inscribed, like the one at Molino del Rey, with a brief eulogy of Mexican valor as shown in the gallant but futile resistance offered to the invading armies of the Americans of the North. It was very unlucky, he thought, that their expeditions should be directed so persistently to the old battle-fields of that wretched war. Since Cármen's pointed reference to the war, he had bought a Mexican school history and had read up on it; and even allowing for the natural bias of the historian, the more that he read about the part played by his own country the more was he ashamed of his own countrymen. Yet he could not but think also that it was rather hard that he should have to bear such a lot of responsibility for an event that occurred before he was born. It wasn't fair in Cármen, he thought, to liven up a dead issue like that and then to make it so confoundedly personal.

A couple of Mexican soldiers, in rather draggled linen uniforms, were sitting sentry lazily at the convent gate; and Don Antonio

explained that the convent proper was now a military hospital. The church, and the large close in front of it, remained devoted to religious purposes, he said; and that portion of the old convent which inclosed the inner quadrangle had been reserved as a dwelling-place for the parish priest.

Passing to the left and turning the angle in the wall, they came to an arched gateway approached by a short flight of stone steps; and through this stately entrance, albeit somewhat shorn of its stateliness by the ruinous condition of its great wooden doors, they entered, and descended another short flight of steps into the close.

"Where are your Italian convents now?" Brown asked, turning to Rowney Mauve, who that morning had been talking rather airily about Italian convents. "You admitted as we came along how good this place was in mass—not scattered a bit, but all the lines well worked together—and how well the gray and brown of the walls, and the green of the trees, and the blue and white tiling of the

dome, come together. Now we have some detail. Did you ever strike anything in Italy better than this great high-walled close, with its heavy shadows from these stunning trees and from the church and the convent, and its bits of color from these stations of the cross in colored tiles? The church might be better, but it has at least a certain heavy grandeur, and the little tower up there is capital. And look how well those black arches close beside it bring out that perfectly beautiful little chapel—I suppose it is a chapel—completely covered with blue and yellow tiles! There are, no doubt, grander churches than this in Italy, and in several other places; but I'll be shot if I believe that there are any more perfectly picturesque or more entirely beautiful. Smith, just tell Don Antonio that I shall be grateful to him to the end of my days for having shown me this lovely place."

"He says that the cloister is finer," Pem translated, while Don Antonio's face beamed thanks upon the party at large; for all the

Americans manifestly concurred in Brown's enthusiastic expression of opinion. "And he says that the finest tile-work is in the choir. I must say I don't remember anything in Spain better than this. It's the rich, subdued color of it all, and the light and shade, I suppose, that does the business. I don't think it would paint, though; do you, Orpiment?"

"No, I don't. You could make a pretty good picture of it; but the picture wouldn't go for much with anybody who had seen the original. You can't paint a place that goes all around you, the way that this does; and you can't paint the spirit and the feeling of it—at least I can't; and that's what you'd have to get here if you got anything at all. No, this is one of the places that we'd better let alone."

The decision, which was a wise one, having been arrived at, the party passed under the archway beside the tiled chapel and so entered the inner quadrangle, surrounded by an arched cloister two stories high, the walls wainscoted

with blue and white tiles. In the open, sunny centre was a little garden, and in the midst of the garden a curious old stone fountain in which purely transparent water bubbled up from a spring with such force as to make a jet three or four inches high above the centre of the large pool. The bubbling water glittered in the sunlight, and little waves that seemed half water and half sunshine constantly went out from the throbbing centre of the pool and fell away lightly upon its inclosing quaintly carved walls of stone.

Here there was another outburst of admiration on the part of the Americans, and while they were in the midst of it the parish priest, attracted by the sound of so many voices in this usually silent and forgotten place, came forth from a low archway and stared about him wonderingly. He was a little round man, with a kindly, gentle face, and a simplicity of manner that told of a pure soul and a trustful heart. Mrs. Gamboge, who entertained tolerably strong convictions in regard to the Scarlet Woman,

and who heretofore had held as a cardinal matter of faith that every Roman Catholic priest was a duly authorized agent of the Evil One, found some difficulty in reconciling with these sound Protestant views the look and manner, and such of the talk as was translated to her, of this simple-minded, single-hearted man.

