

**THE GOLD FISH OF
GRAN
CHIMÚ; PP. 1-125**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649502219

The Gold Fish of Gran Chimú; pp. 1-125 by Charles F. Lummis

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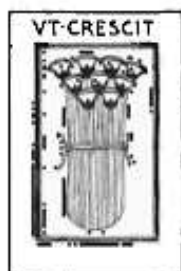
The Gold Fish of Gran Chimú

By



Charles F. Lummis

Illustrated by Henry Sandham, R.C.A.



Boston and New York
Lamson, Wolfe, and Company

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Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

01794.18153

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*The Gold Fish of Gran
Chimú*

Chapter I

An Oppressive Law

“AND what says the Se’or Bull-fighter?” queried Gonzalo, anxiously.

“Say? I say *abur!* If they pass this grand-larceny of a law, much good may it do them! Snails! But they fear to sleep, lest some one have time to forget how many varieties of imbecile a Peruvian Congress can be.”

“*Pero*, Se’or, what imports it? Even though they make the law, it would not be hard to—to compose

» [1]

The the Prefect or to gratify the soldiers, so that
Gold Fish one might dig none the less." It was Franco
of Gran who said this, with a foxy twinkle in his
Chimú thin, light face.

"No!" replied the Bullfighter, sharply.
"It is a fool's law, a thief's law — but if they pass it, there it is. When I'm in a country I obey its laws, crazy though they be. If Congress shows its ears, we will do no more digging, that's all. I would sooner the whole expedition failed than either break their law or be robbed by it. It hasn't even the sense to be funny. If it were possible to exhaust the mummies, as they've exhausted the guano and the mines, it would be right to protect them; but all the people in Peru, digging a hundred years, could hardly make a beginning on the antiquities, much less finish them. Bah! When the Chileans come, these gentlemen cannot find roads enough to run away by. When a president has stolen only five millions, they re-elect him to steal another five. But when a Peruvian or a foreigner dares to be a scholar — *veremos!*"

With this outburst he rose from the block of adobe upon which he had been sitting,

filled his capacious lungs with a jerk, as if he were rather angry at the Peruvian air, too, and strode off around the corner of a huge wall that shielded them from the tropic sun. *An Oppressive Law*

"But he is a so-little revolutionary, no, this Se'or *Yanqui*?" observed Franco in a low tone, looking to see that the *Yanqui* had well gone.

"How revolutionary, thou? Did he not say he would mind the law, bad though it be? *Claro*, that he is angry now—and who can make strange? Here they have come, he and the Maestro, thousands of miles, and spending money like the sands of the pampa; and of a sudden our Congress would prevent them. Yet, even angry, he says 'no more digging.' Is that seditious? As for saying fools and thieves, what else do *we* say? Do not our own papers write 'We Peruasnos,¹ that serve for nothing expect to be robbed'?"

"And *he*, also, is an *asno*—for they might well dig in spite of the law. All know the Prefect, that he has his lean side; and it were easy to make that the *huaqueando*² go

¹ A sarcastic jumbling of *Peruano* and *asno*, like saying "Peruviassos" instead of Peruvians.

² The specific word for *mummy-mining*.