

# THE ERIE OBSERVER.

"THE WORLD IS GOVERNED TOO MUCH."

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Written for the Erie Observer.  
**CERRO GORDO.**

**BY ARCHYTRAL.**

How weary the fallen brave—  
Sleep in peace the heroes now—  
Best they in their mountain grave,  
High on Cerro Gordo's brow!  
A nobler grave was never made,  
A braver band was never led,  
To take their last—ah! long repose,  
Amid the groans of dying foes!

Soldiers! rest that no base foe  
Tread on where they rest,  
And ye winds, oh, gently blow  
When you sweep across their breast,  
Oh, breathe your sweetest incense there,  
And let the night-cold's dewy tear  
In peatly drops, at silent eve,  
Enrich the heroes' hallowed grave.

Long shall fall a nation's tear  
To their memory, who now  
Rest in lonely slumber there,  
On the mountain's clouded brow;  
With sadness on the brave who fell,  
And long the land, in stirring verse,  
Their valor and their deeds rehearse.

**SCENES FROM MEXICAN LIFE.**

Translated from the Franco American for the Albany Argus, by W. G. B.

**PERICO EL ZARAGATE.**

**PART III.—THE VILLAGE.**

The gathering into which Perico had introduced me presented a most singular spectacle. Some score or more of men and women of the lower class of people, were crowded together talking, shouting and gesticulating. A fetid corpse-like odor, mingled with cigar smoke, and the fumes of Xeres wine, and of Chingurito (a sort of brandy made from sugar cane), filled the room.

In the corner of the apartment, was a table covered with provisions of every kind, and cups, bottles and flagons. At a table near by were gathered some gamblers, who were mingling with the clashing of their brass money, all the technicalities of the Monte, and disputing with a warmth heightened by the liquor, over piles of *cuartillas* and *hacocs* (Mexican coins of the smallest value.) Under the triple inspiration of the wine, the women and the game, the orgies, which I had so surprised in its first stage, began rapidly to increase in fury and excitement. But that which struck me most, was precisely that which seemed to occupy the assassin's least. A young child, who apparently had scarce attained the age of seven years, was extended upon a table. Her pale face, covered with flowers, withered by the almost insupportable and stifling heat of the atmosphere, and livid emaciated lips, evinced that life had departed from her, and that she had been dead some time.

Amid all this shouting, laughing, and gambling, this noisy conversation, these men and women who acted like so many savages, this little corpse had an appearance most strange and mournful. The flowers and other decorations with which they had covered the corpse, so far from detracting from its mournful repulsiveness, only served to render it still more hideous. Such was the asylum to which I had been led, through the ingenious solicitude of Perico.

A general silence followed our entrance into the room. A man I at once recognized as the master of the house, and as the father of the dead infant, rose to receive us. So far from seeming overburdened with grief, on the contrary he appeared radiant with contentment, and it was even with an air of pride that he pointed to the number of guests assembled to celebrate with him the death of his daughter regarding it as a favor from heaven that God had designed to re-call to himself an infant, before it had attained the age of reason. He assured us that we were welcome to his house, and that for this he should ever regard us as friends. Thanking to the loquacity of Perico, I was rendered the centre of attraction, and a most difficult part I had to sustain. Perico declared to all those who desired to know, that it was impossible to kill a man with a happier grace than I had shown. In order the better to sustain my new character, I hastened to thrust my gloves into my pockets, and to assume an air of swaggering bravado, persuaded that it was always prudent to "howl with the wolves."

"What do you think of the lodging that I have found for you," asked Perico of me, rubbing his hands, "is it not much better than the one I promised? Besides, you will have an opportunity of participating in a *velorio*. It is a resource, on the night of sorrow, for amusement and relief. Thanks to me, also, you have acquired by this claim to the eternal care of the father, whose infant having died before the age of seven is now in heaven."

And Perico, doubtless eager to secure for himself a share in this tribute of gratitude, seized without any ceremony upon an enormous jar of *Chingurito*, and emptied it at a single draught. It was the first time that I was aware of so barbarous a custom, as this, which required the father of a family, to restrain his tears and disassemble his grief under a smiling outside, and to present the honors of his house to every vagabond, who on the direction of a watchman, came to gorge himself with viands and wines in the presence of the corpse of his daughter, and to partake of those largesses, which frequently the next day gave up a whole family to misery.

