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"Be Just and Fear not—Let all the Ends thou Aims't at, be thy Country's, thy God's land Truth's."

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MONTEZUMA'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXV.
THOMAS IS DOOMED.

At the words of Cortes two Spaniards came forward, and seizing me one by either arm they led me across the roof of the house toward the stairway. Otomie had heard also, and though she did not understand the words she read the face of Cortes and knew well that I was being taken to imprisonment or death. As I passed her she started forward, a terror shining in her eyes. Fearing that she was about to throw herself upon my breast, and thus reveal herself as my wife and bring my fate upon her, I glanced at her warningly, then made pretense to stumble, and as though with fear and exhaustion I fell at her feet. The soldiers who led me laughed brutally, and one of them kicked me with his heavy boot. But Otomie stooped down and held her hand to me to help me rise, and as I did so she spoke low and swiftly.

"Farewell, wife," I said. "Whatever happens, keep silent."

"Farewell," she answered. "If you must die, await me in the gates of death, for I will join you there."

"Nay, live on. Time shall bring comfort."

"You are my life, beloved. With you time ends for me."

Now I was on my feet again, and I think that none noted our whispered words, for all were listening to Cortes, who rated the man that had kicked me.

"I bade you guard this traitor—not to kick him," he said angrily in Castilian. "Will you put us to open shame before these savages? So once more, and you shall pay for it dearly. Learn a lesson in gentleness from that woman. She is starving, yet she leaves her food to help your prisoner to his feet. Now take him away to camp and see that he comes to no harm, for he can tell me much."

Then the soldiers led me away, grumbling as they went, and the last thing I saw was the despairing face of Otomie, my wife, as she gazed after me, faint with the secret agony of our parting. But when I came to the head of the stairway Guatemoc, who stood near, took my hand and shook it.

"Farewell, my brother," he said, with a heavy smile. "The game we played together is finished, and now it is time for us to rest. I thank you for your valor and your aid."

"Farewell, Guatemoc," I answered. "You are fallen, but let this comfort you—in your fall you have found immortal fame."

"On, on!" growled the soldiers, and I went, little thinking how Guatemoc and I should meet again.

They took me to a canoe, and we were paddled across the lake by Tlascalans till at length we came to the Spanish camp.

The rooms of the stone house where they imprisoned me had a window secured by bars of wood, and through these bars I could see and hear the revelings of the soldiers during the time of my confinement. All day long, when they were not on duty, and most of the night also, they gambled and drank, staking tens of pesos on a single throw, which the loser must pay out of his share of the countless treasures of the Aztecs. Little did they care if they won or lost, they were so sure of plunder, but played on till drink overpowered them and they rolled senseless beneath the tables, or till they sprang up and danced wildly to and fro, catching at the sunbeams and screaming, "Gold, gold, gold!"

Listening at this window also I gathered some of the tidings of the camp. I learned that Cortes had come back, bringing Guatemoc and several of the princes with him, together with many of the noble Aztec ladies. Indeed I saw and heard the soldiers gambling for these women when they were weary of their play for money, a description of each of them being written on a piece of paper. One of these ladies answered well to Otomie, my wife, and she was put up to auction by the brute who won her in the gamble and sold to a common soldier for a hundred pesos, for these men never doubted but that the women and the gold would be handed over to them.

Thus things went for several days, during which I sat and slept in my prison untroubled by any, except the native woman who waited on me and brought me food in plenty. During those days I ate as I have never eaten before, since, and I slept much, for my sorrows could not rid my body of its appetites and commanding need for food and rest. Indeed I verily believe that at the end of a week I had increased in weight by a full half. Also my weariness was conquered at length, and I was strong again.

But when I was neither sleeping nor eating I watched at my window, hoping, though in vain, to catch some sight of Otomie or Guatemoc. If I might not see my friends, however, at least I saw my foe, for one evening De Garcia came and stared at my prison. He could not see me, but I saw him, and the devilish smile that flickered on his face as he went away like a wolf made me shiver with a presage of woes to come. For 10 minutes or more he stood gazing at my window hungrily, as a cat gazes at a caged bird, and I felt that he was waiting for the door to be opened and knew that it would soon be opened.

