

monarch's veneration for the god of his fathers had failed; what else remained? And the 'tzin for the first time looked to the king, saying sorrowfully, —

"Anahuac is the common mother, as Huitzil' is the father. The foot of the stranger is heavy on her breast, and she cries aloud, 'Where is Montezuma? Where is the Lord of the Earth? Where is the Child of the Sun?'"

And silence hung heavy in the sanctuary, and the waiting was painful. Again the 'tzin's voice, —

"A bride sits in the house waiting. Love puts its songs in her mouth, and kindles her smiles with the dazzle of stars. But the bridegroom lingers, and the evening and the morning bring him not. Ah, what is she, though ever so beautiful and sweet-singing, when he comes not, and may never come? O king, you are the lingering lord, and Anahuac the waiting bride; as you love her, come."

The fated king covered his face with his hands, as if, by shutting out the light, to find relief from pangs too acute for endurance. Minutes passed, — minutes of torture to him, and of breathless expectancy to all present, except the cavaliers, who, unconscious of peril, watched the scene with indifference, or rather the scornful curiosity natural to men professing a purer and diviner faith. At last his hand dropped, and he said with dignity, —

"Let this end now, — so I command. My explanation must be accepted. I cannot understand why, if you love me as you say, you should receive my word with so little credit; and if you can devote yourselves so entirely to me, why can you not believe me capable of equal devotion to myself? Hear me once more. I do not love the strangers. I hope yet to see them sacrificed to Huitzil'. They promise in a few days to leave the country, and I stay with them to hasten their departure, and, in the mean time, shield you, the nation, the temples, and the gods, from their power, which

is past finding out. Therefore, let no blow be struck at them, here or elsewhere, without my order. I am yet the king. Let me have peace. Peace be with you! I have spoken."

The 'tzin looked once to heaven, as if uttering a last appeal, or calling it to witness a vow, then he fell upon his knees; he, too, had despaired. And as if the feeling were contagious, the *teotuctli* knelt, and in the sanctuary there was stillness consistent with worship, save when some overburdened breast relieved itself by a sigh, a murmur, or a groan.

And history tells how Montezuma remained a little while at the altar, and went peacefully back to his residence with the strangers.

CHAPTER III.

THE PUBLIC OPINION MAKES WAY.

IN the *tianguetz*, one market-day, there was an immense crowd, yet trade was dull; indeed, comparatively nothing in that way was being done, although the display of commodities was rich and tempting.

"Holy gods, what is to become of us?" cried a Cholulan merchant.

"You! You are rich. Dulness of the market cannot hurt you. But I, — I am going to ruin."

The second speaker was a slave-dealer. Only the day before, he had, at great cost, driven into the city a large train of his "stock" from the wilderness beyond the Great River.

"Tell me, my friend," said a third party, addressing the slave-dealer, though in hearing of the whole company, "heard you ever of a slave owning a slave?"

"Not I."

"Heard you ever of a man going into the market to buy a slave, when he was looking to become one himself?"

"Never."

"You have it then, — the reason nobody has been to your exhibition."

The bystanders appeared to assent to the proposition, which all understood but the dealer in men, who begged an explanation.

"Yes, yes. You have just come home. I had forgotten. A bad time to be abroad. But listen, friend." The speaker quietly took his pipe from his mouth, and knocked the ashes out of the bowl. "We belong to Malinche; you know who he is."

"I am not so certain," the dealer replied, gravely. "The most I can say is, I have heard of him."

"O, he is a god —"

"With all a man's wants and appetites," interposed one.

"Yes, I was about to say that. For instance, day before yesterday he sent down the king's order for three thousand *escaupiles*. What need —"

"They were for his Tlascalans."

"O, possibly. For whom were the cargoes of cotton cloth delivered yesterday?"

"His women," answered the other, quickly.

"And the two thousand sandals?"

"For his soldiers?"

"And the gold of which the market was cleaned last week? And the gold now being hunted in Tustepec and Chinantla? And the tribute being levied so harshly in all the provinces, — for whom are they?"

"For Malinche himself."

"Yes, the god Malinche. Slave of a slave! My friend," said the chief speaker to the slave-dealer, "there is no such relation known to the law, and for that reason we cannot

buy of you. Better go back with all you have, and let the wilderness have its own again."

