A MEXICAN CAMPAIGN.

A MEXICAN CAMPAIGN.

I.

THE MOBILIZATION OF THE TROOPS.

MR. PEMBERTON LOGAN SMITH was a member of the Philadelphia Sketch Club; and by his associates in that eminently democratic organization it generally was conceded that if he had not been handicapped by the first two-thirds of his name, and if he had not been born constitutionally lazy, he probably would have made rather a shining light of himself as a landscape painter.

When this opinion was advanced in his presence, as it very frequently was, Pem usually laughed in his easy-going way and said

that quite possibly it possessed some of the elements of truth. For Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith knew very well that he was constitutionally lazy, and he as frankly gloried in his double-barrelled Philadelphia name as he did in the fact that he was a Philadelphian to the backbone.

"You see, old man," he once explained to his New York friend, the eminent young figure-painter Vandyke Brown, "you New York people haven't much notion of birth, and family connection, and that sort of thing, anyway. There are, I believe," said Pem, airily, "a few good families in New York, but most of your so-called best people haven't the least notion in the world who their grandfathers were; or else—and this amounts to the same thing—they know so much about them that they want to keep them as dark as possible. All you care for over here is money. Now, that isn't our way at all. Of course we don't object to a man's having money; but the first thing we want him to have is birth. If he can show that his people

came over with Penn—or before Penn, as mine did—and if he belongs to the Assembly, and is certain of his invitation to the Charity Ball, and a few things of that sort, we take him in; but if he hasn't this sort of a record—well, we think about it. Of course, now and then a fellow who has only money works his way into good society, provided he knows how to give a really good dinner and doesn't stint the terrapin. But that is the exception; the rule is the other way."

But while Brown and some of the Sketch Club men regretted that Pem did not buckle down to painting and accomplish some of the good work that he undoubtedly was capable of, Pem himself took the matter very easily. He had succeeded in developing enough energy to paint two or three pictures which deserved the praise that they received, and with this much accomplished he seemed to be quite contented to let his case rest.

In the Social Art Club, where the artistic element was infinitesimal, and where Pem's

social high qualifications were accepted at their proper high value, he was regarded as an artistic genius of a considerable magnitude. But this was only natural, for he really knew something about pictures—instead of only partly knowing how to talk about them.

And in both of his clubs, and pretty generally by his somewhat extensive personal acquaintance, Pem was set down—quite apart from his qualifications as an artist—as a thoroughly good fellow. As a rule, a popular verdict of this nature may be critically examined without being reversed. In certain quarters the fact was recognized that he had been a little narrowed by the circumstances of his birth and environment; but even in these quarters it was admitted that there was something very pleasant about him—when he was not shying cocoa-nuts from the heights of his Philadelphia family tree. And finally, the three or four people who really knew him well, among whom was his friend Brown, believed that there was an underlying strength

and earnestness in his character which would be aroused, and so fully as to become the governing force of his life, should any great joy or great calamity overtake him that would stir his nature to its depths.

A good-looking young fellow of five or six and twenty, with pleasant manners, plenty of money, a faculty for taking odd and amusing views of life, and having at least a spark of genius in his composition—a young fellow of this sort, I say, is not to be met with on every street corner; and when he is encountered, commonplace humanity, without precisely knowing why, rejoices in him; and uncommonplace humanity, knowing precisely why, rejoices in him too.

On the whole, therefore, it was very natural, when the Browns were casting about them for an eligible man to whom to offer the tenth section in the car which they had chartered for their Mexican expedition, that Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith should have been accorded the suffrages of the Mexican expeditioners with a flattering unanimity.

Quite as naturally, when this offer to join an exceptionally pleasant party in what promised to be an exceptionally pleasant international jaunt was made known to him, Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith promptly accepted it. And he was the more disposed to Mexican adventure because he had acquired a very satisfactory command of Spanish in the course of a recently passed delightful year in Spain.

