

THE PASSING OF ENRIQUEZ.

BY BRET HARTE.

WITH PICTURES BY ALBERT E. STERNER.

WHEN Enriquez Saltillo ran away with Miss Mannersley, as already recorded in these chronicles,¹ her relatives and friends found it much easier to forgive that ill-assorted union than to understand it. For, after all, Enriquez was the scion of an old Spanish-Californian family, and in due time would have his share of his father's three square leagues, whatever incongruity there was between his lively Latin extravagance and Miss Mannersley's Puritan precision and intellectual superiority. They had gone to Mexico, Mrs. Saltillo, as was known, having an interest in Aztec antiquities, and he being utterly submissive to her wishes. For myself, from my knowledge of Enriquez's nature, I had grave doubts of his entire subjugation, although I knew the prevailing opinion was that Mrs. Saltillo's superiority would speedily tame him. Since his brief and characteristic note apprising me of his marriage, I had not heard from him. It was, therefore, with some surprise, a good deal of reminiscent affection, and a slight twinge of reproach that, two years after, I looked up from some proofs, in the sanctum of the "Daily Excelsior," to recognize his handwriting on a note that was handed to me by a yellow Mexican boy.

A single glance at its contents showed me that Mrs. Saltillo's correct Bostonian speech had not yet subdued Enriquez's peculiar Spanish-American slang:

Here we are again! Right side up with care—at 1110 Dupont Street, Telegraph Hill. Second floor from top. "Ring and Push." "No Book agents need apply." How 's your royal nibs? I kiss your hand! Come at 6—the band shall play at 7—and regard your friend "Mees Boston," who will tell you about the little old nigger boys, and your old uncle Ennery.

Two things struck me: Enriquez had not changed; Mrs. Saltillo had certainly yielded up some of her peculiar prejudices. For the address given, far from being a fashionable district, was known as the "Spanish quarter," which, while it still held some old Spanish

families, was chiefly given over to half-castes and obscurer foreigners. Even poverty could not have driven Mrs. Saltillo to such a refuge against her will; nevertheless, a good deal of concern for Enriquez's fortune mingled with my curiosity, as I impatiently waited for six o'clock to satisfy it.

It was a breezy climb to 1110 Dupont street; and although the street had been graded, the houses retained their airy elevation, and were accessible only by successive flights of wooden steps to the front door, which still gave perilously upon the street, sixty feet below. I now painfully appreciated Enriquez's adaptation of the time-honored joke about the second floor. An invincible smell of garlic almost took my remaining breath away as the door was opened to me by a swarthy Mexican woman, whose loose *camisa* seemed to be slipping from her unstable bust, and was held on only by the mantua-like shawl which supplemented it, gripped by one brown hand. Dizzy from my ascent to that narrow perch, which looked upon nothing but the distant bay and shores of Contra Costa, I felt as apologetic as if I had landed from a balloon; but the woman greeted me with a languid Spanish smile and a lazy display of white teeth, as if my arrival was quite natural. Don Enriquez, "of a fact," was not himself in the *casa*, but was expected "on the instant." "Donna Urania" was at home.

"Donna Urania?" For an instant I had forgotten that Mrs. Saltillo's first name was Urania, so pleasantly and spontaneously did it fall from the Spanish lips. Nor was I displeased at this chance of learning something of Don Enriquez's fortunes and the Saltillo menage before confronting my old friend. The servant preceded me to the next floor, and, opening a door, ushered me into the lady's presence.

I had carried with me, on that upward climb, a lively recollection of Miss Mannersley as I had known her two years before. I remembered her upright, almost stiff, slight figure, the graceful precision of her poses, the faultless symmetry and taste of her dress, and the atmosphere of a fastidious and wholesome cleanliness which exhaled from her. In the lady I saw before me,

¹ See "The Devotion of Enriquez," by Bret Harte, in THE CENTURY for November, 1895.

half reclining in a rocking-chair, there was none of the stiffness and nicety. Habited in a loose gown of some easy, flexible, but rich material, worn with that peculiarly indolent slouch of the Mexican woman, Mrs. Saltillo had parted with half her individuality. Even her arched feet and thin ankles, the close-fitting boots and small slippers of which were wont to accent their delicacy, were now lost in a short, low-quartered kid shoe of the Spanish type, in which they moved loosely. Her hair, which she had always worn with a certain Greek simplicity, was parted at one side. Yet her face, with its regularity of feature, and small, thin, red-lipped mouth, was quite unchanged; and her velvety brown eyes were as beautiful and inscrutable as ever.

With the same glance I had taken in her surroundings, quite as incongruous to her former habits. The furniture, though of old and heavy mahogany, had suffered from careless alien hands, and was interspersed with modern and unmatchable makeshifts, yet preserving the distinctly scant and formal attitude of furnished lodgings. It was certainly unlike the artistic trifles and delicate refinements of her uncle's drawing-room, which we all knew her taste had dictated and ruled. The black-and-white engravings, the outlined heads of Minerva and Diana, were excluded from these walls for two cheap colored Catholic prints—a soulless Virgin, and the mystery of the Bleeding Heart. Against the wall, in one corner, hung the only object which seemed a memento of their travels—a singular-looking, upright Indian “papoose-case,” or cradle, glaringly decorated with beads and paint, probably an Aztec relic. On a round table, the velvet cover of which showed marks of usage and abuse, there were scattered books and writing-materials; and my editorial instinct suddenly recognized, with a thrill of apprehension, the loose leaves of an undoubted manuscript. This circumstance, taken with the fact of Donna Urania's hair being parted on one side, and the general negligée of her appearance, was a disturbing revelation.

My wandering eye apparently struck her, for after the first greeting she pointed to the manuscript with a smile.

“Yes; that is *the* manuscript. I suppose Enriquez told you all about it? He said he had written.”

I was dumfounded. I certainly had not understood *all* of Enriquez's slang; it was always so decidedly his own, and peculiar. Yet I could not recall any allusion to this.

“He told me something of it—but very vaguely,” I ventured to say deprecatingly; “but I am afraid that I thought more of seeing my old friend again than of anything else.”

“During our stay in Mexico,” continued Mrs. Saltillo, with something of her old precision, “I made some researches into Aztec history, a subject always deeply interesting to me, and I thought I would utilize the result by throwing it on paper. Of course it is better fitted for a volume of reference than for a newspaper, but Enriquez thought you might want to use it for your journal.”

I knew that Enriquez had no taste for literature, and had even rather depreciated it in the old days, with his usual extravagance; but I managed to say very pleasantly that I was delighted with his suggestion, and should be glad to read the manuscript. After all, it was not improbable that Mrs. Saltillo, who was educated and intelligent, should write well, if not popularly. “Then Enriquez does not begrudge you the time that your work takes from him,” I added laughingly. “You seem to have occupied your honeymoon practically.”

“We quite comprehend our respective duties,” said Mrs. Saltillo, dryly; “and have from the first. We have our own lives to live, independent of my uncle and Enriquez's father. We have not only accepted the responsibility of our own actions, but we both feel the higher privilege of creating our own conditions without extraneous aid from our relatives.”

It struck me that this somewhat exalted statement was decidedly a pose, or a return of Urania Mannersley's old ironical style. I looked quietly into her brown, near-sighted eyes; but, as once before, my glance seemed to slip from their moist surface without penetrating the inner thought beneath. “And what does Enriquez do for *his* part?” I asked smilingly.

I fully expected to hear that the energetic Enriquez was utilizing his peculiar tastes and experiences by horse-breaking, stock-raising, professional bull-fighting, or even horse-racing, but was quite astonished when she answered quietly:

“Enriquez is giving himself up to geology and practical metallurgy, with a view to scientific—purely scientific—mining.”

Enriquez and geology! In that instant all I could remember of it were his gibes at the “geologian,” as he was wont to term Professor Dobbs, a former admirer of Miss Mannersley's. To add to my confusion, Mrs.

Saltillo at the same moment absolutely voiced my thought.

"You may remember Professor Dobbs," she went on calmly, "one of the most eminent scientists over here, and a very old Boston friend. He has taken Enriquez in hand. His progress is most satisfactory; we have the greatest hopes of him."

"And how soon do you both hope to have some practical results of his study?" I could not help asking a little mischievously; for I somehow resented the plural pronoun in her last sentence.

"Very soon," said Mrs. Saltillo, ignoring everything but the question. "You know Enriquez's sanguine temperament. Perhaps he is already given to evolving theories without a sufficient basis of fact. Still, he has the daring of a discoverer. His ideas of the oölitic formation are not without originality, and Professor Dobbs says that in his conception of the Silurian beach there are gleams that are distinctly precious."

