THE FAIR GOD.

BOOK FIVE.

CHAPTER XI.

(Continued.)

"Guatamozin!" said the king, more in astonishment than anger.

"Even so. O king—father—to bear a soldier's part today, I have dared your judgment." Lifting his eyes to the monarch's, he endured his gaze steadily, but at the same time, with such an expression of sympathy that roproof was impossible. "I am prepared for any sentence; but first let me know, let the lords and all the people know, is this going in truth of your own free will?"

Montezuma regarded him fixedly, but not in wrath.

"I conjure you, uncle, father, king—I conjure you by our royal blood, by our country, by all the gods—are these strangers guests or guards? Speak! I pray you, speak but one word."

The poor, stricken monarch heard, and was prostrated by the tone of anguish; yet he replied:

"My brother's son insults me by his question. I am still the king—free to go and come, to reward and punish."

He would have spoken further, and kindly, but for the interruption of Cortes, who cried impatiently:—

"Ho, there! Why this delay? Forward!"

And thereupon Avila stepped rudely and insolently between the king and 'tzin. The latter's breast swelled, and his eyes blazed; he seemed like a tiger about to leap.

"Beware!" said the king, and the warning was in time. "Beware! Not here, not now!"

The 'tzin turned to him with a quick, anxious look of inquiry; a revulsion of feeling ensued; he arose, and said with bowed head: "I understand. O king, if we help not ourselves we are lost. 'Not here, not now.' I catch the permission." Pointing to Avila, he added, "This man's life is in my hands, but I pass it by; thine, O uncle, is the most precious. We will punish these insolents, but not here; we will give you rescue, but not now. Be of cheer."

He then stepped aside and the melancholy cortege passed on, leaving the lords and people and the empire, as represented by them in the dust. Before the *teocollis*, under the eyes of Cuitlahua, within hailing distance of the ten thousand warriors, the doughty cavaliers bore their prize unchallenged.

And through the gates of the old palace, through the files of Spaniards in order of battle waiting, they also carried what they thought was the empire, won without a blow, to be parcelled at pleasure—its lands, its treasures, its cities and its people.

BOOK SIX.

CHAPTER I.

THE LORD HUALPA FEELS HIS FORTUNE.

The 'tzin Guatamo sat at breahfast alone in his palace near Iztapalapan. The fare was simple—a pheasant, bread of maize, oranges and bananas, and water from the spring; and the repast would have been soon despatched but for the announcement, by a slave in waiting, of the Lord Hualpa. As mention of the name the 'tzin's countenance assumed a glad expression.

"The Lord Hualpa! The gods be praised! Bid him come."

Directly the visitor appeared at the door, and paused there, his eyes fixed upon the floor, his body bent, like one half risen from a salutation. The 'tzin went to him, and taking his hand, said:

"Welcome, comrade. Come and account for yourself. I know not yet how to punish you; but for the present, sit there, and eat. If you come from Tenochtitlan this morning, you must bring with you the appetite which is one of the blessings of the lake. Sit, and I will order your breakfast."

"No, good 'tzin, not for me, I pray you. I am from the lake, but do not bring any blessing."

The 'tzin resumed his seat, looking searchingly and curiously at his guest, and pained by his manner and appearance. His face was careworn; his frame bent and emaciated; his look constantly downward; the voice feeble and of uncertain tone; in short, his aspect was that of one come up from a battle in which shame and grief had striven with youth of body and soul, and, fierce as the struggle had been, the end was not yet. He was the counterpart of his former self.

"You have been sick," said the 'tzin, after awhile.

"Very sick, in spirit," replied Hualpa, without raising his eyes.

The 'tzin went on. "After your desertion, I caused inquiry to be made for you everywhere—at the Chalcan's, and at your palace. No one could give me any tidings. I sent a messenger to Tihuanco, and your father was no better informed. Your truancy has been grievous to your friends, no less than to yourself. I have a right to call you to account."

"So you have; only let us to the garden. The air outside is sweet, and there is a relief in freedom from walls."

