

THE FAIR GOD

FROM THE SPANISH De
FERNANDO DE ALVA.

A Work Of Historical Fiction
Narrated by Lew Wallace
Illustrated by Eric Pape
Illuminations by Mel Fuentiz
Recomposed By Lin Stone
To Delight and Enthrall
A Younger Audience,
Shall we say, Under The Age Of 19?

Many entanglements have been untangled,
Numerous spellings have been uprooted,
A few times and peripatetic dates have been altered.
Anywhere a choice had to be made between history and romance,
Romance received the nomination and bears the brunt of any
tragedy.
The typeface has been changed, enlarged and ennobled.
A slight fluency of basic Spanish will make most readers more
comfortable. Wherever possible, American English was
substituted.

TRADUCIDO DEL ESPAÑOL DE
FERNANDO FUENTES DE ALVA.

THE FAIR GOD

BOOK THE FIRST.

The Spanish Calendar is simpler than the Aztecan. In fact, Christian methods, of whatever nature, are always better than heathen.

Therefore, by the Spanish Calendar, March, 1519, had about half spent itself in the valley of Bountiful, which was as yet untrodden by the gold-seeker. He came with cross-hilted sword at his side, and on his pursed lips an oath. Near noon of one of its fairest days a traveler came descending the western slope of the Aqualco Mountains. Since the dawn his path had been amongst hills and crags; at times traversing bald rocks that towered to where the winds blew chill, then dipping into warm valleys, where were grass, flowers, and streamlets, and sometimes forests of cedar and fir, -- labyrinths in which there reigned a perpetual twilight.

Toilsome as was the way, the traveler, young and strong, marched lightly. His dress, of the kind prevalent in his country, was provincial, and with few signs of rank. He had sandals of buffalo-hide, fitted for climbing rocks and threading pathless woods; a sort of white tunic, covering his body from the neck to the knees, leaving bare the arms from the shoulder; sash and mantle -- of cotton, blue tinted, and void of ornament; on the wrist of his left arm he wore a substantial golden bracelet, and in both ears jeweled pendants; while an ebony band that encircled his head kept his straight black locks in place and wicked sweat from his eyes, and permitted a single snow-white bird's-wing for decoration. There was a shield on his left arm, framed of wood, and covered

with padded cloth, and in the left hand a javelin barbed with 'itzli; at his back swung a royal gray wolf, and a quiver filled with arrows; an unstrung bow in his right hand completed his equipments, and served him well in lieu of staff. A young muzzled ocelot that padded reluctantly behind him, was his sole companion.

In the course of his journey he came to a crag that sank bluffly down several hundred feet, commanding a fine viewing prospect. Though the air was cold, he halted. Away to the northwest stretched the beautiful valley of the Bountiful mountains. It was dotted with hamlets and farm-houses, and marked with the silver tracery of streams. Far across the plain, he caught a view of the fresh waters of Lake Chalco, and beyond that, blue in the distance and faintly relieved against the sky, the royal hill of Chapultepec, with its palaces and cypress forests.

In all the world he had seen no scene comparable with that he looked upon, -- none its rival for beauty, none where the heavens seemed so perfectly melted into the earth. There were the most renowned cities of the Empire; from that plain went the armies whose marches were all triumphs; in that air hovered the gods awaiting sacrifices; into that sky rose the smoke of the inextinguishable fires; there shone the brightest suns, and lingered the longest summers; and yonder dwelt that king -- in youth a priest, then a warrior, now the terror of all nations -- whose signet on the hand of a slave could fill the land with a rustling of banners.

No traveler, I ween, could look unmoved on the picture; ours sat down, and gazed with brimful eyes and a beating heart. For the first time he was beholding the matchless vale so overhung with loveliness and full of the monuments of a strange civilization. So rapt was he that he did not observe the ocelot come and lay its head in his lap, like a dog seeking caresses. "Come, boy!" he said, at last rousing himself; "let us on. Our Mother has a fortune waiting us yonder."

And they resumed the journey. Half an hour's brisk walk brought them to the foot of the mountain. Suddenly they came upon company.

