

on. He represented to that monarch the danger to his own interests, of allowing such a junta of able and ambitious men to assume the guidance of the public affairs, and undertake to direct the movements of the people. "What can they do more," he craftily exclaimed, "but assume the reins of government, under the specious pretence, which they now falsely set up, that their king is deprived of his freedom to act, and therefore no longer a king. If, now, you would save your sceptre and your crown, assert at once your imperial prerogative—show them you have still the power to speak and to act—command them, on pain of your royal displeasure, to lay down their arms, desist from their treasonable assemblages, and repair at once to your court, to answer for their unloyal designs."

Misled by false representations of the facts, and deceived by the specious arguments of the Spaniard, Montezuma despatched a message to the lord of Tezcuco, under the great seal of the empire, which it was high treason to disregard, commanding him instantly to appear before his master, to answer for his irregular and ill-advised proceedings. Cacama was too well aware of the real position of Montezuma, and of the constraint under which he acted, to give any heed to his mandate.

"Tell my royal master," he replied, "that I am too much his friend to obey him in this instance. Let him banish the false-hearted Spaniards from his capital, the vipers whom he has taken to his bosom; let him ascend once more his imperial throne, not as a vassal, but as the rightful lord of all these realms, and Cacama will joyfully lay his crown, his life, his all, at his feet. Montezuma is my master when he is master of himself. To that dignity we intend to restore him, or perish in the attempt."

On the evening of the fourth day after the return of the royal messenger, with this spirited reply of Cacama, a light pirogue, guided by a single hand, its sole occupant, might have been seen gliding silently over the lake to the water-palace, the chosen rendezvous of the patriot princes. By the proud and majestic bearing of the boatman, it could be no other than Guatimozin. Securing his skiff by a cord passed through the fingers of a gigantic hand, curiously carved from the jutting rafters on which the floor of the palace was laid, he ascended the steps to the hall, which he found unoccupied and still. He was presently joined by Cuiclahua and Cacama, arriving from different directions, in the same stealthy manner. Their number was soon increased by the arrival of four Tezucan lords, from whom some important communications were expected. Scarcely had they entered the hall, and seated themselves, when, a slight noise from without, attracting his attention, Guatimozin rose, and went towards the door, to ascertain the cause.

"It is only the chafing of our pirogues against the dikes," said one of the new comers—"let us proceed to business."

Guatimozin, true to his own impulses, heeded not the remark. Stepping upon the outer battlement, he discerned a slight figure in a canoe, moving in the shadow of the building, and apparently seeking concealment. Supposing it might be a servant, left by the Tezucans in charge of their boats, he was about returning, when a gentle voice whispered his name.

"Who calls Guatimozin?" he replied in a whisper, at the same time leaning towards the intruder.

"Beware of the Tezucans, beware." The voice was Kere's, but the skiff shot away, like an arrow, before the Prince had time for further parley.

Returning to the council, he instantly demanded, as if nothing had happened, that the plans of the evening should be laid open.

A pictured scroll was then produced by the Tezucans, representing the contemplated movements of the enemy, which they professed to have ascertained from authentic sources, and delineating a plan of operations against them. Guatimozin, somewhat bewildered by the warning he had received, sat down with his friends to the examination of this scroll. But, while seemingly intent upon that alone, he contrived to keep a close watch upon the movements of the Tezucans. It was soon evident that their thoughts were not wholly engrossed by the business before them. A slight noise from without, followed instantly by an exchange of significant looks between two of the party, confirmed his suspicions. Instantly dashing away the false scroll, and springing to his feet, he boldly charged the traitors with a conspiracy, and

demanding an immediate explanation. Alarmed at this mysterious and premature disclosure of their designs, the chief of the party, without venturing a word of reply, gave a shrill, piercing whistle, which was immediately responded to from without. Finding himself entrapped, and not knowing what numbers he might have to contend with, Guatimozin sprang to the door, stretching one of the conspirators on the floor as he passed, and succeeded in reaching his skiff, just as a band of armed men rushed in from the other quarter. Cuiclahua also effected his escape, though not without a desperate encounter with one of the advancing party, who attempted to arrest his flight.

To seize his antagonist with a powerful embrace, to fling him over the parapet into the water, and to plunge in after him, was the work of an instant. Swimming under water for some distance, and rising to the surface within the shadow of the building, he took possession of the nearest canoe, and, following in the wake of Guatimozin, was soon out of the reach of danger, or pursuit.