When it was made clear to the little Padre that this distinguished company, including even Americans from the infinitely remote city of New York, had come to look at his church because it was beautiful, his expression of mingled amazement and delight was a joy to behold. It had never occurred to him, he said, that anybody but himself should think of his poor church as beautiful. He had thought it so for a long while, ever since he had been brought to this parish from his former parish of Los Reyes: where the church was very small and very shabby, and, moreover, was tumbling down. But he had thought that his feeling for the beauty of his church was only because he loved it so

well; for in all the years that he had been there no one ever had even hinted that it was anything more than churches usually are. Yet, it had seemed to him, he said modestly, that there was something about the way the shadows fell in the morning in the close, and something at that time about the colors of the walls and the richer color of the tiles, the like of which he had not seen elsewhere. In the stillness and quiet, amid these soft shadows and soft colors, somehow he found that his heart became so full that often, without at all meaning to pray, he would find his thoughts shaping themselves in prayer.

"Good for the Padre," said Orpiment, when Pem translated this to him. "That's the part of that picture that I said couldn't be painted. He doesn't look it a bit, but that little round man is an artist." But Orpiment was mistaken. Padre Romero loved beautiful things not because he was an artist, but because he had a simple mind and a pure soul.

Under the Padre's guidance the party entered the church—commonplace within, for reformation had destroyed its seventeenth-century quaintness—and thence passed up through the convent to the choir. This beautiful place, rich in elaborate tile-work, remained intact; and even the great choir-books, wrought on parchment in colored inks, still rested on the faldstool, waiting for the brothers to cluster around them once again in song. And there were the benches whereon the brothers once had rested; the central chair, in which their Father Saint Francis had sat in effigy; and to the right of this the chair of the Father Guardian. But the brothers had departed forever: legislated out of existence by the Laws of the Reform.

Rose gave a little shudder as she looked about her in this solemn, deserted place; and with her customary clearness of expression declared that it was "something like being in a deserted tomb full of Egyptian mummies."

"And to think," said Mr. Mangan Brown, who was a martyr to sea-sickness, "that Americans are constantly crossing that beast-

ly Atlantic Ocean in search of the picturesque when things like this are to be seen dry-shod almost at their doors. Let us have our breakfast at once."

There was a lack of consecutiveness about Mr. Brown's remark, but its abstract comment and concrete suggestion were equally well received. Even Rowney Mauve, who was disposed to be critical, admitted that there were "several things worth looking at in Mexico," and added, by way of practical comment upon Mr. Brown's practical proposal, that he was as hungry as a bear.

All this while Rose had been endeavoring to bring about the *tête-à-tête* between Pem and Cármen that she believed would tend to the accomplishment of their mutual happiness. But her efforts had been unsuccessful. Cármen's defensive tactics no longer admitted of doubt, and even Rose was beginning to think that her sanguine interpretation of their meaning might be open to question. Thus far she had tried to cut Cármen out from her supports. She determined now to attempt

the more difficult task of drawing off these supports, and so leaving Cármen isolated.

The breakfast, a very lively meal eaten in the lower cloister to the accompaniment of the tinkling of water falling from the fountain, gave her the desired opportunity for organizing her forces. With the intelligent assistance of Violet, who was taken into partial confidence because her knowledge of Spanish made her a valuable auxiliary, Rose contrived to break up the party, when breakfast was ended, so that she, Doña Catalina, Cármen, and Pem remained together, while the others scattered to explore the convent. Then, Pem serving as interpreter, she asked the ladies if it would be possible to walk in the tangled old garden that they had seen from a window in the sacristy.