It was on the bank of a considerable stream, which was pouring in noisy torrent over a rocky bed. It appeared to rush with a song forward into the valley. A clump of giant oaks shaded a level sward. Under them a crowd of los Tamanes, tawny, half-clad, broad-shouldered men, devoured loaves of cold maize bread. Near the roots of the trees their masters reclined comfortably on mats, or mats, without which an Aztec trader's outfit was incomplete.

Our traveler understood at a single swift glance the innate identity of the strangers. Since his road led directly through them he went on without hesitation. As he came near, some of them bounded up to observe him better. "A warrior going to the city," said one.

"Or rather a king's courier," suggested another.

"Is not that an ocelot chasing at his heels?" asked a third.

"That it is. Boy, bring me my javelin!"

"And mine! And mine!" cried several of them at once, all springing to their feet.

By the time the young man came close the whole party stood at the ready to give him a stiff-armed welcome.

"I am very sorry to have disturbed you," he said softly when he found himself obliged to stop by their spears.

"You seem friendly enough," answered one of the older men; "but your comrade there, -- what of him?"

The traveler smiled a relieved smile. "See, he is muzzled, friendly and safe."

The party laughed at their own fears. The old merchant stepped forward to greet the young stranger. "I confess you have greatly relieved me. I feared your brute might set on and wound one of our slaves. Come up, and sit down with us."

The traveler welcomed this invitation as he was tempted by the prospect of cheer from the provision-baskets lying around.

"Bring a mat for the warrior," said the friendly trader. He waited for its delivery, then added "Now give him bread -- and meat" he added.

From an abundance of bread, fowl, and fruit the wayfarer helped himself. A running conversation was meantime maintained. "My ocelot? Oh, that story is far too simple for you to hear, good friends, I wish it were better. I killed his mother with my knife, and took him when just a kit. Now he does me good service by hunting meat. You should see him in the excited pursuit of an antelope!"

"Oh? Then you are not a warrior?"

"To be a warrior," replied the hunter, modestly, "is to have been in many battles, and taken many captives. I have practiced my arms, and, at times, boasted of my skill, a bit foolishly perhaps but never bested. Still, I must confess, I have never marched a single day under the banner of the great king."

"Ah!" said the old man, quizzically, "I understand you. Perhaps you have served some free-trading company like our own."

"You are shrewd. Yes. My father is a merchant. At times he has traveled with strong trains, and even attacked cities that have refused him admission to their market."

"Indeed? He must be of some great renown. In what province does he live, my son?"

"In Aunt Juana co."

"Tepaja! old Tepaja, of Aunt Juana Co! Are you son of his?" The good man grasped the young one's hand enthusiastically. "I knew him well; many years ago we were as brothers together; we traveled and traded through many provinces. That was the day of

the elder Montezuma, when the Empire was not as large as now; when, in fact, most gates were closed against us, because our king was an Aztec, and we had to storm a town, then turn its square into a market for the sale of our wares. Sometimes we marched as an army, each of us carrying a thousand slaves; and yet our tasks were not always easy. I remember once, down on the bank of the Great River, we were beaten back from a walled town, and succeeded only after a four days' fight. Ah, but we made it a win! We led three thousand slaves back to Tenochtitlan, besides five hundred captives, -- a present for the gods."

So the merchant talked until the hunger of his new acquaintance was appeased; then he offered a pipe, which was declined.

"I am fond of a pipe after a good meal; and this one has been worthy of a king. But now I have no leisure for the luxury; the city to which I am bound is too far ahead of me."

"If this is your first visit, you are right. Do not fail to be there before the market closes. Such a sight never gladdened your dreams!"

"So I have heard my father say."

"O, it never was as it will be to-night! The roads for days have been thronged with visitors going up earlier in processions."

"What? I have missed these. What is the occasion?"

"Why, to-morrow is the celebration of Quetzal! Certainly, my son, you have marked the day concerning that god."

"I have heard rumors only. I believe he was to return to the City Bountiful."