This happened on the eve of the day upon which I was put to torture. Meanwhile, as time went on, I noticed that a change came over the temper of the camp. The soldiers ceased to gamble for untold wealth; they even ceased drinking to excess and from their riotous joy, but took to hanging together in knots, discussing fiercely I could not learn of what. The day when De Garcia came to look at my prison there was a great gathering in the square opposite my prison, to which I saw Cortes ride upon a white horse and richly dressed. The meeting was too far away for me to overhear what passed, but I noticed that several officers addressed Cortes angrily, and that their speeches were loudly cheered by the soldiers. At last the great captain answered them at some length, and they broke up in silence. Next morning, after I had breakfasted, four soldiers came into my prison and ordered me to accompany them.

"Whither?" I asked.

"To the captain, traitor," their leader answered.

"It has come at last," I thought to myself, but I said only:

"It is well. Any change from this hole is one for the better."

"Certainly," he replied, "and this is your last shift."

Then I knew that the man believed that I was going to my death. In five minutes I was standing before Cortes in his private house. At his side was Marina, and around him were several of his companions in arms. The great man looked at me for awhile, then spoke:

"Your name is Wingfield. You are of mixed blood—half English and half Spanish. You were cast away in the Tabasco river and taken to Tenocitlan. There you were doomed to personate the Aztec god Tezcat and were rescued by us when we captured the great teocalli. Subsequently

you joined the Aztecs and took part in the attack and slaughter of the noche triste. You were afterwards the friend and counselor of Guatemoc and assisted in his defense of Tenocitlan. Is this true, prisoner?"

"It is all true, general," I answered.

"Good. You are now our prisoner, and had you a thousand lives you have forfeited them all because of your treachery to your race and blood. Into the circumstances that led you to commit this horrible treason I cannot enter. The fact remains you have slain many of the Spaniards and their allies—that is, being in a state of treason, you have murdered them. Wingfield, your life is forfeit, and I condemn you to die by hanging as a traitor and an apostate."

"Then there is nothing more to be said," I answered quietly, though a cold fear froze my blood.

"There is something," answered Cortes.

"Though your crimes have been many, I am ready to give you your life and freedom upon a condition. I am ready to do more—to find you a passage to Europe on the first occasion, where you may perchance escape the echoes of your infamy if God is good to you. The condition is this: We have reason to believe that you are acquainted with the hiding place of the gold of Montezuma, which was unlawfully stolen from us on the night of the noche triste—nay, we know that this is so, for you were seen to go with the canoes that were laden with it. Choose now, apostate, between a shameful death and the revealing to us of the secret of this treasure."

For a moment I wavered. On the one hand was the loss of honor, with life and liberty and the hope of home; on the other a dreadful end. Then I remembered my oath and Otomie, and what she would think of me, living or dead, if I did this thing, and I wavered no more.

"I know nothing of the treasure, general," I answered coldly. "Send me to my death."

"You mean that you will say nothing of it, traitor. Think again. If you have sworn any oaths, they are broken by God. The empire of the Aztecs is at an end; their king is my prisoner; their great city is a ruin. The true God has triumphed over these devils by my hand. Their wealth is my lawful spoil, and I must have it to pay my gallant comrades, who cannot grow rich on desolation. Think again."

"I know nothing of this treasure, general," I answered.

"Yet memory sometimes wakens, traitor. I have said that you shall die if you should fall you, and so you shall, to be sure. But death is not always swift. There are men so dumbless who have lived in Spain have heard of them, and he arched his brows and glared at me meaningly, "by which a man may die and yet live for many weeks. Now, loath as I am to do it, it seems to me that, if your memory still sleeps, I must find some such means to rouse it—before you die."