By the time that the orgies were fully renewed, I had recovered sufficient of my self-possession, to cast my eyes around me. I perceived in the midst of a group of those meddling women who make it their duty never to miss one of these evenings of the dead, a pale countenance, a mouth which endeavored to smile, notwithstanding the eyes were filled with tears, and in that victim of this gross superstition, I readily recognized the mother, whose angel in heaven, did not compensate for the angel she had lost from earth. Among the gossips who were crowding around her, were those who added by the most awkward importunities to the affliction

of the poor woman. Some recounted the various phrases of the malady and the sufferings of the young deceased, while others enumerated the various infallible remedies they would have applied, had they been consulted in time; such as the plaster of St. Nicholas, the steam from a plant gathered through a piece of the frock of a Dominican; and the poor mother believing them all, turned to hide her tears, fully convinced that these remedies would have had the effect to save her child. The Xeres wine and the cigarettes were passed around during these consultations, which over, they proposed and went through with all the innocent games in vogue in Spanish America. Then some of the children, overcome with fatigue, sought repose in the corners of the room, as if they envied the sleep of her whose pale face under the withered flowers, appeared as if protesting against this odious profanation of the dead.

Retiring behind the heavy embrasure of one of the windows which looked out upon the street, I followed with anxious eyes and with much inquietude the movements of Perico. It appeared to me that he had imposed this protection upon me for the purpose of some trap. My physiognomy must have betrayed my thoughts, for the leproso approached me and said, in a sort of consolatory manner—

"Look you, señor cavalier, it is in killing a man as with many other things—the first step shoves us. And, besides, your sereno may be after all like my Englishman, who at present carries himself better than ever. These heretics have such lasting lives! Ah, Señor Cavalier," sighed Perico, "I have ever regretted that I had not been a heretic."

"To have a lasting life!" said I.

"No, but in order that I might make an adjuration. Unfortunately my reputation as a good christian is too well established."

"But the cavalier that you sought to kill," said I to Perico, "my thoughts naturally reverting to the melancholy young man, whom I had seen kneeling before the *morgue*—do you think that he still lives?"

Perico shook his head—"To-morrow perhaps his foolish passion may cost him his life, and his mistress will not survive him. As for me, I am not willing thus to strike two victims at a time; and so I have renounced this affair."

"These sentiments do you honor, Perico," said I.

Perico was willing to profit by the favorable impression which his reply had produced upon me.

"Certainly," said he; "I will not for the sake of a few dollars thus risk my soul. But *expensas* of dollars, Señor Cavalier," continued he, "and your purse is still perhaps pretty well furnished; in case I should break the bank of the *monte*, I promise to give you half of my winnings."

I did not think it prudent to meet this demand of Perico with a refusal. If he participated in the game of *monte* still going on, I would be relieved for some time from a companion, who had become very importune, and I therefore slipped a few dollars into the hand of Perico. Just at this moment a bell sounded, when one of the crowd raised himself, and exclaimed in a solemn tone,

"It is the hour of the suffering souls—let us pray."

The gamblers ceased, business or amusement of every kind was suspended, and all in the room were on their knees. The prayer was commenced in a loud tone, interrupted at intervals by the responses, and for the first time they appeared to recollect the cause of their gathering.

Those who can imagine those revellers, with their eyes deadened from intoxication, these almost naked women, gathered around a corpse decked with flowers; and rising from this kneeling crowd, the steam of a dense atmosphere, where a putrid miasma from the corpse was mingled with the fumes of the lamp, will be able to form some idea of the strange and horrible scene in which I was forced to assist.

The prayer finished, the revelling commenced anew, but with less ardor. There is always in these nocturnal meetings a moment of weariness, when the love of pleasure is struggling with a desire to sleep; but this passed over, the revel became more noisy, and assumed an aspect even of a kind of delirium and frenzy. It was the hour of the *orgie* the moment had arrived.

