

## FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

## THE TWO VISIONS.

Text: ISA. VI. 5.

BY THE BISHOP OF BROMFORD.

Two visions passed before me as I prayed:  
I saw the King, the Lord of hosts, unveiled,  
In robes of awful purity arrayed;  
And in the blinding light my spirit quailed.

And then mine eyes fell downward; and within,  
Lit with the searching fire that pierced me through,  
I saw a soul all stained with hateful sin:  
And bowed in shame I shrank back from the view.

Then, as one more I sought with trembling awe  
To scan the glories of the heavenly height,  
A Face of tenderest love methought I saw  
Shape itself out from that deep home of light:

And then I knew this double look could win  
The Twofold grace that lifts the soul above;  
For Penitence beholds the guilt within,  
While Faith looks out upon a Saviour's love.

— Church Bells

## THE GOLDEN CITY OF MANOA.

## A STORY MORE THAN HALF TRUE.

More than two hundred years ago, when the Spaniards discovered the great new continent of America, they found many things to surprise them, in the people as well as in the places.

And what must have been most surprising to them of all, was to find that this world, which was so new to them, was in reality as old as the one they had left behind. For when they came to Mexico and Peru, they found there traces of a civilisation older than their own—certain proofs that here had been a people governed by laws, laying out fine roads, and building stately cities, while the greater part of Europe was still lost in savagery and ignorance.

The roads and the cities were there still, and people living in them; a civil-spoken orderly set of people, ruled by a king to whom they all gave obedience, and ready to die any day for such religion as they had.

But the thing which struck the Spaniards most was their *wealth*; the gold and silver which they owned in such quantities, that to read of it even now in history is like reading a fairy tale.

They did not greatly value it, just because it was so plentiful with them, and by fair means or foul, the Spaniards possessed themselves of great riches.

And those whom they had left at home, hearing of this, came out in numbers across the sea, to try for a share of the treasure.

The first who came were gallant soldiers, who dared unknown dangers, and fought and conquered when their enemies were a thousand to one. And they took the land, and had it in possession, like the Israelites of old in the land of Canaan. But after them came out greedy adventurers, whose hearts were on fire with the love of gold, and the sight of the wonderful treasures of Mexico and Peru seemed to drive them mad. The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil, and so it proved now. Indeed, when one reads of the things which these Spaniards did, one is tempted to believe that they must have been changed from men into devils.

For they killed the poor Mexicans by thousands, or tortured them to make them tell where their goods were concealed. They stole from them, and lied to them, and made promises which they never even meant to keep.

Then they found the gold and silver mines among the mountains, the store-places where all those heaps of precious dross had come from. And they made slaves of the natives, and drove them in gangs to work in the mines, treating them worse than brute beasts; till the poor things, who were not made for hard work and hard living, died

off by thousands, and they were forced to bring negroes from Africa to take their place.

So matters went on for many years, while the Spaniards grew more rich and more wicked every year. And at length the wrath of God arose against them, and He prepared for them a punishment which their nation has never got over to this day.

When they had been in America some fifty or sixty years, and gold and silver were no longer quite so plentiful as they had been, a very strange tale began to go about among them.

This tale came to them from many quarters, and, strange though it was, the Spaniards had seen too many marvels in Mexico and Peru, to think any tale too wonderful to be believed.

And the natives all told the same story, whether friends or enemies, Mexicans from the open country, or wandering tribes of wild Indians in the forest. They all agreed in saying that *somewhere*, over the mountains, through the forest, beyond the great river which is now called the Amazon, there was a city built of gold. There, they said, was to be found the last of the Incas, or kings of Peru, with all the treasure that he had carried away with him out of his own land—gold and silver such as no man had seen before, and precious stones and pearls of value past all reckoning. They called the name of this place Manoa; and there was no Indian so ignorant or so stupid that he did not know all about Manoa and its piles of priceless treasures.

And every Spaniard who heard this tale naturally wanted to find the golden city, and load himself with the spoil of it.

Party after party was formed to go out and search for Manoa—some headed by brave and gallant soldiers whose names are remembered in Spain to this day. Party after party crossed the cultivated land, and climbed the mountains, and plunged into the thick forest beyond.

And there they met with hindrances more than can be told here. The forest hindered them—for it grew before them, in places, so thick with matted creepers and underwood, that they had to chop their way through with axes. And the heat hindered them—the damp steaming heat that sucked their strength away, and made them long only to lie down and rest.