I looked at Mrs. Saltillo, who had reinforced her eyes with her old piquant pince-nez, but could detect no irony in them. She was prettily imperturbable, that was all. There was an awkward silence. Then it was broken by a bounding step on the stairs, a wide-open fling of the door, and Enriquez pirouetted into the room—Enriquez, as of old, unchanged, from the crown of his smooth, coal-black hair to the tips of his small, narrow Arabian feet—Enriquez, with his thin, curling mustache, his dancing eyes set in his immovable face, just as I had always known him!

He affected to lapse against the door for a minute, as if staggered by a resplendent vision. Then he said:

"What do I regard? Is it a dream, or have I again got them—thees jimjams! My best friend and my best—I mean my *only*—wife! Embrace me!"

He gave me an enthusiastic embrace and a wink like sheet-lightning, passed quickly to his wife, before whom he dropped on one knee, raised the toe of her slipper to his lips, and then sank on the sofa in simulated collapse, murmuring, "Thees is too mooch of white stone for one day!"

Through all this I saw his wife regarding him with exactly the same critically amused expression with which she had looked upon him in the days of their strange courtship. She evidently had not tired of his extravagance, and yet I felt as puzzled by her manner as then. She rose and said: "I suppose you have a good deal to say to each other,

and I will leave you by yourselves." Turning to her husband, she added, "I have already spoken about the Aztec manuscript."

The word brought Enriquez to his feet again. "Ah! The little old nigger—you have read?" I began to understand. "My wife, my best friend, and the little old nigger, all in one day. Eet is perfect!" Nevertheless, in spite of this ecstatic and overpowering combination, he hurried to take his wife's hand; kissing it, he led her to a door opening into another room, made her a low bow to the ground as she passed out, and then rejoined me.

"So these are the little old niggers you spoke of in your note," I said, pointing to the manuscript. "Deuce take me if I understood you!"

"Ah, my leetle brother, it is *you* who have changed!" said Enriquez, dolorously. "Is it that you no more understand American, or have the 'big head' of the editor? Regard me! Of these Aztecs my wife have made study. She have pursued the little nigger to his cave, his grotto, where he is dead a thousand year. I have myself assist, though I like it not, because thees mummy, look you, Pancho, is not lively. And the mummy who is not dead—believe me! even the young lady mummy—you shall not take to your heart. But my wife"—he stopped, and kissed his hand toward the door whence she had flitted—"ah, *she* is wonderful! She has made the story of them, the peecture of them, from the life and on the instant! You shall take them, my leetle brother, for your journal; you shall announce in the big letter: 'Mooch Importance. The Aztec, He is Found.' 'How He Look and Lif.' 'The Everlasting Nigger.' You shall sell many paper, and Urania shall have scoop in much spondulics and rocks. Hoop-la! For—you comprehend?—my wife and I have settled that she shall forgif her oncle; I shall forgif my father; but from them we take no cent—not a red, not a scad! We are independent! Of ourselves we make a Fourth of July! United we stand; divided we shall fall over! There you are! *Bueno!*"

It was impossible to resist his wild, yet perfectly sincere, extravagance, his dancing black eyes and occasional flash of white teeth in his otherwise immovable and serious countenance. Nevertheless, I managed to say:

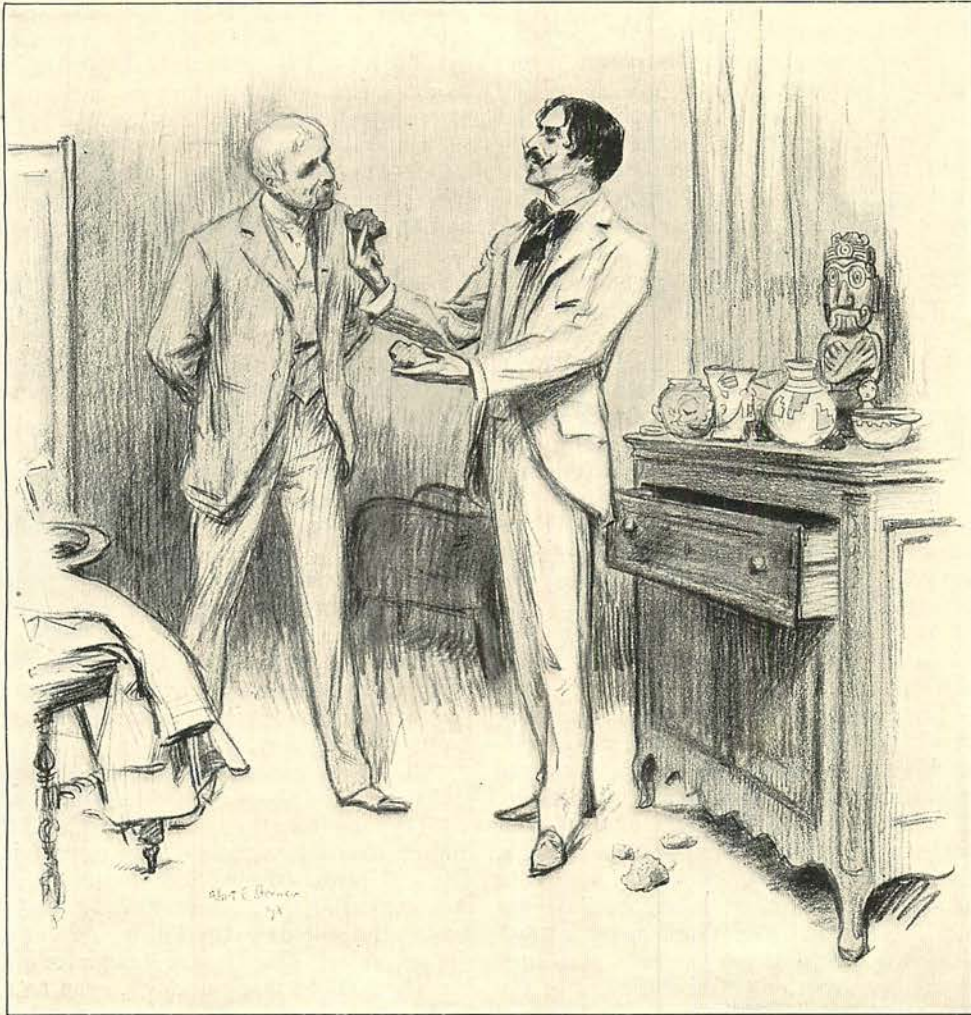
"But how about yourself, Enriquez, and this geology, you know?"

His eyes twinkled. "Ah, you shall hear. But first you shall take a drink. I have the very old bourbon. He is not so old as the

Aztec, but, believe me, he is very much liffier. Attend! Hol' on!" He was already rummaging on a shelf, but apparently without success; then he explored a buffet, with no better results, and finally attacked a large drawer, throwing out on the floor, with his old impetuosity, a number of geological

of spirits—tippling was not one of Enriquez's vices. "You shall say 'when.' 'Ere's to our noble selfs!"

When he had drunk, I picked up another fragment of his collection. It had the same label. "You are very rich in 'conglomerate sandstone,'" I said. "Where do you find it?"



“HE EES CALL THE “COBBLE-STONE.””

specimens, carefully labeled. I picked up one that had rolled near me. It was labeled “Conglomerate sandstone.” I picked up another; it had the same label.

“Then you are really collecting?” I said, with astonishment.

“*Ciertamente,*” responded Enriquez. “What other fool shall I look? I shall relate of this geology when I shall have found this beast of a bottle. Ah, here he have hide!” He extracted from a drawer a bottle nearly full

“In the street,” said Enriquez, with great calmness.

“In the street?” I echoed.

“Yes, my friend! He ees call the ‘cobble-stone,’ also the ‘pounding-stone,’ when he ees at his home in the country. He ees also a small ‘boulder.’ I pick him up; I crack him; he make three separate piece of conglomerate sandstone. I bring him home to my wife in my pocket. She rejoice; we are happy. When comes the efening, I sit down and

make him a label, while my wife she sit down and write of the Aztec. Ah, my friend, you shall say of the geology it ees a fine, a *beautiful* study; but the study of the wife, and what shall please her, believe me, ees much finer! Believe your old Uncle 'Enry every time! On thees question he gets there; he gets left—nevarre!”

“But Professor Dobbs, your geologist, what does *he* say to this frequent recurrence of the conglomerate-sandstone period in your study?” I asked quickly.