"But the goods of which you spoke; certainly they were paid for," said the dealer, turning pale.

"No. There is nothing left of the royal revenue. Even the treasure which the last king amassed, and walled up in the old palace, has been given to Malinche. The empire is like a man in one respect, at least, — when beggared, it cannot pay."

"And the king?"

"He is Malinche's, too."

"Yes," added the bystander; "for nowadays we never see his signet, except in the hands of one of the strangers."

The dealer in men drew a long breath, something as near a sigh as could come from one of his habits, and said, "I remember Mualox and his prophecy; and, hearing these things, I know not what to think."

"We have yet one hope," said the chief spokesman, as if desirous of concluding the conversation.

"And that?"

"Is the 'tzin Guatamo."

* * * * *

"What luck, Pepite?"

"Bad, very bad."

The questioner was the wife of the man questioned, who had just returned from the market. Throwing aside his empty baskets, he sat down in the shade of a bridge spanning one of the canals, and, locking his hands across his bare knees, looked gloomily in the water. His canoe, with others, was close at hand.

The wife, without seeming to notice his dejection, busied herself setting out their dinner, which was humble as themselves, being of boiled maize, tuna figs, and *tecuilatl*, or cheese of the lake. When the man began to eat, he began

to talk, — a peculiarity in which he was not altogether singular.

“Bad luck, very bad,” he repeated. “I took my baskets to the old stand. The flowers were fresh and sweet, gathered, you know, only last night. The market was full of people, many of whom I knew to be rich enough to buy at two prices; they came, and looked, and said, ‘They are very nice, Pepite, very nice,’ but did not offer to buy. By and by the sun went up, and stood overhead, and still no purchaser, not even an offer. It was very discouraging, I tell you; and it would have been much more so, if I had not pretty soon noticed that the market-people around me, fruiterers and florists, were doing no better than I. Then I walked about to see my friends; and in the porticos and booths as elsewhere in the square, — no trade; plenty of people, but no trade. The jewellers had covered their fronts with flowers, — I never saw richer, — you should have been there! — and crowds stood about breathing the sweet perfume; but as to purchasing, they did nothing of the sort. In fact, may the *mitlou** of our little house fly away to-night, if, in the whole day, I saw an instance of trade, or so much as a cocoa-bean pass from one hand to another!”

“It has been so many days now, only not quite so bad, Pepite,” the wife said, struggling to talk cheerfully. “What did they say was the cause? Did any one speak of that?”

“O yes, everybody. Nothing else was talked. ‘What is the use of working? Why buy or sell? We have no longer a king or country. We are all slaves now. We belong to Malinche. Afterwhile, because we are poor, he will take us off to some of his farms, like that one he has down in Oajaca, and set us to working, and keep the fruits, while he gives us the pains. No, we do not want

* Household god of the lowest grade.

anything; the less we have, the lighter will be our going down.’ That is the way the talk went all day.”

For the first time the woman threw off her pretence of cheerfulness, and was still, absorbed in listening and thinking.

“Belong to Malinche! We? And our little ones at home? Not while the gods live!” she said, confidently.

“Why not? You forget. Malinche is himself a god.”

A doubt shook the strong faith of the wife; and soon, gloomy and hopeless as Pepite, she sat down by him, and partook of the humble fare.

* * * * *

“The nation is dying. Let us elect another king,” said an old cacique to a crowd of nobles, of whom he was the centre, in the *pulque* chamber of the Chalcan. Bold words, which, half a year before, would have been punished on the spot; now, they were heard in silence, if not with approbation. “A king has no right to survive his glory,” the veteran continued; “and how may one describe his shame and guilt, when, from fear of death, he suffers an enemy to use him, and turn his power against his people!”

He stopped, and for a time the hush was threatening; then there was clapping of hands, and voices cried out, — “Good, good!”

“May the gods forgive me, and witness that the speech was from love of country, not hatred of Montezuma,” said the cacique, deferentially.

“Whom would you have in his place? Name him,” shouted an auditor.

“Montezuma, — if he will come back to us.”

“He will not; he has already refused. Another, — give us another!”

