

descended the stairs and went out into the street, muttering to himself and giving signs of a badly suppressed rage.

"The wretches! Thus to betray the confidence of an honest man; and it was for this that she was so anxious to get me away. Well it was that I returned, urged by a strange presentiment; for at last I have witnessed and heard all that was needed to come to a final determination. Ah! the hour of my terrible revenge has at length arrived!"

Thus saying, he glanced ominously at the house he had just left, and slowly wended his way up the street.

Presently he arrived at the corner, turned it, and . . . *exit* Perico!

VI.

Four days after this episode, some fishermen were giving their testimony before the local magistrate, in connection with a horrible tragedy which had taken place the night before.

Here are the particulars:

They had already retired into their huts, situated on the sea-shore, when they heard several shots followed by piercing shrieks, like those of a person seriously wounded. Desirous of lending their assistance to the poor fellow, they hurried to the scene of the tragedy where they only found a hat, a coat, a pair of pistols bearing the name of Perico, and a long track of blood recently shed. Not a soul was to be found in all the neighborhood. They instituted a search for the wounded man, following up the direction of the bloody trail, but this, going over some abrupt reefs, was finally lost in the ocean.

It was then evident—according to the fishermen—that a crime had been committed in that locality, the victim of which had been thrown into the sea.

A letter, written by Perico, and addressed to Catalina, which had been found in the pocket of his coat, confirmed the opinion of the witnesses.

In it was stated that in consequence of a question of honor, he was to fight a mortal duel with a dexterous and formidable adversary, adding that the receipt of the letter would be conclusive evidence that he had been killed and thrown into the sea, for such were the conditions of the encounter.

But this was not the most original feature in the case.

Together with the letter was found Perico's testament, extended in due form, in which, after praising Catalina in the most glowing terms, he appointed her absolute heiress to his estate.

The happy widow, as is to be supposed, shed the conventional crocodile tears, that such liberality was expected to elicit, and it is even averred that she ordered some masses to be said for the repose of Perico's soul.

VII.

The moment Juan, Catalina's lover, heard of the demise and testament of Perico, he exultantly said to himself.

"Now I shall wed her and reckon that I have won the big prize in the lottery. I have always felt that I was born to roll in riches."

No sooner said than done. Juan married Catalina.

But once in possession of the titles and prerogatives of a husband, all the poetry that as a lover had surrounded him in the eye of his perverse and fickle consort, vanished like a bank cashier. The unfortunate man soon awoke to the dreadful reality, and gradually dropped into the unenviable place left him by Perico.

The wedding was followed by the squabbles, scratches, slaps, bites, and other lively connubial entertainments so dear to Catalina's soul.

There were, moreover, aggravating circumstances which boded serious consequences. Unlike Perico, Juan had a terrible temper, which at times would impel him to acts of violence.

Evidently Catalina had, for the nonce, encountered her match—

"This man is not like Perico," she would say, "but I'll fetch him."

"This woman is a perfect cataamount," he would say, "I must tame her."

And the thrashings became reciprocal, assuming apace an alarmingly tragic character.

Stubborn he, and she inexorable, in the war for the mastery over each other, neither would yield, and the storm thus raged more furiously every day.

At last the crisis was reached. Juan, in a fit of passion and desperation, tied a rope round his neck, and died cursing his wife, not, however, without first giving her such a drubbing as she had never received before.

Shortly after this, Catalina also gave up the ghost, being unable to survive her beloved husband's parting caresses.

CHAPTER VIII.

The local magistrate was still engaged in investigating the causes which had led to the death of Juan and Catalina, when a gentleman of good appearance presented himself before him desirous of identifying his person. He exhibited for the purpose a pass which read as follows:

"Mr. Perico Pata de Gallo, native and resident of . . . &c., &c." . . .

And at the margin was a description of the owner of the pass, which tallied in every respect with that of Perico.

"But, my good Sir, are you not dead?"—exclaimed the magistrate, aghast at the sight of what he believed an apparition.

"I . . . yes, sir . . . that is to say; . . . Allow me to explain."

And forthwith Perico gave a more or less plausible account of how he had succeeded in saving himself from the "vasty deep," thanks to a foreign vessel which had picked him up, landing him afterwards in a distant country, whence he had just returned.

But, sooth to say, nothing of the sort had happened.

All about the duel, shots, letter and will, had only been a stratagem ably concocted by Perico, for the purpose of attaining a twofold object.

First: To deliver himself from the iron clutches of his wife.

Second: To make her appear as free and wealthy in the eye of her covetous lover, so that he might fall, as he did, in the trap.

Knowing full well the temper of both, especially Catalina's, he had foreseen the tragic end which could not but follow.

He, therefore, simply left them to themselves, and they did the rest.

And this was Perico's terrible revenge.

He recovered his large possessions, and now once more enjoys a happy, free and independant life, with all the other advantages detailed at the beginning of this narrative.

FRANCIS J. AMY.

Halifax, N. S., 18th Nov., 1890.

OUR CIVIL SERVANTS.

DOCTOR (*to Government Clerk*).—Well, what do you complain of?

CLERK.—Sleeplessness, doctor!

DOCTOR.—At what time do you go to bed?

CLERK.—Oh! I don't mean at night, but during office hours!

MOTHER.—Well Tommy, how do you like your new governess?

TOMMY.—Oh, very well; but papa doesn't, 'cause yesterday he pinched her cheek, and must have hurt her!

SHARP BUSINESS.

A nobleman was deeply in love with a lady. He met her one evening at a crowded ball, and as he could not get an opportunity of talking with her in order to propose he contrived to slip into her hand a piece of paper, with the two words written upon it:—

"Will you?"

The reply was equally brief:—

"Won't I!"