

him the sweetest of my collection, and said something about them as a cure for ills of the mind. 'Thank you, daughter,' he said, 'the ills I mourn are your father's. If you can get him to forego his thoughts of war against Malinche, do so at any price. If flowers influence him, come yourself, and bring your maidens, and gather them all for him. Leave not a bud in the garden.' 'Is he so bent on war?' I asked. 'That is he. In the temples every hand is making ready.' 'But my father counsels otherwise.' The old man shook his head. 'I know every purpose of his soul.'

"And is that all?" asked Nenetzin.

"No. Have you not heard what took place in the *tianquez* this morning?"

And Tula told of the appearance of the horse and the stranger's head; how nobody knew who placed them there; how they were thought to have come from Huitzil', and with what design; and how the wish for war was spread, until the beggars in the street were clamoring. "War there will be, O my sister, right around us. Our father will lead the companies against Malinche. The 'tzin, Cuitlahua, Io', and all we love best of our countrymen will take part. O Nenetzin, of the children of the Sun, will you alone side with the strangers? *Tonatiuh* may slay our great father."

"And yet I would go with him," the girl said, slowly, and with sobs.

"Then you are not an Aztec," cried Tula, pushing her away.

Nenetzin stepped back speechless, and throwing her scarf over her head, turned to go.

The elder sister sprang up, conscience-struck, and caught her. "Pardon, Nenetzin. I did not know what I was saying. Stay—"

"Not now. I cannot help loving the stranger."

"The love shall not divide us; we are sisters!" And Tula clung to her passionately.

"Too late, too late!" sobbed Nenetzin.

And she passed out the door; the curtain dropped behind her; and Tula went to the couch, and wept as if her heart were breaking.

Not yet have all the modes in which ills of state become ills of society been written.

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CHAPTER IV.

ENNUYÉ IN THE OLD PALACE.

"FATHER, holy father!—and by my sword, as belted knight, Olmedo, I call thee so in love and honor,—I have heard thee talk in learned phrase about the saints, and quote the sayings of monks, mere makers of books, which I will swear are for the most part dust, or, at least, not half so well preserved as the bones of their scribblers,—I say I have thus heard thee talk and quote for hours at a time, until I have come to think thy store of knowledge is but jargon of that kind. Shake thy head! Jargon, I say a second time."

"It is knowledge that leadeth to righteousness. *Bien quisto!* Thou wouldst do well to study it," replied the padre, curtly.

A mocking smile curled the red-haired lip of the cavalier. "Knowledge truly! I recollect hearing the Señor Hernan once speak of thee. He said thou wert to him a magazine, full of learning precious as breadstuffs."

"Right, my son! Breadstuffs for the souls of sinners irreverent as—"

"Out with it!"

"As thou."

"*Picaro!* Only last night thou didst absolve me, and, by the Palmerins, I have just told my beads!"

"I think I have heard of the Palmerins," said the priest, gravely; "indeed, I am certain of it; but I never heard of them as things to swear by before. Hast thou a license as coiner of oaths?"

"*Cierto*, father, thou dost remind me of my first purpose; which was to test thy knowledge of matters, both ancient and serious, outside of what thou callest the sermons of the schoolmen. And I will not take thee at disadvantage. O no! If I would play fairly with the vilest heathen, and slay him with none but an honest trick of the sword, surely I cannot less with thee."

"Slay me!"

"That will I, — in a bout at dialectics. I will be fair, I say. I will begin by taking thee in a field which every knight hath traversed, if, perchance, he hath advanced so far in clerkliness as to read, — a field divided between heralds, troubadours, and poets, and not forbidden to monks; with which thou shouldst be well acquainted, seeing that, of late days at least, thou hast been more prone to knightly than saintly association!"

"Santa Maria!" said Olmedo, crossing himself. "It is our nature to be prone to things sinful."

"I smell the cloister in thy words. Have at thee! Stay thy steps."

The two had been pacing the roof of the palace during the foregoing passage. Both stopped now, and Alvarado said, "Firstly, — nay, I will none of that; numbering the heads of a discourse is a priestly trick. To begin, by my conscience! — ho, father, that oath offends thee not, for it is the Señor Hernan's, and by him thou art thyself always ready to swear."

"If thou wouldst not get lost in a confusion of ideas, to thy purpose quickly."

"Thank thee. Who was Amadis de Gaul?"

"Hero of the oldest Spanish poem."

