

"Nay, by my conscience! I neither doubt nor dread. Yet I hold it not unseemly to confess that I had rather meet the brunt on the firm land, with room for what the occasion offers. I like not yon canal, with its broken bridge, too wide for horse, too deep for weighted man; it putteth us to disadvantage, and hath a hateful reminder of the brigantines, which, as thou mayest remember, we left at anchor, mistresses of the lake; in our absence they have been lost,—a most measureless folly, father! But let it pass, let it pass! The Mother—blessed be her name!—hath not forsaken us. Montezuma is ours, and —"

"He is victory," said Olmedo, zealously.

"He is the New World!" answered Cortes.

And so it chanced that the poor king was centre of thought for both the 'tzin and his enemy,—the dread of one and the hope of the other.

CHAPTER III.

LA VIRUELA.

A LONG interval behind the rear-guard—indeed, the very last of the army, and quite two hours behind—came four Indian slaves, bringing a man stretched upon a litter.

And the litter was open, and the sun beat cruelly on the man's face; but plaint he made not, nor motion, except that his head rolled now right, now left, responsive to the cadenced steps of his hearers.

Was he sick or wounded?

Nathless, into the city they carried him.

And in front of the new palace of the king, they stopped,

less wearied than overcome by curiosity. And as they stared at the great house, imagining vaguely the splendor within, a groan startled them. They looked at their charge; he was dead! Then they looked at each other, and fled.

And in less than twice seven days they too died, and died horribly; and in dying recognized their disease as that of the stranger they had abandoned before the palace,—the small-pox, or, in the language which hath a matchless trick of melting everything, even the most ghastly, into music, *la viruela* of the Spaniard.

The sick man on the litter was a negro,—first of his race on the new continent!

And most singular, in dying, he gave his masters another servant stronger than himself, and deadlier to the infidels than swords of steel,—a servant that found way everywhere in the crowded city, and rested not. And everywhere its breath, like its touch, was mortal; insomuch that a score and ten died of it where one fell in battle.

Of the myriads who thus perished, one was a KING.

CHAPTER IV.

MONTEZUMA A PROPHET.—HIS PROPHECY.

SCARCE five weeks before, Cortes sallied from the palace with seventy soldiers, ragged, yet curiously bedight with gold and silver; now he returned full-handed, at his back thirteen hundred infantry, a hundred horse, additional guns and Tlascalans. Surely, he could hold what he had gained.

The garrison stood in the court-yard to receive him. Trumpet replied to trumpet, and the reverberation of drums

shook the ancient house. When all were assigned to quarters, the ranks were broken, and the veterans — those who had remained, and those who had followed their chief — rushed clamorously into each other's arms. Comradeship, with its strange love, born of toil and danger, and nursed by red-handed battle, asserted itself. The men of Narvaez looked on indifferently, or clomb the palace, and from the roof surveyed the vicinage, especially the great temple, apparently as forsaken as the city.

And in the court-yard Cortes met Alvarado, saluting him coldly. The latter excused his conduct as best he could; but the palliations were unsatisfactory. The general turned from him with bitter denunciations; and as he did so, a procession approached: four nobles, carrying silver wands; then a train in doubled files; then Montezuma, in the royal regalia, splendid from head to foot. The shade of the canopy borne above him wrapped his person in purpled softness, but did not hide that other shadow discernible in the slow, uncertain step, the bent form, the wistful eyes, — the shadow of the coming Fate. Such of his family as shared his captivity brought up the cortege.

At the sight, Cortes waited; his blood was hot, and his head filled with the fumes of victory; from a great height, as it were, he looked upon the retinue, and its sorrowful master; and his eyes wandered fitfully from the Christians, worn by watching and hunger, to the sumptuousness of the infidels; so that when the monarch drew nigh him, the temper of his heart was as the temper of his corselet.

"I salute you, O Malinche, and welcome your return," said Montezuma, according to the interpretation of Marina.

The Spaniard heard him without a sign of recognition.

"The good Lady of your trust has had you in care; she has given you the victory. I congratulate you, Malinche."

Still the Spaniard was obstinate.

