

CHAPTER XV

THE GIVING OF THE SUN SYMBOL

TWO nights had passed over the world, and the day star was shining over the mountains of the east when the people of Povi-whah saw again Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho.

It was the sentinel on the terrace who saw him, and he was at the ancient shrine at the mesa edge, and a flame was there to show that prayers were being made to greet the god of the new day.

And when he came down from the mesa, and looked at the corn of the fields torn and beaten low by the great storm, his face showed that he carried a sad heart, and that he had gone from Te-gat-ha somewhere into the hills for prayer.

And to his house went the old men, and they listened to that which had been decided by the council of Te-gat-ha. A man had already arrived from Te-gat-ha to tell them that same thing, and to tell them that an evil spirit of the forest who spoke as a Navahu maid, had brought woe on the valley.

Some said it was the Ancient Star calling on the voice of the wind for sacrifice, and others said the tornado had come because the maid had been let go with the sacred symbols of ceremony painted on her body, and the gods of that ceremony called for her on the wind. But whichever way was the true way, the maid was linked to spirits of evil, and the corn of that year would be less than half of a full year, and the Te-gat-ha men asked that any Te-hua man

who found the evil maid would send a runner to tell of it. Robes and blue beads would be given for her: — she belonged to the god of the star, or the god of the mad winds, and on the altar with prayers must she be given to them, that they be not angry.

Tahn-té listened — and when they said the anger of the sky had come from the west, as the maid had come, he was silent.

His first day of failure in council had been the day when he shielded the Dream Maid on the trail. — The woman who had wept in Te-gat-ha had said she was evil and a witch, and now the men pointed to the killed corn as the work of her magic!

No word of his could undo these things or wipe them from the Indian mind. In his own mind he knew that a weakness had come upon him. To live alone for the gods had been an easy thing to think of in the other days, but now it was not easy, and his heart trembled like a snared bird at each plan made by the men for the undoing of the witchmaid if she should be found.

The runner from Te-gat-ha looked strangely at Tahn-té as he walked across the court, and to Kayemo, he said:

“You men of Povi-whah are good runners always, and your Ruler of the Spirit Things has left you all behind always in the race. Yet this time, to come from Te-gat-ha, he stays two sleeps, and follows a trail no man sees!”

“In the hills he has been for prayers — so the old men say,” replied Kayemo. But Yahn, whose ears were ever open, gave stew of rabbit to the Te-gat-ha runner and asked many things, and learned that the storm had washed away all tracks of feet, but that the witch maid had certainly run to the south —

every other way was under the eyes of the sentinel on the wall. By a little stream to the south had her tracks been seen but not in any other place.

"Tahn-té crossed over the trail," said Yahn and laughed. "The priest of the men of iron say that Tahn-té is a sorcerer,— who knows that he did not bury owl-feathers or raven-feathers on the way to hide her trail? If the witch maid was a maid of beauty, is he not already a man?"

The man laughed with her, but he had heard of the dance of Tahn-té to the ancient stone god of the hills! The man who danced there was not the man for the cat scratches of Yahn the Apache, and though he laughed with her because she was pretty and a woman, he was not blind to her malice, and the meaning of her words went by him on the wind.

But the thought once planted in the mind of Yahn did not die. The face of Tahn-té held a trouble new and strange. He walked apart, and the old men said he made many prayers that the Great Mystery send a sign for the going of the white strangers.

In her heart Yahn thought as Tahn-té thought. The eyes of the man of the priest gown went like arrows through her at times — he looked like a man who knew all things. To Ka-yemo he talked until she was wild with desire to know the things said between them. It angered her that Ka-yemo was flattered by such attention. Padre Vicente she hated for his keen eyes and his plain speech of her. Don Ruy and the boyish secretary had too many moments of laughter when her name was spoken of to Juan Gonzalvo — as it often was! Their gifts she took with both hands, and did the talking for them as agreed, but she sulked at times even under their compliments, and Don Diego instructed Säh-pah to strive that the

unruly beauty be brought within the Christian fold.

The success was not great, for Säh-pah was brave in a new gift of silver spurs — worn on rawhide about her neck, for it was the time of the Summer dance when the women choose companions, and love is very free. If the man prefers not to share the love of the dame who makes choice of him — he makes her a gift — or she chooses one.