“Be it so!” said the veteran, with decision. “My life

is forfeit for what I have said. The cell that holds the king Cacama and the good lord Cuitlahua yawns for me also. I will speak." Quaffing a bowl of *pulque*, he added, "Of all Anahuac, O my brothers, who, with the fewest years, is wisest of head and bravest of heart, and therefore fittest to be king in time like this?"

The question was of the kind that addresses itself peculiarly to individual preferences,—the kind which has afflicted the world with its saddest and greatest wars; yet, strange to say, the company, as with one voice, and instantly, answered,—

"The 'tzin, the 'tzin. Guatamo, the 'tzin!"

* * * * *

In the evening time three pabas clomb the stairs by which the top of the turret of Huitzil' on the *teocallis* was reached from the *azoteas*. Arrived at the top, they found there the night-watcher, who recognized the *teotuctli*, and knelt to him.

"Arise, and get you down now," the arch-priest said; "we would be alone awhile."

On a pedestal of stone, or rather of many stones, rested the brazier, or urn, that held the sacred fire. In it crackled the consuming fagots, while over it, with unsteady brilliancy, leaped the flames which, for so many leagues away, were as a beacon in the valley. The three stopped in the shadow of the urn, and might have studied the city, or those subjects greater and more fascinating,—mysteries now, to-night, forever,—Space, and its children, the Stars; but it was not to indulge a common passion or uncertain speculations that Tlalac had brought from their temples and altars his companions, the high-priests of Cholula and Tezcuco. And there for a long time they remained, the grave and holy servants of the gods of the New World, talking earnestly, on what subject and with what conclusion we may gather.

"He is of us no longer," said Tlalac, impressively. "He has abandoned his people; to a stranger he has surrendered himself, his throne and power; he spends his days learning, from a new priesthood, a new creed, and the things that pertain to a god of whom everything is unknown to us, except that he is the enemy of our gods. I bore his desertion patiently, as we always bear with those we love. By permission, as you heard, he came one day to worship Huitzil'; the permission was on condition that there should be no sacrifices. Worship without sacrifice, my brethren! Can such thing be? When he came, he was offered rescue; the preparations were detailed to him; he knew they could not fail; the nobles begged him to accept the offer; I warned him against refusal; yet, of choice, he went back to Malinche. Then patience almost forsook me. Next, as you also know, came the unpardonable sin. In the chamber below—the chamber sanctified by the presence of the mighty Huitzil'—I will give you to see, if you wish, a profanation the like of which came never to the most wicked dream of the most wicked Aztec,—an altar to the new and unknown God. And to-morrow, if you have the curiosity, I will give you to see the further sight,—a service, mixed of singing and prayer, by priests of the strange God, at the same time, and side by side with the worship of our gods,—all with the assent—nay, by order—of Montezuma. Witness these crimes once, and your patience will go quickly, whereas mine went slowly; but it is gone, and in its stead lives only the purpose to do what the gods command."

"Let us obey the gods!" said the reverend high-priest of Cholula.

"Let us obey the gods!" echoed his holy brother of Tezcuco.

"Hear me, then," said Tlalac, with increased fervor. "I will give their command. 'Raise up a new king, and save

yourselves, by saving our worship in the land!' so the gods say. And I am ready."

"But the law," said the Tezucan.

"By the law," answered Tlalac, "there can be kings only in the order of election."

"And so?"

"Montezuma — *must* — DIE!"

Tlalac said these terrible words slowly, but firmly.

"And who will be the instrument?" they asked.

"Let us trust the gods," he answered. "For love of them men go down to death every day; and of the many lovers, doubt not some one will be found to do their bidding."

And so it was agreed.

* * * * *

And so, slowly but surely, the Public Opinion made its way, permeating all classes, — laborers, merchants, warriors, and priests.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE 'TZIN'S FAREWELL TO QUETZAL'.