"I am in your power, general," I answered. "You call me traitor again and again. I am no traitor. I am a subject of the king of England—not of the king of Spain. I came hither, following a villain who has wrought me and mine bitter wrong—one of your company named De Garcia or Sarcada. To find him and for other reasons I joined the Aztecs. They are conquered, and I am your prisoner. At the least, deal with me as a brave man deals with a fallen enemy. I know nothing of the treasure. Kill me and make an end."

"As a man I might wish to do this, Wingfield, but I am more than a man. I am the hand of the church here in Anahuac. You have partaken with the worshippers of idols; you have seen your fellow Christians sacrificed and devoured by your brute comrades. For this alone you deserve to be tortured eternally, and doubtless that will be so after we have done with you. As for the Hidalgo Don Sarcada, I know him only as a brave companion in arms, and certainly I shall not listen to tales told against him by a wandering apostate. It is, however, unlucky for you," and here a gleam of light shot across the face of Cortes, "that there should be any old feud between you, seeing that it is to his charge that I am about to confide you. Now, for the last time, I say choose. Will you reveal the hiding place of the treasure and go free, or will you be handed over to the care of Don Sarcada till such time as he shall find means to make you speak?"

Now a great faintness seized me, for I knew that I was condemned to be tortured, and that De Garcia was to be the torturer. What mercy had I to expect from this cruel heart when I, his deadliest foe, lay in his power to wreak his vengeance on? But still my will and my honor prevailed against my terrors, and I answered:

"I have told you, general, that I know nothing of this treasure. Do your worst, and may God forgive you for your cruelty."

"Dare not speak that holy name, apostate and worshiper of idols, eater of human flesh. Let Sarcada be summoned."

A messenger went out, and for awhile there was silence. I caught Marina's glance and saw pity in her gentle eyes. But she could not help me here, for Cortes was mad because no gold had been found, and the clamor of the soldiers for reward had worn him out and brought him to this shameful remedy, he who was not cruel by nature. Still she strove to plead for me with him, whispering earnestly in his ear. For awhile Cortes listened; then he pushed her from him roughly.

"Peace, Marina," he said. "What! Shall I spare this English dog some pangs when my command and perchance my very life hangs upon the finding of the gold? Nay, he knows well where it lies hid. You said it yourself when I would have hung him for a traitor, and certainly he was one of those whom the spy saw go out with it upon the lake. Our friend was with them also, but he came back no more. Doubtless he murdered him. What is this man to you that you should plead for him? Cease to trouble me, Marina. Am I not troubled enough already?" and Cortes put his hands to his face and remained lost in thought. As for Marina, she looked at me sadly and sighed as though to say, "I have done my best," and I thanked her with my eyes.

Presently there was a sound of footsteps, and I looked up to see De Garcia standing before me. Time and hardship had touched him lightly, and the lines of silver in his curling hair and peaked beard did but add dignity to his noble presence. Indeed, when I looked at him in his dark Spanish beauty, his rich garments decked with chains of gold, as he bowed before Cortes, hat in hand, I was fain to confess that I had never seen a more gallant cavalier, or one whose aspect gave the lie so wholly to the black heart within. But knowing him for what he was my very blood quivered with hate at the sight of him, and when I thought of my own impotence and of the errand on which he had come I ground my teeth and cursed the day that I was born. As for De Garcia, he greeted me with a little cruel smile, then spoke to Cortes.

"Your pleasure, general?"

"Greeting to you, comrade," answered Cortes. "You know this renegade?"

"But too well, general. Three times he has striven to murder me."

"Well, you have escaped, and it is your hour now, Sarcada. He says that he has a quarrel with you. What is it?"

De Garcia hesitated, stroking his peaked beard, then answered: "I am loath to tell it because it is a tale of error for which I have often sorrowed and done penance. Yet I will speak for fear you should think worse of me than I deserve. This man has some cause to mislike me since, to be frank, when I was younger than I am today and given to the follies of youth it chanced that in England I met his mother, a beautiful Spanish lady who by ill fortune was wedded to an Englishman, this man's father and a clown of clowns, who maltreated her. I will be short. The lady learned to love me, and I worsted her husband in a duel; hence this traitor's hate of me."

