

theless.' But dost require more legs in thy recruits, halberdier? If so, it must be a running game, this campaigning in Peru."

"*Bastante!*" growled the soldier. "Thou hast legs enough, and tongue enough, God wot!"

"Good! Then I'll enter. Who is the officer?"

"Lieutenant Cristova! de Peralta."

"I've heard of him," said Pedro, and stumped into the room. Cristoval looked up, to behold a man ten years his senior, slightly corpulent, with a full round face, now reddened by the heat and exertion of riding, which he mopped vigorously as he advanced with sombrero under his arm. Smooth-shaven, somewhat bald, and with gray hair closely cropped, there was a suggestion of the priest or monk in his countenance, further aided by the genial benignancy of his expression. A frock would, indeed, have made him the most jovial-looking of ecclesiastics, and his well-fed and comfortable appearance would have helped the disguise. A large mouth, a nose formidable but well shaped, and eyes with ever a lurking twinkle, made up a face to be warmed to at first glimpse. The precision of his salute left no doubt in Cristoval's mind that the missing leg had been lost on the battle-field, and he surveyed the man with interest.

"Let me not interrupt, *Señor Teniente*," said Pedro. "I am in no hurry."

"I have finished," replied Cristoval. "How can I serve thee?"

"Thou'rt recruiting for Pizarro?"

Cristoval nodded, thinking of the rabble already enrolled that day, and wondering whether this one-legged veteran purposed offering himself.

"*Bien!*" said Pedro. "I would join the expedition."

"But thou'rt maimed, *compadre!*"