can't marry, and so he will have to love me. Oh! can you speak the Spanish? I am so glad, because the English is so cold and *so brief* and *so hard*, and"—here her words ran on in liquid Spanish till he was almost carried off his feet.

Once, over the wreck of a Danish barque, Amparo took my proffered hand. Then again the deep, rich color mounted into her face.

When I put her on board their boat, the setting

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sun had painted the western sky with colors beyond a painter's dream, but the glow of her eyes was fairer to me than sun and moon and sky.

I lie in my wind-swept hammock and watch the scurrying white clouds troop toward the cooler north. The damp, briny taste of the night wind is on my face and in my hair.

She is the fairest woman I ever saw! She's fairest in all the world, I do believe!

I cannot see the moon now. It has gone beyond the open window. The hum of mosquitoes on the leeward side of the hammock blends with the dull roar of the breakers, the sounds of the night, the languor of the salt baths—and—dreams.

Again I am in the mountain camp, and again roused by a woman's shrill cry for rescue. I live it all over, awed by her stony grief. Now she seems to be leaving, and I strive to repeat her parting words. As I sit up in the hammock I finish, half awake, "You are a brave man, and come of a good race." Why should I fall asleep thinking of Amparo, and then dream of *La Francesa*? I have never seen her since—do not know her name—have not thought of her for months.

These weeks have passed like a dream. Every morning I pass in their parlor, reading, talking

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and listening. Amparo plays as perfectly as she speaks, and sings in a voice which exquisitely fills the room. Not heavy enough for a large room, yet it is that most charming thing, a home voice. Her breeding and her tact are so perfect, nature and training are so blended, that the line cannot be seen.

In the evening we go to the baths. I go in my own boat, and while I only start after seeing them aboard, am always in time to help them off.

One night Amparo sang on the way back, sitting on the little cabin of her boat, while I lay on the rail of mine a few rods away. Back of us was the trade wind, bringing a heavy swell in the shallow sea. She sang in German and in French, and then, with Panchita, in Spanish—"Die Wacht am Rhein," "Marseillaise," and "Himno Nacional." I called across the water for the "Star Spangled Banner." She looked at Doña Ana, but that usually most amiable lady shook her head and said something I could not hear. Amparo looked startled, and Panchita, puckering her pretty lips, hummed "La Golondrina." Then she began to sing it, and gave that strange, mournful song with all the fervor of her blood. At the end there was a little pause, and we surged and plunged along on our way into the red of the sunset and mist.

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Amparo had gone to the prow and sat on the rustic seat the sailors had placed near the end. She was looking into the west, and her hair, blown to one side, hid her face. Only the posture was in view. She sat thus for a few moments, and then arose and stood back a little by the mast, holding on to a rope. With the other hand clasping her loose, damp hair she turned her face toward me and opened her lips. Clear as the sound of a cathedral bell, the voice came out over the rushing waters, and "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," filled the air. It was finer and grander, and a prouder air than I had ever thought, and as I looked at her form against the sky, she seemed to me the finished realization of the ideal Columbia. As she concluded, my boat rounded the point, and in a moment I was pulling theirs up to the little pier, and helping them off. She seemed very grave—almost sad—and I walked at her side in silence. How I knew, I could not say, but I was certain that Doña Ana, who came slowly behind us, had been weeping.

I lay awake hours that night thinking, and I did not sleep until the wind fell away in the early morning. When I awoke, the sun was shining across the room, and all the sky was filled with a shimmering mist like particles of gold dust. I

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went to the kitchen for my coffee and rolls, and then, finding my horse picketed in the corner of the yard, I mounted and rode out at the rear gate.

If there be anything in all the world which will make one turn brigand or pirate, which will give new courage to conquer in war or in love, it is a morning gallop. Be sure you have a good Mexican saddle, with the tree from Párras or Leon, and large stirrups closed in front, high-heeled boots and heavy spurs. The baby carbine is under the left leg, butt in front, and a six-shooting pistol in the belt at your right hip. Behind you the inevitable blanket is rolled and strapped, and back on either flank flaps the heavy housing of calf or tiger skin with the hair outwards. On the pommel is the hair rope, coiled and tied ready to stake out the horse, or lasso a cow or an enemy. The bridle of horsehair has the wicked Mexican bit, whose slightest turn will control your horse.

Now if your horse stands fourteen hands, and is well built and well trained, he will dance sideways, or gallop in a slow lope that is like a rocking-horse, or—with a forward rise in the saddle, a flirt of the reins, and the slightest possible pressure of the spurs—he will put all the world and all its cares and worries under his flying feet, and go faster than the wind. The blood goes to your

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fingertips in a flood; you rise in the saddle and sweep on, and on, until it is like intoxication.

I bent forward to the horse's neck and gave him the rein and the spur. When I raised my head I saw that we were some two leagues away, and, checking his pace, we slowly climbed a hill from which I could get a view for miles around. There were few *mezquite* trees, stretches of coarse sea grass and cacti in thousands. Behind me were the low sand hills, while in front the tablelands stretched away to the foothills of the Sierras. As I rested prone on the ground, the *reata* tied to my boot, I looked my present and my future in the face.