The pious Don Diego had the secretary give many lines in the "Relaciones" of this strange custom where the fair fond ones offered marriage — or accepted a gift as memento. He even strutted a bit that the poor heatheness offered to him what best she could afford in exchange for the divine grace of a good sprinkling of holy water. But Yahn said things of the baptism not good for ears polite, or for the "Relaciones," and Säh-pah scuttled back in fear to her new master, and told him, — and told Juan Gonzalvo, that the veins of Yahn Tsyn-deh must be cut open to let out the Apache blood, before they could hope she might be one of the heaven birds in their angel flock!

But Säh-pah did not tell them that the thing of torment awaking Yahn to wrath had been the knowledge that Ka-yemo was somewhere across the mesa, and the old people laughed that he could not stay longer from the new wife, but had gone to seek her in the place of the old ruins.

After that, divine grace had not shielded Säh-pah from vituperation, and when Juan Gonzalvo came wooing, Yahn told him that across the hills was a woman waiting for a man, and dressed in fine skins and many beads: — when he or his men had won Koh-pé the daughter of Tsa-fah, to come back and tell her. She did not mean to be won easier than the other, and without a price!

Which was also a novel statement for the truthful record of the adventurers, and the secretary, on a terrace above, heard it, and rolled on the flat roof in laughter, and wrote it down most conscientiously. By such light matters was the dreariness of waiting days lessened.

For plainly the days were to be of waiting. All the good will of gift-bought friends helped the strangers not at all to the finding of the trail of gold. In the sands of the streams some fragments no larger than seeds of the grass were found, and in the cañon of Po-et-se some of the adventurers dug weary hours in the strange soil where the traces are yet plain of black ashes, and charred cinders far beneath the sagebrush growth of to-day.

But while the Te-hua men gave good will for their digging, yet more than that they could not give, for the reason that no more than two persons could hold in trust that secret of the Sun Father's symbol — and only certain members of the Po-Ahtun order knew even the names of those two people.

After much patient delving had Ka-yemo learned that this was so, for the thing was not a tribal matter, but a thing of high medicine in the Po-Ahtun order. Not even the governor knew who held the secret. When the time came for certain religious ceremonies, some of the yellow stone was placed on the shrine of the weeping god with other prayers, but it was a sacred thing, as was the pollen of the corn, and no man asked from whence it came. To be told meant that the person told was made guardian until the death blankets wrapped him. It was a great honor. No man could ask for it. A brother might not know that his brother was the keeper of the trust. Only

the head men of the secret order of Spirit Things could know.

In vain Juan Gonzalvo swore, and Padre Vicente used diplomacy and made wondrous fine impression as the ambassador for the king of all Spain and the Indian Island!

Don Ruy took the secretary and Yahn Tsyn-deh, and went to the governor of Kah-po where his reception was kindly, but the information given him was slight.

That dignitary told him that his men of Mexico might dig great caves if they chose in search for the yellow metal of the sun symbol, but that to Povi-whah had been given the secret of the gold at the time when Señor Coronado had burned the two hundred men at the stake in Tiguex. All the old men knew that gold was the one thing the men of iron searched for. Before that time all villages had men who knew where it was hidden by the Sun Father. But a council of head men had been called. It had been a great council and long. At the end of it, one village was chosen, one order of that village, and two members of that order, and in the ears of those two alone was whispered the hiding place. No man could know who the two keepers of the secret might be, for it had to do with sacred things and with strong magic, and in that way did the villages decide to guard the secret of the High Sun.

“No chance here for whispers of courtiers and king’s counselors to get abroad in the land,” decided Don Ruy as they mounted their horses for the home ride and Yahn lingered to gossip with neighbors. “In the south the conquerors could fight for gold and win it — but in this land of silence with whom is one to fight?”

“Need you the gold so much that you must come between these poor people and their god in the sky?” asked the secretary doubtfully, for the attitude of the two had been of extreme politeness and not so much of comradeship since that morning of confession when the lad had owned himself a deficient page in the bearing of love messages,—“Is the finding of the gold a matter of life or of death?”

“It pays for most good things,” stated Don Ruy. “How know you that I do not beggar myself on this expedition? And to go back with empty hands would win little of favor for me from even the well-guarded Doña of the Mexic tryst.”

