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"But honor, father—" "That will come by waiting." "Alas!" said the 'tzin bitterly, "I have waited too long already. I have most dismal news. When Mainzhe marched to Compoalla, he left in command here the red-haired chief whom we call Tonatiuh. This, you know, is the day of the incensing of Huitzil.

"I know, my son—an awful day! The day of cruel sacrifice, itself a defiance of Quetzal."

"What?" said Guatamozin, in angry surprise. "Are you not an Aztec?" "Yes, an Aztec, and a lover of his god, the true god, whose return he knows to be near, and—to gather energy of expression, he paused, then raised his hands as if flinging the words to a listener overhead—"and whom he would welcome, though the land be swimming in the blood of unbelievers."

The violence and incoherency astonished the 'tzin, and as he looked at the paba fixedly, he was sensible for the first time of a fear that the good man's mind was affected. And he considered his age and habits, his days and years spent in a great, cavernous house, without amusement, without companionship, without varied occupation; for the thinker, it must be remembered, knew nothing of Teocotl or the world she made so delightful. Moreover, was not mania the effect of long brooding over wrongs, actual or imaginary? Or, to put the thought in another form, how often had that solitary watcher of decay, where of all places decay is most affecting, midst antique and temple splendor, should make the cause of Quetzal's ill, until, at last, as the one idea of his being, it mastered him so absolutely that a division of his love was no longer possible. If the missing had come alone, the pain that wrung the 'tzin would have resolved itself in pity for the victim, so old, so faithful, so passionate; but a dreadful consequence of once presented itself. By a strange fatality the mystery had been taken into the royal council, where, from force of faith, he had gained faith. Now—and this was the dread—what if he had cast the glamor of his mind over the king's and superinduced a policy which had for its object and end the peaceful transfer of the nation to the strangers?

This thought thrilled the 'tzin indefinitely, and in a moment his pity changed to deep distrust. To master himself he walked away; coming back he said quietly: "The day you pray for has come; rejoice, if you can."

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"No victims, no blood!" cried Mualox, clapping his hands. "Blessed be Quetzal!" "The 'tzin bore the interruption, though with an effort.

"In the midst of the service," he continued, "when the yard was crowded, and the revelry gayest, and the good company most happy and unsuspecting, dancing, singing, feasting, suddenly Tonatiuh and his people rushed upon them, and began to kill, and stayed not their hands until, of all the revellers, not one was left alive; leaders in battle, ministers at the altar, old and young—all were slain! O such a piteous sight! The court is a pool of blood. Who will restore the flower this day torn from the nation? O holy gods, what have we done to merit such calamity?"

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