

THE FAIR GOD. BOOK SIX.

CHAPTER V. (Continued.)

The lad, as I think I have before remarked, had been detailed by Cortes to attend...

On this occasion—the day after the interview between the 'tzin and Mualox—while executing some trifling commission in the market, he became conscious of a change in the demeanor of those whom he met; of courtesies there were none; he was not once saluted; even the jewellers with whom he dealt viewed him coldly, and asked not a word about the king; yet, unaware of danger, he went to the portico of the Chalcan, and sat awhile, enjoying the shade and the fountain and listening to the noisy commerce without.

Presently he heard the din of conchs and atabals, the martial music of the Aztecs. Somewhat startled, and half hidden by the curtains, he looked out and beheld, coming from the direction of the king's palace a procession bearing ensigns and banners of all shapes, designs and colors.

At the first sound of the music, the people, of whom, as usual, there were great numbers in the plaza, quitted their occupations and ran to meet the spectacle, which, without halting, came swiftly down to the Chalcan; so that there passed within a few feet of the adventurous page a procession rarely beautiful—a procession of warriors marching in deep files, each one helmeted and with a shield at his back and a banner in his hand—an army with banners.

At the head, apart from the others, strode a chief whom all eyes followed. Even Ortegulla was impressed with his appearance. He wore a tunic of very brilliant feather-work, the skirt of which fell almost to his knees; from the skirt to the ankles his lower limbs were bare; around the ankles, over the thongs of the sandals were rings of furnished silver; on his left arm he carried a shield a shining metal, probably brass, its rim fringed with locks of flowing hair, and in the centre the device of an owl, snow white, and wrought of the plumage of the bird; over his temples, fixed firmly in the golden head-band, there were wings of a parrot, green as emerald, and half spread. He exceeded his followers in stature, which appeared the greater by reason of the long Chinaman's spear in his right hand, used as a staff. To the right was added an air severely grand; for, as he marched, he looked neither to the right nor left—apparently not absorbed to notice the people, many of whom even knelt upon his approach. From the cries that saluted the chief, together with the descriptions he had often heard of him, Ortegulla recognized Gaatomozin.

The procession well nigh passed, and the young Spaniard was studying the devices on the ensigns when a hand was laid upon his shoulder; turning quickly to the intruder, he saw the Prince Iz, whom he was in the habit of meeting daily in the audience-chamber of the king. The prince met his smile and pleasantly with a sombre face, and said, coldly: "You have been kind to the king, my father; he loves you; on your hand I see his signet; therefore I will serve you. Arise, and begone; stay not a moment. You were never nearer death than now."

Ortegulla, scarce comprehending, would have questioned him, but the prince spoke on. "The chiefs who inhabit here are in the procession. Had they found you, Huitzil would have had a victim before sunset. Stay not; begone!"

While speaking, Iz moved to the curtained doorway from which he had just come. "Beware of the people in the square; trust not to the signet. My father is still the king; but the lords and pabas have given his power to another—him whom you saw pass just now before the banners. In all Anahuac, Gaatomozin's word is the law, and that word is War." And with that he passed into the house.

The page was a soldier, not so much in strength as experience, and brave from habit; now, however, his heart stood still, and a deadly coldness came over him; his life was in peril. What was to be done?

The procession passed by, with the multitude in a fever of enthusiasm; then the lad ventured to leave the portico and start for his quarters, to gain which he had first to traverse the side of the square he was on; that done he would be in the beautiful street, going directly to the desired place. He strove to carry his ordinary air of confidence; but the quick step, pale face and furtive glance would have been tell-tales to the shopkeepers and slaves whom he passed if he had been the least observant. As it was, he had almost reached the street, and was felicitating himself, when he heard a yell behind him. He looked back and beheld a party of warriors coming at full speed. The cries and gestures left no room to doubt that he was their object. He started at once for life.

The noise drew everybody to the doors, and forthwith everybody joined in the chase. After passing several bridges, the leading pursuers were about seventy yards behind him, followed by a stream of supporters extending to the tianquez and beyond. So we have the scene with which the chapter opens.

The page's situation was indeed desperate. He had not yet reached the king's palace, on the other side of which, as he knew, lay a stretch of street frightful to think of in such a strait. The mob was coming rapidly. To add to his horror in front appeared a body of men armed and marching toward him; by the sight they halted; then they formed a line of interception. His steps flagged; fainter, but more agonizing, arose his prayer to Christ and the Mother. Into the recesses on either hand, and into the doors and windows, and up to the roofs, and down into the canals, he cast despairing glances; but chance there was not; capture was certain, and then the—SACRIFICE!

darted up the steps; before his foremost pursuer was at the bottom he was at the top. With a glance he swept the acetos. Through the wide, doorless entrance of a turret he saw an altar of stainless white marble, decorated profusely with flowers; imagining there might be pabas present, and possibly devotees, he ran around the holy place, and came to a flight of steps, down which he passed to a did not about his speed, for behind him he heard—at least he fancied so—the swift feet of his pursuers. Either the dear Mother of his prayers, or some ministering angel, had him in keeping during the blind flight; but at last he struck obliquely against a wall; in the effort to recover himself, he reeled against another; then he measured his length upon the floor, and remained exhausted and fainting.

(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 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 unfitted to its surroundings and conditions of life, so long evil will exist, and human beings foolishly try to drown misery with strong drink. But to increase 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 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 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, bronchial irritations, 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 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." dy 61 w li

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