

THE FAIR GOD.

BOOK SIX.

CHAPTER VI.

(Continued.)

Several times, as he advanced, he came to cross passages. Of the distance made he could form no idea. Once he descended a flight of steps, and at the bottom judged himself a story below the level of the court and the street; reflecting, however, that he could not have clomb them on the way in without some knowledge of them, he again paused for consideration. The end of the passage was not reached; he could not say the door he sought was not there; he simply believed not; still he resolved to go back to the starting point and begin anew.

He set out bravely, and proceeded with less caution than in coming. Suddenly he stopped. He had neglected to count the doors and intersecting passages along the way; consequently he could not identify the starting-point when he reached it. Merciful God! he was now indeed lost!

For a time he struggled against the conviction; but when the condition was realized, a paroxysm seized him. He raised his hands wildly, and shouted "Ola! Ola!" The cry smote the walls near by until they rang again, and, flying down the passage, died ringingly in the many chambers, leaving him so shaken by the discordance that he covered nearly to the door, as if in need of human help, he had conjured a demon, and looked for its instant appearance. Summoning all his resolution, he again shouted the challenge, but with the same result; no reply except the mocking echoes, no help. He was in a tomb, buried alive! And at that moment, resulting doubtless from the fever of mind and body, he was conscious of the first decided sensation of thirst, accompanied by the thought of running water, cool, sweet and limpid; as if to add to his torture, he saw then not only that he was immersed alive, but how and what he was to die. Then also he saw why his enemies gave up the pursuit at the passage door. Lost in the depths of the Cu, out of reach of help, groping here and there through the darkness, in hours condensing years of suffering, dead, finally, of hunger and thirst—was he not as much a victim as if formally butchered by the *teotihuacanos*? And if, in the eyes of the heathen god, suffering made the sacrifice appreciable, when was there one more perfect?

"No, no," he cried, "I am a Christian, in care of the Christian's God. I am too young, too strong. I can walk, I can walk, I can walk, and there are hours and days before me, I will find the door. Courage, courage! And thou, dear, blessed mother! if ever thou dost permit a shrine in the chapel of this heathen house, all that which the Senor Hernan may apportion to me thou shalt have. Hear my vow, O sweet Mother, and help me!"

How many heroisms, attributed to duty, or courage, or some high passion, are in fact due to the utter hopelessness, the blindness past seeing, the fainting of the soul called despair. In that last motive what mighty energy! How it now moved Otequilla! Down the passage he went, and with alacrity. Not that he had a plan, or with the mind's eye even saw the way; not at all. He went because in motion there was soothing to his very despair; in motion he could make himself believe there was still a hope; in motion he could expect each moment to hail the welcome door and the glory of the light.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE HOLY MOTHER HELPS HER CHILDREN.

I doubt not my reader is gentle, good and tender-hearted, easily moved by tales of suffering, and nothing delighting in them; and that, with such benignant qualities of heart and such commendable virtues of taste, he will excuse me if I turn from following the young Spaniard, who has now come to be temporarily a hero of my story, and leave to the imagination the details of the long round of misery he endured in his wanderings through the interior of the old Cu.

Pathologists will admit they are never at fault or loss in the diagnosis of cases of hunger and thirst. Whether considered as disease or accident, their marks are unmistakable, and their symptoms before dissolution, like their effects afterwards, invariable. Both may be simply described as consumption of the body by its own organs; precisely as if, to preserve life, one devoured his own flesh and drank his own blood. Note without reason, therefore, the suicide, what time he thinks no crime, always, when possible, chooses some mode easier and more expeditious. The gradations to the end are an intense desire for food and drink; a fever, accompanied by exquisite pain; then delirium; finally death. It is in the second and third stages that the peculiarities show most strangely; then the mind cheats the body with visions of Tantalus. If the sufferer be thirst-stricken he is permitted to see fountains and sparkling streams, and water in draughts and rivers; if he be starving, the same mocking fancy spreads Apician feasts before his eyes, and stimulates the intolerable misery by the sight and scent of all things delicious and appetizing. I have had personal experience of the anguish and delusions of which I speak. I know what they are. I pray the dear Mother, who has us all in holy care, to keep them far from my gentle friends.