"Right!" said the knight, stroking his beard. "And who was Oriana?"

"Heroine of the same story; more particularly, daughter of Lisuarte, King of England."

"Thou didst reprove me for swearing by the Palmerins; who were they?"

"Famous knights, who founded chivalry by going about slaying dragons, working charities, and overthrowing armies of heathen, for the Mother's sake."

"Excellently answered, by my troth! I will have to lead thee into deeper water. Pass we the stories of Ruy Diaz, and Del Carpio, and Pelayo. I will even grant that thou hast heard of Hernan Gonzales; but canst thou tell in how many ballads his prowess hath been sung?"

Olmedo was silent.

"Already!" cried Alvarado, exultant. "Already! By the cross on my sword, I have heard of thirty. But to proceed. Omitting Roland, and Roncesvalles, and the brethren of the Round Table, canst thou tell me of the Seven Lords of Lares?"

"No. But there is a Lord of whom I can tell thee, and of whom it will be far more profitable for thee to inquire."

"I knew a minstrel — a rare fellow — who had a wondrous voice and memory, and who sang fifteen songs all about the Lords of Lares; and he told me there were as many more. O, for the time of the true chivalry, when our Spanish people were song-lovers, and honor was of higher esteem than gold! In one respect, Olmedo, I am more Moslem than Christian."

The padre crossed himself.

"Mahomet — so saith history — taught his warriors that Paradise lieth in the shade of crossing scimitars, — as unlike thy doctrine as a stone is unlike a plum. *Picaro!* It pleaseth me; it hardeneth the heart and grip; it is more inspiring than clarions and drums."

Olmedo looked into the blue eyes of the knight, now unusually bright, and said, "Thou didst jest at my knowledge; now I ask thee, son, is it not better to have a mind full of saintly lore than one which nothing holds but swords and lances and high-bred steeds? What dost thou know but war?"

"The taste of good wine," said Alvarado, seriously; "and by Sta. Agnes, holy father, I would I had my canteen full; the smoke from these dens is turning me into a Dutch sausage. Look to the towers of yon temple, — the great one just before us. How the clouds ascending from them poison the morning air! When my sword is at the throats of the fire-keepers, Heaven help me to slay them!"

Alvarado then took the tassels of the cord around the good man's waist, and pulled him forward. "Come briskly, father! This roof is all the field left us for exercise; and much do I fear that we will dream many times of green meadows before we see them again." Half dragging him, the knight lengthened his strides. "Step longer, father! Thou dost mince the pace, like a woman."

"Hands off, irreverent!" cried the padre, holding back. "My feet are not iron-shod, like thine."

"What! Didst thou not climb the mountains on the way hither barefooted? And dost now growl at these tiles? Last night Sandoval shod his mare, the gay *Motilla*, with silver, which he swore was cheaper, if not better, than iron. When next we take a morning trot, like this, *cierto*, I will borrow two of the precious shoes for thee."

Olmedo's gown, of coarse, black woollen serge, was not a

garment a Greek, preparing for a race, would have chosen; the long skirts hampered his legs; he stumbled, and would have fallen, but for his tormentor.

"Stay thee, father! Hast been drinking? Not here shouldst thou kneel unless in prayer; and for that, bethink thee, house-tops are for none but Jews." And the rough knight laughed heartily. "Nay, talking will tire thee," he continued. "Take breath first. If my shield were at hand, I would fan thee. Or wouldst thou prefer to sit? or better still, to lie down? Do so, if thou wouldst truly oblige me; for, by my conscience, as Cortes sweareth, I have not done testing thy knowledge of worthy things outside the convent libraries. I will take thee into a new field, and ask of the Moorish lays; for, as thou shouldst know, if thou dost not, they have had their minstrels and heroes as fanciful and valiant as infidels ever were; in truth, but little inferior to the best of old Castile."

Olmedo attempted to speak.

"Open not thy mouth, father, except to breathe. I will talk until thy tire is over. I was on the Moors. A fine race they were, bating always their religion. Of their songs, thou hast probably heard that mournful roundelay, the Loves of Gazul and Abindarraez; probably listened to Tales of the Arabian Nights, or to verses celebrating the tournaments in the Bivarrambla. Certainly, thou hast heard recitals of the rencontres, scimitar in hand, between the Zegrís and Abencerrages. By Sta. Agnes! they have had warriors fit for the noblest songs. At least, father, thou knowest —" He stopped abruptly, while a lad mounted the roof and approached them, cap in hand.