Doña Catalina, being devoted to gardens, as Mexican women usually are, accepted the proposition immediately and heartily; and Cármen—a little uneasily, Rose thought—fell in with the plan. Fortunately the Padre appeared at this moment, and was delighted

to guide them through a long dark corridor and so into his domain of trees and flowers. He was full of enthusiasm about the garden. It had been restored to the church only a month before, he said, after belonging to the hospital ever since the property had been confiscated. The soldiers had done nothing with it. The ladies could see for themselves its neglected state. They must come again in a year's time, and then they would see one of the finest gardens in the world. And full of delight, the little man explained with great volubility his plans for pruning and training, for clearing away weeds and rubbish, and for making his wilderness once more to blossom like the rose. Doña Catalina, having her own notions about gardens, entered with much animation into his plans, and they talked away at a great rate.

So Rose and Pem and Cármen walked through the shady alleys slowly, while Doña Catalina and the priest, walking still more slowly, and stopping here and there, that the projected improvements might be fully explained, dropped a long way behind.

It was a perfect Mexican day. Overhead was a clear, very dark-blue sky; liquid sunshine fell warmly through the cool, crisp air; a gentle wind idled along easily among the branches of the trees. The garden was very still. The only sound was a low buzzing of bees among the blossoms, and the faint gurgle of the flowing water in conduits unseen amidst the trees.

Rose stepped aside to pluck a spray of peach-blossoms. Cármen half stopped, but Pem, with admirable presence of mind, walked slowly on without pausing in the rather commonplace remark that he happened to be making in regard to the advantages of irrigation. A few steps farther on they came to a half-ruined arbor. They turned here and looked back along the alley, but Rose was not in sight. "She will join us in a moment," said Pem. "She is looking for flowers—she is very fond of flowers. Shall we wait for her here? And will the Señorita seat herself in the shade?"

Cármen stood for a moment irresolute. As

the result of what she believed to be a series of small accidents, she found herself now in precisely the situation that she had determined to avoid—alone with this *Americano* whom she had decided in her own mind to keep at a safe distance. Yet now that the situation that she had tried hard to render impossible actually had been brought about she found in it a certain excitement in which pleasure was blended curiously with pain. Her position certainly was weakened, for Pem observed, and counted the sign a good one, that her color had increased and that her eyes were brighter even than usual. She herself was conscious that the attack now had passed inside the skirmish line, and made an effort—not a very vigorous one—to rally her forces.

"Señorita! Señorita!" she called, but not very loudly, and her voice lacked firmness. There was no answer.

"She will be here in a moment," Pem repeated. "It is pleasant in this shady place. Will not the Señorita seat herself? And will

she answer me one question?" Pem's own heart was getting up into his throat in an awkward sort of way, and his voice was not nearly so steady as he wished it to be. But the chance had come that he had been waiting for, and he was determined to make the most of it.

Cármen gave a hurried glance around her. Rose still remained invisible. It was very lonely there in the old garden, and the stillness seemed to be intensified by the low, soft buzzing of the bees. There was a tightness about her heart, and she felt a little faint. Her color had left her face and she was quite pale. She seated herself with a little sigh. But she realized that another rally was necessary, for the shakiness of Pem's voice had an unmistakable meaning. She could guess pretty well, no matter what his one question might be, in what direction it ultimately would lead, and she felt that she must check him before it was spoken. Her wits, however, were not in very good working order, and she presented the first thought that came

into her mind—the thought, indeed, that had been uppermost in her mind all that day:

"The Señor soon will leave Mexico?" she said. She was aware even as these words were spoken that they served her purpose badly. Pem perceived this too, and hastened to avail himself of the opening. "And the Señorita will be glad when I am gone?"

"Glad? No. But everything must have an end, and the Señor no doubt now is tired of this land and will have pleasure in returning to his own. He will have many lively stories to tell his friends about the savages whom he has seen in Mexico; and then presently he will forget Mexico and the savages, and will be busied again with his own concerns. Is it not so?"

"Is it the custom of Mexicans thus to forget friends who have shown them great kindness; or does the Señorita argue by contraries, and declare that because Mexicans are grateful there is no such virtue as gratitude among Americans? Does the Señorita truly in her heart believe that I shall forget the

kindness that has been shown to me here, and the—and those who have shown it?"

