

THE CRAFTSMAN, HAMILTON, 15th NOVEMBER, 1868.

THE LAST OF THE CELADORES.

FOR THE CRAFTSMAN.

"That was a pretty story of yours, Burton," said the Colonel, thoughtfully lighting a fresh Havannah, as we all sat round the fire in my rooms at Cruise's. "The story of Brother Marioncourt, I mean, that you told us just before we came away. I was wondering what the toast meant even in the act of drinking it."

"Oh," said the Master, "that's an old legend of No. 13. I thought you would have known it though. You have dined with us before now."

"You forget how long ago," he answered. "And if I heard it then, I have excuse enough for having forgotten it long since. England is newer and stranger to me to-day than twenty years ago!"

Colonel Wright had been a guest at our lodge dinner of that evening, among many others, on whose behalf he had responded when we pledged the health of our visitors. He had been introduced by Burton, and had filled the post of honor next the chair, I myself—a youngster then—sitting lower down on the other side. There had been a whisper down the table that he was a Prince Mason, and had lived in almost every corner of the world, and seen some strange adventures in his time. His speech was at once so dignified and so modest, and his whole manner was so singularly attractive, that I gladly availed myself of the opportunity which a few words addressed to me half an hour later seemed to offer, and, crossing to a vacant seat beside him, opened a conversation, which only terminated in his promising to come over to my quarters for sherry and seltzer, if the Master, who was his host, would permit his doing so before they left town for home. Some of the others were easily prevailed upon to join, and we had quite a party gathered when the words which I have quoted were spoken.

I broke in on their answer. "But for you, Colonel, a tale such as that can have nothing extraordinary. If half the adventures of which they make you the hero be true, our solitary record is little more than common-place. Though I remember how it impressed me when I first heard it, and how my Entered Apprentice enthusiasm panted some day to rival it."

"And it did well, my boy," said he kindly. "Such stories are told none too often, nor do they grow ordinary or common-place to the oldest of us. I have been a mason for a great many years, and have proved masonry in a great many lands, and yet this tradition of yours, as Burton gave it, touched me like a youngster. It is a good one to remember always."

There was a long silence, only broken by the gurgle of the seltzer. Suddenly the Master spoke:

"We have to wait for the moon, Wright. Tell the lads one of your own adventures, round the Horn or anywhere."

There was a full chorus of support, while I stirred the fire and rang for more sherry. Our guest thought for a minute or two before he answered. Then he looked up, and his face was very grave.

"If I had not been a mason, I should not be

alive to-night," he said slowly and almost dreamily. "My masonry saved me through that affair at Rangariri in the last New Zealand war, when poor Leslie of the 65th was murdered by my side. I was in the North Adelaide Lodge," he went on in the same absent tone, "when John MacDougall Stuart, who, poor fellow, is dead and gone since, was introduced to tell us that he had arrived within the hour from Carpentaria, and that he never would have arrived at all, but for the lessons he had learned in that room. As it was, he left three of his best men dead, and had to turn back almost from the sea. But as you said round the Horn, Burton, we'll go back there, and I'll tell you of something that occurred to me not so long ago, and of a certain trifling service which I was enabled to render to a brother in his need. It is one of which it would not be pleasant to speak often, but I am sure that there is no gentleman here who will not acquit me of narrating it now from any desire of making out myself a hero. If I had had it in my power to do ten times what I have, it would not have one tenth repaid my obligation to the Order."

There was no need for any of us there to assure him that he ran no risk of being accounted vain-glorious among us. So he told us, without other hesitation, in his own grand simple fashion, the story from which this paper takes its name, and which I reproduce in my clumsy style, not without serious misgiving that I spoil it in the recital.

During one of the many revolutions in Peru, (he began), I need not specify which—I was a resident in Lima, endeavoring to recover in trade part of the fortune I had lost in idleness. Like all other foreigners I took little interest in the political drama being enacted around us, confident that history would as usual repeat itself, and that but little bloodshed would result from any of the great strategic movements of which inflated rumours reached us daily. It was to us of no concern whose fleet held possession of the Chinchas so long as our countrymen were permitted to purchase at fair price what guano they desired, nor did we greatly care to whom the guard presented arms at the Palace while our shops had to be attended to and were doing trade briskly. It was of course to be regretted that so many of our country customers should be kept away from town by the disturbances common to all the provinces, and that our native servants should be pressed into the ranks of the army as surely as they ventured abroad after night fall, but these were drawbacks of certain periodical occurrence under any regime whatever, to be accepted as philosophically as the mosquitoes or the damp season, and for the rest we contented ourselves with raising our tariff to the buyers who remained, and with taking care that the lads remained within doors through the darkness. The ultimate collision which was to establish or upset the government, we looked forward to much in the same way as the Earthquake, whose nightly apprehension lays *manta* and *saya* conveniently at the bedside of each Limena, but interferes by no means with her repose. We knew that, some day or other, we should have to put up our shutters and lock our tills while the belligerents were having it out before our eyes, but until then we were contented to plod along as usual, and gave ourselves scant concern as to the progress of the war.