

THE FAIR GOD.

BOOK SIX. CHAPTER VIII. (Continued.)

Then Teetzel said earnestly, "Now that you have eaten, good Quetzal, come and let us go to my father."

Ortegulla made up his mind speedily; he could not do worse than go back the way he came; and the light here was so beautiful, and the darkness there so terrible; and here was company. Just then, also, as a further incident, he heard the whistle of a bird, and fancied he distinguished the smell of flowers.

"A garden," he said, in his soul—"a garden and birds, and liberty!" The welcome thought thrilled him inexpressibly. "Yes, I will go," and aloud, "I am ready."

"Here, here, good Quetzal." Here by the fountain he lies. All her concern was for the paba. And through the many pillars of stone, and along a walk bounded by shrubs and all manner of dwarfed tropical trees, half blinded by the light, but with the scent of flowers and living vegetation in his nostrils, and the carol of birds in his ears, and full of wonder unspeakable, he was taken, without pause, to the fountain. At the sight of the sparkling jet, his fever of thirst raged more intensely than ever.

"Water, water!" Blessed Mother, I see it again! "A cup—quick—a cup!" He seized one on the table, and drank, and drank again, crying between each breath, "To the Mother the praise!"

Looking to the couch, whither she had gone, he saw the figure of the paba stretched out like a corpse. He approached, and, searching the face, and laying his hand upon the heart, asked, in a low voice, "How long has your father been asleep?"

"A long time," she replied. "Just Christ!" He is dead, and she does not know it! he thought, amazed at her simplicity. Again he regarded her closely, and for the first time was struck by the beauty of face and form, by the brightness of her eyes, by the hair, wavy on the head and curling over the shoulders, by the simple childish dress, and sweet voice; above all, by the innocence and ineffable purity of her look and manner, all then discernible in the full glare of the lamps.

Her eyes opened wide. "Never, never wake! Why?" "He is dead."

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