Cacama, unsuspecting of danger, and intent only on the object of their meeting, was so engrossed with the scroll, and the plans delineated upon it, that he did not fully comprehend the meaning of this sudden interruption of their council, until his two friends had disappeared, and, in their place, a band of twenty armed men stood before him. Resistance was in vain. By order of the chief of the conspirators, he was seized, securely bound, and carried a prisoner to Tenochtitlan. There, though treated with indignity by Cortez, and with severity by Montezuma, he maintained a haughty and independent bearing, sternly refusing to yield, in the slightest degree, to the insolent dictation of the one, or the pusillanimous policy of the other. Cuiclahua was afterwards seized in his own palace of Izatapalapan; but, after a short detention, was released again, at the instigation of Montezuma.

These outrages, so far from intimidating the people, only excited and incensed them the more, and led to other and more desperate assaults upon the beleaguered foe, till Cortez, apprehensive of ultimate defeat and ruin, applied once more to Montezuma, proposing that he should appear in person before his people, and require them to lay down their arms, retire to their homes, and leave his guests in peaceable possession of the quarters he had voluntarily assigned them.

Arrayed in his royal robes, with the imperial diadem upon his head, preceded by his officers of state, bearing the golden wands, the emblem of despotic power, and accompanied by a considerable train of his own nobles, and some of the principal Castilian cavaliers, the unfortunate monarch appeared on the battlements, to remonstrate with his own people for their zeal in the defence of his crown and honor, and appease the rage of his subjects for insults offered to his own person, and to those of his loyal nobles. His presence was instantly recognized by the thronging multitudes below and around. Some prostrated themselves on the earth in profound reverence, some bent the knee, and all waited in breathless silence to hear that voice, which had so long ruled them with despotic sway.

With a sad, but at the same time a calm and dignified tone, the monarch addressed them—"My children," said he, "why are you here in this fierce array. The strangers are my friends. I abide with them as their voluntary guest, and all that you do against them, is done against me, your sovereign and father."

When the monarch declared himself the friend of the detested Spaniard, a murmur of discontent and rage arose, and ran through the assembled host.—Their ungovernable fury burst at once the barrier of loyalty, and vented itself in curses upon the king who could, in the hour of their peril forsake his people, and endeavour to betray them into the hands of a treacherous and blood thirsty foe. "Base Aztec!" they cried, "woman! coward! go back to the viper friends whom you have taken to your bosom. No longer worthy to reign over us, we cast away our allegiance for ever." At the same moment, some powerful arm, more fearless than the rest, aimed a huge stone at the head of the king, which brought him senseless to the ground. His attendants, put off their guard by the previous calm and reverential attention of the crowd, were taken by surprise. In vain they interposed their shields and bucklers, to protect his person from further violence. The fatal blow was struck. The great

Montezuma had received the death-wound from the hand of one of his own subjects, who, but a moment before, would have sacrificed a hundred lives, had he possessed them, to shield the person of his monarch from violence and dishonor.

The effect of this unexpected catastrophe seemed equally appalling to both the belligerent parties.—The Aztecs, struck aghast at their own sacrilegious deed, dispersed in sorrow and shame to their homes; while the Spaniards felt that they had lost their only remaining hold upon the forbearance and regard of a mighty people whose confidence they had shamefully abused, and whose altars and houses they had wantonly desecrated. It was a season of agonizing suspense. To retreat from their post, and abandon the conquest which they once imagined was nearly achieved, might be as disastrous as it would be humiliating. To remain in their narrow quarters, surrounded with countless thousands of exasperated foes, on whom they must be dependent for their daily supplies of food, seemed little better than madness. To the proud spirit of the haughty Castilian, the alternative was scarcely less to be dreaded than martyrdom. It was manifestly, however, the only resource, and he resolved to evacuate the city.

Meanwhile, active hostilities had been temporarily suspended. The unhappy Montezuma, smitten even more severely in heart than in person, refused alike the condolence of his friends and the skill of the Castilian surgeon. Tearing off the bandages from his wounds, "leave me alone," he cried, "I have already outlived my honour and the affection and confidence of my people. Why should I look again upon the sun or the earth. The one has no light, the other no flowers for me. Let me die here. I feel indeed that the gods have smitten me, when I fall by the hand of one of my own people."

