

us life everlasting, preserve us, and accept this our sacrifice."¹

In the voluminous specimens of Aztec prayers preserved by Sahagun, moral improvement, the "spiritual gift," is very rarely if at all the object desired. Health, harvests, propitious rains, release from pain, preservation from dangers, illness, and defeat, these are the almost unvarying themes. But here and there we catch a glimpse of something better, some dim sense of the divine beauty of suffering, some feeble glimmering of the grand truth so nobly expressed by the poet:—

aus des Busens Tiefe strömt Gedeihn
Der festen Duldung und entschlossner That.
Nicht Schmerz ist Unglück, Glück nicht immer Freude;
Wer sein Geschick erfüllt, dem lächeln beide.

"Is it possible," says one of them, "that this scourge, this affliction, is sent to us not for our correction and improvement, but for our destruction and annihilation? O Merciful Lord, let this chastisement with which thou hast visited us, thy people, be as those which a father or mother inflicts on their children, not out of anger, but to the end that they may be free from follies and vices." Another formula, used when a chief was elected to some important position, reads: "O Lord, open his eyes and give him light, sharpen his ears and give him understanding, not that he may

¹ Geronimo de Ore, *Symbolo Catholico Indiano*, chap. ix., quoted by Ternaux-Compans. De Ore was a native of Peru and held the position of Professor of Theology in Cuzco in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He was a man of great erudition, and there need be no hesitation in accepting this extraordinary prayer as genuine. For his life and writings see Nic. Antonio, *Bib. Hisp. Nova*, tom. ii. p. 43.