IF I were writing history, it would delight me to linger over the details of Cortes' management after the arrest of Montezuma; for in them were blent, fairly as ever before seen, the grand diversities of war, politics, and governmental administration. Anticipating interference from the headquarters in Cuba, he exercised all his industry and craft to recommend himself directly to his Majesty, the Emperor Charles. The interference at last came in the form of a grand expedition under Panfilo de Narvaez; but in the interval, — a period of little more than five months, — he had

practically reduced the new discovery to possession, as attested by numerous acts of sovereignty, — such, for instance, as the coast of the gulf surveyed; colonies established; plantations opened and worked with profit; tribute levied; high officials arrested, disseized, and executed; the collection and division of a treasure greater than ever before seen by Christians in the New World; communication with the capital secured by armed brigantines on the lakes; the cross set up and maintained in the *teocallis*; and last, and, by custom of the civilized world, most absolute, Montezuma brought to acknowledge vassalage and swear allegiance to the Emperor; and withal, so perfect was the administration of affairs, that a Spaniard, though alone, was as safe in the defiles between Vera Cruz and Tenochtitlan as he would have been in the *camino reales* of old Spain, as free in the great *tianguex* as on the quay of Cadiz.

Narvaez's expedition landed in May, six months after Cortes entered Tenochtitlan; and to that time I now beg to advance my reader.

Cortes himself is down in Cempoalla; having defeated Narvaez, he is lingering to gather the fruits of his extraordinary victory. In the capital Alvarado is commanding, supported by the Tlascalans, and about one hundred and fifty Christians. Under his administration, affairs have gone rapidly from bad to worse; and in selecting him for a trust so delicate and important, Cortes has made his first serious mistake.

* * * * *

At an early hour in the evening Mualox came out of the sanctuary of his Cû, bearing an armful of the flowers which had been used in the decoration of the altar. The good man's hair and beard were whiter than when last I noticed him; he was also feebler, and more stooped; so the time is not far distant when Quetzal' will lose his last and

most faithful servant. As he was about to ascend the stairway of the tower, his name was called, and, stopping, he was overtaken by two men.

"Guatamozin!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"Be not alarmed, father, but put down your burden, and rest awhile. My friend here, the lord Hualpa, has brought me news, which calls me away. Rest, therefore, and give me time for thanks and explanation."

"What folly is this?" asked Mualox, hastily, and without noticing Hualpa's salutation. "Go back to the cell. The hunters are abroad and vigilant as ever. I will cast these faded offerings into the fire, and come to you."

The 'tzin was in the guise of a paba. To quiet the good man's alarm, he drew closer the hood that covered his head, remarking, "The hunters will not come. Give Hualpa the offerings; he will carry them for you."

Hualpa took them, and left; then Mualox said, "I am ready to hear. Speak."

"Good father," the 'tzin began, "not long since, in the sanctuary there, you told me — I well remember the words — that the existence of my country depended upon my action; by which I understood you to prefigure for me an honorable, if not fortunate, destiny. I believe you had faith in what you said; for on many occasions since you have exerted yourself in my behalf. That I am not now a prisoner in the old palace with Cacama and the lord Cuitlahua is due to you; indeed, if it be true, as I was told, that the king gave me to Malinche to be dealt with as he chose, I owe you my life. These are the greatest debts a man can be bound for; I acknowledge them, and, if the destiny should be fortunate as we hope, will pay them richly; but now all I can give you is my thanks, and what I know you will better regard, — my solemn promise to protect this sacred property of the holy Quetzal'. Take the thanks and the promise, and let me have your blessing. I wish now to go."

"Whither?" asked Mualox.

"To the people. They have called me; the lord Hualpa brings me their message."

"No, you will not go," said the paba, reproachfully. "Your resolution is only an impulse; impatience is not a purpose; and — and here are peace, and safety, and a holy presence."

"But honor, father, —"

"That will come by waiting."

"Alas!" said the 'tzin, bitterly, "I have waited too long already. I have most dismal news. When Malinche marched to Cempoalla, he left in command here the red-haired chief whom we call *Tonatiuh*. This, you know, is the day of the incensing of Huitzil' —"

"I know, my son, — an awful day! The day of cruel sacrifice, itself a defiance of Quetzal'."

"What!" said Guatamozin, in angry surprise. "Are you not an Aztec?"

"Yes, an Aztec, and a lover of his god, the true god, whose return he knows to be near, and," — to gather energy of expression, he paused, then raised his hands as if flinging the words to a listener overhead, — "and whom he would welcome, though the land be swimming in the blood of unbelievers."

