

## CHAPTER IV.

### A SPANISH GRANDEE.

Any other than the Indian, Martin Paz, would have, indeed, perished in the waters of the Rimac; to escape death, his surprising strength, his insurmountable will, and especially his sublime coolness, one of the privileges of the free hordes of the pampas of the New World, had all been found necessary.

Martin knew that his pursuers would concentrate their efforts to seize him below the bridge; it seemed impossible for him to overcome the current, and that the Indian must be carried down; but by vigorous strokes he succeeded in stemming the torrent; he dived repeatedly, and finding the under-currents less strong, at last ventured to land, and concealed himself behind a thicket of mangrove-trees.

But what was to become of him? Retreat was perilous; the soldiers might change their plans and ascend the river; the Indian must then inevitably be captured; he would lose his life, and, worse yet, Sarah. His decision was rapidly made; through the narrow streets and deserted squares he plunged into the heart of the city; but it was important that he should be supposed dead; he therefore avoided being seen, since his garments, dripping with water and covered with sea-weed, would have betrayed him.

To avoid the indiscreet glances of some belated inhabitants, Martin Paz was obliged to pass through one of the widest streets of the city; a house still brilliantly illuminated presented itself: the port-cochere was open to give passage to the elegant equipages which were issuing from the court, and conveying to their respective dwellings the nobles of the Spanish aristocracy.

The Indian adroitly glided into this magnificent dwelling; he could not remain in the street, where curious zambos were thronging around, attracted by the carriages. The gates of the hotel were soon carefully closed, and the Indian found flight impossible.

Some lacqueys were going to and fro in the court; Martin Paz rapidly passed up a rich stairway of cedar-wood, ornamented with valuable tapestry; the saloons, still illuminated, presented no convenient place of refuge; he crossed them with the rapidity of lightning, and disappeared in a room filled with protecting darkness.

The last lustres were quickly extinguished, and the house became profoundly silent.

The Indian Paz, as a man of energy to whom moments are precious, hastened to reconnoitre the place, and to find the surest means of evasion; the windows of this chamber opened on an interior garden; flight was practicable, and Martin Paz was about to spring from them, when he heard these words:

"Señor, you have forgotten to take the diamonds which I had left on that table!"

Martin Paz turned. A man of noble stature and of great pride of countenance was pointing to a jewel-case.

At this insult Martin Paz laid his hand on his poignard. He approached the Spaniard, who stood unmoved, and, in a first impulse of indignation, raised his arm to strike him; but turning his weapon against himself, said, in a deep tone,

"Señor, if you repeat such words, I will kill myself at your feet."

The Spaniard, astonished, looked at the Indian more attentively, and through his tangled and dripping locks perceived so lofty a frankness, that he felt a strange sympathy fill his heart. He went toward the window, gently closed it, and returned toward the Indian, whose poignard had fallen to the ground.

"Who are you?" said he to him.

"The Indian, Martin Paz. I am pursued by soldiers for having defended myself against a mestizo who attacked me, and levelled him to the ground with a blow from my poignard. This mestizo is the betrothed of a young girl whom I love. Now, señor, you can deliver me to my enemies, if you

judge it noble and right."

"Sir," replied the Spaniard, gravely, "I depart to-morrow for the Baths of Chorillos; if you please to accompany me, you will be for the present safe from pursuit, and will never have reason to complain of the hospitality of the Marquis Don Vegal."

Martin Paz bent coldly without manifesting any emotion.

"You can rest until morning on this bed," resumed Don Vegal; "no one here will suspect your retreat. Good-night, señor!"

The Spaniard went out of the room, and left the Indian, moved to tears by a confidence so generous; he yielded himself entirely to the protection of the marquis, and without thinking that his slumbers might be taken advantage of to seize him, slept with peaceful security.

The next day, at sunrise, the marquis gave the last orders for his departure, and summoned the Jew Samuel to come to him; in the meantime he attended the morning mass.

This was a custom generally observed by the aristocracy. From its very foundation Lima had been essentially Catholic. Besides its numerous churches, it numbered twenty-two convents, seventeen monasteries, and four beaterios, or houses of retreat for females who did not take the vows. Each of these establishments possessed a chapel, so that there

were at Lima more than a hundred edifices for worship, where eight hundred secular or regular priests, three hundred religieuses, lay-brothers and sisters, performed the duties of religion.