"Excellent Señor, so it please thee, my master hath somewhat to say to thee in his chamber below. And" — crossing himself to Olmedo — "if the holy father will remember me in his next prayer, I will tell him that Bernal Diaz is looking for him."

"Doth thy master want me also?"

"That is Diaz's message."

"What can be in the wind now?" asked Alvarado, musingly.

"Hadst thou asked me that question —"

"Couldst thou have answered? Take the chance! What doth thy master intend?"

"Look, Don Pedro, and thou, good father," replied the page; "look to the top of yon pile so ridiculously called a temple of —"

"Speak it, as thou lovest me," cried Alvarado.

"Wilt thou pronounce it after me?"

"That will I; though, *cierto*, I will not promise my horse if I fail."

"*Huitzilpotchli*," said the boy, slowly.

"The saints defend us!" exclaimed the knight, crossing himself. "Where didst thou get so foul a name?"

"Of the Doña Marina. Well, the Señor Hernan, my master, designeth visiting those towers, and seeing what horrors they hold."

Olmedo's countenance became unusually grave. "Holy Mother, keep his temper in check, that nothing rash be done!"

Alvarado received the news differently. "Thou art a good boy, Orteguilla," he said. "I owe thee a ducat. Remind me of the debt when next thou seest me with gold. *Espiritu Santo!* Now will I take the rust out of my knees, and the dull out of my head, and the spite from my stomach! Now will I give my sword, that hath hungered so long, to surfeit on the heart-eaters! *Bien Quisto!* What jargon didst thou use a moment ago when speaking of the temple?"

"*Huitzilpotchli*," said the boy, laughing.

"Murrain take the idol, if only for his name's sake! Come; we shall have a good time."

The knight turned to descend. Orteguilla caught him by the mantle. "A word, Don Pedro."

"*Picaro!* A thousand of them, quickly!"

"Thou didst promise me a ducat —"

"Truly, and thou shalt have it. Only wait till the division cometh, and thy master saith to me, 'Take thy share.'"

"Thou hearest, father?"

"How! Dost doubt me?"

The boy stepped back. "No. Alvarado's promise is good against the world. But dost thou not think the Señor Hernan will attack the temple?"

"*Cierto*, with horse, foot, guns, Tlascalans, and all."

"He goeth merely on a visit, and by invitation of Montezuma, the king."

Olmedo's face relaxed, and he rubbed his hands; but the captain said, dismally, "By invitation! *Picaro!* Instead of the ducat, that for thy news!" And he struck openly at the page, but with such good-will that the latter gave him wide margin the rest of the day.

CHAPTER V.

ALVARADO FINDS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

THERE was a bluster of trumpets and drums, and out of the main gate of the palace in which he was lodged, under the eyes of a concourse of spectators too vast to be nearly estimated, Cortes marched with the greater part of his Christians. The column was spirited, even brilliant. Good steeds had improved with rest; while good fare, not to speak of the luxury of royal baths, had reconstituted both footmen and riders. At the head, as guides, walked four commissioners of the king, — stately men, gorgeous in *escarpiles* and plumed helms.

The Spaniards were full of glee, vented broad exaggerations, and manifested the abandon I have seen in sailors ashore the first time after a long voyage.

"Be done, good horse!" said Sandoval to Motilla, whose blood warmed under the outcry of trumpet and clarion. "Be done!"

Montejo laughed. "Chide her not! She feels the silver on her heels as a fine lady the ribbons on her head."

"No," said Alvarado, laying his lance half in rest, "Motilla is a Christian, and the scent of the pagan is in her nostrils."

"Up with thy lance, *Señor Capitan!* The guides, if they were to look back, would leave us without so much as good day."

"*Cierto*, thou'rt right! But how pleasant it would be to impale two of them at once!"

"Such thy speculation? I cannot believe thee. I have been thy comrade too long," said Leon, gravely.

Alvarado turned curtly, as if to say, "Explain thyself."

"The gold in their ears and on their wrists, Señor, — there were thine eyes. And thou didst look as if summing up, — ear-rings, four; bracelets, six; sundries, three; total, thirteen ounces pure. Confess thee, confess thee!"

The laugh was loud and long.

I have already given the reader an idea of the *tianguetz*, or market, whither Cortes, by request, was first conducted. It is sufficient to say now, that the exhibition of the jewellers attracted most attention; in front of their booths many of the footmen actually broke ranks, determined to satisfy themselves if all they there saw was indeed of the royal metal. Years after, they vaunted the sight as something surpassing all the cities of Europe could display.