"Ah, well, it is a little matter, not worth talking about," Cármen replied, uneasily. "No doubt some Americans have feelings of gratitude, and other virtues as well. But, as the Señor knows, I am not fond of Americans. I know too well the story of my own country. Yes, I know that I should not have spoken of this again," Cármen went on, answering the pained look on Pem's face, "but it is not my fault. The Señor should not have made me talk about Americans." This with a little air of defiance. "And least of all in this place. The Señor knows that this very convent was captured by his countrymen from mine? But does he remember that after the surrender, when he was asked to give up his ammunition, the General Anaya replied, 'Had I any ammunition, you would not be here?' Is not that the whole story of the war, told in a single word? Does the Señor wonder that I hate the Americans with all my heart?"

Pem was less disconcerted by this sally than he had been by the similar revival of dead issues at the Molino del Rey. He was fairly well convinced in his own mind that Cármen was saying not more than she meant in the abstract, perhaps; but, certainly, a good deal more than she meant in the concrete as applied to himself. It was his belief that she was forcing this new fighting of the old war as a rather desperate means of delivering herself from engaging in a new and more personal conflict. He also inferred from her adoption of a line of defence that he knew was distasteful to her that, like General Anaya, she was short of ammunition. Entertaining these convictions, he was disposed to press the attack vigorously.

"Let us not talk about Americans," he said. "Let us talk about one single American. Does the Señorita hate *me?*"

This sudden and very pointed question produced much the same effect as that of the unmasking of a heavy mortar battery. It threw the enemy into great confusion, and

for a moment completely silenced the defending guns.

Cármen was not prepared for so sharp a shifting of the conversation from general to exceedingly personal grounds. She flushed again, and then again grew pale. She was silent for a very long while—at least so it seemed to Pem. Her head was reclining backward against the trellis-work of the arbor in a way that showed the beautiful lines of her throat. Her eyes were nearly closed, and almost wholly veiled by her long black lashes—that seemed still blacker by contrast with her pale cheeks. Her mouth was open a little, and her breath came and went irregularly. Her face was still; but as Pem waited for her answer, watching her closely, he saw an expression of resolve come into it. Then at last she spoke:

"I do hate you," she said, slowly and firmly. But as she spoke the words there was a drawing of the muscles of her face, as though she suffered bodily pain.

"Unearthed at last! By Jove, Smith, I

had begun to think that you and the Señorita and Rose had fitted yourselves out with wings and flown away somewhere. I've been looking for you high and low, literally; for I've been up on the roof of the convent, and now I'm down here. Where is Rose? Doña Catalina said that you all three were here in the garden. Oh! there she comes now. Come! We're all waiting for you; it's time to start back to town."

Brown was of the opinion that he did not at all deserve the rating that Rose gave him, on the first convenient opportunity, for perpetrating this most untoward interruption. "How the dickens could I know they were spooning by themselves?" he asked. "I thought that you all three were together, of course." And although Rose, who took the matter a good deal to heart, replied that this "was just like him," she could not but accept this reasonable excuse.

On Pem and Cármen the effects of the interruption were different. Whatever her more considerate opinion might be, Cármen's

first feeling certainly was that of relief. She had fired the shot that she had nerved herself to fire, and the diversion had come just in time to check the reply of the enemy and to cover her orderly retreat.

Pem, realizing that the situation was critical, was thoroughly indignant. He wanted to punch Brown's head. Fortunately no opportunity offered for this practical expression of his wrath, and by the time that he got back to town he had cooled down a little. But he was so grumpy on the return journey, and looked so thoroughly uncomfortable, that the motherly Doña Catalina expressed grave concern when she bade him good-by and frankly asked him—with the freedom that is permissible in Spanish—if anything that he had eaten at breakfast had disagreed with him? And being only half-convinced by his disclaimer, she advised him to take a tumblerful of hot water with a dash of tequila in it as soon as he got home.