“You forget, Excellency,” said the lad and smiled, “she is called mad you know — and to a mad maid you might return in a cloak of woven grasses, or of shredded bark, and lack nothing of welcome.”

“Humph! Only to a mad maid dare I return coatless, and find an open gate? And suppose it be another than the gentle maniac whom I seek? — a cloak of grasses would be a sorry equipment to cover my failure.”

“There is one right good blanket at your disposal,” said the lad looking straight out across the river, yet feeling the color mount to his hair as Don Ruy regarded him keenly and then clapped him on the shoulder.

“I’ll claim half of the blanket when the day comes!” he declared — “and in truth I’d not be so sorry to see the maid of your discourse whether mad or of sanity. That ever restless Cacique who strives to bar us out, shows me that more than one Indian may have gone mad in the same struggle. Think you he must know the keepers of the secret of gold?”

“It would not be strange, since he is the head of the magicians and the worker of spirit things.”

“God send that Juan Gonzalvo gets not that idea strongly in his mind — it would be the cap sheaf to the stack of his grievances.”

“And it would be the one to weigh most heavily with his reverence the padre” — added Chico. “His soul is set on treasure for the Holy Brotherhood — and to win in secret where Coronado and the church failed with all the blare of trumpets, means that no man in the Indies would have a name written above that of the patient and devout Padre Vicente.”

“You say things, lad, with a serious face; — but with a mocking voice,” commented Don Ruy. “Tell me truly if the life of a page in the palace of the Viceroy teaches you so much of politics and holy orders that you combine the two and grow skeptic to each?”

“A page sees more than he understands —” returned the lad, “it was the teaching of your mad Doña of the silken scarf who saw things as the priests told her they were not to be seen, — she it was who taught me to laugh instead of doing penance.”

“And she it was also no doubt who taught you of magic Mexic things in keeping with the fairy Melissa of Charlemagne’s day, and Merlin the magian of Britain?”

“Heigh-ho! It is precious magic those old romancers did tell of!” agreed the lad. “Think how fine it would be if we had those enchanted steeds and lances, — and the fair daughter of the Khan of Kathay, for company through the wilderness!”

“She was too fickle, and too much the weeping fair,” decided Don Ruy. “Bradamante the warrior

maid is more to the fancy — she would fight for the lover she loved — or against him as the case might be, yet give love to him all the time! She was the very pole-star of those old romances — but they make no such maids except in books!”

“Not so much pity for that,” commented the secretary. “Since she was too easily won for the hearth stone of a plain man. It is clearly set down that she spoke with her pagan lover but once, and fell straightway so deep in love that she would fight either Christian or Moor to find the way to him. A maid like that looks well afar off, but it would take a valiant man to house with her!”

“How know you aught of how many times eyes must meet — or words be said ere love comes?” demanded Don Ruy — “Bantam that you are! — Must a man and a maid see summer and winter together ere the priest has work to do?”

“Alas — and saints guard us! — we need not to live long to see denial of that!” said the secretary and shrugged and smiled. “But since a maid close to my own house throws lilies to strange cavaliers, it is not for me to make discourse of ladies light-of-love!”

“Light-of-love! — Jackanapes! You know not so much after all if you get that thought cross wise in your skull! My ‘Doña Bradamante’ (for as yet neither you or the padre have given a name to her!) the ‘Doña Bradamante’ spoke no word the most rigid duenna could have frowned down! If you are her foster brother you might have gathered that much of wisdom to yourself!”

“But — your Excellency — she has never scattered wisdom broadcast on any one of us! An elfish maid who needed guard of both duenna and confessor: —

how was a mere friend to know that a love of a mad moment would have made her a wonder of wisdom and discretion?"

Whereupon Don Ruy suggested that he go to the devil and learn sense, and added that if the famous magic steed, or ring of invisibility were to be found in the desert regions of these Indian provinces, he would use them for a peep into the palace of the Viceroy, or the nunnery of the Doña of the Lily. No ambassador would he trust. For himself he would see how much or how little of madness was back of the message of the blossom, or the guerdon of the silken scarf.

"If I were indeed a worthy page I would make a song of your enchanted — or demented Doña, and pipe it to you to the tombé of the medicine workers on the roofs," declared the lad in high glee that Don Ruy again spoke with frankness to him.