I heard and thought that my heart must burst with fury. To all his wickedness and offenses against me De Garcia now had added slander of my dead mother's honor.

"You lie, you murderer!" I gasped tearing at the ropes that bound me.

"I must ask you to protect me from such insult, general," De Garcia answered coldly. "Were the prisoner worthy of my sword I would ask further that his bonds should be loosed for a little space, but my honor would be tarnished forever were I to fight with such as he."

"Dare to speak thus once more to a gentleman of Spain," said Cortes coldly, "and you heathen dog, your tongue shall be dragged from you with red-hot pinchers. For you, Sarcada, I thank you for your confidence. If you have no worse crime than a love affair upon your soul, I think that our good chaplain, Olmedo, will frank you through the purgatorial fires. But we waste words and time. This man has the secret of the treasure of Guatemoc and of Montezuma. If Guatemoc and his nobles will not tell it, he at least may be forced to speak, for the torments that an Indian can endure without a groan will soon bring truth bubbling from the lips of the white heathen. Take him, Sarcada, and hearken, let him be your special care. First let him suffer with the others, and afterward, should he prove obstinate, alone. The method I leave to you. Should he confess, summon me."

"Pardon me, general, but this is no task for a Hidalgo of Spain. I have been more wont to pierce my enemies with the sword than to tear them with pinchers," said De Garcia, but as he spoke I saw a gleam of triumph shine in his black eyes and heard the ring of triumph through the mock anger of his voice.

"I know it, comrade. But this must be done. Though I hate it, it must be done. There is no other way. The gold is necessary to me—by the Mother of God, the knaves say that I have stolen it—and I doubt these stubborn Indian dogs will never speak, however great their agony. This man knows, and I give him over to you because you are acquainted with his wickedness, and that knowledge will steel your heart against all pity. Spare not, comrade. Remember that he must be forced to speak."

"It is your command, Cortes, and I will obey it, though I love the task little. With one proviso, however—that you give me your warrant in writing."

"It shall be made out at once," answered the general. "And now away with him."

"Where to?"

"To the prison that he has left. All is ready, and there he will find his comrades."

Then a guard was summoned, and I was dragged back to my own place. De Garcia saying as I went that he would be with me presently.

CHAPTER XXVI.
DE GARCIA SPEAKS HIS MIND.

At first I was taken into the chamber that I had left, but placed in a little room opening out of it where the guard slept. Here I waited awhile, bound hand and foot and watched by two soldiers with drawn swords. As I waited, torn by rage and fear, I heard the noise of hammering through the wall, followed by a sound of groans.

At length the suspense came to an end. A door was opened, and two fierce Tlascalcan Indians came through it and seized me by the hair and ears, dragging me thus into my own chamber.

"Poor devil!" I heard one of the Spanish soldiers say as I went. "Apostate or no, I am sorry for him. This is bloody work."

Then the door closed, and I was in the place of torment. The room was darkened, for a cloth had been hung in front of the window bars, but its gloom was relieved by certain fires that burned in braziers. It was by the light of these fires chiefly that I saw the sight. On the floor of the chamber were placed three solid chairs, one of them empty. The other two were filled by none other than Guatemoc, emperor of the Aztecs, and by his friend and mine, the cazique of Taecuba. They were bound in the chairs, the burning braziers were placed at their feet, behind them stood a clerk with paper and inkhorn, and around them Indians were busy at some dreadful task, directed to it by two Spanish soldiers. Near the third chair stood another Spaniard, who as yet took no part in the play. It was De Garcia. As I looked an Indian lifted one of the braziers, and seizing the naked foot of the Taecuban prince thrust it down upon the glowing coals. For awhile there was silence; then the Taecuban broke into groans. Guatemoc turned his head toward him and spoke, and as he spoke I saw that his foot also was resting in the flames of a brazier. "Why do you complain, friend," he said in a steady voice, "when I keep silence? Am I then taking my pleasure in a bed? Follow me now as always, friend, and be silent beneath your sufferings."