“He says nothing. You comprehend? He ees a profound geologist, but he also has the admiration excessif for my wife Urania.” He stopped to kiss his hand again toward the door, and lighted a cigarette. “The geologist would not that he should break up the happy efening of his friends by thees small detail. He put aside his head—so; he say, ‘A leetle freestone, a leetle granite, now and then, for variety; they are building in Montgomery street.’ I take the hint, like a wink to the horse that has gone blind. I attach to myself part of the edifice that is erecting himself in Montgomery street. I crack him; I bring him home. I sit again at the feet of my beautiful Urania, and I label him ‘Free-stone,’ ‘Granite’; but I do not say ‘from Parrott’s Bank’—eet is not necessary for our happiness.”

“And you do this sort of thing only because you think it pleases your wife?” I asked bluntly.

“My friend,” rejoined Enriquez, perching himself on the back of the sofa, and caressing his knees as he puffed his cigarette meditatively, “you have ask a conundrum. Gif to me an easier one! It is of truth that I make much of thees thing to please Urania. But I shall confess all. Behold, I appear to you, my leetle brother, in my *camisa*—my shirt! I blow on myself; I gif myself away.”

He rose gravely from the sofa, and drew a small box from one of the drawers of the wardrobe. Opening it, he discovered several specimens of gold-bearing quartz, and one or two scales of gold. “Thees,” he said, “friend Pancho, is my own geology; for thees I am what you see. But I say nothing to Urania; for she have much disgust of mere gold,—of what she calls ‘vulgar mining,’—and, believe me, a fear of the effect of ‘speculation’ upon my *temperamento*—you comprehend my complexion, my brother? Reflect upon it, Pancho! *I*, who am the *filosofo*, if that I am anything!” He looked at me with great levity of eye and supernatural gravity of demeanor. “But eet ees the jealous affection of the wife,

my friend, for which I make play to her with the humble leetle pounding-stone rather than the gold quartz that affrights.”

“But what do you want with them, if you have no shares in anything and do not speculate?” I asked.

“Pardon! That ees where you slip up, my leetle friend.” He took from the same drawer a clasped portfolio, and unlocked it, producing half a dozen prospectuses and certificates of mining shares. I stood aghast as I recognized the names of one or two extravagant failures of the last ten years—“played-out” mines that had been galvanized into deceptive life in London, Paris, and New York, to the grief of shareholders abroad and the laughter of the initiated at home. I could scarcely keep my equanimity. “You do not mean to say that you have any belief or interest in this rubbish?” I said quickly.

“What you call ‘rubbish,’ my good Pancho, ees the rubbish that the American speculator have dump himself upon them in the shaft. The rubbish of the advertisement, of the extravagant expense, of the salary, of the assessment, of the ‘freeze-out.’ For thees, look you, is the old Mexican mine. My grandfather and hees father have both seen them work before you were born, and the American knew not there was gold in California.”

I knew he spoke truly. One or two were original silver-mines in the South, worked by peons and Indian slaves, a rope windlass, and a venerable donkey.

“But those were silver-mines,” I said suspiciously, “and these are gold specimens.”

“They are from the same mother,” said the imperturbable Enriquez,—“the same mine. The old peons worked him for *silver*, the precious dollar that buy everything, that he send in the galleon to the Philippines for the silk and spice! *That is good enough for him!* For the gold he made nothing, even as my leetle wife Urania. And regard me here! There ees a proverb of my father’s which say that ‘it shall take a gold-mine to work a silver-mine’—so mooch more he cost. You work him, you are lost! *Naturalmente*, if you turn him round,—if it take you only a silver-mine to work a gold-mine,—you are gain. Thees ees logic!”

The intense gravity of his face at this extraordinary deduction upset my own. But as I was never certain that Enriquez was not purposely mystifying me, with some ulterior object, I could not help saying a little wickedly:

"Yes, I understand all that; but how about this geologist? Will he not tell your wife? You know he was a great admirer of hers."

"That shall show the great intelligence of him, my Pancho. He will have the four 'S's,' especially the *secreto!*"

of his embraces and protestations, I managed to get out of the room. But I had scarcely reached the front door when I heard Enriquez's voice and his bounding step on the stairs. In another moment his arm was round my neck.

"You must return on the instant! Mother



"THE ONLY NATURAL AND HYGIENIC MODE OF TREATING THE HUMAN CHILD."

There could be no serious discussion in his present mood. I gathered up the pages of his wife's manuscript, said lightly that as she had the first claim upon my time, I should examine the Aztec material and report in a day or two. As I knew I had little chance in the hands of these two incomprehensibles together, I begged him not to call his wife, but to convey my adieus to her, and, in spite

of God! I haf forget—*she* haf forget—we all haf forget! But you have not seen him!"

"Seen whom?"

"*El niño*—the baby! You comprehend, pig! The *criaturica*—the leetle child of ourselfs!"

"The baby?" I said confusedly. "*Is there—is there a baby?*"

"You hear him?" said Enriquez, sending

an appealing voice upward. "You hear him, Urania? You comprehend. This beast of a leetle brother demands if there ees one!"

"I beg your pardon," I said, hurriedly re-ascending the stairs. On the landing I met Mrs. Saltillo, but as calm, composed, and precise as her husband was extravagant and vehement. "It was an oversight of Enriquez's," she said quietly, reëntering the room with us; "and was all the more strange, as the child was in the room with you all the time."

She pointed to the corner of the wall, where hung what I had believed to be an old Indian relic. To my consternation, it *was* a bark "papoose-case," occupied by a *living* child, swathed and bandaged after the approved Indian fashion. It was asleep, I believe, but it opened a pair of bright huckle-berry eyes, set in the smallest of features, that were like those of a carved ivory idol, and uttered a "coo" at the sound of its mother's voice. She stood on one side with unruffled composure, while Enriquez threw himself into an attitude before it, with clasped hands, as if it had been an image of the Holy Child. For myself, I was too astounded to speak; luckily, my confusion was attributed to the inexperience of a bachelor.

"I have adopted," said Mrs. Saltillo, with the faintest touch of maternal pride in her manner, "what I am convinced is the only natural and hygienic mode of treating the human child. It may be said to be a reversion to the aborigine, but I have yet to learn that it is not superior to our civilized custom. By these bandages the limbs of the infant are kept in proper position until they are strong enough to support the body, and such a thing as malformation is unknown. It is protected by its cradle, which takes the place of its incubating-shell, from external injury, the injudicious coddling of nurses, the so-called 'dancings' and pernicious rockings. The supine position, as in the adult, is imposed only at night. By the aid of this strap it may be carried on long journeys, either by myself or by Enriquez, who thus shares with me, as he fully recognizes, its equal responsibility and burden."

"It—certainly does not—cry," I stammered.

"Crying," said Mrs. Saltillo, with a curve of her pretty red lip, "is the protest of the child against insanitary and artificial treatment. In its upright, unostentatious cradle it is protected against that injudicious fondling and dangerous promiscuous osculation

to which, as an infant in human arms, it is so often subjected. Above all, it is kept from that shameless and mortifying publicity so unjust to the weak and unformed animal. The child repays this consideration by a gratifying silence. It cannot be expected to understand our thoughts, speech, or actions; it cannot participate in our pleasures. Why should it be forced into premature contact with them, merely to feed our vanity or selfishness? Why should we assume our particular parental accident as superior to the common lot? If we do not give our offspring that prominence before our visitors so common to the young wife and husband, it is for that reason solely; and this may account for what seemed the forgetfulness of Enriquez in speaking of it or pointing it out to you. And I think his action in calling you back to see it was somewhat precipitate. As one does not usually introduce an unknown and inferior stranger without some previous introduction, he might have asked you if you wished to see the baby before he recalled you."