The king hesitated, dropped his eyes under the cold stare, and was frozen into silence. Then Cortes turned upon his heel, and, without a word, sought his chamber.

The insult was plain, and the witnesses, Christian and infidel, were shocked; and while they stood surprised, Tula rushed up, and threw her arms around the victim's neck, and laid her head upon his breast. The retinue closed around them, as if to hide the shame; and thus the unhappy monarch went back to his quarters, — back to his captivity, to his remorse, and the keener pangs of pride savagely lacerated.

For a time he was like one dazed; but, half waking, he wrung his hands, and said, feebly, "It cannot be, it cannot be! Maxtla, take the councillors and go to Malinche, and say that I wish to see him. Tell him the business is urgent, and will not wait. Bring me his answer, omitting nothing."

The young chief and the four nobles departed, and the king relapsed into his dazement, muttering, "It cannot be, it cannot be!"

The commissioners delivered the message. Olid, Leon, and others who were present begged Cortes to be considerate.

"No," he replied; "the dog of a king would have betrayed us to Narvaez; before his eyes we are allowed to hunger. Why are the markets closed? I have nothing to do with him."

And to the commissioners he said, "Tell your master to open the markets, or we will for him. Begone!"

And they went back and reported, omitting nothing, not even the insulting epithet. The king heard them silently; as they proceeded, he gathered strength; when they ceased, he was calm and resolved.

"Return to Malinche," he said, "and tell him what I wished to say: that my people are ready to attack him, and that the only means I know to divert them from their purpose is to release the lord Cuitlahua, my brother, and send him to them to enforce my orders. There is now no other of authority upon whom I can depend to keep the peace, and open the markets; he is the last hope. Go."

The messengers departed; and when they were gone the monarch said, "Leave the chamber now, all but Tula."

At the last outgoing footstep she went near, and knelt before him; knowing, with the divination which is only of woman, that she was now to have reply to the 'tzin's message, delivered by her in the early morning. Her tearful look he answered with a smile, saying tenderly, "I do not know whether I gave you welcome. If I did not, I will amend the fault. Come near."

She arose, and, putting an arm over his shoulder, knelt closer by his side; he kissed her forehead, and pressed her close to his breast. Nothing could exceed the gentleness of the caress, unless it was the accompanying look. She replied with tears, and such breaking sobs as are only permitted to passion and childhood.

"Now, if never before," he continued, "you are my best beloved, because your faith in me fell not away with that of all the world besides; especially, O good heart! especially because you have to-day shown me an escape from my intolerable misery and misfortunes,—for which may the gods who have abandoned me bless you!"

He stroked the dark locks under his hand lovingly.

"Tears? Let there be none for me. I am happy. I have been unresolved, drifting with uncertain currents, doubtful, yet hopeful, seeing nothing, and imagining everything; waiting, sometimes on men, sometimes on the gods,—and that so long,—ah, so long! But now the weakness is past

Rejoice with me, O Tula! In this hour I have recovered dominion over myself; with every faculty restored, the very king whom erst you knew, I will make answer to the 'tzin. Listen well. I give you my last decree, after which I shall regard myself as lost to the world. If I live, I shall never rule again. Somewhere in the temples I shall find a cell like that from which they took me to be king. The sweetness of the solitude I remember yet. There I will wait for death; and my waiting shall be so seemly that his coming shall be as the coming of a restful sleep. Hear then, and these words give the 'tzin: Not as king to subject, nor as priest to penitent, but as father to son, I send him my blessing. Of pardon I say nothing. All he has done for Anahuac, and all he hopes to do for her, I approve. Say to him, also, that in the last hour Malinche will come for me to go with him to the people, and that I will go. Then, I say, let the 'tzin remember what the gods have laid upon him, and with his own hand do the duty, that it may be certainly done. A man's last prayer belongs to the gods, his last look to those who love him. In dying there is no horror like lingering long amidst enemies."

His voice trembled, and he paused. She raised her eyes to his face, which was placid, but rapt, as if his spirit had been caught by a sudden vision.