I had resumed my post in the embrasure of the window, and in order to escape a desire to sleep, produced by the mephitic air of the room; I had half opened the window. Looking forth, I sought to read in the stars the hour, and I strove also to bring to my recollection a clue through the labyrinth of streets I had traversed; but it was in vain; I could reach nothing in the city of Mexico like this canal with its stagnant waters, and these sombre streets. I was completely lost.

I should remain longer in the midst of these hideous orgies? Should I risk the perils of an attempt to escape, and a journey through the streets of this remote and solitary burrough? While I was considering these questions—equally embarrassing—without power to resolve them, a noise of footsteps and a confused murmuring arose, to increase my perplexity. I got behind one of the inside shutters, in such a position as to be able to see, without being seen. Some half dozen men soon appeared from one of the streets, which opened opposite the house in which I found myself. The man who marched at their head was dressed in an *esclavina*, (a sort of surcoat, or short cloak), which disclosed the scabbard of a sword; the others carried in their hands their naked blades. From their timid manner, a European just arrived, would have taken them for malefactors, but my experience did not lead me into any such mistake. Justice alone had a countenance so frightened, and I readily recognized the night patrol, comprising a *regidor*, an *alcalde*, and four *caladores*.

"*Yoto a brazo!*" said the man in the esclavina; doubtless one of those magistrates at the same time *alcalde* and tavern-keeper, who shelter these malefactors during the day for the sake of purging them at night. "What is the señor perfect thinking of in sending us to patrol in these quarters, where justice never penetrates. I wish to himself had charge of this work."

"He would have taken care to bring with him those pistols that he refused to us," said one of the band, who, of all of them, appeared the most courageous, "because these criminals and these malefactors are not in the habit of carrying like us their arms exposed, as those whom we are charged to protect may this night experience to their cost."

"Yes," said the *alcalde*, "but when they know that they are exposed to assassination at night, they remain at home."

"But there are those mad ones whom no fear will stop," replied one of the men, "but as it is said by the Evangelist, 'the man who seeks danger perishes.'"

"What hour might it be?" asked one of them.

"Four o'clock," another responded, and raising his eyes to the window where I was concealed, he continued, "I envy the life of those people who pass so gaily the night in *tertulia*. And still conversing, the *caladores* continued their march along the parapet which bordered the canal. All at once, one of them stumbled over something in the dark. At the same instant, a man raised himself up and stood before the guardian of the night.

"Who are you?" demanded the *alcalde*, in a tone of voice, which he sought to make commanding.

"What is that to you?" demanded the man, in a tone not less arrogant. "Cannot a man sleep in the streets of the city, without being subject to questioning?"

"People sleep in their houses—so far as is possible," stammered the *alcalde*, visibly intimidated.

This individual, surprised in the most flagrant act of vagabondage, here heard a shrill whistle, when pushing aside the *Alcalde*, he ran into the narrow street. To my great surprise, the *caladores*, instead of following, departed like people who feared a trap, in another direction. At the same time, a hand was placed on my shoulder; I turned around, and Perico and the host, to whom he had introduced me, were before me.

"I heard a whistle which sounded like a signal from my comrade Navajo, now off on some expedition," said Perico, approaching the window, while the host, with all the manner of a man jealous to do the honors of his which his trembling hand caused to run over. Then with the superabundant politeness peculiar to men in a state of intoxication, he said:

"They speak truly, Señor Cavalier, that you are not accustomed to the society of poor people like us; you neither play nor drink, and yet in certain cases of conscience, and in the game and the drink, are great relief. Look at me, I have expended in regaling my friends all I have and more besides, and yet I am content, although I possess not a *toaca* in the world; and now if you are willing, I will play with you for the body of my child. It is a stake" continued he with a confidential air, "which is more valuable than any other, because I can still hire it out at a good price to some amateur of the *velorio*."

"Play for the body of your child!" I exclaimed.

"And why not? it is done every day. It is not every body who is so fortunate as to have an angel in Heaven; while the body of the dear child gives good luck here below."

