

# WILSON'S EXPERIMENT.

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## LAST WORDS.

BY R. A. P.

Here were sounds of wail in the darkened room,  
Where a fair child dying lay.  
There were fond eyes strained through the chamber's gloom,

To watch him pass away ;  
And angel-wings that hovered near,  
Unseen around him stirred,  
As the Mother held her breath to hear  
Her darling's parting word ;  
"Mother, mother !" with his last sigh  
Fell quivering from his tongue,  
Then to his rest sank peacefully  
The beautiful and young.

An aged man lay down to die,  
A miser, old and wan,  
But ever fell his glazing eye,  
His cherished hoards upon !  
He hath laid up all his treasure here,  
Where moth and rust decay,  
And here in agony and fear,  
Passeth his soul away ;  
And dimmer burns life's wasting flame,  
And his head grows damp and cold,  
But the latest word his pale lips frame  
Is the name of his idol—Gold.

A Soldier sinks on the battle field,  
The hour of strife is o'er,  
But the arm once strong the brand to wield,  
May never wield it more ;  
'Tis hard, while yet life's tide is high  
In every throbbing vein.  
Unwept, unhonored, thus to die,  
Amidst th' inglorious slain ;  
But his keen eye flashed through the mists of death,  
As a glad cry rings afar,  
And the last faint tone of his dying breath  
Echoes the proud "Huzza !"

The setting sunbeams gently stream  
On a forehead seamed by care,  
Ah ! many a brief and fevered dream,  
And blighted hope was there.  
The Poet's high, but mournful dower,  
Was written on that brow.  
But the harp he cherished many an hour  
Lies mute and stringless now ;  
He knows his hand no more may wake  
Its wild and thrilling tune,  
And he sighs, as fast his life-strings break ;  
"So soon—to die so soon !"

"The stake—the pile—the blazing torch—  
Heap high the funeral pyre !  
He hath blasphemed our Mother Church,  
Hence with him to the fire !"  
And up rose to the peaceful skies,  
And to the Christian's God,  
The smoke of that dread sacrifice,  
That offering of blood.  
"Oh ! in this hour" the Martyr said,  
"My spirit knows no fear,  
Though by this fiery passage led,  
Along death's shadowy vale I tread,  
For thou my God, art here." •

• Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.—Psalm 23.

Cobourg, C. H.

A POET'S DREAM.—I dreamt that I was engaged in writing, and that in the midst of a sentence a mosquito came buzzing in my ear. I remonstrated with him for so disturbing me, having spoilt a beautiful paragraph. "I will not trouble you," he replied, "I have merely come to punctuate a passage."

## Sketches of Aboriginal Life.

### THE AZTEC PRINCESS ; OR, THE DESTINY FORESHAD- OWED OF THE DOWNFALL OF THE ANCIENT HOUSE OF THE MONTEZUMAS.

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### AGITATIONS IN THE CAPITAL—THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD—THE SPANIARDS STEADILY ADVANCING.

For monarchs tremble on their thrones,  
And 'neath the gem-lit crown,  
Care, fear and envy dwell—

—They come,  
Mysterious, dreaded band !  
With clang of trumpet, torch and brand ;  
With lightning speed, with lightning power,  
They scale the lofty mountain tower,  
And sweep along the vale—  
Who shall arrest their proud career,  
And save our doomed land ?

This position, of affairs suited the timid and vacillating policy of Montezuma. Finding that Cuiclahua, and his forces, had taken no part in the affair, and had not even visited the city, he immediately sent an embassy to the Spanish camp, disclaiming all participation in the treacherous counsels and doings of the Cholulans, and severely blaming them for their unheard of outrage upon the rites of hospitality. Whether the sharp-sighted Castilian placed any confidence in these professions, or not, it suited his designs to appear to do so. With the utmost seeming cordiality, he assured the royal messengers that it gave him the most heartfelt satisfaction to know that the treatment he had received at Cholula was not instigated or countenanced by their august master, that it was unworthy of a great and wise monarch, and that he should proceed on his route to the capital, with the same confidence as before, and visit the emperor as if nothing had happened to hinder his progress.