"To the world," he said, in a little while, "I have bid farewell. I see its vanities go from me one by one; last in the train, and most glittering, most loved, Power,—and in its hands is my heart. A shadow creeps upon me, darkening all without, but brightening all within; and in the brightness, lo, my People and their Future!"

He stopped again, then resumed:—

"The long, long cycles—two,—four,—eight—pass away, and I see the tribes newly risen, like the trodden grass, and in their midst a Priesthood and a Cross. An age

of battles more, and, lo! the Cross but not the priests; in their stead Freedom and God."

And with the last word, as if to indicate the Christian God, the report of a gun without broke the spell of the seer; the two started, and looked at each other, listening for what might follow; but there was nothing more, and he went on quietly talking to her.

"I know the children of the Aztec, crushed now, will live, and more,—after ages of wrong suffered by them, they will rise up, and take their place—a place of splendor—amongst the deathless nations of the earth. What I saw was revelation. Cherish the words, O Tula; repeat them often; make them an utterance of the people, a sacred tradition; let them go down with the generations, one of which will, at last, rightly interpret the meaning of the words FREEDOM and God, now dark to my understanding; and then, not till then, will be the new birth and new career. And so shall my name become of the land a part, suggested by all things,—by the sun mildly tempering its winds; by the rivers singing in its valleys; by the stars seen from its mountain-tops; by its cities, and their palaces and halls; and so shall its red races of whatever blood learn to call me father, and in their glory, as well as misery, pray for and bless me."

In the progress of this speech his voice grew stronger, and insensibly his manner ennobled; at the conclusion, his appearance was majestic. Tula regarded him with awe, and accepted his utterances, not as the song habitual to the Aztec warrior at the approach of death, nor as the rhapsody of pride soothing itself; she accepted them as prophecy, and as a holy trust,—a promise to be passed down through time, to a generation of her race, the first to understand truly the simple words,—FREEDOM and GOD. And they were silent a long time.

At length there was a warning at the door; the little

bells filled the room with music strangely inharmonious. The king looked that way, frowning. The intruder entered without *nequen*; as he drew near the monarch's seat, his steps became slower, and his head drooped upon his breast.

"Cuitlahua! my brother!" said Montezuma, surprised.

"Brother and king!" answered the cacique, as he knelt and placed both palms upon the floor.

"You bring me a message. Arise and speak."

"No," said Cuitlahua, rising. "I have come to receive your signet and orders. I am free. The guard is at the door to pass me through the gate. Malinche would have me go and send the people home, and open the markets; he said such were your orders. But from him I take nothing except liberty. But you, O king, what will you,—peace or war?"

Tula looked anxiously at the monarch; would the old vacillation return? He replied firmly and gravely,—

"I have given my last order as king. Tula will go with you from the palace, and deliver it to you."

He arose while speaking, and gave the cacique a ring; then for a moment he regarded the two with suffused eyes, and said, "I divide my love between you and my people. For their sake, I say, go hence quickly, lest Malinche change his mind. You, O my brother, and you, my child, take my blessing and that of the gods! Farewell."

He embraced them both. To Tula he clung long and passionately. More than his ambassador to the 'tzin, she bore his prophecy to the generations of the future. His last kiss was dewy with her tears. With their faces to him, they moved to the door; as they passed out, each gave a last look, and caught his image then,—the image of a man breaking because he happened to be in God's way.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO YIELD A CROWN.

AS the guard passed the old lord and the princess out of the gate opposite the *teocallis*, the latter looked up to the *azoteas* of the sacred pile, and saw the 'tzin standing near the verge; taking off the white scarf that covered her head, and fell from her shoulders, after passing once around her neck, she gave him the signal. He waved his hand in reply, and disappeared.

The lord Cuitlahua, just released from imprisonment and ignorant of the situation, scarcely knowing whither to turn yet impatient to set his revenge in motion, accepted the suggestion of Tula, and accompanied her to the temple. The ascent was laborious, especially to him; at the top, however, they were received by Io' and Hualpa, and with every show of respect conducted to the 'tzin. He saluted them gravely, yet affectionately. Cuitlahua told him the circumstances of his release from imprisonment.

"So," said the 'tzin, "Malinche expects you to open the market, and forbid the war; but the king,— what of him?"