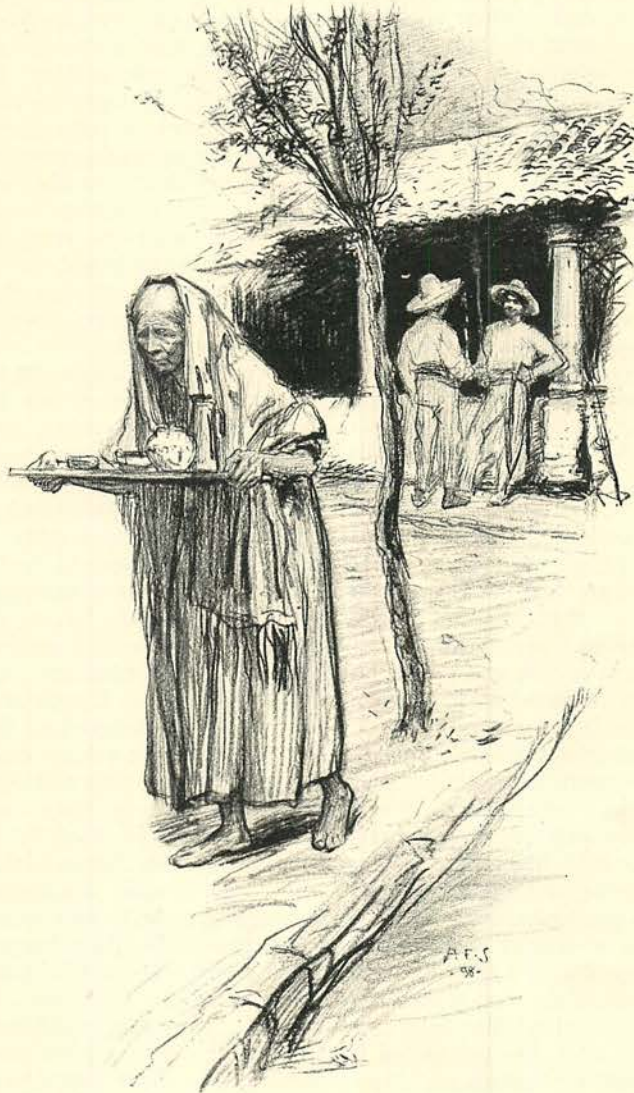
I looked from Urania's unfathomable eyes to Enriquez's impenetrable countenance. I might have been equal to either of them alone, but together they were invincible. I looked hopelessly at the baby. With its sharp little eyes and composed face, it certainly was a marvelous miniature of Enriquez. I said so.

"It would be singular if it was not," said Mrs. Saltillo, dryly; "and as I believe it is by no means an uncommon fact in human nature, it seems to me singular that people should insist upon it as a discovery. It is an inheritance, however, that in due time progress and science will no doubt interrupt, to the advancement of the human race. I need not say that both Enriquez and myself look forward to it with confident tranquillity."

There was clearly nothing for me to do now but to shake hands again and take my leave. Yet I was so much impressed with the unreality of the whole scene that when I reached the front door I had a strong impulse to return suddenly and fall in upon them in their relaxed and natural attitudes. They could not keep up this pose between themselves; and I half expected to see their laughing faces at the window, as I glanced up before wending my perilous way to the street.

I found Mrs. Saltillo's manuscript well written and, in the narrative parts, even graphic and sparkling. I suppressed some general remarks on the universe, and some

correlative theories of existence, as not appertaining particularly to the Aztecs, and as not meeting any unquenchable thirst for information on the part of the readers of the "Daily Excelsior." I even promoted my fair contributor to the position of having been not aware of any particular service that it did to ethnology; but, as I pointed out in the editorial column, it showed that the people of California were not given over by material greed to the exclusion of intellectual research; and as it was attacked instantly in



"SHE IS OF YEARS ONE HUNDRED AND ONE." (SEE PAGE 243.)

commissioned, at great expense, to make the Mexican journey especially for the "Excelsior." This, with Mrs. Saltillo's somewhat precise Preraphaelite drawings and water-colors, viley reproduced by woodcuts, gave quite a sensational air to her production, which, divided into parts, for two or three days filled a whole page of the paper. I am long communications from one or two scientific men, it thus produced more copy. Briefly, it was a "boom" for the author and the "Daily Excelsior." I should add, however, that a rival newspaper intimated that it was also a "boom" for Mrs. Saltillo's *husband*, and called attention to the fact that a deserted Mexican mine, known as "El

Bolero," was described graphically in the Aztec article among the news, and again appeared in the advertising columns of the same paper. I turned somewhat indignantly to the file of the "Excelsior," and, singularly enough, found in the elaborate prospectus of a new gold-mining company the description of the El Bolero mine as a *quotation* from the Aztec article, with extraordinary inducements for the investment of capital in the projected working of an old mine. If I had had any difficulty in recognizing in the extravagant style the flamboyant hand of Enriquez in English writing, I might have read his name plainly enough displayed as president of the company. It was evidently the prospectus of one of the ventures he had shown me. I was more amused than indignant at the little trick he had played upon my editorial astuteness. After all, if I had thus benefited the young couple I was satisfied. I had not seen them since my first visit,—as I was very busy, my communications with Mrs. Saltillo had been carried on by letters and proofs,—and when I did finally call at their house, it was only to find that they were visiting at San José. I wondered whether the baby was still hanging on the wall, or, if he was taken with them, who carried him.

A week later the stock of El Bolero was quoted at par. More than that, an incomprehensible activity had been given to all the deserted Mexican mines, and people began to look up scrip hitherto thrown aside as worthless. Whether it was one of those extraordinary fevers which attacked Californian speculation in the early days, or whether Enriquez Saltillo had infected the stock-market with his own extravagance, I never knew; but plans as wild, inventions as fantastic, and arguments as illogical as ever emanated from his own brain, were set forth "on 'change" with a gravity equal to his own. The most reasonable hypothesis was that it was the effect of the well-known fact that the Spanish Californian hitherto had not been a mining speculator, nor connected in any way with the gold production on his native soil, deeming it inconsistent with his patriarchal life and landed dignity, and that when a "son of one of the oldest Spanish families, identified with the land and its peculiar character for centuries, lent himself to its mineral exploitations,"—I beg to say that I am quoting from the advertisement in the "Excelsior,"—"it was a guerdon of success." This was so far true that in a week Enriquez Saltillo was rich and in a fair way to become a millionaire.

II.

It was a hot afternoon when I alighted from the stifling Wingdam coach, and stood upon the cool, deep veranda of the Carquinez Springs Hotel. After I had shaken off the dust which had lazily followed us, in our descent of the mountain road, like a red smoke, occasionally overflowing the coach windows, I went up to the room I had engaged for my brief holiday. I knew the place well, although I could see that the hotel itself had lately been redecorated and enlarged to meet the increasing requirements of fashion. I knew the forest of enormous redwoods where one might lose one's self in a five minutes' walk from the veranda. I knew the rocky trail that climbed the mountain to the springs, twisting between giant boulders. I knew the arid garden, deep in the wayside dust, with its hurriedly planted tropical plants, already withering in the dry autumn sunshine, and washed into fictitious freshness, night and morning, by the hydraulic irrigating-hose. I knew, too, the cool, reposeful night winds that swept down from invisible snow-crests beyond, with the hanging out of monstrous stars, that too often failed to bring repose to the feverish guests. For the overstrained neurotic workers who fled hither from the baking plains of Sacramento, or from the chill sea-fogs of San Francisco, never lost the fierce unrest that had driven them here. Unaccustomed to leisure, their enforced idleness impelled them to seek excitement in the wildest gaities; the bracing mountain air only reinvigorated them to pursue pleasure as they had pursued the occupations they had left behind. Their sole recreations were furious drives over break-neck roads; mad, scampering cavalcades through the sedate woods; gambling parties in private rooms, where large sums were lost by capitalists on leave; champagne suppers; and impromptu balls that lasted through the calm, reposeful night to the first rays of light on the distant snow-line. Unimaginative men, in their temporary sojourn they more often outraged or dispossessed nature in her own fastnesses than courted her for sympathy or solitude. There were playing-cards left lying behind boulders, and empty champagne bottles forgotten in forest depths.

I remembered all this when, refreshed by a bath, I leaned from the balcony of my room and watched the pulling up of a "brake," drawn by six dirty, foam-bespattered horses, driven by a noted capitalist.

As its hot, perspiring, closely veiled yet burning-faced fair occupants descended, in all the dazzling glory of summer toilets, and I saw the gentlemen consult their watches with satisfaction, and congratulate their triumphant driver, I knew the characteristic excitement they had enjoyed from a "record run," probably a bet, over a mountain road in a burning sun.

"Not bad, eh? Forty-four minutes from the summit!"

The voice seemed at my elbow. I turned quickly, to recognize an acquaintance, a young San Francisco broker, leaning from the next balcony to mine. But my attention was just then preoccupied by a face and a figure, which seemed familiar to me, of a woman who was alighting from the brake.

"Who is that?" I asked—"the straight, slim woman in gray, with the white veil twisted round her felt hat?"

"Mrs. Saltillo," he answered, "wife of 'El Bolero' Saltillo, don't you know. Mighty pretty woman, if she is a little stiffish and set up."

Then I had not been mistaken! "Is Enriquez—is her husband—here?" I asked quickly.

The man laughed. "I reckon not. This is the place for other people's husbands, don't you know."