The violence and incoherency astonished the 'tzin, and as he looked at the paba fixedly, he was sensible for the first time of a fear that the good man's mind was affected. And he considered his age and habits, his days and years spent in a great, cavernous house, without amusement, without companionship, without varied occupation; for the thinker, it must be remembered, knew nothing of Tecetl or the world she made so delightful. Moreover, was not mania the effect of long brooding over wrongs, actual or imaginary? Or, to put the thought in another form, how natural that the soli-

tary watcher of decay, where of all places decay is most affecting, midst antique and templed splendor, should make the cause of Quetzal' his, until, at last, as the one idea of his being, it mastered him so absolutely that a division of his love was no longer possible. If the misgiving had come alone, the pain that wrung the 'tzin would have resolved itself in pity for the victim, so old, so faithful, so passionate; but a dreadful consequence at once presented itself. By a strange fatality, the mystic had been taken into the royal councils, where, from force of faith, he had gained faith. Now, — and this was the dread, — what if he had cast the glamour of his mind over the king's, and superinduced a policy which had for object and end the peaceable transfer of the nation to the strangers?

This thought thrilled the 'tzin indefinitely, and in a moment his pity changed to deep distrust. To master himself, he walked away; coming back, he said quietly, "The day you pray for has come; rejoice, if you can."

"I do not understand you," said Mualox.

"I will explain. This is the day of the incensing of Huitzil', which, you know, has been celebrated for ages as a festival religious and national. This morning, as customary, lords and priests, personages the noblest and most venerated, assembled in the court-yard of the temples. To bring the great wrong out in clearer view, I ought to say, father, that permission to celebrate had been asked of *Tonatihah*, and given, — to such a depth have we fallen! And, as if to plunge us into a yet lower deep, he forbade the king's attendance, and said to the *teotuctli*, 'There shall be no sacrifice.'"

"No victims, no blood!" cried Mualox, clasping his hands. "Blessed be Quetzal'!"

The 'tzin bore the interruption, though with an effort.

"In the midst of the service," he continued, "when the yard was most crowded, and the revelry gayest, and the good

company most happy and unsuspecting, dancing, singing, feasting, suddenly *Tonatihah* and his people rushed upon them, and began to kill, and stayed not their hands until, of all the revellers, not one was left alive; leaders in battle, ministers at the altar, old and young, — all were slain!* O such a piteous sight! The court is a pool of blood. Who will restore the flower this day torn from the nation? O holy gods, what have we done to merit such calamity?"

Mualox listened, his hands still clasped.

"Not one left alive! Not one, did you say?"

"Not one."

The paba arose from his stooping, and upon the 'tzin flashed the old magnetic flame.

"What have you done, ask you? Sinned against the true and only god —"

"I?" said the 'tzin, for the moment shrinking.

"The nation, — the nation, blind to its crimes, no less blind to the beginning of its punishment! What you call calamity, I call vengeance. Starting in the house of Huitzil', — the god for whom my god was forsaken, — it will next go to the city; and if the lords so perish, how may the people escape? Let them tremble! He is come, he is come! I knew him afar, I know him here. I heard his step in the valley, I see his hand in the court. Rejoice, O 'tzin! He has drunk the blood of the sacrificers. To-morrow his house must be made ready to receive him. Go not away! Stay, and help me! I am old. Of the treasure below I might make use to buy help; but such preparation, like an offering at the altar, is most acceptable when induced by love. Love for love. So said Quetzal' in the beginning; so he says now."

* Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp. Gomara, Cronica. Prescott, Conq. of Mexico.

"Let me be sure I understand you, father. What do you offer me?" asked the 'tzin, quietly.

"Escape from the wrath," replied Mualox.

"And what is required of me?"

"To stay here, and, with me, serve his altar."

"Is the king also to be saved?"

"Surely; he is already a servant of the god's."

Under his gown the 'tzin's heart beat quicker, for the question and answer were close upon the fear newly come to him, as I have said; yet, to leave the point unguarded in the paba's mind, he asked, —

"And the people: if I become what you ask, will they be saved?"

"No. They have forgotten Quetzal' utterly."