The projector of the Mexican campaign was Mr. Mangan Brown. Through his leather connection in Boston, Mr. Brown had been induced to invest a considerable sum of money in what his Boston friends had described to him, at the time when the investment was made, as the highly philanthropic and very lucrative work of aiding in the railway development of Mexico. A fabulously rich country was waiting, they told him, to be aroused into active commercial life by the provision of adequate means of internal transportation; a sister Republic, they added, was pining to be bound to the

great nation of the north by bonds of steel. Honor awaited the men who would accomplish this magnificent international work, while the substantial return for their philanthropy would be unlimited dividends in hard cash. It was a picturesque way of presenting a commercial enterprise, and Mr. Brown was moved by it. Pleased with the prospect of figuring to future generations in the guise of a continental benefactor, and not averse to receiving unlimited dividends, which would be all the more acceptable because they were so honorably earned, he listened to the voice of the Boston charmers—and drew his cheque in his customary liberal way.

His desire to go to Mexico, in part at least, grew out of his not altogether unnatural wish to find out why some of the promised generous dividends had not been declared. But aside from his financial interest in the sister republic, the erratic visitation of Miss Violet Carmine—now Mrs. Rowney Mauve—had inspired him with a strong curiosity to visit a country that was capable of producing

so extraordinary a type of womanhood. And point had been given to this curiosity by the frequent warm invitations extended to him by his remote kinsman, Violet's father, to come to Mexico for a visit of indefinite length, accompanied by his family and a working majority of his friends. Hospitality of so boundless a type, Mr. Brown considered, in itself was a phase of sociology the study of which was very well worth a journey of three thousand miles.

And finally, with an eye to business, Mr. Brown believed that a visit to Mexico might be made to redound very materially to his interest in the matter of the direct importation of Mexican hides.

"The leather business is not what it used to be, Van," he remarked, somewhat gloomily, to his nephew, when this feature of the expedition was touched upon. "When I was a young man, serving my time with the late Mr. Orpiment's father, there were chances in leather that nowadays nobody would even dream of. I remember, in '46, our firm

brought in two ship-loads of hides from Buenos Ayres, which were worth almost their weight in gold. They were made right up into shoes for Scott's army, you see. It always has rested a little heavily on my conscience, Van, that those hides were made up green that way. The shoes that they made of them must have worn out, I should say, in rather less than a week. But I wasn't really responsible for it, for I was only a boy in the counting-room; and even Mr. Orpiment wasn't responsible for what was done with the hides after they were sold. And our firm certainly made a pot of money out of the transaction. Of course, I can't hope now for anything as good as that was, no matter what I find in Mexico; but I am sure, all the same, that the Mexican leather market is worth looking into—and if all the Mexicans are like our cousin Carmine, they must be worth looking into also.

"By the way, I had a letter from Carmine to-day—he writes extraordinary English—in answer to mine telling him when we are

likely to get there; and instead of being horrified at the prospect of having such a lot of us bowling down on him, as I should be, I know, he says that his only regret is that there are not more of us coming. You'd think that being called upon this way to entertain twelve people, with only one in the whole party whom he ever has laid eyes on, and, besides Violet, only four—you and I, Verona and your aunt Caledonia—who have the smallest claim of blood relationship, would upset even a Mexican's extended notions of hospitality. But it doesn't a bit. He writes in the friendliest way that he is looking forward with delight to having us all with him for three or four months anyway, and urges us to hurry down as quickly as possible.

"I confess, Van," Mr. Brown went on, self-reproachfully, "that this whole-souled sort of welcome makes me feel a little mean about the half-hearted way in which we welcomed Violet. And I really am ashamed to remember how thankful I was when she ran off with your friend Rowney Mauve and got married.

To be sure, Violet wouldn't have been such a—such an abnormity, if it hadn't been for that confounded parrot. Thank heaven, she has consented to leave the parrot at home this time. I don't think that I could have gone myself if Violet had insisted, as at first she seemed disposed to, upon taking along that detestable bird. Parrots—parrots are awful things, Van!" And Mr. Brown obviously permitted his thoughts to wander back ruefully into a parrot-stricken past.

As to the party at large, it may be said—with the exception of Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith—to have organized itself. Van and Rose, Verona and young Orpiment, and Mr. and Mrs. Gamboge, were so closely bound by blood, marriage, and friendship to each other and to Mr. Mangan Brown, that they were as much a part of his plan as he was himself. Rowney Mauve and Violet, the son-in-law and the daughter of their prospective host in Mexico, naturally could not be left out. That Jaune d'Antimoine and his wife Rose (*née* Carthame) should come along was taken for

granted by everybody. Indeed, these young French people were very close to the hearts of their American friends, and leaving them out of any plan as pleasant as this Mexican plan promised to be was not to be thought of.