"To Tula he gave his will; hear her."

And she repeated the message of her father. At the end, the calm of the 'tzin's temper was much disturbed. At his instance she again and again recited the prophecy. The words "Freedom and God" were as dark to him as to the king, and he wondered at them. But that was not all. Clearly, Montezuma approved the war; that he intended its continuance was equally certain; unhappily, there was no designation of a commander. And in thought

of the omission, the young chief hesitated; never did ambition appeal to him more strongly; but he brushed the allurements away, and said to Cuitlahua, —

"The king has been pleased to be silent as to which of us should govern in his absence; but we are both of one mind: the right is yours naturally, and your coming at this time, good uncle, looks as if the gods sent you. Take the government, therefore, and give me your orders. Malinche is stronger than ever." He turned thoughtfully to the palace below, over which the flag of Spain and that of Cortes were now displayed. "He will require of us days of toil and fighting, and many assaults. In conquering him there will be great glory, which I pray you will let me divide with you."

The lord Cuitlahua heard the patriotic speech with glistening eyes. Undoubtedly he appreciated the self-denial that made it beautiful; for he said, with emotion, "I accept the government, and, as its cares demand, will take my brother's place in the palace; do you take what else would be my place under him in the field. And may the gods help us each to do his duty!"

He held out his hand, which the 'tzin kissed in token of fealty, and so yielded the crown; and as if the great act were already out of mind, he said, —

"Come, now, good uncle, — and you, also, Tula, — come both of you, and I will show what use I made of the kingly power."

He led them closer to the verge of the *azoteas*, so close that they saw below them the whole western side of the city, and beyond that the lake and its shore, clear to the sierra bounding the valley in that direction.

"There," said he, in the same strain of simplicity, "there, in the shadow of the hills, I gathered the people of the valley, and the flower of all the tribes that pay us tribute.

They make an army the like of which was never seen. The chiefs are chosen; you may depend upon them, uncle. The whole great host will die for you."

"Say, rather, for us," said the lord Cuitlahua.

"No, you are now Anahuac"; and, as deeming the point settled, the 'tzin turned to Tula. "O good heart," he said, "you have been a witness to all the preparation. At your signal, given there by the palace gate, I kindled the piles which yet burn, as you see, at the four corners of the temple. Through them I spoke to the chiefs and armies waiting on the lake-shore. Look now, and see their answers."

They looked, and from the shore and from each pretentious summit of the sierra, saw columns of smoke rising and melting into the sky.

"In that way the chiefs tell me, 'We are ready,' or 'We are coming.' And we cannot doubt them; for see, a dark line on the white face of the causeway to Cojohuacan, its head nearly touching the gates at Xoloc; and another from Tlacopan; and from the north a third; and yonder on the lake, in the shadow of Chapultepec, a yet deeper shadow."

"I see them," said Cuitlahua.

"And I," said Tula. "What are they?"

For the first time the 'tzin acknowledged a passing sentiment; he raised his head and swept the air with a haughty gesture.

"What are they? Wait a little, and you shall see the lines on the causeways grow into ordered companies, and the shadows under Chapultepec become a multitude of canoes; wait a little longer, and you shall see the companies fill all the great streets, and the canoes girdle the city round about; wait a little longer, and you may see the battle."

And silence fell upon the three, — the silence, however, in which hearts beat like drums. From point to point they

turned their eager eyes, — from the causeways to the lake, from the lake to the palace.

Slowly the converging lines crawled toward the city; slowly the dark mass under the royal hill, sweeping out on the lake, broke into divisions; slowly the banners came into view, of every color and form, and then the shields and uniforms, until, at last, each host on its separate way looked like an endless unrolling ribbon.

When the column approaching by the causeway from Tlacopan touched the city with its advance, it halted, waiting for the others, which, having farther to march, were yet some distance out. Then the three on the *teocallis* separated; the princess retired to her *chinampa*; the lord Cuitlahua, with some nobles of the 'tzin's train, betook himself to the new palace, there to choose a household; the 'tzin, for purposes of observation, remained on the *azoteas*.