Alas! I *did* know; and as there flashed upon me all the miserable scandals and gossip connected with this reckless, frivolous caravansary, I felt like resenting his suggestion. But my companion's next words were more significant:

"Besides, if what they say is true, Saltillo would n't be very popular here."

"I don't understand," I said quickly.

"Why, after all that row he had with the El Bolero Company."

"I never heard of any row," I said, in astonishment.

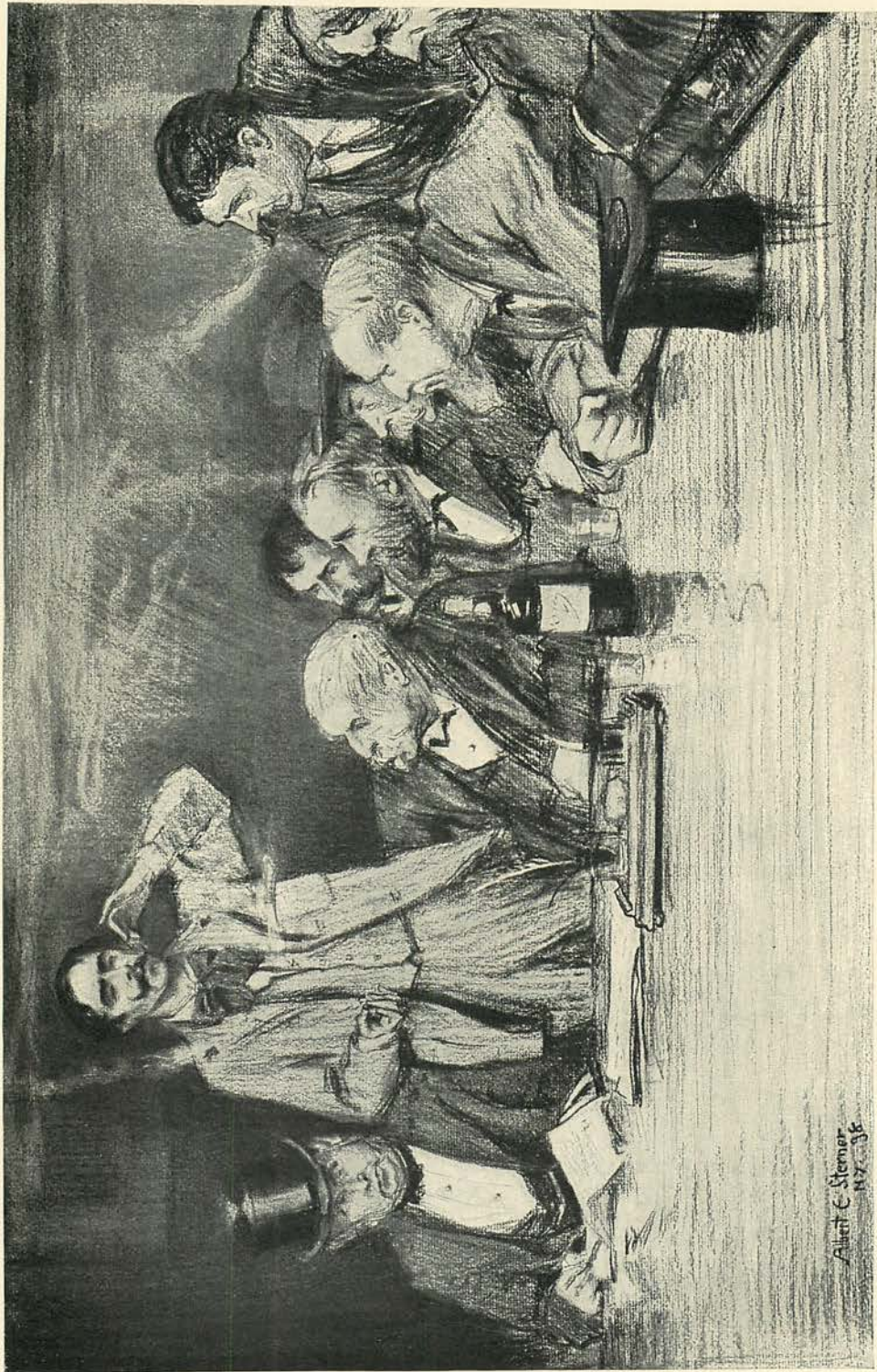
The broker laughed incredulously. "Come! and *you* a newspaper man! Well, maybe they *did* try to hush it up, and keep it out of the papers, on account of the stock. But it seems he got up a reg'lar shindy with the board, one day—called 'em thieves and swindlers, and allowed he was disgracing himself as a Spanish hidalgo by having anything to do with 'em. Talked, they say, about Charles V of Spain, or some other royal galoot, giving his ancestors the land in trust! Clean off his head, I reckon. Then shunted himself off the company, and sold out. You can guess he would n't be very popular around here, with Jim Bestley,

there," pointing to the capitalist who had driven the brake, "who used to be on the board with him. No, sir. He was either lying low for something, or was off his head. Think of his throwing up a place like that!"

"Nonsense!" I said indignantly. "He is mercurial, and has the quick impulsiveness of his race, but I believe him as sane as any who sat with him on the board. There must be some mistake—or you have n't got the whole story." Nevertheless, I did not care to discuss an old friend with a mere acquaintance, and I felt secretly puzzled to account for his conduct, in the face of his previous cleverness in manipulating the El Bolero, and the undoubted fascination he had previously exercised over the stock-holders. The story had of course been garbled in repetition. I had never before imagined what might be the effect of Enriquez's peculiar eccentricities upon matter-of-fact people,—I had found them only amusing,—and the broker's suggestion annoyed me. However, Mrs. Saltillo was here in the hotel, and I should, of course, meet her. Would she be as frank with me?

I was disappointed at not finding her in the drawing-room or on the veranda; and the heat being still unusually oppressive, I strolled out toward the redwoods, hesitating for a moment in the shade before I ran the fiery gauntlet of the garden. To my surprise, I had scarcely passed the giant sentinels on its outskirts before I found that, from some unusual condition of the atmosphere, the cold undercurrent of air which generally drew through these pillared aisles was withheld that afternoon; it was absolutely hotter than in the open, and the wood was charged throughout with the acrid spices of the pine. I turned back to the hotel, re-ascended to my bedroom, and threw myself into an arm-chair by the open window. My room was near the end of a wing; the corner room at the end was next to mine, on the same landing. Its closed door, at right angles to my open one, gave upon the staircase, but was plainly visible from where I sat. I remembered being glad that it was shut, as it enabled me without offense to keep my own door open.

The house was very quiet. The leaves of a catalpa, across the roadway, hung motionless. Somebody yawned on the veranda below. I threw away my half-finished cigar, and closed my eyes. I think I had not lost consciousness for more than a few seconds before I was awakened by the shaking and thrilling of the whole building. As I stag-



Albert C. Sterner
N.Y. '36

“‘THEN I ERRISE—SO!’”
(SEE PAGE 244.)

gered to my feet, I saw the four pictures hanging against the wall swing outwardly from it on their cords and my door swing back against the wall. At the same moment, acted upon by the same potential impulse, the door of the end room in the hall, opposite the stairs, also swung open. In that brief moment I had a glimpse of the interior of the room—of two figures, a man and a woman, the latter clinging to her companion in abject terror. It was only for an instant, for a second thrill passed through the house, the pictures clattered back against the wall, the door of the end room closed violently on its strange revelation, and my own door swung back also. Apprehensive of what might happen, I sprang toward it, but only to arrest it an inch or two before it should shut, when, as my experience had taught me, it might stick by the subsidence of the walls. But it did stick ajar, and remained firmly fixed in that position. From the clattering of the knob of the other door, and the sound of hurried voices behind it, I knew that the same thing had happened there when that door had fully closed.

I was familiar enough with earthquakes to know that with the second shock or subsidence of the earth the immediate danger was passed, and so I was able to note more clearly what else was passing. There was the usual sudden stampede of hurrying feet, the solitary oath and scream, the half-hysterical laughter, and silence. Then the tumult was reawakened to the sound of high voices, talking all together, or the impatient calling of absentees in halls and corridors. Then I heard the quick swish of female skirts on the staircase, and one of the fair guests knocked impatiently at the door of the end room, still immovably fixed. At the first knock there was a sudden cessation of the hurried whisperings and turning of the door-knob.

"Mrs. Saltillo, are you there? Are you frightened?" she called.

"Mrs. Saltillo!" It was *she*, then, who was in the room! I drew nearer my door, which was still fixed ajar. Presently a voice—Mrs. Saltillo's voice—with a constrained laugh in it came from behind the door: "Not a bit. I'll come down in minute."