Cortes occupied himself questioning the guides; for which purpose Marina was brought forward. Nothing of importance escaped him.

At one of the corners, while the interpreter was in the midst of a reply, Cortes' horse suddenly stopped, startled by an obstacle in the way. Scarcely a lance-length off, pictures of terror, stood four slaves, richly liveried, and bearing a palanquin crowned by a green *panache*.

"By Our Lady, I will see what is here contained!"

So saying, Alvarado spurred impetuously forward. The guides threw themselves in his way; he nearly rode one of them down; and, laughing at the fright of the slaves, he drew aside the curtain of the carriage, and peered in.

"*Jesu!*" he cried, dropping the cloth, and reining his horse back.

"Hast thou the fiend there? Or only a woman?" asked Cortes.

"A paragon, an houri, your excellency! What a rude fellow I have been! She is frightened. Come hither, Marina. Say to the girl —"

"Not now, not now!" said Cortes, abruptly. "If she is pretty, thou wilt see her again."

Alvarado frowned.

"What! angry?" continued the general. "Out on thee, captain! How can an untaught infidel, though paragon and houri, understand knightly phrases? What the merit of an apology in her eyes? Pass on!"

"Perhaps thou'rt right. Stand aside! Out of the way there!" And as if to make amends, he cleared a passage for the slaves and their burden.

"To the devil all of ye!" he replied, to the laughter of his comrades. "Ye did not see her, nor know ye if she is old or young, harridan or angel."

From the market, the column marched back to the great temple, with which, as it rose, broad and high, like a terraced hill, between the palace they occupied and the sun at rising, they were somewhat familiar. Yet, when fairly in view of the pile, Cortes called Olmedo to his side.

"I thank thee, Father Bartolomé. That thou art near, I feel better. A good surcoat and shield, as thou knowest, give a soldier confidence in battle; and so, as I come nigh yon abomination, full of bloody mysteries, called worship, and carven stones, called gods, — may they be accursed from the earth! — I am pleased to make use of thee and thy holiness. Doubtless the air of the place is thick with sorceries and evil charms; if so, thy crucifix hath more of safeguard than my sword. Ride nearer, father, and hearken, that thou mayst answer what more I have to say. Would, not this pile look the better of a cross upon every tower?"

"Thy zeal, my son, I commend, and thy question strictly hath but one answer," Olmedo replied. "The impulse, moreover, is to do at once what thou hast suggested. Roll away a stone, and in its bed plant a rose, and the blooming will be never so sweet; and so, never looketh the cross so

beautiful as when it taketh the place of an idol. And for the conversion of heathen, the Holy Mother careth not if the worship be under Christian dome or in pagan chamber."

"Say'st thou so!" said Cortes, checking his horse. "By my conscience, I will order a cross!"

"Be not so fast, I pray you. What armed hand now putteth up, armed hand must keep; and that is war. May not the good end be reached without such resort? In my judgment we should first consult the heathen king. How knowest thou that he is not already inclined to Christian ways? Let us ask him."

Cortes relaxed the rein, and rode on convinced.

Through the gate of the *coatapanthi*, amid much din and clangor, the entire column entered the yard of the temple. On a pavement, glassy-smooth, and spotless as a good housewife's floor, the horsemen dismounted, and the footmen stood at rest. Then Cortes, with his captains and Marina, approached the steps, where he was received by some pabas, who offered to carry him to the *azoteas*, — a courtesy he declined with many protestations of thanks.

At the top, under a green canopy, and surrounded by courtiers and attendants, Montezuma stood, in the robes of a priest, and with only his sceptre to indicate his royalty.

"You have my welcome, Malinche. The ascent is wearisome. Where are the pabas whom I sent to assist you?"

The monarch's simple dignity affected his visitors, Cortes as much as the others.

"I accept thy welcome, good king," he replied, after the interpretation. "Assure thyself that it is given to a friend. The priests proffered their service as you directed; they said your custom was to be carried up the steps, which I grant accords with a sovereign, but not with a warrior, who should be superior to fatigue."

