

300 THE DEATH SONG OF CHILIQUI

Now that death had come so very swiftly, the circle of warriors stared at each other and then up where Chiliqui sat helpless and wondering. It would take a strong one to tell Chiliqui—and of them all, who was brave enough; till out of the silence rose the ancient medicine man. "I am going the way that Chiliqui goes," he said, steadily, "and it may be we shall journey together.

They watched him climb. They saw his grey head stoop to that other grey head in a communion of grief and age. They noted the drooping figure reel under the last blow that earth could inflict on that proud unyielding front. Then the medicine man moved slowly away and drew his robe over his face.

The sun stooped to the long magnificent flanks of the hills. There came over the vast expanse of earth and sky the ineffable stillness that pervades the closing of day in silent places. And down from the ledge drifted the death song of Chiliqui, broken with the rumble of his drum.