"I got rid as soon as I could of the importunities of a father so tender, and turned my eyes towards the street, but the sides of the canal were again silent and deserted. I could not convince myself, however, that this tranquility and silence was not only apparent, merely, for some vague noises and murmurs were heard each moment from the streets in the neighborhood of the canal. Presently I thought I heard some stealthy steps on the gravel walk. With my body resting outside of the balcony, and my ears attentive, I waited for the moment when this deep silence was to be disturbed by some cries of anguish. A renewed noise in the room recalled my attention to that direction. The *orgie* had at this moment attained its height. The *Zaragate*, surrounded by a menacing group of gamblers whose his continued good luck had rendered suspicious of his honesty of play, sought, but in vain, to preserve his olive cloak from being torn to fragments by the furious hands of his antagonists. The most opprobrious epithets were also showered upon him from all sides.

"I am a man of honor," cried Perico, "and your discourteous manners have torn to tatters one of the most beautiful cloaks that I possessed."

"Audacious thief!" cried one of the gamblers, "thy cloak had as many holes as thy conscience."

"At some other place," replied Perico, who was prudently maneuvering towards the door, "you shall account to me for this double injury. Señor Cavalier," continued he, "be my security, as I have been yours, the half of my winnings belong to you; it is an honest winning, and all that these men have said is an atrocious calumny."

I cured again my intimacy with Perico, when a strange event occurred, which gave a happy diversion to the scene, in which I was threatened to be made an actor. A man came rushing precipitately from one of the most distant corners of the apartment, and close upon his heels another with a drawn knife in his hand, followed by a woman with her hair dishevelled and screaming most vehemently.

"Will you suffer me to be assassinated?" screamed pitiously the individual who pursued; "will nobody give me a knife?"

"Leave him to me; let me open the bowels of this swindler of my honor!" shouted the outraged husband.

The women, through an *esprit de corps*, doubtless, all joined in the most lamentable cry, and threw themselves between the two adversaries, when one of the friends of the offender, placed stealthily in his hands a long knife. With this he turned intrepidly to meet the encounter of his rival. The cries of the women were redoubled, and it was indeed a most infernal confusion. The two enemies, now furious, were making the utmost exertions to separate the crowd gathered between them. Blood had begun to flow, when in the struggle among them all, the table which supported the dead child which was overturned. The body fell to the ground with a dull sound, and the flowers with which it was covered, were scattered around. A large circle opened around the corpse thus profaned—when a piercing cry arose above all the tumult, and the desolate mother threw herself upon the remains of her child, with an affecting and overwhelming solitude.

I had begun to move. I turned towards the balcony, and cast a look upon the street, to make myself certain that an escape was still possible; but on this side also, the passage was closed to me. A man approached from one of the streets which opened on the canal. Some other men were following quickly after him, brandishing their arms. This Navajo, in whom Perico had recognized a comrade, had doubtless gathered a band, and I was to see without power to succor the victim, one of those nocturnal murders which are the glory of these *leproso*. The man whom they pursued, soon reached the parapet of the quay, and backed himself against it. I could hear him distinctly cry,

"Book, you cowardly rascals, would you bring five to one?"

"Courage, *muchachos*," cried one who appeared to be the chief of the band, "there are five dollars to be gained."

That which followed, it is scarcely necessary to describe. The unequal struggle in which they were engaged lasted but a few moments, and presently a shout of fierce joy announced to me that it had terminated to the advantage of the assassins. However, the unfortunate man, so cowardly attacked, still breathing, crawled upon the bridge, where waving his broken sword, he again defied his five assailants, but it was in vain.

Again he was surrounded by these wretches, and again he fell under their blows. By the glimmering light of the lamp which burned before the "Spirits in Purgatory," I saw these five men raise a bloody body and launch it into a momentary gust. A second effort, the assassins had disappeared and so rapidly, that I asked myself if it was not the work of a bad dream, but the reality in which I was did not allow me to remain in such an error very long. A new incident occurred also, proving to me that I was wide awake. A man on horseback left the house, to which I had been conducted, through so fatal a chain of circumstances, and in the man I recognized Perico—and in the horse, the noble animal that I had procured with so much trouble from the *hacienda* de la Noria.

"Hollo!" cried I, "this is going a little too far—you are stealing my horse."