To favor a view of the city, which was after a while sug-

gested, the king conducted Cortes to the southern side of the *azoteas*, where were also presented a great part of the lake, bordered with white towns, and the valley stretching away to the purple sierras. The train followed them with mats and stools, and erected the canopy to intercept the sun; and thus at ease, the host explained, and the guest listened. Often, during the descriptions, the monarch's eyes rested wistfully on his auditor's face; what he sought, we can imagine; but well I ween there was more revelation in a cloudy sky than in that bloodless countenance. The demeanor of the Spaniard was courtierly; he failed not to follow every gesture of the royal hand; and if the meaning of what he heard was lost because of the strange language, the voice was not. In the low, sad intonations, unmarked by positive emphasis, he divined more than the speaker read in his face, — a soul goodly in all but its irresolution. If now and then the grave attention relaxed, or the eye wandered from the point indicated, it was because the city and lake, and the valley to the mountains, were, in the visitor's mind, more a military problem than a picture of power or beauty.

The interview was at length interrupted. Two great towers crowned the broad *azoteas* of the temple, one dedicated to Tezca', the other to Huitzil'. Out of the door of the latter issued a procession of pabas, preceded by boys swinging censers, the smoke of which was sickening sweet. Tlalac, the *teotuctli*, came last, walking slowly, bareheaded, barefooted, his gown trailing behind him, its sleeves and front, like his hands and face, red with the blood of recent sacrifice. While the gloomy train gathered about the astonished Christians, the heathen pontiff, as if unconscious of their presence, addressed himself to the king. His words were afterwards translated by Marina.

"To your application, O king, there is no answer. What

you do will be of your own inspiration. The victims are removed; the servants of the god, save whom you see, are in their cells. If such be thy will, the chamber is ready for the strangers."

Montezuma sat a moment hesitant, his color coming and going; then, feeling the gaze of his guest upon him, he arose, and said kindly, but with dignity, "It is well. I thank you." Turning to Cortes, he continued, "If you will go with me, Malinche, I will show you our god, and the place in which we celebrate his worship. I will explain our religion, and you may explain yours. Only give me respect for respect."

Bowing low, Cortes replied, "I will go with thee, and thou shalt suffer no wrong from the confidence. The hand or tongue that doeth grievance to anything pertaining to thy god or his worship shall repeat it never." The last sentence was spoken with a raised voice, and a glance to the captains around; then, observing the frowns with which some of them received the notice, he added, almost without a pause, to Olmedo, "What saith the Church of Christ?"

"That thou hast spoken well, for this time," answered the priest, kissing the crucifix chained to his girdle. "Go on. I will go with thee."

Then they followed the king into the sanctuary, leaving the *teotuctli* and his train on the *azoteas*.

I turn gladly from that horrible chamber. With quite as much satisfaction, I turn from the conversation of the king and Cortes. Not even the sweet voice of Marina could make the Aztec theogony clear, or the Catholic commentary of the Spaniard interesting.

Alvarado approached the turret door with loathing. Staggered by the stench that smote him from within, he stopped a moment. Orteguilla, the page, pulled his mantle, and said, "I have news for thee. Wilt thou hear?"

"*Picaro!* To-morrow, if the Mother doth spare me so long, I will give thee a lash for every breath of this sin-laden air thou makest me draw with open mouth. As thou lovest life, speak, and have done!"

"What if I bring thee a message of love?"

"If thou couldst bring me such a message from a comely Christian maiden, I would kiss thee, lad."

Orteguilla held out an exquisite *ramillete*. "Seest thou this? If thou carest and wilt follow me, I will show thee an infidel to swear by forever."

"Give me the flowers, and lead me to the infidel. If thou speakest truly, thy fortune is made; if thou liest, I will fling thee from the temple."

He turned from the door, and was conducted to the shade of the turret of Tezca'.

"I was loitering after the tall priest, the one with the bloody face and hands, — what a monster he is!" said the page, crossing himself, — "when a slave came in my way, offering some flowers, and making signs. I spoke to him. 'What do you want?' 'Here is a message from the princess Nenetzin.' 'Who is she?' 'Daughter of the great king.' 'Well, what did she say?' 'She bade me' — and, *señor capitan*, these are almost his words, — 'she bade me give these flowers to one of the *teules*, that he might give them to *Tonatihah*, him with the red beard.' I took the present, and asked, 'What does the princess say to the *Tonatihah*?' 'Let him read the flowers,' the fellow answered. I remembered then that it is a custom of this people to send messages in that form. I asked him where his mistress was; he told me, and I went to see her."

"What of her? Is she handsome?"

"Here she is; judge thou."