But his excellency put aside the offer, content to make his own songs when there was a maid to listen.

"Dame Yahn Tsyn-deh might listen — and even make herself beautiful for you."

"The Dame Yahn is like enough to make trouble without the singing of songs! Whether it is the Indian war capitan, or our own, I know not as to the favorite. But some game she is playing, and I doubt if it is for Juan Gonzalvo, despite his gifts."

Padre Vicente and José were walking apart under a group of the white limbed cottonwoods, as the two riders drew near the village. Their discourse was earnest, and the voice of the padre was heard in decision.

"That is how it must be, José —" he said. "You have found the way, — the gold is as good as ours!"

"By the faith!" — said Don Ruy swinging from

the saddle to join them; "if this be true let us fill wallets and break camp for Mexico! — there is a gentle maniac over there with whom I would fain hold hands once more — this womanless paradise pleases me little!"

The padre regarded him with tolerance, and never a blink of the eye to denote remembrance of any gentle maniac in particular. Since the dame had served a worthy purpose, forgotten was all the episode!

"It is well you know the good tidings of José," he said — "though there is no hint that the gold is piled in bars waiting for the lading. Speak, José."

"It is a man of Ni-am-be," said José "He has been outcast for a reason. He lives alone, and the fear of the alone is growing in him, for he is old! He was one of the men who made medicine to forget where the sign of the Sun Father hides in the earth. But the medicine was not good medicine."

"He does not forget?"

"He made a vow to the sky to forget, but the sky did not listen and take the vow. He does not forget."

"And he will show the place?"

"It may be he will show the place. He asks me if it is a good life to live with your people, also if you would take him away when you go."

"Oh — ho! — he fears what would happen if he was left behind after telling — he fears they would kill him?"

"Not so much of the to kill is he afraid. He was a medicine man. He knows what the other medicine men could do. He would wish for the to die many

times and they would not let death come near to his cave in the rock."

"By their magic?" asked Don Ruy.

"By their magic, Excellency. Of all the head men is he afraid, but of Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho who has the sight of the dark is he much afraid."

"The sight of the dark?"

"It is so, some men are born into the world with it. They know the thought of the other man,—they see the hidden things. Tahn-té has the strong medicine and the eyes to see. He is much afraid of Tahn-té the Ruler."

"You see the power of these necromancers with their satanic arts?" said Padre Vicente. "We must make it plain to these people that such fear is to be driven out only by the true church and the power of its saints."

"If we wait for the gold until we teach them all that, the profit of this journey will be to our heirs and not to ourselves," decided Don Ruy. "Pay the renegade for the secret he should have forgotten, take him along with us, and convert him at your leisure. In all good time, and with a larger guard of men, you can come for the further conversion of the tribe."

"There is wisdom in what you say," replied the padre, "for converts here will mean a waiting game. But once let us take to Mexico the golden proof of the wealth in this province and there will be eager troops and churchmen in plenty to cross the deserts and defend the faith. But for that devil-possessed Po-Ahtun-ho the road to success would be shorter."

"It is not good luck to say things against the man of strong magic," stated José. "Ka-yemo, the war

capitan would like if Tahn-té had never come from the land of the Hópitû — but Ka-yemo says no evil words of Tahn-té — he knows that Tahn-té has ears to hear far off, and eyes to see in the dark.”

“Do you forget you are a Christian soul?” demanded the padre. “The holy saints can kill the evil powers even in the sons of Satan! Let me hear no more of the ‘eyes of the dark;’—pagan trickery!”

José said no more, but it was easy to see that the veneration of foreign ritual had made little impression on the Indian mind. He feared all the devils of the Christian hell, and most of the gods of the pagan pantheon. A policy of propitiation towards all the unseen powers is the wise and instinctive attitude of the primitive mind. He slipped his prayer beads through his fingers as taught for prayer, but to be quite certain that evil be bribed to keep its distance, he stealthily scattered prayer meal as he walked behind the others, and Yahn who was coming behind them, saw him, and laughed. She was glad of heart to see that the Te-hua, after years of the white man’s religion, was still at heart, a devotee of the Sun.

“He says that Tahn-té the Ruler has not the strong magic,” he said lowly to Yahn — “but no one else says so in this land.”