The clerk wrote down his words, for I heard the quill scratching on the paper, and as he wrote Guatemoc turned his head and saw me. His face was gray with pain. Still he spoke as a hundred times I had heard him speak at council—slowly and clearly. "Alas, are you also here, my friend Teule?" he said. "I hoped that they had spared you. See how these Spaniards keep faith. Malinche swore to treat me with all honor. Behold how he honors me, with hot coals for my feet and pinchers for my flesh. They think that we have buried treasure, Teule, and would wring its secret from us. You know that it is a lie. If we had treasure, would we not give it gladly to our conquerors, the god born sons of Quetzal? You know that there is nothing left except the ruins of our cities and the bones of our dead."

Here he ceased suddenly, for the demon who tormented him struck him across the mouth, saying, "Silence, dog!"

But I understood, and I swore in my heart that I would die ere I revealed my brother's secret. This was the last triumph that Guatemoc could win, to keep his gold from the grasp of the greedy Spaniard, and that victory at least he should not lose through me. So I swore, and very soon my oath must be put to the test, for at a motion from De Garcia the Tlascalcans seized me and bound me to the third chair.

Then he spoke into my ear in Castilian: "Strange are the ways of Providence, Cousin Wingfield. You have hunted me across the world, and several times we have met, always to your sorrow. I thought I had you in the slaveship, I thought that the sharks had you in the water, but somehow you escaped me whom you came to hunt. When I knew it, I grieved, but now I grieve no more, for I see that you were reserved for this moment. Cousin Wingfield, it shall go hard if you escape me this time, and yet I think that we shall spend some days together before we part. Now I will be courteous with you. You may have a choice of evils. How shall we begin? The resources at my command are not all that we could wish, alas; the holy office is not yet here with its unholy armor, but still I have done my best. These fellows do not understand their art. Hot coals are their only inspiration. I, you see, have several," and he pointed to various instruments of torture. "Which will you select?"

"I made no answer, for I had determined that I would speak no word and utter no cry, do what they might with me."

"Let me think, let me think," went on De Garcia, smoothing his beard. "Ah, I have it! Here, slaves."

"Now I will not renew my own agonies or awake the horror of any who may chance to read what I have written by describing what befell me after this. Suffice it to say that for two hours and more this devil, helped in his task by the Tlascalcans, worked his wicked will upon me. One by one torments were administered to me with a skill and ingenuity that cannot often have been surpassed, and when at times I fainted I was recovered by cold water being dashed upon me and spirits poured down my throat. And yet, I say it with some pride, during those two dreadful hours I uttered no groan, however great my sufferings, and spoke no word, good or bad.

Nor was it only bodily pain that I must bear, for all this while my enemy mocked me with bitter words, which tormented my soul as his instruments and hot coals tormented my body. At length he paused exhausted and cursed me for an obstinate pig of an Englishman, and at that moment Cortes entered the shambles, and with him Marina.

"How goes it?" he said lightly, though his face turned pale at the sight of horror.

"The cazique of Taecuba has confessed that gold is buried in his garden. The other two have said nothing, general," the clerk answered, glancing down his paper.

"Brave men, indeed!" I heard Cortes mutter to himself. Then said aloud: "Let the cazique be carried tomorrow to the garden of which he speaks, that he may point out the gold. As for the other two, cease tormenting them for this day. Perhaps they may find another mine before tomorrow. I trust so—for their own sakes I trust so!"

Then he drew to the corner of the room and consulted with Sarcada and the other torturers, leaving Marina face to face with

Guatemoc and me. For awhile she stared at the prince as though in horror; then a strange light came into her beautiful eyes, and she spoke to him in a low voice, saying in the Aztec tongue:

"Do you remember how once you rejected me down yonder in Tabasco, Guatemoc, and what I told you then—that I should grow great in spite of you? You see, it has all come true, and more than true, and you are brought to this. Are you not sorry, Guatemoc? I am sorry, though were I as some women are perchance I might rejoice to see you thus."