Their numbers dwindled fast away as they went on; for some were killed by tribes of savage Indians, and some were swept away in crossing the deep rapid rivers. Some were bitten by snakes or torn by wild beasts, and some ate of poisonous fruits, such as those tropical woods are full of, and so died miserably. And many died of fever in the pestilent swamps; and others were just *lost*, for what became of them no man knows.

But only a very few came back again, long years after, with sorrowful hearts and heads grown grey; and they had been through many wonderful adventures, and had seen many strange things, but they had not found the golden city.

However, there were still Indians found who told the same story, and there were still Spaniards who believed it—perhaps because God, to punish their greed, sent them “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,” and spend their lives in following after a shadow. So still each year there were men found willing to risk their lives in seeking for the treasures of Manoa.

With one of these parties there went a young man who had just come out from Spain—Francisco Mendoza. He was more kind-hearted than most of his countrymen, and the way in which the Indian slaves were treated in the Spanish colonies filled him with grief and disgust. So he was glad to turn his back upon them all, and join those who were starting off into the heart of the country, to try if, by looking in some new direction, they could light upon the hidden city of Manoa.

They met with all the dangers and difficulties that the others had with, but they would not be beaten. They struggled on through hunger and thirst, through heat and weariness, and the want of all things, daring hardships and dangers in a way that would have made saints and heroes of

them, if only they had been working for something better than gold.

At last they came, those that were left of them, to a little Indian village, deep in the woods.

They were so weak with toil and travel that they were glad to make friends with the Indians, and ask leave to stay with them to rest awhile. And, luckily for them, these people were simple, ignorant, friendly folks, and lived so deep in the woods, and so cut off from the rest of the world, that they had never heard of the Spaniards and of their cruelties.

They stayed there many days, and Francisco picked up scraps of the Indians' language, and was able to talk with them a little. They were very kind to him in their childish fashion, more kind than his own countrymen had been, and he grew very fond of them. But he was grieved when he found how ignorant they were—how they knew little or nothing of God, but worshipped the devil for fear he should do them harm, and lived in bondage to the fear of him and to the fear of death, with no hope of anything beyond.

There was no one to teach them, no one to make them wiser or better, and, as far as could be made out from their story, they were sinking lower year by year, growing less like men and more like the beasts that lived in the forest round them.

And day and night Francisco heard a voice within him saying, “*These, too, are My children, My sheep, whom I died to save. Stay here and tend them for Me.*”

He would not hear the voice at first; he tried to forget it, and to think of the golden treasures of Manoa, and all the fame and wealth that he was going to win.

But it gave him no rest. It seemed to him that he had been kept from dangers and brought safely by rough and weary ways to this place, for this very purpose.

And so at last his mind was made up, and when his companions were ready to go on, he told them that he should stay there in that Indian village, and teach those poor simple folks about the love of their heavenly Father and their home in heaven.

The others laughed at him first; then tried to persuade him; then grew angry and called him a coward. But he had not chosen for his own pleasure, and such things had no power to change his mind.

So he stayed behind with the Indians, who were learning to love him already, and worked for them, and taught them, and prayed for them till he died.

And the others travelled forward into the beautiful pathless wilderness, and whither they went, and what became of them, no man knows—but they never found the golden city of Manoa; and none ever did find it, nor ever will. For America is mapped and explored now from one end to the other, and there is no such place to be found. The very name of it is almost forgotten, and no one will ever go to search for it again.

But the strange part of the story is this—that the man who stayed behind, who gave up the search, was the man who found the Golden City after all! We need not ask how that could be; for we all know of the *real* Golden City, whose streets are pure gold like transparent glass, and her gates of a single pearl.

And may we not believe that God, to whom that City belongs, has found a place there for the man who gave up all his own hopes and plans that he might work for God? Surely, yes!

Thus the man who lost his life was the one who found it after all—lost it in this world, and kept it unto life eternal.

For if those others had found what they sought, they would not have been much the better for it. They would have lost or spent it, or if not, the richest man can carry nothing away with him when he dies. If they had found all the gold of Manoa, they would, none the less, have had to go naked out of the world.

But the true Golden City is ‘eternal in the heavens,’ and Francisco's treasure was laid up in the safest place of all, ‘at God's right hand for evermore.’

HELEN SHIPTON.