

I laughed at
 skinned, dark-
 me, but bade
 to the lovely
 ated, yet was
 here, the little
 of the oppor-
 , John Ashley
 for a moment
 necessary re-
 led me to sus-
 fore me. Yet
 rements of the
 among the differ-
 known to me,
 ge I had cele-
 the tribes of
 rove to assure
 ge to be, — con-
 ly against the
 nguage unintel-
 were probably
 and man might
 iles of the law
 ease; a voice
 ame but to wit-
 un years, years
 my fatal error.
 o God in pen-
 ne Holy Father
 marriage. Doña
 eed, shall give
 ous love!"
 wiped away his
 d to Herlinda.
 But daughter,
 paper? That,
 declared your
 have thought of
 I thought it was
 treasure it as my

life; that was why I sewed it in the reliquary I placed about my baby's neck."

With a cry Chata drew forth the tiny bag, almost the counterpart of that poor Chinita had worn, and the sight of which had confirmed the mistake of Pedro, — on such slight things hangs fate! She thought of how often she and Chinita had compared them when children, laughingly proposing to exchange or open them, yet ever shrinking from tampering with them in superstitious awe. Pedro, who had returned, snatched it from her hand, — the act irresistible. As he opened it with his dagger's point, a filigree earring fell into his palm. He groaned and turned away.

Herlinda caught from his hand a tattered paper. "Read, read!" she cried to Ashley. "See that he was noble, true as you have said! He was my husband!"

The proof attested by the signature of the long dead Mademoiselle La Croix, and that of the living priest, was of the simplest, the most efficient, and all these years had been preserved by the piety or superstition of the child to whom it had been confided, and who, had she but known it, had so vital an interest in its discovery. Chata gazed at the paper in blank amaze. Around her were men and women giving thanks to God and his saints. At the knees of Herlinda was her uncle Leon Vallé and Doña Isabel her mother.

Ashley Ward was the first to break the spell. He took Herlinda's hand. "Remember, here is a man who never doubted you," he said.

"And here one who would have died for you!" said Gonzales.

In a single phrase each had expressed the loyalty of the nation he represented, — Ashley, that of faith in man's honor and woman's chastity; Gonzales, the tenacious love that distrust might change to jealous madness, but which it could never destroy.

Within a few hours a sad and solemn funeral cortége set forth from Las Parras, bearing all that was mortal of the beautiful Chinita. Not far from the limits of the town Ashley and Gonzales came upon a startling and awful sight, — a woman lay dead upon the road, her garments