And all the time the threatened palace was a picture of peace; the flags hung idly down; only the sentinels were in motion, and they gossiped with each other, or lingered lazily at places where a wall or a battlement flung them a friendly shade.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE LEAGUER.

BY and by a Spaniard came out through the main gateway of the palace; after brief leave-taking with the guard there, he walked rapidly down the street. The 'tzin, observing that the man was equipped for a journey, surmised him to be a courier, and smiled at the confidence of the master who sent him forth alone at such a time.

The courier went his way, and the great movement proceeded.

After a while Hualpa and Io' came down from the turret where, under the urn of fire, they too had been watching, and the former said, —

“Your orders, O 'tzin, are executed. The armies all stand halted at the gates of the city, and at the outlet of each canal I saw a division of canoes lying in wait.”

The 'tzin looked up at the sun, then past meridian, and replied, “It is well. When the chiefs see but one smoke from this temple they will enter the city. Go, therefore, and put out all the fires except that of Huitzil.”

And soon but one smoke was to be seen.

A little afterwards there was a loud cry from the street, and, looking down, the 'tzin saw the Spanish courier, without morion or lance, staggering as he ran, and shouting. Instantly the great gate was flung open, and the man taken in; and instantly a trumpet rang out, and then another and another. Guatamozin sprang up. The alarm-note thrilled him no less than the Christians.

The palace, before so slumberous, became alive. The Tlascalans poured from the sheds, that at places lined the interior of the parapet, and from the main building forth rushed the Spaniards, — bowmen, slingers, and arquebusiers; and the gunners took post by their guns, while the cavalry clothed their horses, and stood by the bridles. There was no tumult, no confusion; and when the 'tzin saw them in their places — placid, confident, ready — his heart beat hard: he would win, — on that he was resolved, — but ah, at what mighty cost!

Soon, half drowned by the voices of the captains mustering the enemy below, he heard another sound rising from every quarter of the city, but deeper and more sustained, where the great columns marched. He listened intently.

Though far and faint, he recognized the *susurrante*, — literally the commingled war-cries of almost all the known fighting tribes of the New World. The chiefs were faithful; they were coming, — by the canals, and up and down the great streets, they were coming; and he listened, measuring their speed by the growing distinctness of the clamor. As they came nearer, he became confident, then eager. Suddenly, everything, — objects far and near, the old palace, and the hated flags, the lake, and the purple distance, and the unflecked sky, — all melted into mist, for he looked at them through tears. So the Last of the 'Tzins welcomed his tawny legions.

While he indulged the heroic weakness, Io' and Hualpa rejoined him. About the same time Cortes and some of his cavaliers appeared on the *azoteas* of the central and higher part of the palace. They were in armor, but with raised visors, and seemed to be conjecturing one with another, and listening to the portentous sounds that now filled the welkin. And as the 'tzin, in keen enjoyment, watched the wonder that plainly possessed the enemy, there was a flutter of gay garments upon the palace, and two women joined the party.

“Nenetzin!” said Io', in a low voice.

“Nenetzin!” echoed Hualpa.

And sharper grew his gaze, while down stooped the sun to illumine the face of the faithless, as, smiling the old smile, she rested lovingly upon Alvarado's arm. He turned away, and covered his head. But soon a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he heard a voice, — the voice of the 'tzin, —

“Lord Hualpa, as once before you were charged, I charge you now. With your own hand make the signal. Io' will bring you the word. Go now.” Then the voice sunk to a whisper. “Patience, comrade. The days for many to come

will be days of opportunity. Already the wrong-doer is in the toils ; yet a little longer. Patience !”

The noise of the infidels had now come to be a vast uproar, astonishing to the bravest of the listeners. Even Cortes shared the common feeling. That war was intended he knew ; but he had not sufficiently credited the Aztec genius. The whole valley appeared to be in arms. His face became a shade more ashy as he thought, either this was of the king, or the people were capable of grand action without the king ; and he griped his sword-hand hard in emphasis of the oath he swore, to set the monarch and his people face to face ; that would he, by his conscience, — by the blood of the saints !