As Don Vegal entered the church of Santa Anna, he noticed a young girl kneeling in prayer and in tears. There was so much of grief in her depression, that the marquis could not look at her without emotion; and he was preparing to console her by some kind words, when Father Joachim de Camarones approached him, saying in a low voice:

"Señor Don Vegal, pray do not approach her."

Then he made a sign to Sarah, who followed him to an obscure and deserted chapel.

Don Vegal directed his steps to the altar and listened to the mass; then, as he was returning, he thought involuntarily of the deep sadness of the kneeling maiden. Her image followed him to his hotel, and remained deeply engraven in his soul.

Don Vegal found in his saloon the Jew Samuel, who had come in compliance with his request. Samuel seemed to have forgotten the events of the night; the hope of gain animated his countenance with a natural gayety.

"What is your lordship's will?" asked he of the Spaniard.

"I must have thirty thousand piasters within an hour."

"Thirty thousand piasters! And who has them! By the holy king David, my lord, I am far from being able to furnish such a sum."

"Here are some jewels of great value," resumed Don Vegal, without noticing the language of the Jew; "besides I can sell you at a low price a considerable estate near Cusco."

"Ah! señor, lands ruin us--we have not arms enough left to cultivate them; the Indians have withdrawn to the mountains, and our harvests do not pay us for the trouble they cost."

"At what value do you estimate these diamonds?"

Samuel drew from his pocket a little pair of scales and began to weigh the stones with scrupulous skill. As he did this, he continued to talk, and, as was his custom, depreciated the pledges offered him.

"Diamonds! a poor investment! What would they bring? One might as well bury money! You will notice, señor, that this is not of the purest water. Do you know that I do not find a ready market for these costly ornaments? I am obliged to send such merchandise to the United Provinces! The Americans would buy them, undoubtedly, but to give them up to the sons of Albion. They wish besides, and it is very just, to gain an honest per centage, so that the depreciation falls upon me. I

think that ten thousand piasters should satisfy your lordship. It is little, I know; but----

"Have I not said," resumed the Spaniard, with a sovereign air of scorn, "that ten thousand piasters would not suffice?"

"Señor, I cannot give you a half real more!"

"Take away these caskets and bring me the sum I ask for. To complete the thirty thousand piasters which I need, you will take a mortgage on this house. Does it seem to you to be solid?"

"Ah, señor, in this city, subject to earthquakes, one knows not who lives or dies, who stands or falls."

And, as he said this, Samuel let himself fall on his heels several times to test the solidity of the floors.

"Well, to oblige your lordship, I will furnish you with the required sum; although, at this moment I ought not to part with money; for I am about to marry my daughter to the caballero André Certa. Do you know him, sir?"

"I do not know him, and I beg of you to send me this instant, the sum agreed upon. Take away these jewels."

"Will you have a receipt for them?" asked the Jew.

Don Vegal passed into the adjoining room, without replying.

"Proud Spaniard!" muttered Samuel, "I will crush thy insolence, as I disperse thy riches! By Solomon! I am a skillful man, since my interests keep pace with my sentiments."

Don Vegal, on leaving the Jew, had found Martin Paz in profound dejection of spirits, mingled with mortification.

"What is the matter?" he asked affectionately.

"Señor, it is the daughter of the Jew whom I love."

"A Jewess!" exclaimed Don Vegal, with disgust.

But seeing the sadness of the Indian, he added:

"Let us go, amigo, we will talk of these things afterward!"

An hour later, Martin Paz, clad in Spanish costume, left the city, accompanied by Don Vegal, who took none of his people with him.

The Baths of Chorillos are situated at two leagues from Lima. This Indian parish possesses a pretty church; during the hot season it is the



rendezvous of the fashionable Limanian society. Public games, interdicted at Lima, are permitted at Chorillos during the whole summer. The señoras there display unwonted ardor, and, in decorating himself for these pretty partners, more than one rich cavalier has seen his fortune dissipated in a few nights.

Chorillos was still little frequented; so Don Vegal and Martin Paz retired to a pretty cottage, built on the sea-shore, could live in quiet contemplation of the vast plains of the Pacific Ocean.

The Marquis Don Vegal, belonging to one of the most ancient families of Peru, saw about to terminate in himself the noble line of which he was justly proud; so his countenance bore the impress of profound sadness. After having mingled for some time in political affairs, he had felt an inexpressible disgust for the incessant revolutions brought about to gratify personal ambition; he had withdrawn into a sort of solitude, interrupted only at rare intervals by the duties of strict politeness.