"Do," persisted the would-be intruder. "It's all over now, but we're all going out into the garden; it's safer."

"All right," answered Mrs. Saltillo. "Don't wait, dear. I'll follow. Run away, now."

The visitor, who was evidently still nervous, was glad to hurry away, and I heard

her retreating step on the staircase. The rattling of the door began again, and at last it seemed to yield to a stronger pull, and opened sufficiently to allow Mrs. Saltillo to squeeze through. I withdrew behind my door. I fancied that it creaked as she passed, as if, noticing it ajar, she had laid an inquiring hand upon it. I waited, but she was not followed by any one. I wondered if I had been mistaken. I was going to the bell-rope to summon assistance to move my own door when a sudden instinct withheld me. If there was any one still in that room, he might come from it just as the servant answered my call, and a public discovery would be unavoidable. I was right. In another instant the figure of a man, whose face I could not discern, slipped out of the room, passed my door, and went stealthily down the staircase.

Convinced of this, I resolved not to call public attention to my being in my own room at the time of the incident; so I did not summon any one, but, redoubling my efforts, I at last opened the door sufficiently to pass out, and at once joined the other guests in the garden. Already, with characteristic recklessness and audacity, the earthquake was made light of; the only dictate of prudence had resolved itself into a hilarious proposal to "camp out" in the woods all night, and have a "torch-light picnic." Even then preparations were being made for carrying tents, blankets, and pillows to the adjacent redwoods; dinner and supper, cooked at campfires, were to be served there on stumps of trees and fallen logs. The convulsion of nature had been used as an excuse for one of the wildest freaks of extravagance that Carquinez Springs had ever known. Perhaps that quick sense of humor which dominates the American male in exigencies of this kind kept the extravagances from being merely bizarre and grotesque, and it was presently known that the hotel and its menage were to be appropriately burlesqued by some of the guests, who, attired as Indians, would personate the staff, from the oracular hotel proprietor himself down to the smart hotel clerk.

During these arrangements I had a chance of drawing near Mrs. Saltillo. I fancied she gave a slight start as she recognized me; but her greetings were given with her usual precision. "Have you been here long?" she asked.

"I have only just come," I replied laughingly—"in time for the shock."

"Ah, you felt it, then? I was telling these

ladies that our eminent geologist, Professor Dobbs, assured me that these seismic disturbances in California have a very remote center, and are seldom serious."

"It must be very satisfactory to have the support of geology at such a moment," I could not help saying, though I had not the slightest idea whose the figure was that I had seen, nor, indeed, had I recognized it among the guests. She did not seem to detect any significance in my speech, and I added: "And where is Enriquez? He would enjoy this proposed picnic to-night."

"Enriquez is at Salvatierra Rancho, which he lately bought from his cousin."

"And the baby? Surely, here is a chance for you to hang him up on a redwood to-night, in his cradle."

"The boy," said Mrs. Saltillo, quickly, "is no longer in his cradle; he has passed the pupa state, and is now free to develop his own perfected limbs. He is with his father. I do not approve of children being submitted to the indiscriminate attentions of a hotel. I am here myself only for that supply of ozone indicated for brain exhaustion."

She looked so pretty and prim in her gray dress, so like her old correct self, that I could not think of anything but her mental attitude—which did not, by the way, seem much like mental depression. Yet I was aware that I was getting no information of Enriquez's condition or affairs, unless the whole story told by the broker was an exaggeration. I did not, however, dare to ask more particularly.

"You remember Professor Dobbs?" she asked abruptly.

This recalled a suspicion awakened by my vision so suddenly that I felt myself blushing. She did not seem to notice it, and was perfectly composed.

"I do remember him. Is he here?"

"He is; that is what makes it so particularly unfortunate for me. You see, after that affair of the board, and Enriquez's withdrawal, although Enriquez may have been a little precipitate in his energetic way, I naturally took my husband's part in public; for although we preserve our own personal independence inviolable, we believe in absolute confederation as against society."

"But what has Professor Dobbs to do with the board?" I interrupted.

"The professor was scientific and geological adviser to the board, and it was upon some report or suggestion of his that Enriquez took issue, against the sentiment of the

board. It was a principle affecting Enriquez's Spanish sense of honor."

"Do tell me all about it," I said eagerly; "I am very anxious to know the truth."

"As I was not present at the time," said Mrs. Saltillo, rebuking my eagerness with a gentle frigidity, "I am unable to do so. Anything else would be mere hearsay, and more or less *ex parte*. I do not approve of mere gossip."

"But what did Enriquez tell you? You surely know that."

"That, being purely confidential, as between husband and wife,—perhaps I should say partner and partner,—of course you do not expect me to disclose. Enough that I was satisfied with it. I should not have spoken to you about it at all, but that, through myself and Enriquez, you are an acquaintance of the professor's, and I might save you the awkwardness of presenting yourself with him. Otherwise, although you are a friend of Enriquez, it need not affect your acquaintance with the professor."

"Hang the professor!" I ejaculated. "I don't care a rap for *him*."

"Then I differ with you," said Mrs. Saltillo, with precision. "He is distinctly an able man, and one cannot but miss the contact of his original mind and his liberal teachings."

Here she was joined by one of the ladies, and I lounged away. I dare say it was very mean and very illogical, but the unsatisfactory character of this interview made me revert again to the singular revelation I had seen a few hours before. I looked anxiously for Professor Dobbs; but when I did meet him, with an indifferent nod of recognition, I found I could by no means identify him with the figure of her mysterious companion. And why should I suspect him at all, in the face of Mrs. Saltillo's confessed avoidance of him? Who, then, could it have been? I had seen them but an instant, in the opening and the shutting of a door. It was merely the shadowy bulk of a man that flitted past my door, after all. Could I have imagined the whole thing? Were my perceptive faculties—just aroused from slumber, too—sufficiently clear to be relied upon? Would I not have laughed had Urania, or even Enriquez himself, told me such a story?

As I reëntered the hotel the clerk handed me a telegram. "There's been a pretty big shake all over the country," he said eagerly. "Everybody is getting news and inquiries from their friends. Anything fresh?" He paused interrogatively as I tore open the

envelop. The despatch had been redirected from the office of the "Daily Excelsior." It was dated, "Salvatierra Rancho," and contained a single line: "Come and see your old uncle Ennery."

There was nothing in the wording of the message that was unlike Enriquez's usual light-hearted levity, but the fact that he should have telegraphed it to me struck me uneasily. That I should have received it at the hotel where his wife and Professor Dobbs were both staying, and where I had had such a singular experience, seemed to me more than a mere coincidence. An instinct that the message was something personal to Enriquez and me kept me from imparting it to Mrs. Saltillo. After worrying half the night in our bizarre camp in the redwoods, in the midst of a restless festivity which was scarcely the repose I had been seeking at Carquinez Springs, I resolved to leave the next day for Salvatierra Rancho. I remembered the rancho—a low, golden-brown adobe-walled quadrangle, sleeping like some monstrous ruminant in a hollow of the Contra Costa Range. I recalled, in the midst of this noisy picnic, the slumberous coolness of its long corridors and soundless courtyard, and hailed it as a relief. The telegram was a sufficient excuse for my abrupt departure. In the morning I left, but without again seeing either Mrs. Saltillo or the professor.

It was late the next afternoon when I rode through the *cañada* that led to the rancho. I confess my thoughts were somewhat gloomy, in spite of my escape from the noisy hotel; but this was due to the somber scenery through which I had just ridden, and the monotonous russet of the leagues of wild oats. As I approached the rancho, I saw that Enriquez had made no attempt to modernize the old casa, and that even the garden was left in its lawless native luxuriance, while the rude tiled sheds near the walled corral contained the old farming implements, unchanged for a century, even to the ox-carts, the wheels of which were made of a single block of wood. A few peons, in striped shirts and velvet jackets, were sunning themselves against a wall, and near them hung a half-drained *pellejo*, or goatskin water-bag. The air of absolute shiftlessness must have been repellent to Mrs. Saltillo's orderly precision, and for a moment I pitied her. But it was equally inconsistent with Enriquez's enthusiastic ideas of American progress, and the extravagant designs he had often imparted to me of the improvements he would make

when he had a fortune. I was feeling uneasy again, when I suddenly heard the rapid clack of unshod hoofs on a rocky trail that joined my own. At the same instant a horseman dashed past me at full speed. I had barely time to swerve my own horse aside to avoid a collision, yet in that brief moment I recognized the figure of Enriquez. But his face I should have scarcely known. It was hard and fixed. His upper lip and thin, penciled mustache were drawn up over his teeth, which were like a white gash in his dark face. He turned into the courtyard of the rancho. I put spurs to my horse, and followed, in nervous expectation. He turned in his saddle as I entered. But the next moment he bounded from his horse, and, before I could dismount, flew to my side and absolutely lifted me from the saddle to embrace me. It was the old Enriquez again; his face seemed to have utterly changed in that brief moment.