In this disconsolate mood, the spirit of Montezuma took its flight. In vain did the Castilian general endeavor to suppress, for a time, the tidings of his death. The loud wailing of his attendants, would have published it far and wide among the thousands of affectionate hearts, that listened for every sound that issued from the palace, if they had not, unknown to the Spaniards, established a kind of telegraphic signal, by means of which they communicated to the priests on the great Teocalli daily reports of the progress of the disease. When the sad signal was given, announcing the solemn fact, that the great Montezuma had laid down his honors and his troubles together, it was responded to by the mournful tones of the great drum of the temple, by ten measured muffled strokes, conveying the melancholy intelligence to every dwelling in Tenochtitlan.

The breathing of that populous city was now one universal wail, that seemed to penetrate the very heavens. Partly from a sincere regard for the fallen monarch, and partly for the hope that he might thus conciliate the good will of his afflicted subjects, Cortez directed his remains to be placed in a splendid coffin, and borne in solemn procession, by his own nobles, to his palace, that it might be interred with the customary regal honors. It was received by his people with every demonstration of affectionate joy and respect. Conveyed with great pomp to the castle of Chapultepec, followed by an immense train of priests, nobles, and common people, it was interred amid all the imposing ceremonies of the Aztec religion. His wives and children, frantic with grief, gathered around those hallowed remains, and testified, by all those tender, and delicate tokens which seem the natural expression of a refined feminine sorrow, their profound sense of the inestimable loss they had sustained.

By one of those singular coincidences, which tend so strongly to confirm the too easy credulity of the superstitious, and give an unnatural emphasis to the common accidents of life, it was the festival of the new moon, the very day on which Montezuma had promised Tecuichpo that he would join the household circle at Chapultepec, that his lifeless remains were borne thither, in solemn funeral procession.

"Alas! my father," she cried, "is this fulfilment of that only promise which sustained my sinking courage in the hour of separation?" She said no more. The more profound the sorrow, the fewer words it has to spare. "The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb."



THE ZEBRA.

In beauty this animal must be confessed as superior to almost any other quadruped; but its native wildness defies every effort to render it serviceable in a domestic state. These creatures live in herds, frequenting the open plains, and usually in company with the Ostrich, where, by their beauty and liveliness, they adorn and animate the dreary scene; their voice is remarkably shrill, somewhat like the sound of a post-horn.

Mr. Burchell says he saw troops of thirty, intermixed with Ostriches, on the arid plains of Africa, and he thus describes their beautiful appearance; "I stopped to examine these Zebras with my pocket telescope; they were the most beautiful marked animals I had ever seen: their clean sleek limbs glittered in the sun, and the brightness and regularity of their striped coats presented a picture of extraordinary beauty, in which, probably, they are not surpassed by any quadruped with which we are at present acquainted. It is, indeed, equaled in this particular by the mountain horse, whose stripes are more defined and regular, but which do not offer to the eye so lively a coloring."

There does not appear any reason why Zebras should not be tamed by patience, perseverance and kind treatment.



THE ELK.

The Elk, or Moose Deer, have legs of great length, and a neck so short that they cannot graze on level ground like other animals, but are obliged to browse the tops of large plants, and the leaves or branches of small trees. In all their actions and movements they appear very awkward. Their faculty of hearing is supposed to be more acute than that of sight or scent, which renders it a very difficult task to kill them in the summer time; and the Indians have then no other method of doing this than by creeping after them under the trees and bushes, till they get within gun-shot. In winter, the natives are able frequently to run these animals down; for their slender legs break through the snow at every step, and plunge them up to the belly. They are so tender footed and so short winded, that a good runner will generally tire them out in less than a day. In summer the Elks frequent the margins of rivers and lakes, getting into the water in order to avoid the innumerable multitudes of musketoos, and other flies that pester them during that season. When pursued in this situation, they are the most inoffensive of all animals, never making any resistance.

A gentleman from the country, (says a Boston paper,) now stopping at one of our hotels, entered into conversation with one of the boarders, asking questions about the Fair at Quincy Hall, &c.: after some minutes conversation, the boarder drew out his cigar case and asked the countryman—

"Will you take a cigar, sir?"

"Wa-a-al, I don't mind if I dew," was the reply.

The cigar was passed to him, and, also, one which the boarder was smoking, for the purpose of giving him a light. He carefully placed the cigar first handed to him in his pocket; took his knife and cut off that end of the lighted one which had been in the mouth of his generous friend, and commenced smoking the remainder, remarking—

"It ain't often that a man from the country runs foul of so clever a feller, in the city, as you am."