His immense fortune was daily diminishing. The neglect into which his vast domains had fallen for want of laborers, had compelled him to borrow at a disadvantage; but the prospect of approaching mediocrity did not alarm him; that carelessness natural to the Spanish race, joined to the ennui of a useless existence, had rendered him insensible to the menaces of the future. Formerly the husband of an adored wife, the father of a charming little girl, he had seen himself deprived, by a horrible event, of both these objects of his love. Since then, no bond

of affection had attached him to earth, and he suffered his life to float at the will of events.

Don Vegal had thought his heart to be indeed dead, when he felt it palpitate at contact with that of Martin Paz. This ardent nature awoke fire beneath the ashes; the proud bearing of the Indian suited the chivalric hidalgo; and then, weary of the Spanish nobles, in whom he no longer had confidence, disgusted with the selfish mestizoes, who wished to aggrandize themselves at his expense, he took a pleasure in turning to that primitive race, who have disputed so valiantly the American soil with the soldiers of Pizarro.

According to the intelligence received by the marquis, the Indian passed for dead at Lima; but, looking on his attachment for the Jewess as worse than death itself, the Spaniard resolved doubly to save his guest, by leaving the daughter of Samuel to marry André Certa.

While Martin Paz felt an infinite sadness pervade his heart, Don Vegal avoided all allusion to the past, and conversed with the young Indian on indifferent subjects.

Meanwhile, one day, saddened by his gloomy preoccupations, the Spaniard said to him:

"Why, my friend, do you lower the nobility of your nature by a sentiment so much beneath you? Was not that bold Manco-Capac, whom his patriotism

placed in the rank of heroes, your ancestor? There is a noble part left for a valiant man, who will not suffer himself to be overcome by an unworthy passion. Have you no heart to regain your independence?"

"We are laboring for this, señor," said the Indian; "and the day when my brethren shall rise en masse is perhaps not far distant."

"I understand you; you allude to the war for which your brethren are preparing among their mountains; at a signal they will descend on the city, arms in hand--and will be conquered as they have always been! See how your interests will disappear amid these perpetual revolutions of which Peru is the theatre, and which will ruin it entirely, Indians and Spaniards, to the profit of the mestizoes, who are neither."

"We will save it ourselves," exclaimed Martin Paz.

"Yes, you will save it if you understand how to play your part! Listen to me, Paz, you whom I love from day to day as a son! I say it with grief; but, we Spaniards, the degenerate sons of a powerful race, no longer have the energy necessary to elevate and govern a state. It is therefore yours to triumph over that unhappy Americanism, which tends to reject European colonization. Yes, know that only European emigration can save the old Peruvian empire. Instead of this intestine war which tends to exclude all castes, with the exception of one, frankly extend your hands to the industrious population of the Old World."

"The Indians, señor, will always see in strangers an enemy, and will never suffer them to breathe with impunity the air of their mountains. The kind of dominion which I exercise over them will be without effect on the day when I do not swear death to their oppressors, whoever they may be! And, besides, what am I now?" added Martin Paz, with great sadness; "a fugitive who would not have three hours to live in the streets of Lima."

"Paz, you must promise me that you will not return thither."

"How can I promise you this, Don Vegal? I speak only the truth, and I should perjure myself were I to take an oath to that effect."

Don Vegal was silent. The passion of the young Indian increased from day to day; the marquis trembled to see him incur certain death by re-appearing at Lima. He hastened by all his desires, he would have hastened by all his efforts, the marriage of the Jewess!

To ascertain himself the state of things he quitted Chorillos one morning, returned to the city, and learned that André Certa had recovered from his wound. His approaching marriage was the topic of general conversation.

Don Vegal wished to see this woman whose image troubled the mind of Martin Paz. He repaired, at evening, to the Plaza-Mayor. The crowd was always numerous there. There he met Father Joachim de Camarones, his

confessor and his oldest friend; he acquainted him with his mode of life. What was the astonishment of the good father to learn the existence of Martin Paz. He promised Don Vegal to watch also himself over the young Indian, and to convey to the marquis any intelligence of importance.

Suddenly the glances of Don Vegal rested on a young girl, enveloped in a black mantle, reclining in a calèche.

"Who is that beautiful person?" asked he of the father.

"It is the betrothed of André Certa, the daughter of the Jew Samuel."

"She! the daughter of the Jew!"

The marquis could hardly suppress his astonishment, and, pressing the hand of Father Joachim, pensively took the road to Chorillos.

He had just recognized in Sarah, the pretended Jewess, the young girl whom he had seen praying with such Christian fervor, at the church of Santa Anna.