"This is all very well, old chap," I said; "but do you know that you nearly ran me down, just now, with that infernal half-broken mustang? Do you usually charge the casa at that speed?"

"Pardon, my leetle brother! But here you shall slip up. The mustang is not half-broken; he is not broke at all! Look at his hoof—never have a shoe been there. For myself—attend me! When I rride alone, I think mooch; when I think mooch I think fast—my idea he go like the cannon-ball! Consequent, if I ride not thees horse like the cannon-ball, my thought *he* arrive first—and where are you? You get left! Believe me that I fly thees horse,—thees old Mexican plug,—and your de' uncle Ennery and his leetle old idea arrive all the same time—and on the instant."

It was the old Enriquez! I perfectly understood his extravagant speech and illustration, and yet for the first time I wondered if others did.

"Tak'-a-drink!" he said, all in one word. "You shall possess the old bourbon or the rhum from the Santa Cruz! Name your poison, gentlemen!"

He had already dragged me up the steps from the *patio* to the veranda, and seated me before a small round table still covered with the chocolate equipage of the morning. A little dried-up old Indian woman took it away, and brought the spirits and glasses.

"*Mirar* the leetle old one!" said Enriquez, with unflinching gravity. "Consider her, Pancho—to the bloosh! She is not truly an Aztec, but she is of years one hundred and

one—and *lifs!* Possibly she haf not the beauty which ravishes—which devastates. But she shall attent you to the hot water—to the bath. Thus shall you be protect, my leetle brother, from scandal.”

“Enriquez,” I burst out suddenly, “tell me about yourself. Why did you leave the El Bolero board? What was the row about?”

Enriquez’s eyes for a moment glittered; then they danced as before.

“Ah,” he said, “you have heard?”

“Something; but I want to know the truth from you.”

He lighted a cigarette, lifted himself backward into a grass hammock, on which he sat, swinging his feet. Then, pointing to another hammock, he said: “Tranquillize yourself there. I will relate; but, truly, it ees nothing.”

He took a long pull at his cigarette, and for a few moments seemed quietly to exude smoke from his eyes, ears, nose, even his finger-ends—everywhere, in fact, but his mouth. That and his mustache remained fixed. Then he said slowly, flicking away the ashes with his little finger:

“First you understand, friend Pancho, that I make no row. The other themself make the row—the shindig. They make the dance, the howl, the snap of the finger, the oath, the ‘Helen blazes,’ the ‘Wot the devil,’ the ‘That be damned,’ the bad language; they themselves finger the revolver, advance the bowie-knife, throw off the coat, square off, and ‘Come on.’ I remain as you see me now, little brother—tranquil.” He lighted another cigarette, made his position more comfortable in the hammock, and resumed: “The Professor Dobbs, who is the geologian of the company, made a report for which he got two thousand dollar. But thees report—look you, friend Pancho—he is not good for the mine. For in the hole in the ground the Professor Dobbs have found a ‘hoss.’

“A what?” I asked.

“A hoss,” repeated Enriquez, with infinite gravity. “But not, leetle Pancho, the hoss that run, the horse that buck-jump, but what the miner call a ‘hoss’—a something that rear up in the vein and stop him. You pick around the hoss; you pick under him; sometimes you find the vein, sometimes you do not. The hoss he rear up—and remain! Eet ees not good for the mine. The board say, ‘D—the hoss!’ ‘Get rid of the hoss.’ ‘Chuck out the hoss.’ Then they talk together, and one say to the Professor Dobbs: ‘Eef you cannot thees hoss remove from the mine, you can take him out of the re-

port.’ He look to me, thees professor. I see nothing; I remain tranquil. Then the board say: ‘Thees report with the hoss in him is worth two thousand dollar, but *without* the hoss he is worth five thousand dollars. For the stock-holder is frightened of the rearing hoss. It is of a necessity that the stock-holder should remain tranquil. Without the hoss the report is good; the stock shall errise; the director shall sell out, and leave the stock-holder the hoss to play with.’ The professor he say, ‘Al-right’; he scratch out the hoss, sign his name, and get a check for three thousand dollars.”

“Then I errise—so!” He got up from the hammock, suiting the action to the word, and during the rest of his narrative, I honestly believe, assumed the same attitude and deliberate intonation he had exhibited at the board. I could even fancy I saw the reckless, cynical faces of his brother directors turned upon his grim, impassive features. “I am tranquil; I smoke my cigarette. I say that for three hundred year my family have held the land of thees mine; that it pass from father to son, and from son to son; it pass by gift, it pass by grant, but that *nevarre there pass a lie with it!* I say it was gift by a Spanish Christian king to a Christian hidalgo for the spread of the gospel—and not for the cheat and the swindle! I say that this mine was worked by the slave, and by the mule, by the ass—but never by the cheat and swindler. I say that if they have struck the hoss in the mine, they have struck a hoss *in the land*—Spanish hoss; a hoss that have no bridle worth five thousand dollar in his mouth, but a hoss that rear, a hoss that you shall not ride, and a hoss that cannot be struck out by a Yankee geologian; and that hoss is Enriquez Saltillo!”

He paused, and laid aside his cigarette. “Then they say, ‘Dry up,’ and ‘Sell out’; and the great bankers say, ‘Name your own price for your stock, and resign.’ And I say, ‘There is not of gold in your bank, in your San Francisco, in the mines of California, that shall buy a Spanish gentleman. When I leave, I leave the stock at my back; I shall take it—nevarre!’ Then the banker he say: ‘And you will go and blab, I suppose?’ And then, Pancho, I smile, I pick up my mustache—so! and I say: ‘Pardon, señor, you haf mistake. The Saltillo haf for three hundred year no stain, no blot, upon him. Eet is not now—the last of the race—who shall confess that he haf sit at a board of disgrace and dishonor!’ And then it is that the band begin to play, and the animals stand on their

hind leg and waltz, and behold, the row he haf begin!"

I ran over to him, and fairly hugged him. But he put me aside with a gentle and philosophical calm. "Ah, eet is nothing, Pancho. It is, believe me, all the same a hundred years to come—and where are you then? The earth he turn round, and then come *el temblor*,—the earthquake,—and there you are! Bah! eet is not of the board that I have asked you to come; it is something else I would tell you. Go and wash yourself of thees journey, my leetle brother, as I have"—looking at his narrow, brown, well-bred hands—"wash myself of the board. Be very careful of the leetle old woman, Pancho; do not wink to her of the eye! Consider, my leetle brother, for one hundred and one year she haf been as a nun—a saint! Disturb not her tranquillity."

Yes, it was the old Enriquez; but he seemed graver—if I could use that word to one of such persistent gravity; only, his gravity heretofore had suggested a certain irony rather than a melancholy which I now fancied I detected. And what was this "something else" he was to "tell me later"? Did it refer to Mrs. Saltillo? I had purposely waited for him to speak of her before I should say anything of my visit to Carquinez Springs. I hurried through my ablutions in the hot water brought in a bronze jar on the head of the centenarian handmaid; and even while I was smiling over Enriquez's caution regarding this aged Ruth, I felt I was getting nervous to hear his news.

I found him in his sitting-room, or study—a long, low apartment with small, deep windows like embrasures in the outer adobe wall, but glazed in lightly upon the veranda. He was sitting quite abstractedly, with a pen in his hand, before a table on which a number of sealed envelops were lying. He looked so formal and methodical for Enriquez!

"You like the old casa, Pancho?" he said, in reply to my praise of its studious and monastic gloom. "Well, my leetle brother, some day that is fair—who knows?—it may be at your *disposicion*; not of our politeness, but of a truth, friend Pancho. For if I leave it to my wife"—it was the first time he had spoken of her—"for my leetle child," he added quickly, "I shall put in a bond—an *obligacion*—that my friend Pancho shall come and go as he will."

"The Saltillos are a long-lived race," I laughed. "I shall be a gray-haired man, with a house and family of my own, by that time." But I did not like the way he had spoken.

"*Quien sabe?*" he only said, dismissing the question with the national gesture. After a moment he added: "I shall tell you something that is strange—so strange that you shall say, like the banker say, 'Thees Enriquez he ees off his head; he ees a crank—a *lunatico*'; but it ees a *fact*—believe me, I have said!"