Yahn did not care to discuss the power of Tahn-té — it was a bitter thing in her days.

And as the little group went on through the fragrant sage and the yellow bloom, Tahn-té himself stood almost on their trail, but a little to one side where a knoll was.

Still as a thing of stone he stood there. His hand shaded his eyes while he gazed across the sage levels

— across the water of the river and to the yellow and red sands beyond.

Even at their footsteps near, and their voices, he made no sign and wavered not in his gaze. Don Ruy glancing at him saw that his expression was keen, yet incredulous. So strange was it that Don Ruy instinctively turned in his saddle to see the thing at which Tahn-té looked and frowned.

At first he could see only the wavering lines of heat across the level — and then he saw the thing, and with a word halted the others and pointed.

Out of the red and yellow sand and soft green patches of the desert growth a group of men were outlined against the low hills. Indians with lances and with shields.

“That is a curious thing,” said Don Ruy. “They walk this way yet their steps bring them not closer! Is it a war party?”

Yahn gave one look, drew her breath sharply, and turned speechless to Tahn-té. José after a long look crossed himself many times and gripped the sleeve of the padre.

“Navahu!” — he muttered, the terror of his ancient first captors coming over him. “Navahu to battle!”

But Tahn-té made a little gesture to reassure the startled interpreter.

“You do not see men alive there,” he said, — “these are not men, but the shadows of men who will come.”

“Shadows?” — the tones of the padre were contemptuous.

“Spirit people of the shadows — these things do come to some eyes, some days, in our land,” stated

Tahn-té quietly. "This time you have also been given to see that these things are."

Even as he spoke the mirage of the armed men faded in a whirl of sand caught up by a wandering wind, and while the others still stared at the place where it had been, Tahn-té passed them and ran with easy stride across the levels to Povi-whah.

The Spanish crossed themselves, and even Yahn Tsyn-deh trembled. Tahn-té had chosen to show the men of iron that his medicine was strong to bring visions, and what was most wonderful — to bring them before the eyes of other men!

José was shaking with fear.

"All things he hears," he muttered — "all things! Under the trees we spoke words — far off they reached his ears! He waited to show us that his eyes were for the dark or the day — or — the *dead!* The spirit men were Navahu. Holy Father, he can bring all the men who ever died to tramp us into the sand! Holy Father, my heart is very sick!"

The others were silent. All were awed, and Padre Vicente was thinking what was most wise to say. There were enough in the group for strong witness that Tahn-té had shown them a thing which did not exist; — only a sorcerer could call up men out of the earth and send them away on the wind!

"In the sorcery we had no part, my children," he said at last. "The man who raised those demons fled, as you see, at the sign of the cross! To-morrow morning we have a mass. It is well to walk in prayer, when Satan works with his chosen helpers."

Don Ruy looked at him sharply — for the mirage could not be a thing of wonder for so travelled a man. But his was not the task to correct eminence as to natural or infernal agencies, and the effect on the

minds of the two interpreters might prove a thing of grace!

Therefore he bent his head, and rode onward, and smiled at the secretary, who was careful to ride close, and showed none too much of courage at this glimpse of the magic of the barbarian who clasped hands with the gods -- or the demons!

"What dare be written in the "Relaciones" of a thing like that?" he queried.—"You smile, Excellency, as if you carried a magic shield, or enchanted sword lifted from pages of old romance, but what think you Señor Brancadori will say to this thing of wonder? It does not belong to the living world we know."

"Let it not get into your dreams," suggested Don Ruy —"or if you do, content yourself with the fancy that I indeed bear a magic shield and am ever near enough for you to hide behind it."

"I am not so much a coward!" retorted the lad, —"to die for a good cause in any human way is not a thing to fear — but these magical works —"

"Without doubt they do belong to the sorcery of Satan," said Don Ruy soberly, yet with an eye on the padre —"and yon supple racer is of course one of his heirs. Stay you close to me, lad, and forget not you orisons."

When they reached the camp, a herald was calling to the people from the terraces. He was calling for all the men to prepare for battle. In a vision of the bright day had Tahn-té seen the coming of the Navahu. The medicine of Tahn-té was strong. Not at home would they wait for battle. To steal women had the enemy taken the trail to the dwellings of the Ancient ruins in the hills, and there must the warriors prepare to meet them on the trail.