From habit, I suppose, they proceeded to the arena set apart for military exercise. No one was there. The 'tzin seated himself on a bench, making room for Hualpa, who still declined the courtesy, saying:

"I will give an account of myself to you, brave 'tzin, not only because I should, but because I stand in need of your counsel. Look for nothing strange; mine is a simple story of shame and failure. You know its origin already. You remember the last night I spent with you here. I do, at least. That day the king made me happier than I shall ever be again. When I met you at the landing the kiss of my betrothed was sweet upon my lips, and I had but one sorrow in the world—that you were an exile, and could not take part, as you so wished and deserved, in the battle which my hand was to precipitate next noon. I left you, and by dawn was at my post in the temple. The hours were long. At last the time came. All was ready. The ten thousand warriors chosen for the assault were in their quarters. The Lord Cuitlahua was in the tower of Huitzil', with the *teotuctli* and his pabas, at prayer. We awaited only the king's word. Finally Io' appeared. I saw him coming. I raised the stick, my blood was warm, another instant and the signal would have been given—" Hualpa's voice trembled, and he stopped.

"Go on," said the 'tzin. "What restrained you?"

"I remembered the words of the king—'Io' will come to you at noon with my commands,'—those were the words. I waited. 'Strike!' said Io'. 'The command—quick!' cried. 'As you love life, strike!' he shouted. Something unusual had taken place; I hesitated. 'Does the king so command?' I asked. 'Time never was as precious! Give me the stick,' he replied. But the duty was mine. 'With your own hand give the signal'—such was the order. I resisted, and he gave over the effort, and, throwing himself at my feet, prayed me to strike. I refused the prayer also. Suddenly he sprang up and ran out to the verge of the temple overlooking the street. Lest he should cast himself off I followed. He turned to me as I approached, and cried, with upraised hands, 'Too late, too late! We are undone. Look where they carry him off.' 'Whom?' I asked. 'The king—my father—a prisoner!' Below, past the *coatapantli*, the royal palanquin was being borne, guarded by the strangers. The blood stood still in my heart. I turned to the prince; he was gone. A sense of calamity seized me. I ran to the tower and called the Lord Cuitlahua, who was in time to see the procession. I shall never forget the awful look he gave me, or his words."

Hualpa again paused.

"What were they?" asked the 'tzin.

"'My Lord Hualpa,' he said, 'had you given the signal when Io' came to you first, I could have interposed my companies, and saved him. It is now too late; he is lost. May the gods forgive you! A ruined country cannot.'"

"Said he so?" exclaimed the 'tzin indignantly. "By all the gods, he was wrong!"

At these words, Hualpa for the first time dared look into the 'tzin's face, surprised, glad—yet doubtful.

"How?" he asked. "Did you say I was right?"

"Yes."

Tears glistened in the Tihuancan's eyes, and he seized and kissed his friend's hand with transport.

(To be continued.)

Definitions of Bible Terms.

A geran was 1 cent.
A farthing was 3 cents.
A shekel of gold was $38.
A talent of gold was $13,800.
A talent of silver was $538.33.
A bin was one gallon and two pints.
Ezekiel's reed was nearly eleven feet.
A shekel of silver was about 50 cents.
A cubit was nearly twenty-two inches.
A mite was less then a quarter of a cent.
A piece of silver, or penny, was 12 cents.
A Sabbath day's journey was about an English mile.
An ephah, or bath, contains seven gallons and five pints.
A day's journey was about twenty-three and one fifth miles.
A firkin was seven pints, and omer was six pints, a cab was three pints.
A hand's breadth is equal to three and five eighth inches. A finger's breadth is equal to an inch.—*Evangelist.*

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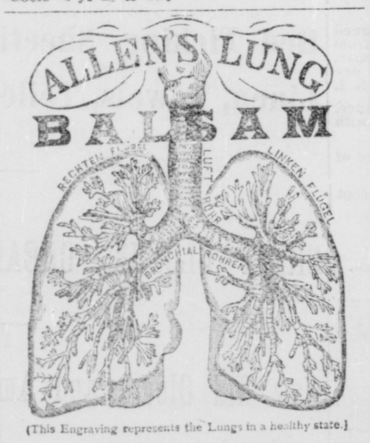

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