

True Heroism.

It calls for something more than brain
On bloody, ghastly fields
When honor greets the man that wins,

Here is a hero staunch and brave,
Who fights an unseen foe,
And puts at last beneath his feet
His passions base and low.

It calls for something more than brain
Or muscle to overcome
An enemy who marches not
With banner, plume or drum—

All honor, then, to that brave heart,
Through rich or poor he be,
Who struggles with his baser part—
Who conquers and is free.

THE FAIR GOD.

BOOK SEVEN.

CHAPTER I.

(Continued.)

So she answered the 'tzin's appeal, and the answer was from her heart; and, seeing of what heroism she dreamed, his dark eyes glowed with admiration.

"I give you honor, Tala—I give you honor for the thought; but forgive me if I think you beguiled by your love. There was a time when he was capable of what you have imagined. Alas! he is changed; he will never choose—never!"

"Such changes are not always of years. Who is he that to-night, only to-night, driven by a faltering of the will, which in the king, my father, is called weakness, brought himself prayerfully to a woman's feet, and begged her to divide with him a burden imposed upon his conscience by a decree of the gods? Who is he, indeed? Study yourself, O 'tzin, and commiserate him, and bethink you, if he choose not, it will be yours to choose for him.

"Until I return! May be I cannot. Malinche may hold me prisoner."

"From love to war—the step was short. "True," he said. "The armies will await my signal of attack, and they must not wait upon uncertainties."

"He arose and paced the floor, and when he paused he said, firmly: "I will set you down at the gate in the early morning, that you may see your father before Malinche sees him. And when you speak to him, ask not if I may not make the war; on that I am resolved; but tell him what no other can—that I look forward to the time when Malinche, like the Tonahua, will bring him from his chamber, and show him to the people, to distract them again. And when you have told him that, speak of what the gods have laid upon me, and then say what I say, 'Come he so, whether of choice or by force, the dread duty shall be done. The gods helping me, I will strike for Anahuac.' And if he ask what I would have him do, answer, 'A king's duty to his people—'

"Tala heard him to the end, and buried her face in her hands, and there was a long silence. "Poor king! poor father!" she said at last. "For me to ask him to die! A heavy, heavy burden, O 'tzin!"

"The gods help you!" he replied. "If Malinche hold me prisoner, how will the weather avail you?"

"Take them with you, and from the roof, if your father resolve not, show the green one. Alas, then, for me! If in its stead, you wave the white one, I shall know that he comes, if so he does, by force, and that—his voice trembled—"it is his will Anahuac should live."

She listened, wistfully, and replied, "I understand: Anahuac saved means Montezuma lost. But doubt him not, doubt him not; he will remember his glory's day, and die as he has lived."

CHAPTER II.

THE CONQUEROR ON THE CAUSEWAY AGAIN.

As predicted by the 'tzin, the Spaniards set out early next morning—the morning of the 24th of June—by the causeway from Itzapalapan, already notable in this story.

At their head rode the Senor Hernan, silent, thoughtful, and not well pleased; pondering, doubtless, the misconduct of the adelantado in the old palace to which he was marching, and the refusal condition it might impose upon the expedition.

"The cavaliers next in the order of march, which was that of battle, rode and talked as men are wont when drawing nigh the end of a long and toilsome task. This the leader at length interrupted: "Senores, come near. Yonder you may see the gate of Xoloc," he continued, when they were up. "If the heathen captains think to obstruct our entry, they would do well, now that our ships lie sunken in the lake, to give us battle there. Ride we forward to explore what preparations, if any, they have made."

"Fina companeros!" cried Cortes, riding through the shadow of the battlements. "Give the words the 'scabards again. The way to the palace is open." And, waiting till the columns were at their heels, he turned to the trumpeters, and shouted, cheerily, "Ola, ye lazy knaves! Since the march began, ye have not been heard from. Out, now, and blow! Blow as if ye were each a Roland, with Roland's horn. Blow merrily a triumphal march, that our brethren in the leaguer ahead may know deliverance at hand."

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