A peerless woman, who would grace any *salon* or adorn any home in any capital in the world, was so near and yet so unattainable. Could I win her love, there was yet back of that the hatred of her father for all my race, and I knew too well that she, while she might love me, would never give her hand and take my name without his free consent.

"I am his only child, and he has no wife," she had once said to me.

I knew his class and his ideas, his manners and ways of life, in the many of his race I had met. An iron will, a patient endurance and a positive

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genius for business have made him, and such as he, the financial arbiters of these Americas.

From his beautiful home in Strasburg he could order or advise, and his will or wish would turn men and laws in many lands. His letters of credit would command you unlimited money; his letters of introduction would open grand parlors, make you a welcome guest, give you guides and food, and warm friends, from the Rio Grande to the River Plate.

While I lay thinking, I glanced toward the pass from the plateau, and my keen eyes noted a train come galloping down the incline some three leagues away. An ambulance and a smaller carriage, with numerous outriders indicated some one of consequence. I felt at the first view that it portended evil to me and all my hopes. They were coming for Amparo and the rest of the party.

That night I took no sail. The other boat, with new faces, made the trip while I remained on the mainland. At dusk, and before the boat had returned, I heard a low voice calling across the wall. It was Panchita, and as she raised her face to view, it was flooded with tears.

"Oh!" she said, "we go to-night. The master has come. He has gone to the baths with Amparo, and we are packing. We go when the moon

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ises. And—and—the master is very angry. Don Santos must have spoken of you, for he speaks very bitterly and looks sharply the while at Amparo. And she—she makes no sign—but her heart—her heart. So they go to-night, and the master's ship rides at anchor off the lower coast, and in one week they will have sailed for Hamburg. No, Señor—no—she will not see you. It is her father's will. And I will not go with her, although the master wishes, and so does Don Santos' wife. No, I will stay here, at the *hacienda*, and when news of her shall come I will tell you. Meet me here one moment, at eleven, just before we start."

The moon will rise in five minutes. It is eleven, and I wait anxiously.

"I am here, Don Juan, but Amparo cannot come, and she sends no word. I cannot speak to her alone. She only looks at me in her grave way. I dare not sing a French song, nor those of the *Americanos* while the master is here. So I only sang '*La Golondrina*,' and she wept a little, when she dared. And now we go, and with many outriders, for the master is great, and bad men, they say, are abroad. My heart is broken because I leave it with you. And you—you will cast it off.

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You love Amparo while there is no hope, and she is so sad. Ah, *Dios!* Ah, *Dios!* *mio!* When I sang in '*La Golondrina*,' 'Whither dost thou go?' she turned her face one second and looked across the sea. Ah, *Dios!* It is so great, and so deep, and so stormy—and I will not go and leave you here alone. But she, she will go, and the master will marry her, so Doña Ana says, to a great banker in Hamburg. Ah, well! If we love we lose, and if we die we gain, and the Holy Virgin, our Lady of Guadalupe, be with you. *Adios, Adios, Adios!*"

All the light of my life went out as I saw the long train wind across the low plains and climb the pass to the lower coast. I left the next day, and, joining Milkins at Tula, began the survey of a branch line over the mountains.

The walls of the high Sierras shut my heart in as a well. I had no life—no hope—no fear. In leisure hours, which had never before seemed so many or so hard to endure, I tried to hunt, to ride, to do anything which would help banish my bitter thoughts.

Months passed in this hopeless life until at last our preliminary work was all done. Then we got orders to go out of commission, while I waited at

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San Miguel for certain work which might come in two months, or not until another season.

To be alone and without work of any sort in that little out-of-the-way *pueblo* was unbearable.

Amparo was beyond the seas—beyond my hopes—and could never be a part of my life. Vainly I chafed against a hard but inexorable fate.

One day—was it in answer to an unacknowledged thought?—old Pedro, Don Santos' *mayordomo*, entered my room and handed me a letter. The address and signature were in Spanish, but the body of the letter was in rather formal English:

“CASA DE VD., MAYO 15 DE 1,8—.

“MUY AMIGO MIO: I beg of you that you will be pleased to pay me a visit, and the bearer hereof will conduct you hither. He will wait until you are ready, and I will have a messenger ever there to bring your mail to this place.

“Soy de Vd. S. S. Q. B. S. M.,

“SANTOS VALDEZ.”

Don Santos does not know the English, and in his endeavors to be courteous he has evidently copied the words of Panchita.

What shall I say? I can always return here to my post in time. Stay here, idly waiting, I can-

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not. Amparo is in Germany. I am shut in by the mighty mountains. And—no—it is not that—but—perhaps Panchita may have heard. Yes, I will go.