The names of men were called as scouts, and the response was quick, as one after another ran to the kiva for orders, and then started on the run towards mesa and forest.

Don Ruy looked after them with eyes perplexed.

"Does the Cacique regard the mirage with earnestness?" he said to the padre who also watched and listened. "The man has a quick, good brain and marvellous understandings,—but to prepare for battle because of a sun picture in the sand is scarce what I looked for in him."

Padre Vicente smiled with his lips, and stroked his beard.

"You have yet to learn that the Indian magic workers let no tricks go by to prove their greatness,"—he said. "That wench and José were witness to the thing—thus he must claim it as his own! When the scouts find no Navahu warriors, be sure it will be for the reason that the magic of the sorcerer caused them to turn back in weakness on the trail!"

"That will but strengthen his power, if it be so," agreed the younger man,— "and how will you surmount that fear of him, and win the renegade of Ni-am-be to give the word we need?"

"Protection and a life of ease away from the Indian magicians is a good bribe for an outcast,— and it may be that fortune plays into our hands. I could wish that the Cacique would follow the scouts with his mummeries and incantations. You see how they have taught even José the fear of him!"

"Yes — I do see, and but for the story that in this one village is held the gold secret, I should say to move camp to some province where bookish caciques hold no sway. How account you for the keen brain of this wonder-worker? We have pampered and

tutored numbskulls in Seville who know not even their own creed so well as it is known by this heretic barbarian."

"Without doubt it is the power of the Prince of Darkness," and Padre Vicente gave the opinion with all due force — having in remembrance that scene of the gift of the rosary in the kiva, and seeing clearly that the Spanish adventurer had more than a little of admiration for the unexpected daring of the pagan.—"Witchcraft and sorcery are of the Devil, and both white men and savages do trade their souls for evil knowledge. To strip him of his ill-gotten power would be a work of grace for the Faith — and it is a thing for which each Christian should gladly say many prayers!"

Don Ruy well knew that these ardent words were directed at his own luke-warmness in regard to the young Ruler. Maestro Diego and Juan Gonzalvo had distanced him in setting a good example to the men of the guard!

A messenger from the kiva approached and spoke to Yahn, and she came to the Spaniards with a message.

A council was in the kiva. It was about war if war came. The Po-Ahtun-ho thought it was good that one of the white visitors be asked to sit and listen; Don Ruy was invited to be that one. The man José was to interpret.

Don Ruy speculated as to the cause of this courtesy. The Ruler certainly did not desire the help of the white men — the message did not even say as much. But it was plain that there were two parties on that question, and Tahn-té meant to show no fear of his opponents. They would see he gave them fair chances.

So he went, and José followed, and Yahn watched them — to her great, yet silent rage.

Ka-yemo only reached the village as the last scout was started for the trail of the Po-et-se cañon. Ka-yemo was the official for the war orders, yet the orders had been given without speech with him! Over his head had it been done, and his protest to the governor, and to the old men in council brought him little of pride or of comfort.

“On the trail to see your wife you might have died,” said one of the old men,— “or on the way coming home. How could we know? If you die and we have to fight — we have to fight without you. Before you were born we fought without you.”

“I was not to see a wife!” protested Ka-yemo. “I can stay away like other men. Some one has talked crooked! I was on the mesa talking with the guardians who make the arrow heads. To the far away ones I talked. The women send word to them that they are afraid. A ghost is at Puyé. All the women but the Twilight Woman are much frightened. They want men.”

“Good!” said the governor. “The scouts are already on the trail. If men are needed, each man is ready and each spear is waiting. To the Po-Ahtun-ho has been shown a vision of the enemy — it was not a time to wait for council.”

Ka-yemo's handsome face was still sulky. The vision of Tahn-té might have waited. He had come down with a fine new story of a ghost seen in the ruins of Puyé, and it was ignored because Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho had found a vision!

Tahn-té entered not at all into the discussion of the confiscated rights of Ka-yemo. Even of the ghost frightening the women he asked no question.

Many things of war were talked of if the Navahu should come to steal women or corn, and the dusk of the twilight crept after the vanished sun when Tahn-té turned at last to the war chief.

“Ka-yemo, with the men of iron you have spoken much and often,” he said quietly. “Do you know who told them first that in Povi-whah was held the secret of the yellow metal for which they search?”

