

"*Como así!* Just so!" replied the other, with a wave of the hand. "I'm not all here, as the cannoneer observed when his pieces were scattered over a thousand yards by the explosion of his gun. But there is enough of me for the purpose, señor, for I am a cook, — a *cantínero*. I seek not to enlist, but the privilege of filling a moderate space aboard thy brigantine with myself, my helper, called Pedrillo, and such stores and gear as will fit a canteen."

"Draw up a chair," said Cristoval, pleased with the cook's manner. "We will consider it. Thy name?"

"Pedro."

"So I heard thee called by the halberdier."

"Ah! — the rest of my name? H'm! Why, I'll tell thee, señor, I have not always been a cook — and — pardon me —"

"I see," said Cristoval, with delicacy. "*No importa*. We'll let it go. Thou'rt Pedro."

Pedro bowed. After some conversation the arrangement was made. "Now," said Cristoval, "there are three or four of us from the ship quartered together, and we need a cook. There is Ruiz, the pilot; José, the principal armorer; and I look for De Soto from *Nombre de Dios*. He is to command when we sail. Couldst take charge of the *rancho* whilst we remain in Panama? Couldst begin at once? Good! Then 't is agreed. I've taken the inn kept by Señora Bolio for quarters for the company, but her cooks are all Indios and worthless, and — What aileth thee, man?"

At the señora's name Pedro opened his mouth, pushed back his chair, and sat looking at the cavalier in manifest disquiet. "Bolio!" he whispered. "Bolio! Dost know her, *Señor Teniente*?"

"No. What of her?" demanded Cristoval, remembering that certain of his recruits had heard her