"Señor Cavalier," replied Perico, with the greatest possible sang froid, "I am taking a very able evidence which would otherwise prove very troublesome to you."

This was the farewell given me by the leproso, and the horse vigorously urged departed in a gallop. Without taking leave of the people in the room, I hastened to the pursuit of the *Zaragate*. It was too late—I could only hear his distant neighing and the clatter of his hoofs, which soon ceased altogether. I ran at all hazards into one of the dark streets that bordered on the canal. I wandered for a long time in this labyrinth without discovering a neighborhood which I knew, and day was just breaking when I found where I was. The scenes of the night had taught me prudence, and I resolved to make a formal and regular avowal of the mischance I had caused the evening before. I, therefore, resolutely directed my steps towards the *juzgado de letras*, (criminal court.) When I entered, the judge had not yet arrived, and I awaited him in the vestibule. Fatigue and want of sleep soon caused me to forget everything; and I was soon asleep on the bench. In my confused dreams, were re-enacted the scenes of which I had been a witness, when I thought I heard a dull, heavy noise around me for a moment, when all was suddenly silent again. I opened my eyes and believe I was still under the influence of the nightmare which had oppressed me. A hand-barrow covered with a bloody cloth was at my feet. A thought suggested itself to me as an instant. In my imagination, I had been recognized, and they were now with a refinement truly barbarous, about to confront me with the man whose death I had been the cause. I retired to the farthest part of the vestibule, for the sight of the bloody cloth was insupportable to me. Little by little, however, I became reassured, and taking courage, I went and raised a corner of this funeral cloth. I was at no loss in recognizing the victim. His beautiful and pale face, his forehead, marked by a long and delicate scar, had been too strongly imprinted upon my memory. The bits of marsh weeds and green slime which adhered to his face recalled to my recollection the spot where this crime had been committed. He was certainly the man whom I had seen so tenderly lamented, and whom I knew would be so tenderly lamented. I let the cloth fall upon his noble head.

A short episode terminates this long recital. Fifteen days had elapsed, and there remained to me of my nocturnal adventures only an invincible horror of all classes of the *leproso*, when I received an order to appear before an unknown (to me) *alcalde*. A man thus screened pitiously the individual who pursued; "will nobody give me a knife?"

"Señor Cavalier," said this man, "I am the *faroero* that your honor half killed, and as this accident rendered me incapable of labor for fifteen days, you will not think it ill if I ask of you an indemnity therefor."

"Certainly not," said I, sufficiently satisfied to see that I had not to reproach myself with having caused the man's death—"What do you wish?"

"Five hundred dollars, señor."

I confess that this exorbitant demand changed immediately my satisfaction to rage, and I could not refrain from wishing that I had really sent him to the devil! However, the *alcalde* having advised an agreement, I was fortunate enough to be let off for one-fifth the sum demanded by the *faroero*. Although my studies among the leproso had cost me dear, the experience which I had gained had its value, and after all I had nothing to regret, not even the dollars which had been extorted from me by my most ingenious friend Perico.

**FUNNY SCENE AT THE WEST.**

The difficulties which our policemen often meet in the prosecution of their duty abroad, and the way in which they get over some of them, is handsomely illustrated in the following account of the arrest of a Cleveland merchant, as chronicled in the *Cleveland Herald*:

"Gov. Bebb issued the document," who the officer knowing that his duty, if well done, should be done quickly, spared his prisoner all leaves taking, put him through town in his shirt sleeves.

"Half a hundred lawyers, however, are not so easily eluded, and the prisoner by dint of impassioned gestures, and loud cries of '*habeas corpus*—a lawyer—a lawyer,' made known his predicament. One of the 'limbs'—who physically at least is the Hercules of the bar—soon heard of the mishap of his client, and mounting the first horse started in hot haste for the dock. 'Twas all in vain, Capt. Bolden had rung his 'go-ahead' bell, and the 'States' promptly rounded the season, bound down a scow.

"To the judge went the lawyer, swearing vengeance. A writ of *habeas corpus* was issued, and the sheriff under the lead of counsel started for the piers. 'The States in her hurry had not finished 'wooding' at the dock, and she lay a half mile in the Lake, taking wood from a scow.