"Well, the story is long, and you are in a hurry. We also are going to the city, but will halt our slaves at Iztapalapan for the night, and cross the causeway before the sun to-morrow. If you care to keep us company, we will start at once; on the way I will tell you a few things that may not be unacceptable."

"I see," said the hunter, pleasantly, "I have reason to be proud of my father's good report. Certainly, I will go a distance with you at least, and thank you for any information you care to impart. To speak quite frankly, I am seeking my fortune."

The merchant gestured an announcement to his companions then



raised a huge conch-shell to his mouth. He blew a blast that started every slave to his feet. For a few minutes all was commotion. The mats were rolled up, and, with the provision-baskets, slung upon broad shoulders; each tamane resumed his load of wares, and took his place; those armed put themselves, with their masters, at the head; and at another peal from the shell everyone started forward.

The column, if such it may be called, was long, and not without a certain picturesqueness as it crossed the stream, and entered a tract covered with tall

trees, amongst which the palm was strangely intermingled with the oak and the cypress. The whole valley, from the lake to the mountains, was irrigated, and under cultivation. Full of wonder, the hunter marched beside the merchant.

An Explanatory Note From Lew Wallace

A personal experience, though ever so plainly told, is, generally speaking, more attractive to listeners and readers than fiction. A circumstance from the tongue or pen of one to whom it actually happened, or who was its hero or victim, or even its spectator, is always more interesting than if given second-hand. If the makers of history, contradistinguished from its writers, could teach it to us directly, one telling would suffice to secure our lasting remembrance. The reason is, that the narrative so proceeding derives a personality and reality not otherwise attainable, which assist in making way to our imagination and the sources of our sympathy.

With this theory or bit of philosophy in mind, when the annexed book was resolved upon, I judged best to assume the character of a translator, which would enable me to write in the style and spirit of one who not merely lived at the time of the occurrences woven in the text, but was acquainted with many of the historical personages who figure therein, and was a native of the beautiful valley in which the story is located. Thinking to make the descriptions yet more real, and therefore more impressive, I took the liberty of attributing the composition to a literator who, whatever may be thought of his works, was not himself a fiction. Without meaning to insinuate that *THE FAIR GOD* would have been the worse for creation by Don Fernando de Alva, the Tezcucan, I wish merely to say that it is not a translation. Having been so written, however, now that publication is at hand, change is impossible; hence, nothing is omitted, -- title-page, introductory, and conclusion are given to the reader exactly as they were brought to the publisher by the author.

L.W.

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The text, names and vocabulary as well as the stream of consciousness has been modified by the publisher in order to appeal to a younger generation. The graphics have been modified as well. With these modifications in mind it seems obvious a new copyright should be taken out. 09/26/17 **ALL INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS** are therefore reserved for and to the publisher on this day.

THE
FAIR GOD



WALLACE

GROSSET
& DUNLAP

THE FAIR GOD



BY LEW WALLACE

TRADUCIDO DEL ESPAÑOL DE
FERNANDO FUENTES DE ALVA.

Capitulo 2

"I was speaking about Quetzal', I believe," said the old man, when all were fairly on the way. "His real name was Quetzalcoatl. He was a wonderfully kind god, who, many ages ago, came to the temple in the valley here, and dwelt awhile. The people were then rude and savage; but he taught them agriculture, and other arts, of which you will see signs as we get on. He changed the manners and customs; while he stayed, famine was unknown; the harvests were abundant, and happiness universal. Above all, he taught the princes wisdom in applying their government.

If to-day the Aztec Empire is the strongest in the world, it is owing to Quetzal'. Where he came from, or how long he stayed, is not known. The people and their governors after a time proved ungrateful, and they banished him; they also overthrew his religion, and set up their hungry idols again. They sacrificed men, women and children, which he had prohibited. Driven away, it was said he went to Cholula; thence to the sea-coast, where, it is said, he built him a canoe of serpent-skins, and departed for Tlapallan, a heaven lying somewhere toward the rising sun. But before he went, he promised to return some day, and wrest away the Empire and restore his own religion.