And as he swore, here and there upon the adjacent houses armed men showed themselves ; and directly the heads of columns came up, and, turning right and left at the corners, began to occupy all the streets around the royal enclosure.

If one would fancy what the cavaliers then saw, let him first recall the place. It was in the heart of the city. Eastward arose the *teocallis*, — a terraced hill in fact, and every terrace a vantage-point. On all other sides of the palace were edifices each higher than its highest part ; and each fronted with a wall resembling a parapet, except that its outer face was in general richly ornamented with fretwork and mouldings and arches and grotesque corbals and cantilevers. Every roof was occupied by infidels ; over the sculptured walls they looked down into the fortress, if I may so call it, of the strangers.

As the columns marched and countermarched in the streets thus beautifully bounded, they were a spectacle of extraordinary animation. Over them played the semi-transparent shimmer or thrill of air, so to speak, peculiar to armies in rapid movement, — curious effect of changing colors and multitudinous motion. The Christians studied them with

an interest inappreciable to such as have never known the sensations of a soldier watching the foe taking post for combat.

Of arms there were in the array every variety known to the Aztec service, — the long bow ; the javelin ; slings of the ancient fashion, fitted for casting stones a pound or more in weight ; the *maquahuitl*, limited to the officers ; and here and there long lances with heads of bronze or sharpened flint. The arms, it must be confessed, added little to the general appearance of the mass, — a deficiency amply compensated by the equipments. The quivers of the bowmen, and the pouches of the slingers, and the broad straps that held them to the person were brilliantly decorated. Equally striking were the costumes of the several branches of the service : the fillet, holding back the long, straight hair, and full of feathers, mostly of the eagle and turkey, though not unfrequently of the ostrich, — costly prizes come, in the way of trade, from the far *llanos* of the south ; the *escaupil*, of brightest crimson ; the shield, faced with brazen plates, and edged with flying tufts of buffalo hair, and sometimes with longer and brighter locks, the gift of a mistress or a trophy of war. These articles, though half barbaric, lost nothing by contrast with the naked, dark-brown necks and limbs of the warriors, — lithe and stately men, from whom the officers were distinguished by helmets of hideous device and mantles indescribably splendid. Over all shone the ensigns, *indicia* of the tribes : here a shining sphere ; there a star, or a crescent, or a radial sun ; but most usually a floating cloth covered with blazonry.

With each company marched a number of priests, bare-headed and frocked, and a corps of musicians, of whom some blew unearthly discords from conchs, while others clashed cymbals, and beat atabals fashioned like the copper tam-tams of the Hindoos.

Even the marching of the companies was peculiar. Instead of the slow, laborious step of the European, they came on at a pace which, between sunrise and sunset, habitually carried them from the bivouac twenty leagues away.

And as they marched, the ensigns tossed to and fro; the priests sang monotonous canticles; the cymbalists danced and leaped joyously at the head of their companies; and the warriors in the ranks flung their shields aloft, and yelled their war-cries, as if drunk with happiness.

As the inundation of war swept around the palace, a cavalier raised his eyes to the temple.

"*Valgame Dios!*" he cried, in genuine alarm. "The levies of the valley are not enough. Lo, the legions of the air!"

On the *azoteas* where but the moment before only the 'tzin and Io' were to be seen, there were hundreds of caparisoned warriors; and as the Christians looked at them, they all knelt, leaving but one man standing; simultaneously the companies on the street stopped, and, with those on the house-tops, hushed their yells, and turned up to him their faces countless and glistening.

"Who is he?" the cavaliers asked each other.

Cortes, cooler than the rest, turned to Marina: "Ask the princess Nenetzin if she knows him."

And Nenetzin answered, —

"The 'tzin Guatamo."

As the two chiefs surveyed each other in full recognition, down from the sky, as it were, broke an intonation so deep that the Christians were startled, and the women fled from the roof.

"*Ola!*" cried Alvarado, with a laugh. "I have heard that thunder before. Down with your visors, gentlemen, as ye care for the faces your mothers love!"

Three times Hualpa struck the great drum in the sanctuary of Huitzil'; and as the last intonation rolled down over the city the clamor of the infidels broke out anew, and into the enclosure of the palace they poured a cloud of missiles so thick that place of safety there was not anywhere outside the building.