The tongue of Ka-yemo became stiff as all sat silent waiting for his answer.

“The padre asked me,”—he said at last,—“the padre always makes people speak—I told the padre that which I had heard.”

There was a slight stir among the men, but Tahn-té quieted them with a glance.

“The priest of the iron men has also been told one other thing,” he continued—“and it is well for you all, brothers, that you hear this thing. Oh-we-tahnh, the outcast of Ni-am-be, was a strong medicine man. He used magic in a dark way for evil. His power was taken from him. He was told by the council to forget the secret of the sun symbol. Brothers, he has not forgotten! He has come to the camp of the men of iron. He eats their food:—last night he slept by their walls.”

“Our brothers of Ni-am-be will not be glad with us if we let this be,” stated one man. “The evil magic must be outcast always.”

“Send some one and find the man,” said Tahn-té. “When the sun of to-morrow comes, all who listen here may be on the war trail. It is not good to leave a coyote loose to do harm when no one watches.”

In a little while the outcast was brought into the circle. He cringed with fear, and his eyes were restless as those of a trapped wolf. The governor ques-

tioned him as to his presence there, reminding him that the council of Ni-am-be had granted him life only if he take that life out of sight of his kind. Why then did he come to Povi-whah and stay in the camp of the strangers?

His only reply was that he would go now, and he would go quickly.

“No — not quickly,” said Tahn-té. “You will not go quickly any where ever again. I am looking at you! I say so!”

The man stared at Tahn-té like a bird that was under a charm. All the others saw the steady gaze of Tahn-té, and saw also that the outcast began to tremble.

“Hold out your hand,” said Tahn-té, and when it was done, Tahn-té took from his medicine pouch some pieces of yellow gold. They were heavy, he passed them around until all might see, then he put the gold in the hand of the outcast.

“Your clan was a proud clan and good, and you made them ashamed,” said Tahn-té. “You had strong medicine and you used it for evil until your name must not be spoken by your brothers. To these men of iron you would trade that which is not yours: Without speech of council you would do this — and to do it would be traitor! Because your heart wishes to give the sun symbol to these strangers, I send you to them with what your hand can hold. To the priest of the white god give it! Tell him I, the Po-Ahtun-ho, send it, and no more than that will he ever see here in Povi-whah. Tell him that the weight of it makes your hand shake and your body shake. Tell him that the sickness is now in your blood, and when the day comes again your tongue cannot make words to tell him things. Tell him if

his men put you in the saddle, or carry you to the hidden place of the Sun Father, that the light of your eyes will go out on the trail! I am looking at you! — and you, who once had a name, and were a worker of magic, know that I look on you with Power, and that it will be as I say.”

He stooped and drew in the ashes of the place of fire, the figure of a man with hand stretched out, then, with a breath, he sent the ashes in a little cloud and each line was obliterated.

“To destroy you would not be good,”— he continued. “It is better that the boys and the young men see the fate given to a traitor. My brothers,— is this well?”

“It is well!” said the men, but the voice of the war chief was not loud, and his hands shook until he clasped them together and held them steady.

Tahn-té looked around the circle as though undecided, and then rested on Ka-yemo.

“You speak the words of the Castilian man, and like to speak them,” he said quietly, “so it will be well for you to make the words for this man who carries to their priest the gift of the sun symbol. Forget no thought of it — for all the words have meaning.”

And this speech to Ka-yemo was in Castilian, and was plainly said, and Ruy Sandoval knew then why the courtesy of the council had been extended to him.

And the outcast, holding the nuggets in his trembling outstretched hand shook so that he could not go alone up the ladder to the world above.

Ka-yemo, with a still, strange face of fear, put out his hand to help the outcast, who looked as if Great King Death had called his name.

No more words were spoken, and the men in silence

followed after. They had seen a thing of strong medicine, and the Great Mystery had sent power quickly. That palsy by which the man had been touched had come with the swiftness of the wind when it whirls the leaves of the cottonwood. They all knew that the tongue would be dumb, and the eyes would be blind in the given time if need be.

And Don Ruy like the others, was touched with awe of the man who had wrought the thing. As he went up the ladder he looked back at the Ruler who sat still — gazing into the ashes of the place of sacred fire.