A day and night in the temple—another day and night—morning of the third day, and we discover the page sitting upon the last of a flight of steps. No water, no food in all that time. He slept once; how long, he did not know. A stone floor does not conduce to rest even where there is sleep. All that time, too, the wearisome search for the door; groping along the wall, feeling the way ell by ell; always at fault and lost utterly. His condition can be understood almost without the aid of description. He sits on the step in a kind of stupor; his cries for help have become a dull, unmeaning moan; before him pass the fantasies of food and water; and could the light—so precious, beautiful light, so long sought, so earnestly prayed and struggled for—fall upon him, we should have a sad picture of the gay youth who, in the market, sported his velvet cloak and feathered bonnet, and half disdainfully flashed the royal signet in the faces of a despairing creature whom much misery was rapidly bringing down to death.

And of his thoughts, or, rather, the vagaries that had taken the place of thoughts—ah, how well they can be divined! While given to the far-off active land, and the loved ones there—land and loved ones never again to be seen; then to the New World, full of all things strange; but mostly to his situation, lost so hopelessly, suffering so dreadfully. There were yet ideas of escape, reawakenings of the energy of despair, but less frequent every hour; indeed, he was becoming submissive to the fate. He prayed also; but his prayers had more relation to the life to come than to this one. To die without Christian rite, to leave his bones in such unhalloved place! O, for one shrieking word from father Bartolome!

In the midst of the wretchedness, and of the sighs and sobs and tears which were its actual expression, suddenly the ceiling over-

head and all the rugged sides of the passage above the line of the upper step of the stairway at the foot of which he was sitting were illumined by a faint red glow of light. He started to his feet. Could it be? Was it not a delusion? Were not his eyes deceiving him? In the darkness he had seen banquets, and the chambers thereof, and had heard the gurgle of pouring wine and water. Was not this a similar trick of the imagination? or had the Blessed Mother at last heard his supplications?

He looked steadily; the glow deepened. O wondrous charm of life! To be, after dying so nearly, brought back with such strength, so quickly, and by such a trifle!

(To be continued.)

Free Rum or Cider—Which?

Whether the proposed constitutional amendment in Massachusetts against rum is also against cider, is being, as it ought to be well agitated. We believe fruit-growers feel about manufacturing a home beverage somewhat like the woman whom the learned Dr. Abernethy once remonstrated with for mutilating her husband's face and head with her finger-nails in a family jar. Said the worthy doctor:—Madam, are you not ashamed, treating the head of this family thus?—in fact, your head, madam. The virago retorted fiercely, "Well, doctor, if that be true, haven't I a right to scratch my own head?" It seems to us, prohibition advocates should reflect that, so long as humanity is untried to its surroundings and conditions of life, so long evil will exist, and human beings foolishly try to "draw misery" with strong drink. But in-crease human happiness by every possible means; lessen that mother's burden that she may bear more healthy children; then ameliorate their hunger, disease, and pain by better physical as well as moral training, and you will have plucked out the most deadly fang of the monster—intemperance, while farmers and fruit-growers are left to pursue an honest calling. Acting upon this precept, we would go farther and proclaim that thousands of families are now suffering with troubles that scores of persons have tried to relieve with strong drink. "Hot lemonade with a stick," "rock and rye" are familiar recipes. Temperance people should teach others to find some better remedy for hacking coughs, bronchitis, catarrhal inflammation, rheumatism, and neuralgia than whiskey. Said a well known Boston merchant, recently, to a party of friends: "I used to resort to whiskey when attacked with rheumatism and neuralgia. But I know a remedy—Johnson's Anodyne Liniment—that will fix it for me every time. Truly, it is the most certain remedy known for any pain or inflammation. It is used internally as much as externally. Many people do not know this. The manufacturers, I. S. Johnson & Co., Boston, Mass., will send free to any one a pamphlet telling how to use it. A teaspoonful, properly used, will accomplish wonders."

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