In appearance he was not like our race; his skin was creamy, and almost transparent. His hair was long and wavy and black. He is said to have been wise as a god, and more beautiful than men. Such is his history; and, as the prophecy has it, the time of his return is at hand. The king and Tlalac, the teotuctli, are looking for him; they expect him every hour, and, they say, live in continued dread of him. Wishing to propitiate him, they have called the people together, and celebrate to-morrow, with sacrifices and combats and more pomp than was ever seen before, not excepting even the time of the king's coronation."

The hunter listened closely, and at the conclusion said, "Thank you, uncle. Tell me now of the combats."

"Yes. In the days of the first kings it was the custom to go into the

temples, choose the bravest warriors there set apart for sacrifice, bring them into the tianguetz, and make them do battle in the presence of the people. If they conquered, they were set free and sent home with presents."

"Es verdad? With whom did they combat?"

"True enough, my son. The fight was deemed a point of honor amongst the Aztecs, and the best of them volunteered. Indeed, those were royal times! Of late, I am sorry to say, the custom of which I was speaking has been neglected, but to-morrow it is to be revived. The scene will be very grand. The king and all the nobles will be in state there."

The description excited the listener's fancy, and he said, with flushed cheeks, " For all the world I would not lose the chance to see this. Can you tell me who of the Aztecs will combat?"

"In the city we could easily find out; but you must recollect I am going home after a long absence. The shields of the combatants are always exhibited in the tianguetz the evening before the day of the fight. In that way the public are notified beforehand of those who take the field. As the city is full of Chiefs, you may be assured our champions will be noble."

"Thank you again, uncle. And now, as one looking for service, like myself, is anxious to know with whom to engage, tell me of the Chiefs and sub-chiefs."

"Then you intend entering the army?"

"Well, yes. I am tired of hunting; and though trading is honorable, I have no taste for it."

The merchant, as if deliberating, took out a box of snuff and helped himself; and then he replied, --

"The Chiefs are very numerous; in no former reign, probably, were there so many of ability and renown. With some of them I have personal acquaintance; others I know only by sight or reputation. You had better mention those of whom you have been thinking."

"Well," said the hunter, "there is Iztzil', the Tezcucan."

"Do not think of him, I pray you!" And the good man spoke earnestly.

"He is as brave as any, and perhaps as skilful, but proud, Ha, haughty, soured, and treacherous. Everybody fears him. You have heard of his father?"

"You mean the wise 'Hualpilli?"

"Yes. Upon his death, not long since, Iztliil' denied his brother's right to the Tezcucan throne. There was a quarrel which would have ended in blood, had not Montezuma interfered, and given the city to Cacama, and all the northern part of the province to Iztliil'. Since that day, the latter has been discontented with the great king. So, I say again, do not think of him, unless you are careless about your own honor."

"Then what of Cacama? Tezcucan is a goodly city, I hear."

"He has courage, but is too effeminate to be a great warrior. A garden and a soft couch delight him more than camps, and dancing women better than fighting men. You might grow rich with him, but not renowned. Look elsewhere."

"Then there is the lord Cuitlahua."

"The king's brother, and governor of Iztapalapan!" said the merchant, promptly. "Some have thought him better qualified for Chapultepec than Montezuma, but it is not wise to say so. His people are prosperous, and he has the most beautiful gardens in the world; unlike Cacama, he cares nothing for them, when there is a field to be fought. Considering his influence at court and his love of war, you would do well to bear shield for him; but, on the other hand, he is old. Were I in your place, my son, I would attach myself to some young man."

"That brings me to Maxtla, the Tesoyucan."

"I know him only by repute. With scarcely a beard, he is chief of the king's guard. There was never anything like his fortune. Listen now, I will tell you a secret which may be of value to you some time. The king is not as young as he used to be by forty summers."

The hunter smiled at the caution with which the old man spoke of the monarch.