"A small boat was chartered and the sheriff pulled into the lake. 'Give me the oars, I'm strongest,' and his hand and coat off, his face glowing in the sun, and his locks dripping with sweat, this disciple of Blackstone gave a long pull and strong pull in defense of liberty and the inalienable rights of man."

"Only ten rods pull by between the gripe of the sheriff and the 'States,' and with writ in hand he stood ready to execute the command of the court. The lawyer trembled with excitement and hard work. 'Now hail him, Mr. Sheriff!' No response, and up jumped our legal Hercules. 'Let me hail him,' said he and drawing up his saltwater frame to full height, and raising his arm of might, with a loud voice cried, 'Capt. Bolden—Capt. Bolden—Capt. Bolden, in the name of the people of the State of Ohio—here the 'States' puffed and started!—G—d—d—o you Capt. Bolden,' and the Ajax of the profession sunk in the arms of the sheriff. The boat moved on, and between oars 'caught' of her massive engine, our friend of the bar shaking his fist at Captain B.'s well-fil figure on the wheel house, gasped out in broken accents, 'Capt. Bolden, you're a d—d old rip.'

Flowers.—How the universal heart of man blesses flowers! They are wreathed round the cradle, the marriage altar, and the tomb. The Persian in the far East delights in their perfume, and writes his love in rose-gays; while the Indian child of the far West claps his hands with glee as he gathers the abundant blossoms—the illuminated scripture of the prairies. The Cupid of the ancient Hindoos tipped his arrows with flowers, and orange buds are the bridal crown with us, a nation of yesterday. Flowers garlanded the Grecian altar, and they sang in votive wreaths before the Christian shrines. All those are appropriate uses. Flowers should deck the brow of the youthful bride, for they are in themselves a lovely type of marriage. They should twine round the tomb, for their perpetual renewed beauty is a symbol of their resurrection. They should rest on the altar, for their fragrance and their beauty ascend in perpetual worship before the Most High.

A BITE.—A silly coxcomb attracted on a recent occasion to play off some of his fantastic airs before a sensible young lady, who chanced to be his partner at a ball. He commended by looking full in her face with an expression of wonderful softness in his eyes, then wriggled himself into various tender attitudes—and finally clapping his hands to his face, he hesitatingly said—"if it is not love I feel, pray what is it?" "Perhaps," replied the young lady, "something bites you." The story got whispered about the ballroom and the coxcomb was soon numbered among the missing.

DM YOU SAY SOOT?—We clip the following good thing from the *N. O. Delta*:

"Walter," said a diner-out, in a down-town restaurant yesterday—"Walter, bring me a plate of soup, quick."

"Say soop again, stranger," said a tall Tennessee returned volunteer, who happened to sit opposite to him, "and I'll give you a Cerro Gordo whipping, I will; I told the old General when I left him at Japan, that when I came to the States, I'd lick the first man I'd hear say 'soop'."

"The *Delta* adds, that it was with great difficulty the Tennessee could be satisfied. Hereafter, gratitude and admiration will alike compel us to dispose of our soup in silence."

A newly invented wire boggy is attracting much attention in Cincinnati. The "Signal" says that it looks in the distance like a cobweb.

**A Death-Scene in the Wilderness.**

The following is most beautiful and heart-touching. It is an extract from a sketch in the *Journal of Commerce*, entitled "A Forest Funeral."

"It was nearly midnight of Saturday night that a messenger came to Col. —, requesting him to go to the cabin of a settler some three miles down the river, and see his daughter, a girl of fourteen, who was supposed to be dying. Col. — awoke me and asked me to accompany him, and I consented, taking with me the small package of medicine which I always carried in the forest. But I learned soon that there was no need of these, for her disease was past cure.

Leaving the house, we descended to the bank of the river, and stepped into a canoe that lay in an eddy, and seizing a pole, flattened at one end for a paddle, Col. — pushed the slight vessel out into the current, and we shot swiftly down. I have described so many night scenes that I forbear giving you this. You may imagine the scene if you choose, as I lay in the bottom, and he used now his pole and now his paddle, to guide the bark in the rapids.