We are in a valley which trends east and west. At either end a turn in the ranges shuts off the view, so that we are surrounded on all sides by high mountains. Only the clear, cool, bracing wind which follows the curves of the valley indicates any other world beyond.

The massive stone house set in the great yard is like a fortress. Through the great gate surges the busy life of the *hacienda*. Each morning light sees the armed retainers go out to labor in the fields, while the *pastores* and *vaqueros* on the farther hills keep daily and nightly ward over their sheep and goats, their horses, mules and cows. An hundred armed men at a hour's notice will follow the master's lead or go to execute his orders. He is well called *Amo*, as Doña Carmen is called *Ama*.

He is the visible soul, the controlling power in all his work, as she in hers. All law and all power are centered in his will, and to him the poor *peones* look for life, food, raiment and protection. Their parents served this house, their children will serve

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the growing boys, who, in their time will take his place.

As I dress in the early sunlight, I pick and eat an orange, then my coffee, and roll of hard brown bread—then I go for my horse and gun and dogs. I follow the mountain paths or the winding, ditch-drained river. Views of skies, of gorgeous sunsets, of mountains holding out their mighty arms—sheer precipices and nature in her grandest moods. I have been here a month—two months. I am beyond the world, and the world is not for me. My heart may be in Germany, but *I* am here.

Poor, tender, timorous Panchita! She had no message from her in Germany, but she had a message to me from her own heart. She does not speak it, but I see it in her eyes as she glances at me in my varying moods. When I am gloomy, her face is sad and anxious. When I am gayer, the old smile, almost her old joyousness, and more, much more, than her former charm, comes back.

She is fair to see. Sometimes I fear to be near her, and she, divining my mood, avoids me.

One day I returned wounded from a jaguar hunt. It was not dangerous, but painful, and kept me to my room for a week. Panchita brought me every delicacy, tended me, pitied me, watched me and sung to me.

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As my wounds healed, her beaming face was more and more fair to my eyes.

We sit on the inner balcony watching the moon sweeping through the white clouds which dare to cover her face. The wind is from the mountains, and carries a chill which seems more real as we glance toward the snow-capped range toward the north.

We are at another *hacienda* forty miles down the valley, which Don Santos has given us. Again and again I have gone over her words to me:

"I cannot live without your love, and so I come to you. I know you love her in Germany, but love me a little, and for a time."

Well! We are beyond the sea—and beyond the world—and beyond the judgment of man. What does it matter?

Six months or more have passed; months filled by a dull happiness broken by bitter moods. I put away that which is past, now separated by an ocean, and go about my new life here, resolved to be content.

Panchita lives only for me. My every wish is gratified ere spoken. When I am content she is happy. But if my past does come to mind, and

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if vain hopes disturb, I cannot hide these from her quick, pathetic eyes.

For she is not well. She is blanched and thinner than of old. She has faded as fades a mountain flower—she is frail, and life seems hanging by a slender thread.

I cannot tell why she has so changed. She will not let me go from her sight; walks with me, sits by me, and tries to read my face. I hope I make it gentle to her.

And one day came the mountain wind and the frost. And then, at night while the ghostly moonlight filled all the valley, the snow from the far ranges swept down, and all the earth was clothed for an hour with the mantle of the arctic mother. After this the end was all too soon. The day she passed away she drew my face to hers—so pale and wan—and whispered that I was to search her writing-desk after she was gone.

Poor little flower! Poor tropic heart! How fast you beat! How soon art hushed!

Her last words were:

“Lay me with my babe. Amparo is in Germany. Look!”

This is what I found.

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“CARLSBAD.

“MY DEAREST FRANCISCA: I think I have loved him from the very first, and you may tell him if you will. I shall never marry another, and he—if he wishes, I will wait.

“AMPARO.”

On the back was written in Spanish:

“Ah, *Dios! Dios bueno!* I cannot tell him now. It is too late, and I love him too much! Some time I will.”

Six months later I wrote Amparo from my new post on the line of the Trans-Andean Railway. I told her all, and sent her note with what Panchita had written on it.

After waiting three months, I resigned my office and made my way over the snowy divide to Buenos Ayres. At my banker's I found the following letter:

“MR. JOHN VANSTERN,

“Care of BANCO HIPOTECARIO,

“C. BUENOS AIRES DE ARGENTINA.

“SIR: I have only this day learned that you are the young American who saved my life. I am the Frenchwoman. My niece, Amparo, loves you,

A Flower of the Tropics.

and has loved you ever since she knew you. I do not reproach you for Francisca, and Amparo will abide by my decision. My brother does not love the Americans; but he is my brother, and I am his sister, and I have said to him, 'That man saved me from more than a million deaths. Are you my brother, and yet refuse to allow one of your blood to pay a noble debt?' He will not refuse my wish.

"ANNETTE BECKER DE ABOUT."

Inside were a few words from Amparo which now lie next my heart.

Enough! A steamer leaves for Bordeaux in three days. I will cable from Rio, and in forty days I will look into Amparo's eyes once more, never to be separated from her while life shall last.

THE END.

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