"You see," the speaker continued, "time and palace life have changed

him: he no longer leads the armies; his days are passed in the temples with the priests, or in the gardens with his women, of whom there are several hundreds; his most active amusement now is to cross the lake to his forests, and kill birds and rabbits by blowing little arrows at them through a reed. Thus changed, you can very well understand how he can be amused by songs and wit, and make favorites of those who best lighten his hours of satiety and indolence. In that way Maxtla rose, -- a marvellous courtier, but a very common soldier."

The description amused the young man, but he said gravely, "You have spoken wisely, uncle, and I am satisfied you know the men well. Really, I had no intention of entering the suite of either of them: they are not of my ideal; but there is a cacique, if reports are to be credited, beyond all exception, -- learned and brave, honored alike by high and low."

"Ah! you need not name him to me. I know him, as who does not?" And now the merchant spoke warmly. "A nobler than Guatamozin, -- or, as he is more commonly called, the 'tzin Guatamo -- never dwelt in Bountiful. He is the people's friend, and the Empire's hope. His valor and wisdom, -- ah, you should see him, my son! Such a face! His manner is so full of sweet dignity! But I will give you other evidence."

He clapped his hands three times, and a soldier sprang forward at the signal.

"Do you know the 'tzin Guatamo?" asked the merchant.

"I am an humble soldier, my master, and the 'tzin is the great king's nephew; but I know him. When he was only a boy, I served under him in Tlascalala. He is the best chief in Bountiful."

"That will do."

The man retired.

"So I might call up my tamanes," the merchant resumed, "and not one but would speak of him in the same way."

"Strange!" said the Tihuancan, in a low tone.

"No; if you allude to his popularity, it is not strange: if you mean the

man himself, you are right. The gods seldom give us the qualities that belong to him. He is more learned than Tlalac or the king; he is generous as becomes a prince; in action he is a hero. You have probably heard of the Tlascalan wall in the eastern valley; few warriors ever passed it and lived; yet he did so when almost a boy. I myself have seen him send an arrow to the heart of an eagle in its flight. He has a palace and garden in Iztapalapan; in one of the halls stand the figures of three kings, two of Michuaca, and one of the Ottomies. He took them prisoners in battle, and now they hold torches at his feasts."

"Enough, enough!" cried the hunter. "I have been dreaming of him while among the hills. I want no better leader."

The merchant cast an admiring glance at his beaming countenance, and said, "You are right; enter his service."

In such manner the conversation was continued, until the sun fast declined towards the western mountains. Meantime, they had passed through several hamlets and considerable towns. In nearly the whole progress, the way on either hand had been lined with plantations. Besides the presence of a busy, thriving population, they everywhere saw evidences of a cultivation and science, constituting the real superiority of the Aztecs over their neighbors. The country was thus preparing the stranger for the city, unrivaled in splendor and beauty. Casting a look toward the sun, he at length said, "Uncle, I have much to thank you for, -- you and your friends. But it is growing late, and I must hurry on, if I would see the tianguetz before the market closes."

"Very well," returned the old trader. "We will be in the city tomorrow. The gods go with you!"

Whistling to his ocelot, the adventurer quickened his pace, and was soon far in the advance.



Capitula 3

In the valley of Bountiful, at the time I write, are four lakes, -- Xaltocan, Chalco, Xochichalco, and Tezcucu. The latter, besides being the largest, washed the walls of Tenochtitlan, and was the especial pride of the Aztecs, who, familiar with its ways as with the city, traversed them all the days of the year, and even the nights.

"Ho, there!" shouted a voyageur, in a voice that might have been heard a long distance over the calm expanse of the lake. "Ho, the canoe!"

The hail was answered.

"Is it Guatamozin?" asked the first speaker.

"And going to Tenochtitlan?"

"The gods willing, -- yes."

The canoes of the voyageurs -- I use that term because it more nearly expresses the meaning of the word the Aztecs themselves were wont to apply to persons thus abroad -- were, at the time, about the middle of the little sea. After the 'tzin's reply, they were soon alongside, when lashings were applied, and together they swept on rapidly, for the slaves at the paddles vied in skill and

discipline.

"Iztli'l, of Tezcucó!" said the 'tzin, lightly. "He is welcome; but had a messenger asked me where at this hour he would most likely be found, I should have bade him search the chinampas, especially those most notable for their perfume and music."