"Woman," the prince answered in a thick voice, "you have betrayed your country, and you have brought me to shame and torment. Yes; had it not been for you these things had never been. I am sorry, indeed I am sorry—that I did not kill you. For the rest, may your name be shameful forever in the ears of honest men and your soul be everlastingly accursed, and may you yourself, even before you die, know the bitterness of dishonor and betrayal! Your words were fulfilled, and so shall mine be also."

She heard and turned away, trembling, and for awhile was silent. Then her glance fell upon me, and she began to weep.

"Alas, poor man!" she said. "Alas, my friend!"

"Weep not over me, Marina," I answered, speaking in Aztec, "for your tears are of no worth, but help me if you may."

"Ah, that I could!" she sobbed, and turning fled from the place, followed presently by Cortes.

Now the Spaniards came in again and removed Guatemoc and the cazique of Taecuba, carrying them in their arms, for they could not walk, and indeed the cazique was in a swoon.

"Farewell, Teule," said Guatemoc as he passed me. "You are indeed a true son of Quetzal and a gallant man. May the gods reward you in times to come for all that you have suffered for me and mine, since I cannot."

Then he was borne out, and these were the last words that I ever heard him utter.

Now I was left alone with the Tlascalcans and De Garcia, who mocked me as before.

"A little tired, eh, friend Wingfield?" he said, sneering. "Well, the play is rough till you get used to it. A night's sleep will refresh you, and tomorrow you will be a new man. Perhaps you believe that I have done my worst. Fool, this is but a beginning. Also you think doubtless that your obstinacy angers me. Wrong again, my friend. I only pray that you may keep your lips sealed to the last. Gladly would I give my share of this hidden gold in payment for two more such days with you. I have still much to pay you back, and look you, I have found a way to do it. There are more ways of hurting a man than through his own flesh—for instance, when I wished to be revenged upon your father, I struck him through her whom he loved. Now I have touched you, and you wonder what I mean. Well, I will tell you. Perhaps you may know an Aztec lady of royal blood who is named Otomie?"

"Otomie, what of her?" I cried, speaking for the first time, since fear for her stirred me more than all the torments I had borne.

"A triumph indeed! I have found a way to make you speak at last. Why, then, tomorrow you will be full of words. Only this, Cousin Wingfield. Otomie, Montezuma's daughter, a very lovely woman, by the way, is your wife according to the Indian customs. Well, I know all the story, and—she is in my power. I will prove it to you, for she will be brought here presently, and then you can console each other. For listen, dog, tomorrow she will sit where you are sitting, and before your eyes she shall be dealt with as you have been dealt with. Ah, then you will talk fast enough, but perhaps it will be too late."

And now for the first time I broke down and prayed for mercy even of my foe.

"Spare her," I groaned. "Do what you will with me, but spare her! Surely you must have a heart, even you, for you are human. You can never do this thing, and Cortes would not suffer it."

"As for Cortes," he answered, "he will know nothing of it—till it is done. I have my warrant that charges me to use every means in my power to force the truth from you. Torture has failed; this alone is left. And for the rest you must read me ill. You know what it is to hate, for you hate me. Multiply your hate by 10, and you may find the sum of mine for you. You came to take vengeance on me, and soon or later by you or through you it will be glutted, but till then I triumph—aye, even when I must sink to this butcher's work to do it," and suddenly he turned and left the place.

Then weakness and suffering overcame me, and I swooned away. When I awoke, it was to find that my bonds had been loosed, and that I lay on some sort of bed, while a woman bent over me, tending me with murmured words of pity and love. The night had fallen, but there was light in the chamber, and by it I saw that the woman was none other than Otomie, no longer starved and wretched, but almost as lovely as before the days of siege and hunger.

"Otomie, you here!" I gasped through my wounded lips, for with my senses came the memory of De Garcia's threats.

"Yes, beloved, it is I," she muttered.

"They have suffered that I nurse you, devils though they are! Oh, that I must see you thus and yet be helpless to avenge you!" and she burst into weeping.