"When the king became your fellow-servant, father, made he no terms for his dependants, for the nation, for his family?"

"None."

Guatamozin dropped the hood upon his shoulders, and looked at Mualox sternly and steadily; and between them ensued one of those struggles of spirit against spirit in which glances are as glittering swords, and the will holds the place of skill.

"Father," he said, at length, "I have been accustomed to love and obey you. I thought you good and wise, and conversant with things divine, and that one so faithful to his god must be as faithful to his country; for to me, love of one is love of the other. But now I know you better. You tell me that Quetzal' has come, and for vengeance; and that, in the fire of his wrath, the nation will be destroyed; yet you exult, and endeavor to speed the day by prayer. And now, too, I understand the destiny you had in store for me. By hiding in this gown, and becoming a priest at your altar, I was to escape the universal death. What the king did, I

was to do. Hear me now: I cut myself loose from you. With my own eyes I look into the future. I spurn the destiny, and for myself will carve out a better one by saving or perishing with my race. No more waiting on others! no more weakness! I will go hence and strike —"

"Whom?" asked Mualox, impulsively. "The king and the god?"

"He is not my god," said the 'tzin, interrupting him in turn. "The enemy of my race is my enemy, whether he be king or god. As for Montezuma," — at the name his voice and manner changed, — "I will go humbly, and, from the dust into which he flung them, pick up his royal duties. Alas! no other can. Cuitlahua is a prisoner; so is Cacama; and in the court-yard yonder, cold in death, lie the lords who might with them contest the crown and its tribulations. I alone am left. And as to Quetzal', — I accept the doom of my country, — into the heart of his divinity I cast my spear! So, farewell, father. As a faithful servant, you cannot bless whom your god has cursed. With you, however, be all the peace and safety that abide here. Farewell."

"Go not, go not!" cried Mualox, as the 'tzin, calling to Hualpa, turned his back upon him. "We have been as father and son. I am old. See how sorrow shakes these hands, stretched toward you in love."

Seeing the appeal was vain, the paba stepped forward and caught the 'tzin's arm, and said, "I pray you stay, — stay. The destiny follows Quetzal', and is close at hand, and brings in its arms the throne."

Neither the tempter nor the temptation moved the 'tzin; he called Hualpa again; then the holy man let go his arm, and said, sadly, "Go thy way, — one scoffer more! Or, if you stay, hear of what the god will accuse you, so that, when your calamity comes, as come it will, you may not accuse him."

"I will hear."

"Know, then, O 'tzin, that Quetzal', the day he landed from Tlapallan, took you in his care; a little later, he caused you to be sent into exile—"

"Your god did that!" exclaimed the 'tzin. "And why?"

"Out of the city there was safety," replied Mualox, sententiously; in a moment, he continued, "Such, I say, was the beginning. Attend to what has followed. After Montezuma went to dwell with the strangers, the king of Tezcucó revolted, and drew after him the lords of Iztapalapan, Tlacopan, and others; to-day they are prisoners, while you are free. Next, aided by Tlalac, you planned the rescue of the king by force in the *teocallis*; for that offence the officers hunted you, and have not given over their quest; but the cells of Quetzal' are deep and dark; I called you in, and yet you are safe. To-day Quetzal' appeared amongst the celebrants, and to-night there is mourning throughout the valley, and the city groans under the bloody sorrow; still you are safe. A few days ago, in the old palace of Axaya', the king assembled his lords, and there he and they became the avowed subjects of a new king, Malinche's master; since that the people, in their ignorance, have rung the heavens with their curses. You alone escaped that bond; so that, if Montezuma were to join his fathers, asleep in Chapultepec, whom would soldier, priest, and citizen call to the throne? Of the nobles living, how many are free to be king? And of all the empire, how many are there of whom I might say, 'He forgot not Quetzal'?' One only. And now, O son, ask you of what you will be accused, if you abandon this house and its god? or what will be forfeit, if now you turn your back upon them? Is there a measure for the iniquity of ingratitude? If you go hence for any purpose of war, remember Quetzal' neither forgets nor forgives; better that you had never been born."