To this time the garrison had kept silence; now, standing each at his post, they answered. In the days of the former siege, besides preparing banquettes for the repulsion of escalades, they had pierced the outer walls, generally but little higher than a man's head, with loop-holes and embrasures, out of which the guns, great and small, were suddenly pointed and discharged. No need of aim; outside, not farther than the leap of the flames, stood the assailants. The effect, especially of the artillery, was dreadful; and the prodigious noise, and the dense, choking smoke, stupefied and blinded the masses, so unused to such enginery. And from the wall they shrank staggering, and thousands turned to fly; but in pressed the chiefs and the priests, and louder rose the clangor of conchs and cymbals: the very density of the multitude helped stay the panic.

And down from the temple came the 'tzin, not merely to give the effect of his presence, but to direct the assault. In the sanctuary he had arrayed himself; his *escaupil* and *til-matti*, of richest feather-work, fairly blazed; his helm and shield sparkled; and behind, scarcely less splendid, walked Io' and Hualpa. He crossed the street, shouting his war-cry. At sight of him, men struggling to get away turned to fight again.

Next the wall of the palace the shrinking of the infidels had left a clear margin; and there, the better to be seen by his people, the 'tzin betook himself. In front of the embrasures he cleared the lines of fire, so that the guns were often ineffectual; he directed attention to the loopholes, so

that the appearance of an arbalest or arquebus drew a hundred arrows to the spot. Taught by his example, the warriors found that under the walls there was a place of safety; then he set them to climbing; for that purpose some stuck their javelins in the cracks of the masonry; some formed groups over which others raised themselves; altogether the crest of the wall was threatened in a thousand places, insomuch that the Tlascalans occupied themselves exclusively in its defence; and as often as one raised to strike a climber down, he made himself a target for the quick bowmen on the opposite houses.

And so, wherever the 'tzin went he inspired his countrymen; the wounded, and the many dead and dying, and the blood maddened instead of daunting them. They rained missiles into the enclosure; upon the wall they fought hand to hand with the defenders; in their inconsiderate fury, many leaped down inside, and perished instantly, — but all in vain.

Then the 'tzin had great timbers brought up, thinking to batter in the parapet. Again and again they were hurled against the face of the masonry, but without effect.

Yet another resort. He had balls of cotton steeped in oil shot blazing into the palace-yard. Against the building, and on its tiled roof, they fell harmless. It happened, however, that the sheds in which the Tlascalans quartered consisted almost entirely of reeds, with roofs of rushes and palm-leaves; they burst into flames. Water could not be spared by the garrison, for the drought was great; in the extremity, the Tlascalans and many Christians were drawn from the defences, and set to casting earth upon the new enemy. Hundreds of the former were killed or disabled. The flames spread to the wooden outworks of the wall. The smoke almost blotted out the day. After a while a part of the wall fell down, and the infidels rushed in; a steady fire of arque-

buses swept them away, and choked the chasm with the slain; still others braved the peril; company after company dashed into the fatal snare uselessly, as waves roll forward and spend themselves in the gorge of a sea-wall.

The conflict lasted without abatement through long hours. The sun went down. In the twilight the great host withdrew, — all that could. The smoke from the conflagration and guns melted into the shades of night; and the stars, mild-eyed as ever, came out one by one to see the wrecks heaped and ghastly lying in the bloody street and palace-yard.

All night the defenders lay upon their arms, or, told off in working parties, labored to restore the breach.

All night the infidels collected their dead and wounded, thousands in number. They did not offer to attack, — custom forbade that; yet over the walls they sent their vengeful warnings.

All night the listening sentinels on the parapet noted the darkness filled with sounds of preparation from every quarter of the city. And they crossed themselves, and muttered the names of saints and good angels, and thought shudderingly of the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE LEAGUER YET.

GUATAMOZIN took little rest that night. The very uncertainty of the combat multiplied his cares. It was not to be supposed that his enemy would keep to the palace, content day after day with receiving assaults; that was neither his character nor his policy. To-morrow he would certainly open the gates, and try conclusions in the streets