"Hush," I said, "hush! Have we food?"

"In plenty. A woman brought it from Marina."

"Give me to eat, Otomie."

Now for awhile she fed me, and the deadly sickness passed from me, though my poor flesh burned with a hundred agonies.

"Listen, Otomie. Have you seen De Garcia?"

"No, husband. Two days since I was separated from my sister Tecuichpo and the other ladies, but I have been well treated and have seen no Spaniard except the soldiers who led me here, telling me that you were sick. Alas, I knew not from what cause!" and again she began to weep.

"Still some have seen you, and it is reported that you are my wife."

"It is likely enough," she answered, "for it was known throughout the Aztec hosts, and such secrets cannot be kept. But why have they treated you thus? Because you fought against them?"

"Are you alone?" I asked.

"The guard is without, but there is none else in the chamber."

"Then bend down your head, and I will tell you," and I told her all.

When I had done so, she sprang up with flashing eyes, and her hand pressed upon her breast and said:

"Oh, if I loved you before, now I love you more if that is possible, who could suffer thus horribly and yet be faithful to the fallen and your oath! Blessed be the day when first I looked upon your face, O my husband, most true of men! But they who could do this—what of them? Still it is done with, and I will nurse you back to health. Surely it is done with, or they had not suffered me to come to you."

"Alas, Otomie, I must tell all—it is not done with," and with faltering voice I went on with the tale—yes, and since I must I told her for what purpose she had been brought here. She listened without a word, though her lips turned pale.

"Truly," she said when I had done, "these Teules far surpass the pabas of our people, for if the priests torture and sacrifice it is to the gods and not for gold and secret hate. Now, husband, what is your counsel? Surely you have some counsel."

"I have none that I dare offer, wife," I groaned.

"You are timid as a girl who will not utter the love she burns to tell," Otomie answered, with a proud and bitter laugh.

"Well, I will speak it for you. It is in your mind that we must die tonight."

"It is," I said. "Death now, or shame and agony tomorrow, and then death at last, that is our choice. Since God will not protect us, we must protect ourselves if we can find the means."

"God! There is no God. At times I have doubted the gods of my people and turned to yours. Now I renounce and reject him. If there were a God of mercy such as you cling to, could he suffer that such things be? You are my god, husband. To you and for you I pray, and you alone. Let us have done now with pleading to those who are not, or who, if they live, are deaf to our cries and blind to our misery, and befriend ourselves. Yonder lies rope; that window has bars; very soon we can be beyond the sun and the cruelty of Teules or sound asleep. But there is time yet. Let us talk awhile. They will scarcely begin their torments before the dawn, and ere dawn we shall be far."

So we talked as well as my sufferings would allow. We talked of how we first had met; of how Otomie had been vowed to me as the wife of Tezcat, soul of the world; of that day when we had lain side by side upon the stone of sacrifice; of our true marriage thereafter, of the siege of Tenocitlan and the death of our firstborn. Thus we talked till midnight was two hours gone; then there came a silence.

"Husband," said Otomie at last in a hushed and solemn voice, "you are worn with suffering, and I am weary. It is time to do that which must be done. Sad is our fate, but at least rest is before us. I thank you, husband, for your gentleness. I thank you more for your faithfulness to my house and people. Shall I make ready for our last journey?"

"Make ready!" I answered.

Then she rose and soon was busy with the ropes. At length all was prepared, and the moment of death was at hand.

"You must aid me, Otomie," I said. "I cannot walk by myself."

She came and lifted me with her strong and tender arms till I stood upon a stool beneath the window bars. There she placed the rope about my throat; then tak-

"I come to save you if I can." ing her stand by me she fitted the second rope upon her own. Now we kissed in solemn silence, for there was nothing more to say. Yet Otomie said something, asking:

"Of whom do you think in this moment, husband? Of me and of my dead child, or of that lady who lives far across the sea? Nay, I will not ask. I have been happy in my love; it is enough. Now love and life must end together, and it is well for me, but for you I grieve. Say, shall I thrust away the stool?"