The speech was courteous, yet the moment of reply was allowed to pass. The 'tzin waited until the delay excited his wonder.

"There is a rumor of a great battle with the Tlascalans," he said again, this time with a direct question. "Has my friend heard of it?"

"The winds that carry rumors seldom come to me," answered Iztli'l.

"Couriers from Tlascala pass directly through your capital -- "

The Tezcucan laid his hand on the speaker's shoulder.

"My capital!" he said. "Do you speak of the city of Tezcucó?"

The 'tzin dashed the hand away, and arose, saying, "Your meaning is dark in this dimness of stars."

"Be seated," said the other.

"If I sit, is it as friend or foe?"

"Hear me; then be yourself the judge."

The Aztec folded his cloak about him and resumed his seat, very watchful.

"Montezuma, the king -- "

"Beware! The great king is my kinsman, and I am his faithful subject."

The Tezcucan continued. "In the valley the king is next to the gods; yet to his nephew I say I hate him, and will teach him that my hate

is no idleness, like a passing love. 'Tzin, a hundred years ago our races were distinct and independent. The birds of the woods, the winds of the prairie, were not more free than the people of Tezcucu. We had our capital, our temples, our worship, and our gods; we celebrated our own festivals, our kings commanded their own armies, our priesthood prescribed their own sacrifices. But where now are king, country, and gods? Alas! you have seen the children of 'Hualpilli, of the blood of the Acolhuan, suppliants of Montezuma, the Aztec." And, as if overcome by the recollection, he burst into apostrophe. "I mourn thee, O Tezcucu, garden of my childhood, palace of my fathers, inheritance of my right! Against me are thy gates closed. The stars may come, and as of old garland thy towers with their rays; but in thy echoing halls and princely courts never, never shall I be known again!"

The silence that ensued, the 'tzin was the first to break.

"You would have me understand," he said, "that the king has done you wrong. Be it so. But, for such cause, why quarrel with me?"

"Ah, yes!" answered the Tezcucan, in an altered voice. "Come closer, that the slaves may not hear."

The Aztec kept his attitude of dignity. Yet lower Iztzil' dropped his voice.

"The king has a daughter whom he calls Tula, and loves as the light of his palace."

The 'tzin started, but held his peace.

"You know her?" continued the Tezcucan.

"Name her not!" said Guatamozin, passionately.

"Why not? I love her, and but for you, O 'tzin, she would have loved me. You, too, have done me wrong."

With thoughts dark as the waters he rode, the Aztec looked long at the light of fire painted on the sky above the distant city.

"Is Guatamozin turned woman?" asked Iztzil', tauntingly.

"Tula is my cousin. We have lived the lives of brother and sister. In hall, in garden, on the lake, always together, I could not help loving her."

"You mistake me," said the other. "I seek her for wife, but you seek her for ambition; in her eyes you see only her father's throne."

Then the Aztec's manner changed, and he assumed the mastery as easily as one would don a cloak. "Enough, Tezcucan! I listened calmly while you reviled the king, and now I have somewhat to say. In your youth the wise men prophesied evil from you; they said you were ingrate and blasphemous then: your whole life has but verified their judgment. Well for your royal father and his beautiful city had he cut you off as they counselled him to do. Treason to the king, -- defiance to me! By the holy Sun, for each offense you should answer me shield to shield! But I recollect that I am neither priest to slay a victim nor officer to execute the law.

I mourn a feud, still more the blood of countrymen shed by my hand; yet the wrongs shall not go unavenged or without challenge. To-morrow is the sacrifice to Quetzal'. There will be combat with the best captives in the temples; the arena will be in the tianguetz; Tenochtitlan, and all the valley, and all the nobility of the Empire, will look on. Dare you prove your kingly blood? I challenge the son of 'Hualpilli to share the danger with me."

The cacique was silent, and the 'tzin did not disturb him. At his order, however, the slaves bent their dusky forms, and the vessels sped on, like wingless birds.

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