"Holy Mother! 'T is the girl I so frightened on the street. She is the pearl of the valley, the light of the

world!" exclaimed Alvarado. "Stay thou, sir page. Interpret for me. I will speak to her."

"Simply, then. Thou knowest I am not so good an Aztec as Marina."

Nenetzin was sitting in the shade of the turret. Apart several paces stood her carriage-bearers. Her garments of finest cotton, white as snow, were held close to her waist by a green sash. Her ornaments — necklace, bracelets, and anklets — were of gold, enriched by *chalchuites*. Softest sandals protected her feet; and the long scarf, heavy with embroidery, and half covering her face, fell from her head to the mat of scarlet feathers upon which she was sitting.

When the tall Spaniard, in full armor, except the helmet, stopped thus suddenly before her, the large eyes dilated, the blood left her cheeks, and she shrank almost to the roof. Was it not as if the dream, so strange in the coming, had vitalized its subject, and sent it to her, a Fate the more irresistible because of its peculiarities, — the blue eyes, the forehead womanly white, the hair long and waving, the beard dyed, apparently, in the extremest brightness of the sun, — all so unheard of among the brown and olive children of Anahuac? And what if the Fate had come demandingly? Refuse! Can the chrysalis, joyous in the beauty of wings just perfected, refuse the sun?

The cavalier could not mistake the look with which she regarded him. In pity for her fear, in admiration of her beauty, in the native gallantry of his soul, he knelt, and took her hand, and kissed it; then, giving it back, and looking into her face with an expression as unmistakable as her own, he said, —

"My beautiful princess must not be afraid. I would die sooner than harm her."

While the page interpreted, as best he could, the captain smiled so winsomely that she sat up, and listened with a

smile in return. She was won, and shall we say lost? The future comes rapidly now to answer for itself.

"Here is the message," Alvarado continued. "which I could not read; but if it meant to tell me of love, what better can I than give it back to tell the same story for me?"

He kissed the flowers, and laid them before her. Picking them up, she said, with a laugh, "*Tonatih* is a poet, — a god and a poet."

He heard the interpretation, and spoke again, without relaxing his ardent gaze.

"*Jesu Christo!* That one so beautiful should be an infidel! She shall not be, — by the holy sepulchre, she shall not! Here, lad, take off the chain which is about my neck. It hath an iron crucifix, the very same my mother — rested be her soul! — gave me, with her blessing and prayer, what time I last bade her farewell."

Orteguilla took off the chain and crucifix, and put them in the cavalier's hand.

"Will my beautiful princess deign to receive these gifts from me, her slave forever? And in my presence will she put them on? And for my sake, will she always wear them? They have God's blessing, which cannot be better bestowed."

Instead of laying the presents down to be taken or not, this time he held them out to her directly; and she took them, and, childlike, hung them around her neck. In the act, the scarf fell, and left bare her head and face. He saw the glowing countenance, and was about to speak further, when Orteguilla stopped him.

"Moderate thyself, I pray thee, Don Pedro. Look at the hounds; they are closing us in. The way to the turret is already cut off. Have a care, I pray!"

The tone of alarm had instant effect.

"How! Cut off, say'st thou, lad?" And Alvarado

sprang up, his hand upon his sword. He swept the circle with a falcon's glance; then turning once more to the girl, he said, resuming the tenderness of voice and manner, "By what name may I know my love hereafter?"

"Nenetzin, — the princess Nenetzin."

"Then farewell, Nenetzin. Ill betide the man or fortune that keepeth thee from me hereafter! May I forfeit life, and the Holy Mother's love, if I see thee not again! Farewell."

He kissed his mailed hand to her, and, facing the array of scowling pabas, strode to them, and through their circle, with a laugh of knightly scorn.

At the door of the turret of Huitzil' he said to the page, "The love of yon girl, heathen no longer, but Christian, by the cross she weareth, — her love, and the brightness of her presence, for the foulness and sin of this devil's den, — what an exchange! *Valgame Dios!* Thou shalt have the ducat. She is the glory of the world!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE IRON CROSS.

"MY lord Maxtla, go see if there be none coming this way now."

And while the chief touched the ground with his palm, the king added, as to himself, and impatiently, "Surely it is time."

"Of whom speak you?" asked Cuitlahua, standing by. Only the brother would have so presumed.

The monarch looked into the branches of the cypress-tree above him; he seemed holding the words in ear, while he followed a thought.