Withdrawing the forces under Cuiclahua, and giving orders every where for the hospitable reception and entertainment of the Castilians, whom he had no longer the heart to oppose either by stratagem or by force, Montezuma retired within his palace, and for several days shut himself up from all intercourse with his chiefs. He was now fully convinced that his destiny was sealed, and with it that of his family and crown. He was in the hands of an unappeasable fate. He gave himself up to fasting, prayer and sacrifice. He consulted all his oracles anew. But they gave no response. He then sought counsel of his chiefs, and the sages of his court. Here again he was distracted by the divided opinions of his friends. While many of the princes, overawed by the invincible courage and invariable success of the Castilians, advised a frank and courteous reception, there was still a powerful war-party, with the brave Cuiclahua at their head, who were eager to measure lances with the strangers, and show them that, in order to reach the capital, they had other foes to contend with and overcome, than half-savage Tlascalans, or trading Cholulans.

Montezuma found no difficulty in following the counsel of the majority, though the mystic warning of Kavee had not wholly faded from his mind. A new embassy was immediately despatched, consisting of a numerous suite of powerful nobles, and a long train of servants, bearing rich presents of gold, and other valuables, and charged with a message couched in terms of humble and earnest supplication, proposing, if the Spaniards would now return, not only to send them home laden with gold to their utmost wish, but to pay an annual tribute of gold to their master, the king of Spain. Finding that this bribe only fired the grasping

conqueror with a more fixed determination to secure the whole prize for which he had so long, and against such fearful odds, contended, the messengers yielded the point, and threw wide open to the decided foe every avenue to the heart of the empire, assuring him, in the name of the Emperor, that he should be received as a brother, and entertained with the consideration due to the powerful representative of a mighty monarch.

The march of the Spaniards was now a continued triumph. No longer compelled to fight their way on, they had time to enjoy the rich and varied scenery, to scale the mountain, explore the caverns and ravines of the sierras, and the craters of the volcanoes, and show to the admiring natives, by their agility and love of adventure, that fighting and conquest had neither tamed their spirits, nor exhausted their physical powers. As they advanced, they were continually surprised and delighted with the growing evidences of civilization and high prosperity which met them on every side. In the cultivation of the land, in the style of architecture, and in all that constitutes the refinement, or contributes to the comfort of life, the regions they were now traversing very far exceeded the best of those through which they had before passed. They were continually gaining more exalted ideas of their own adventure, and the importance of their position and movements. The ambition of Cortez reached to the viceroyalty of his splendid empire ; and, though accompanied by a mere handful of men, their past achievements inspired him with confidence, that he could carry every thing before him.

Though entertained with lordly magnificence in every place through which he passed, and visited and complimented by envoys from all the states embraced in the Mexican domain, the sagacious Spaniard relaxed none of his vigilance, nor diminished aught of the strict discipline of his little corps. With an eye ever awake to his own safety, and feeling that the artful contriver of one stratagem could easily invent another, he advanced from post to post, in martial array, always ready for any exigency that might arise. His course, however was unobscured. The resources and hopes of the great king seemed to have been exhausted. In passive despair, he was waiting for the hour of his doom.

The terror of the events we have described fell not alone upon the unfortunate Montezuma ; nor did they affect him only as monarch of the realm. As a parent fondly devoted to his children, whose destiny was wrapped up in his as the father of his people, to whom he had been a kind of demi-god, the vicegerent of Heaven, entitled to their unqualified reverence, obedience and love, he felt with tenfold intensity the bitterness of his humiliation. In all his sufferings and distresses his wives and children shared, showing, by every token in their power, their profound respect and affection, and their tender sympathy in all his cares.

