

"Now Carlos," said I, turning to him as the door closed and I had sent for the single trustworthy servant of the establishment—a Belgian who had lived many years in English households,—“I am not going to notice the insolence of the little speech you have made to your old friend. I have no interest in the President or any of his people excepting one, and him you are about to help me in saving. The Celadores, as you know very well, hold the place and are devoted to Perez. One of their officers is my good friend, and is your brother mason, and I do not mean quietly to see him shut into a trap that can never open for him alive. I am going to send for this man, who is not a Peruvian nor even an American, and with your assistance will keep him here until the trouble is over. Will you help me, or must I look elsewhere?”

“Then, gentlemen, I made that solemn appeal that I trust none of you may ever have to use, but that I am sure that none of you can ever use in vain. On the mystic points of Fellowship with which each of you is acquainted, I implored him to save his brother whose life was in his hands. I know how hard the struggle went, for I know how thoroughly Calzado and every leader of his party detested the mercenary forces of the government, and how they had devoted them to retribution for the “massacres” of some weeks before. But, Peruvian as he was, he answered boldly and like a mason, although he would not confess how hard it had been to yield:

“Help you, my friend! Certainly; and with the greatest pleasure. For yourself to say nothing of our obligations. One Celador more or less is nothing to us; and if he is a good mason he'll be glad to find good government. But they are stubborn dogs, these fellows, and perhaps he will not be disposed to do as we bid him. He will want to be back among his comrades. They have *esprit de corps* to stock a brigade.”

“Precisely, and this makes the difficulty. My man is not the likeliest in the world to desert either his post or his fellows in time of danger. He may not even come, but, once here, he must not be allowed to return. You understand?”

“Exactly. We will try what amateur gaolers can do against professionals. Will he drink?”

“Like an albicore; but there is not enough liquor in the house to send him under the table. We musn't trust to that.”

“Never mind,” said Calzado easily, “we'll manage it I dare say. Send off at once and get it over.”

As I was despatching my note briefly requesting the Celador to call to my rooms without delay, and my messenger, having received strict injunction to make no mention of any stranger's presence with me, was turning to leave the room, the Limeno called him back.

“Stay!” said he, “you will perhaps want the countersign. They are cautious to-day and have carefully locked up the empty stable. It is *Junta*. Don't forget and don't be long.”

He smiled in reply to my involuntary look of admiration. “Oh yes,” said he; “we know all about their affairs—better than they do themselves sometimes. He'll bring the man you'll find.”

And he went rattling on of the coming opera season, of our old horse-racing at Bella Vista, or of

the summer's *tortullias* at Chorillos, as if we were not living in a state of siege and absolutely on the eve of a great politician convulsion. This man I had known for months previously to be preoccupied, grave, and self-contained almost to moroseness. In the condition of nervousness into which the morning's excitement had thrown me, enfeebled from illness, there was something terrible in the flux of his natural gaiety—it told so plainly of the imminence of the catastrophe. For I had known Carlos Calzado long enough to be sure that the cares which had weighed upon him had not been dismissed while aught remained yet to do, or while the minutest preparation was left uncompleted. But though I could recognize their tone, the words were themselves little more than empty sound buzzing painfully in my ears all through those awful ten minutes, that might have been ten hours, while we sat waiting for the Footstep on the stairs. Thank Heaven! it came at last: rapidly and with the jingle of full accoutrement.

Galway entered hastily, but started back at seeing with me so prominent a revolutionist, whose presence at large in the city at that moment was a marvel most characteristic of the inscrutable policies of Peruvian governments, and drew himself up stiffly as though waiting to know my wishes.

My heart was beating painfully and I spoke with difficulty. “Sit down, Senor Galvez” I said, signing to him to take no notice of the presence of the other. “I will not detain you many moments as you seem busy. Carlos, let me trouble you to touch the bell beside you; they never dream of refilling that liqueur case.”

Calzado leaning over rang impatiently. After a moment's listening he sprang up with an exclamation.

“*Caramba!* it is too bad! They want people to wait on themselves here. Don't you move. I will go and blow up old Morin himself until I bring him to some sense of propriety. See if you are not better served after to-day!” And he swaggered noisily out, swinging the door to with a bang. I turned to Galway.

“He will go in a few minutes and I *must* talk to you. Wait until he is off and I will tell you everything.”

My only object now was to gain time. I was incapable of all plan and trusted everything to my ally. The Celador was palpably uneasy and impatient, and seemed little inclined to fall in with my wishes as he answered.

“But, I am really so much occupied, and I cannot be long absent. I can come again, but now”

“No!” said I vehemently, catching at his arm as he rose, and forcing him back into his chair; I can't let you go without having your advice and help. I am in a most awkward situation and you must get me out of it. You can if anyone. You know that the United States commodore comes here a great deal. Well, last evening at a whist party but hush! here he comes, and I would not for the world let him know anything. Wait until he goes. I will give him his *conge* directly.

It was in fact Carlos who entered simultaneously with the absinthe, and providentially cut short the thread of romance that I found such difficulty in weaving. “Couldn't find the old fellow after all,” said he laughingly, “but it will be all the worse for