"Yes, Otomie, since there is no hope but death. I cannot break my faith with Guatemoc, nor can I live to see you shamed and tortured."

"Then kiss me first and for the last time."

We kissed again, and then, as she was in the very act of pushing the stool from beneath us, the door opened and shut, and a veiled woman stood before us, bearing a torch in one hand and a bundle in the other. She looked, and seeing us and our dreadful purpose ran to us.

"What do you?" she cried, and I knew the voice for that of Marina. "Are you then mad, Teule?"

Guatemoc and me. For awhile she stared at the prince as though in horror; then a strange light came into her beautiful eyes, and she spoke to him in a low voice, saying in the Aztec tongue:

"Do you remember how once you rejected me down yonder in Tabasco, Guatemoc, and what I told you then—that I should grow great in spite of you? You see, it has all come true, and more than true, and you are brought to this. Are you not sorry, Guatemoc? I am sorry, though were I as some women are perchance I might rejoice to see you thus."

"Woman," the prince answered in a thick voice, "you have betrayed your country, and you have brought me to shame and torment. Yes; had it not been for you these things had never been. I am sorry, indeed I am sorry—that I did not kill you. For the rest, may your name be shameful forever in the ears of honest men and your soul be everlastingly accursed, and may you yourself, even before you die, know the bitterness of dishonor and betrayal! Your words were fulfilled, and so shall mine be also."

She heard and turned away, trembling, and for awhile was silent. Then her glance fell upon me, and she began to weep.

"Alas, poor man!" she said. "Alas, my friend!"

"Weep not over me, Marina," I answered, speaking in Aztec, "for your tears are of no worth, but help me if you may."

"Ah, that I could!" she sobbed, and turning fled from the place, followed presently by Cortes.

Now the Spaniards came in again and removed Guatemoc and the cazique of Taecuba, carrying them in their arms, for they could not walk, and indeed the cazique was in a swoon.

"Farewell, Teule," said Guatemoc as he passed me. "You are indeed a true son of Quetzal and a gallant man. May the gods reward you in times to come for all that you have suffered for me and mine, since I cannot."

Then he was borne out, and these were the last words that I ever heard him utter.

Now I was left alone with the Tlascalcans and De Garcia, who mocked me as before.

"A little tired, eh, friend Wingfield?" he said, sneering. "Well, the play is rough till you get used to it. A night's sleep will refresh you, and tomorrow you will be a new man. Perhaps you believe that I have done my worst. Fool, this is but a beginning. Also you think doubtless that your obstinacy angers me. Wrong again, my friend. I only pray that you may keep your lips sealed to the last. Gladly would I give my share of this hidden gold in payment for two more such days with you. I have still much to pay you back, and look you, I have found a way to do it. There are more ways of hurting a man than through his own flesh—for instance, when I wished to be revenged upon your father, I struck him through her whom he loved. Now I have touched you, and you wonder what I mean. Well, I will tell you. Perhaps you may know an Aztec lady of royal blood who is named Otomie?"

"Otomie, what of her?" I cried, speaking for the first time, since fear for her stirred me more than all the torments I had borne.

"A triumph indeed! I have found a way to make you speak at last. Why, then, tomorrow you will be full of words. Only this, Cousin Wingfield. Otomie, Montezuma's daughter, a very lovely woman, by the way, is your wife according to the Indian customs. Well, I know all the story, and—she is in my power. I will prove it to you, for she will be brought here presently, and then you can console each other. For listen, dog, tomorrow she will sit where you are sitting, and before your eyes she shall be dealt with as you have been dealt with. Ah, then you will talk fast enough, but perhaps it will be too late."

And now for the first time I broke down and prayed for mercy even of my foe.

"Spare her," I groaned. "Do what you will with me, but spare her! Surely you must have a heart, even you, for you are human. You can never do this thing, and Cortes would not suffer it."

"As for Cortes," he answered, "he will know nothing of it—till it is done. I have my warrant that charges me to use every means in my power to force the truth from you. Torture has