He rose, and going to the end of the room, opened a door. It showed a pretty little room, femininely arranged in Mrs. Saltillo's refined taste. "Eet is pretty; eet is the room of my wife. *Bueno!* attend me now." He closed the door, and walked back to the table. "I have sit here and write when the earthquake arrive. I have feel the shock—the grind of the walls on themselves—the tremor—the stagger—and—that—door—he swing open!"

"The door?" I said, with a smile that I felt was ghastly.

"Comprehend me," he said quickly; "it ees not *that* which ees strange. The wall lift, the lock slip, the door he fell open—it is frequent; it comes so ever when the earthquake come. But eet is not my wife's room I see; it is *another room*—a room I know not! My wife Urania, she stand there, of a fear, of a tremble; she grasp—she cling to some one. The earth shake again; the door shut. I jump from my table; I shake and tumble to the door. I fling him open. *Maravilloso!* it is the room of my wife again. She is *not* there—it is empty—it is nothing!"

I felt myself turning hot and cold by turns. I was horrified, and—and I blundered. "And who was the other figure?" I gasped.

"Who?" repeated Enriquez, with a pause, a fixed look at me, and a sublime gesture. "Who *should* it be—but myself—Enriquez Saltillo?"

A terrible premonition that this was a chivalrous *lie*—that it was *not* himself he had seen, but that our two visions were identical—came upon me. "After all," I said, with a fixed smile, "if you could imagine you saw your wife, you could easily imagine you saw yourself too. In the shock of the moment you thought of *her* naturally, for then she would as naturally seek your protection. You have written for news of her?"

"No," said Enriquez, quietly.

"No?" I repeated amazedly.

"You understand, Pancho! Eef it was the trick of my eyes, why should I affright her for the thing that is not? If it is the truth, and it arrive to *me*, as a warning, why shall I affright her before it come?"

"Before *what* comes? What is it a warning of?" I asked impetuously.

"That we shall be separated! That *I* go, and she do not."

To my surprise, his dancing eyes had a slight film over them. "I don't understand you," I said awkwardly.

"Your head is not of a level, my Pancho. These earthquake he remain for only ten seconds, and he fling open the door. If he remain for twenty seconds, he fling open the wall, the house toomble, and your friend Enriquez is feenish!"

"Nonsense!" I said. "Professor—I mean the geologists—say that the center of disturbance of these Californian earthquakes is some far-away point in the Pacific, and there never will be any serious convulsions here."

"Ah, the geologist," said Enriquez, gravely, "understand the hoss that rear in the mine, and the five thousand dollar,—believe me,—no more. He haf lif here three year. My family have lif here three hundred! My grandfather saw the earth swallow the Church of San Juan Bautista."

I laughed—until, looking up, I was shocked to see for the first time that his dancing eyes were moist and shining. But almost instantly he jumped up, and declared that I had not seen the garden and the corral, and, linking his arm in mine, swept me like a whirlwind into the patio. For an hour or two he was in his old invincible spirits. I was glad I had said nothing of my visit to Carquinez Springs and of seeing his wife; I determined to avoid it as long as possible; and as he did not again refer to her, except in the past, it was not difficult. At last he infected me with his own extravagance, and for a while I forgot even the strangeness of his conduct and his confidences. We walked and talked together as of old. I understood and enjoyed him perfectly, and it was not strange that in the end I began to believe that his strange revelation was a bit of his extravagant acting, gotten up to amuse me. The coincidence of his story with my own experience was not, after all, such a wonderful thing, considering what must have been the nervous and mental disturbance produced by the earthquake. We dined together, attended only by Pedro, an old half-caste body-servant. It was easy to see that the household was carried on economically, and, from a word or two casually dropped by Enriquez, it appeared that the rancho and a small sum of money were all that he retained from his former fortune when he left the El Bolero. The stock he kept intact, refusing to take the dividend

upon it, until that collapse of the company should occur which he confidently predicted, when he would make good the swindled stock-holders. I had no reason to doubt his perfect good faith in this.

The next morning we were up early for a breezy gallop over the three square miles of Enriquez's estate. I was astounded, when I descended to the patio, to find Enriquez already mounted, and carrying before him, astride of the horn of his saddle, a small child—the identical papoose of my memorable first visit! But the boy was no longer swathed and bandaged, although, for security, his plump little body was engirt by the same sash that encircled his father's own waist. I felt a stirring of self-reproach; I had forgotten all about him! To my suggestion that the exercise might be fatiguing to him, Enriquez shrugged his shoulders:

"Believe me, no! He is ever with me when I go on the *pasear*. He is not too yonge. For he shall learn 'to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth,' even as the Persian chile. Eet ees all I can gif to him."

Nevertheless, I think the boy enjoyed it, and I knew he was safe with such an accomplished horseman as his father. Indeed, it was a fine sight to see them both careering over the broad plain, Enriquez with jingling spurs and whirling *reata*, the boy with a face as composed as his father's, and his tiny hand grasping the end of the flapping rein with a touch scarcely lighter than the skilful rider's own. It was a lovely morning; though warm and still, there was a faint haze—a rare thing in that climate—on the distant range. The sun-baked soil, arid and thirsty from the long summer drought, and cracked into long fissures, broke into puffs of dust, with a slight detonation like a pistol-shot, at each stroke of our pounding hoofs. Suddenly my horse swerved in full gallop, almost lost his footing, "broke," and halted with braced fore feet, trembling in every limb. I heard a shout from Enriquez at the same instant, and saw that he too had halted about a hundred paces from me, with his hand uplifted in warning, and between us a long chasm in the dry earth, extending across the whole field. But the trembling of the horse continued until it communicated itself to me. I was shaking too, and, looking about for the cause, I beheld the most weird and remarkable spectacle I had ever witnessed. The whole *llano*, or plain, stretching to the horizon-line, was *distinctly undulating!* The faint haze of the hills was repeated over its surface, as if a dust had arisen from some grind-

ing displacement of the soil. I threw myself from my horse, but the next moment was fain to cling to him, as I felt the thrill under my very feet. Then there was a pause, and I lifted my head to look for Enriquez. He was nowhere to be seen! With a terrible recollection of the fissure that had yawned between us, I sprang to the saddle again, and spurred the frightened beast toward that point. *But it was gone, too!* I rode backward and forward repeatedly along the line where I had seen it only a moment before. The plain lay compact and uninterrupted, without a crack or fissure. The dusty haze that had arisen had passed as mysteriously away; the clear outline of the valley returned; the great field was empty!

Presently I was aware of the sound of galloping hoofs. I remembered then—what I had at first forgotten—that a few moments before we had crossed an *arroyo*, or dried bed of a stream, depressed below the level of the field. How foolish that I had not remembered! He had evidently sought that refuge; there were his returning hoofs. I galloped toward it, but only to meet a fright-

ened *vaquero*, who had taken that avenue of escape to the rancho.

"Did you see Don Enriquez?" I asked impatiently.

I saw that the man's terror was extreme, and his eyes were staring in their sockets. He hastily crossed himself:

"Ah, God, yes!"

"Where is he?" I demanded.

"Gone!"

"Where?"

He looked at me with staring, vacant eyes, and, pointing to the ground, said in Spanish: "He has returned to the land of his fathers!"

Neither he nor his innocent burden was ever seen again of men. Whether he had been engulfed by mischance, or had fulfilled his own prophecy by deliberately erasing himself for some purpose known only to himself, I never knew.

Yet the widow of Enriquez did *not* marry Professor Dobbs. But she too disappeared from California, and years afterward I was told that she was well known to the ingenious Parisians as the usual wealthy widow "from South America."



GALLOPS.

BY DAVID GRAY.

CARTY CARTERET'S SISTER.

"ELEANOR," said Miss Carteret, "I'd like a trap at half-past eleven. Mr. Bennings and I want to drive over to Captain Forbes's. And you'll come?" she added to Willie Colfax.

He nodded affably, and helped himself to marmalade. Mr. Bennings looked annoyed.

"We're going to buy horses," she continued. "That is, I'm going to buy *one*. Mr. Bennings, I believe, is going to buy a drove."

Mr. Bennings raised his hand in deprecation.

"Aw—I say, not a lot; just a few likely ones," he remarked.

"Polly Carteret," said Mrs. Braybrooke, "you're an extravagant goose! What in the world will you do with a horse?"

"I shall give him sugar," Miss Carteret replied. "That will be one thing."

Mr. James Braybrooke stared at her, gathered up the sporting pages of the newspaper, and left the table.

"You're impossible!" said Mrs. Braybrooke. She went to the window, and looked out. The Braybrookes' breakfast-room com-