In these lovely demonstrations of filial affection none were more assiduous or warm-hearted, and none more successful in reaching the heart of the broken spirited monarch, or winning from him an occasional smile of hope, than Tecuichpo. Just ripening into womanhood, with every gift of person, mind and heart that could satisfy the pride of the monarch, and requit to the full, the yearning love of the father, the fair princess lavished on him all her powers of persuasion and condolence. It was all in vain. It even aggravated his sorrows ; for it was on her account, and that of others, dearer to him than his own life, that he suffered most deeply. The mysterious shadows that had brooded so darkly over the infancy of his lovely daughter had never ceased to shed a chilling gloom over his mind. Her clouded destiny was linked with his, not merely as a child, but as one specially marked out, by infallible signs from heaven, for a signal doom. His superstitious faith invested her and her fate with a peculiar sacredness. She was as one whom the gods had devoted to an awful sacrifice, from which neither imperial power nor pater-

nal love could rescue her. It therefore pierced his soul with a deeper pang to gaze upon her loveliness and witness her amiable efforts to soothe and sustain him in the midst of calamities that were more terrible and overwhelming to her, than even to himself. If, by offering himself as a sacrifice to his offended gods, he could have propitiated their favor for his family and his people, and handed down to his posterity an undiminished empire, and an untarnished crown, he would have gone with as much pride and pleasure, to the altar, as to a triumphal festival that should celebrate his victory and clothe his brow with unfading laurel. But in this sacrifice there was no substitution. He was himself the most distinguished victim, destined to the highest and hottest place on the great altar of his country, where a hecatomb would scarce suffice to appease the anger of the offended gods.

Gathering his royal household around him, he explained to them the peculiarity of his position, avowing his entire confidence in the ancient prophecy, which declared that the realm of Anahuac belonged to a race of white men, who had gone away for a season toward the rising sun, and who after the lapse of ages, were to return in power, and claim their inheritance. It was the predestined arrangement of the gods, and could not be resisted. He had, from the beginning, felt that resistance was wholly vain, and had only attempted it, in deference to the urgent advice and solicitations of his best and most experienced counsellors. For himself he was ready, at any time, to stand at his post, and die, if necessary, in defence of his crown and his people. But he could not contend with the gods. Empires and crowns, and the lives and happiness of nations, were at their disposal, and kings and subjects alike must submit to their righteous requirements. It was but the dictate of common piety to say "the will of the gods he done." Hard and trying as it was, he felt it incumbent on him to relinquish his crown and his honors, at their bidding, as cheerfully as he should lay down his life, when his destined hour should arrive. He counselled them to bow submissively to their inevitable fate, in the hope that, though humbled, broken and scattered in this world, they might meet and dwell together in peace in the paradise of the gods.

His wives and children wept around him. They besought him to hope yet for the best—to turn his thoughts from the dark visions on which he had dwelt too long and too intensely. Their mysterious forebodings of evil might yet be averted, through the favor of the gods, to whom a childlike, cheerful confidence in their benignity and paternal regard, was more acceptable, than that blind abandonment sometimes mistaken for submission, which views them as stern, arbitrary, and implacable tyrants, rather than as parents of the human family, watching over it for the good of mankind, and ordering all events for the welfare of their true children.

This was a cheerful faith, and, seasonably adopted, might have saved the life and throne of Montezuma, and preserved, for many years, the integrity of his empire. But his heart was not prepared to receive it. Steeped in the dismal superstitions of the Aztec faith, and yielding himself unreservedly to the guidance and dictation of its constituted oracles, he had never, for a moment, allowed himself to falter in his conviction, and the Aztec dynasty was to terminate with him, and that he and his family were doomed to a terrible destruction, in the overthrow of the sacred institutions of his beloved land.

The scene was too thrilling for the tender heart of Tecuichpo, and she swooned away in the arms of her father, who had drawn her towards him in an affectionate embrace. The attendants were called, and, as soon as the unhappy princess was restored to consciousness, the king directed the royal barges to be prepared, and went out, with his household, to enjoy the invigorating air of the lake, and seek relief from the dark thoughts that oppressed and overwhelmed them, in contemplating from various points in view, the rich and varied scenery of that glorious valley.