By this time, Hualpa had joined the party. Resting his hand upon the young man's shoulder, the 'tzin fixed on Mualox a look severe and steady as his own, and replied,—
"Father, a man knows not himself; still less knows he other men; if so, how should I know a being so great as you claim your god to be? Heretofore, I have been contented to see Quetzal' as you have painted him,—a fair-faced, gentle, loving deity, to whom human sacrifice was especially abhorrent; but what shall I say of him whom you have now given me to study? If he neither forgets nor forgives, wherein is he better than the gods of Mictlan? Hating, as you have said, the sacrifice of one man, he now proposes, you say, not as a process of ages, but at once, by a blow or a breath, to slay a nation numbering millions. When was Huitzil' so awfully worshipped? He will spare the king, you further say, because he has become his servant; and I can find grace by a like submission. Father,"—and as he spoke the 'tzin's manner became inexpressibly noble,—
"father, who of choice would live to be the last of his race? The destiny brings me a crown: tell me, when your god has gluttoned himself, where shall I find subjects? Comes he in person or by representative? Am I to be his crowned slave or Malinche's? Once for all, let Quetzal' enlarge his doom; it is sweeter than what you call his love. I will go fight; and, if the gods of my fathers—in this hour become dearer and holier than ever—so decree, will die with my people. Again, father, farewell."

Again the withered hands arose tremulously, and a look of exceeding anguish came to the paba's help.

"If not for love of me, or of self, or of Quetzal', then for love of woman, stay"

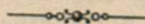
Guatamozin turned quickly. "What of her?"

"O 'tzin, the destiny you put aside is hers no less than yours."

The 'tzin raised higher his princely head, and answered, smiling joyously, —

“Then, father, by whatever charm, or incantation, or virtue of prayer you possess, hasten the destiny, — hasten it, I conjure you. A tomb would be a palace with her, a palace would be a tomb without her.”

And with the smile still upon his face, and the resolution yet in his heart, he again, and for the last time, turned his back upon Mualox.



CHAPTER V.

THE CELLS OF QUETZAL' AGAIN.

“Victim! A victim!”

“Hi, hi!”

“Catch him!”

“Stone him!”

“Kill him!”

So cried a mob, at the time in furious motion up the beautiful street. Numbering hundreds already, it increased momentarily, and howled as only such a monster can. Scarce eighty yards in front ran its game, — Orteguilla, the page.

The boy was in desperate strait. His bonnet, secured by a braid, danced behind him; his short cloak, of purple velvet, a little faded, fluttered as if struggling to burst the throat-loop; his hands were clenched; his face pale with fear and labor. He ran with all his might, often looking back; and as his course was up the street, the old palace of Axaya' must have been the goal he sought, — a long, long way off for one unused to such exertion and so fiercely pressed. At every backward glance, he cried, in agony of

terror, “Help me, O Mother of Christ! By God's love, help me!” The enemy was gaining upon him.

The lad, as I think I have before remarked, had been detailed by Cortes to attend Montezuma, with whom, as he was handsome and witty, and had soon acquired the Aztecan tongue and uncommon skill at *totoloque*, he had become an accepted favorite; so that, while useful to the monarch as a servant, he was no less useful to the Christian as a detective. In the course of his service, he had been frequently intrusted with his royal master's signet, the very highest mark of confidence. Every day he executed errands in the *tian-guez*, and sometimes in even remoter quarters of the city. As a consequence he had come to be quite well known, and to this day nothing harmful or menacing had befallen him, although, as was not hard to discern, the people would have been better satisfied had Maxtla been charged with such duties.

On this occasion, — the day after the interview between the 'tzin and Mualox, — while executing some trifling commission in the market, he became conscious of a change in the demeanor of those whom he met; of courtesies, there were none; he was not once saluted; even the jewellers with whom he dealt viewed him coldly, and asked not a word about the king; yet, unaware of danger, he went to the portico of the Chalcan, and sat awhile, enjoying the shade and the fountain, and listening to the noisy commerce without.

Presently, he heard a din of conchs and attabals, the martial music of the Aztecs. Somewhat startled, and half hidden by the curtains, he looked out, and beheld, coming from the direction of the king's palace, a procession bearing ensigns and banners of all shapes, designs, and colors.

At the first sound of the music, the people, of whom, as