

ican told me that here his love was staying. I laughed at him for fixing his heart upon some brown-skinned, dark-eyed peasant girl. He did not contradict me, but bade me be ready in the early morning to wed him to the lovely object of his youthful passion. I remonstrated, yet was glad to serve him. Though no priest lived here, the little church was open; the people were glad of the opportunity to hear Mass. Just before it began, John Ashley and Herlinda Garcia were married. As she for a moment loosened the reboso she wore to make the necessary responses, I caught a glimpse of a face that led me to suspect it was no simple peasant who stood before me. Yet it was only in after years, when the requirements of the law and the customs unalterable as law among the different castes existing in your land became known to me, that I remembered with disquiet the marriage I had celebrated here. I was a missionary among the tribes of Northern Indians, doing good work. I strove to assure myself that, irregular as I knew the marriage to be, — contracted in secret, unknown to and probably against the consent of the young girl's parents, in a language unintelligible to the few witnesses, — the parties were probably living in amity, satisfied, as surely God and man might be, with a marriage which only the quibbles of the law made disputable. Yet I could not be at ease; a voice seemed calling me hither. Alas, alas! I came but to witness the consummation of the tragedy begun years, years ago, — a tragedy, the direct outcome of my fatal error. But I will atone. I will go — would to God in penance it might be upon my knees — to the Holy Father in Rome, and pray him to ratify the marriage. Doña Herlinda Garcia, pure in name as in deed, shall give a spotless name to the child of her virtuous love!"

The old monk ceased; tremblingly he wiped away his tears. "Pardon, pardon!" he murmured to Herlinda. "Oh my daughter, how you have suffered! But daughter, the certificate I gave, — had you not the paper? That, however subject to cavil, would have declared your purity."

"Ah, a paper!" cried Herlinda. "I have thought of it a thousand times. It was in English. I thought it was a blessed prayer, though John told me to treasure it as my