Jaune, by the way, had made a great success in art since that day when Mr. Badger Brush had given him his first order. To be sure, as an animal-painter he could not hope to do work that would rank with Van's figure-painting; but he considered himself, and his wife considered him, as ranking far above young Orpiment. In this opinion, very naturally, neither young Orpiment nor Verona concurred. As to Verona, she entertained the profound conviction that landscape-painting was the very crown and glory of all forms of artistic expression; and she not less firmly believed that her husband was the highest expositor of that highest form of art. There was a little "Evening on the Hills," that young Orpiment had painted while they were on their wedding journey in

the Catskills, that Verona never permitted him to sell, and that she was accustomed to compare—to her husband's advantage—with the finer work of Claude. It will be observed that some years of married life had not in the least degree diminished — it could not well have augmented—the strength of Verona's wifely affection.

The party thus constituted comfortably filled, with one section to spare, the Pullman car that Mr. Mangan Brown, who cared a great deal for comfort and very little for expense, had chartered for the expedition. Mr. and Mrs. Gamboge, out of respect to their superior age, and because of the need for superior privacy involved in the commercial peculiarity of Mrs. Gamboge's back hair, were accorded the cranny that the Pullman people dignify with the name of a "drawing-room;" and each of the other members of the party had a section apiece.

There was some little debate as to what should be done with the spare section; for

they all were agreed that another nice person would be welcome; and equally agreed that it would be a pity, in the interest of nice persons abstractly, to leave vacant a place that so many people very gladly would fill. The suggestion made by Rose to Van, somewhat timidly, it must be confessed, that old Madder should be invited, never came before the house at all. It was voted down promptly in committee. Van had a great deal of theoretical devotion to his father-in-law, but he did not see his way clear to this form of its practical expression. With a wise diplomacy, however, he refrained from making the matter personal. After Rose was married old Madder had taken a little apartment, and his sister kept house for him. It was here that little Madder and Caledonia were to remain while Rose and Van were in Mexico. What would become of the children, Brown asked, if their grandfather went along? And this, of course, settled it.

A similar suggestion, similarly made in private by his wife to Jaune d'Antimoine, in

regard to Madame Carthame, similarly received a firm though less skilful negative.

Old Madder probably never knew that his name had been mentioned in connection with the Mexican expedition at all; and the diplomatic Madame d'Antimoine certainly did not permit her severe maternal relative to imagine for a moment that she had been weighed in her son-in-law's balance and found wanting. But after the party had started, old Madder certainly did say to Cremnitz White and Robert Lake, and one or two more of his especial cronies, that nothing under heaven could have induced him to accompany to Mexico, or to any other part of the world, a gang of painters that hadn't a single artist among them. And Madame Carthame likewise remarked, addressing her first-floor lodger, that she would not, under any circumstances, have permitted herself to associate with these her daughter's friends among the *nouveaux riches*.

It really looked as though the odd section in the Pullman would remain vacant—or that

it would be utilized only as Rose suggested, as a cattery. Rose was very fond of cats, and to her mind the suggestion seemed to be a very reasonable one; for she wanted greatly to take her Persian cat, Beaux-yeux, along.

However, the feline member was not added to the party, for at this stage of proceedings Van put a large spoke in the wheel of his Philadelphia friend's fate by suggesting Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith as an eminently fit person to fill the vacancy. And so the organization of the friendly army of invasion was made complete.

II.

THE ENGAGEMENT AT THE FRONTIER.

MRS. GAMBOGE approached the Mexican border with a heavy heart.

"Are the—the custom-house examinations *very* strict?" she asked of Mr. Gamboge, as they waited at the station in El Paso for the train that was to back across from the Mexican side of the river and hook on their car.

There was something in the tone of the lady's voice that caused her husband to look at her sharply, and to observe with some asperity: "You're not trying to smuggle anything, I hope?"

"N—no," responded Mrs. Gamboge, with a manifest hesitation. "But it—it's so horrid to have one's things all pulled to pieces, you know."

"You've got to make the best of it. You'd