

"I can't help you, ma'am," he replied; "a very expensive journey to the City of Mexico. Your son will be released by and by on exchange of prisoners."

"Sir," said the widow, as the tears of woe rolled down her cheek, "can you not help me to get a passport?"

"Of course," he replied, "that will be granted to you at the Secretary of State's office; but you are poor—how do you expect to pay the expenses of such a journey? It is a visionary scheme. Good morning, ma'am."

"Sir," said the lady, "will you be so kind as to recommend me to the officer in command of the regiment that will sail from Baltimore in a few days?"

"Impossible, ma'am, impossible," he replied. Then turning to the page, he said, "who did you say was waiting for an audience? Tell them, I am at leisure, now."

"Sir," said the lady, "I have one more question to ask you before I leave your office, and I pray you answer it—are you a Mason?"

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.

"Then, sir," she said, "permit me to say I am a Mason's widow—with this declaration I leave your office."

That moment the Secretary's manner was changed to that of the most courteous interest.

He entreated her to be seated until he could write a few lines to the Secretary of State. In a few moments he presented her with a note to the Secretary, recommending her to his sympathy and friendship. The Secretary of State received her most kindly, and gave her a letter to the commandant at New Orleans directing him to procure her a free pass to Vera Cruz by the first steamer. Through the agency of the two Secretaries the lodges placed in her hands three hundred dollars, with a talismanic card from the Grand Master at Washington, and the widow left the city.

When she reached Pittsburg the State agent, seeing the letter she

bore from the Grand Master, would receive nothing for her passage—the Captain of the steamer on which she embarked for New Orleans no sooner deciphered it than he gave her the best state-room he had, and when she reached the Crescent City, she had two hundred and ninety dollars left of her three hundred. She there waited on the General in command of the station, with the letter of Secretary of State, who immediately instructed the Colonel in command of the forwarding troops to see that she had a free passage to Vera Cruz by the first steamer. By all the officers she was treated with the greatest politeness and delicacy, for they were all Masons and felt bound to her by ties as strong and delicate as those which bind a brother to a sister, and rejoiced in the opportunity offered them of evincing the benign and noble principles of the craft.

After a passage of five days she reached Vera Cruz, and, having a letter from the commandant at New Orleans to the American Governor, she sent it to him, enclosing the talismanic card she received from the Grand Master at Washington. The Governor immediately waited on her at the hotel and offered her transportation to the City of Mexico by a train that would start the next morning. The Colonel who commanded the train kindly took her in charge, and offered her every facility and comfort on her journey, provided her with a carriage where the country was level, and with mules and planquins over the mountains.

Within ninety miles of the city, they were overtaken by a detachment of dragoons escorting a government official to the General in command. Anxious to get on faster, she asked permission of the Colonel to join the detachment, and, though informed of the *langor and fatigue of riding* all day on horseback, she was willing to brave all, that she might sooner see her son. The Colonel then provided her with a fleet and gentle Mexican