



BOOK XII.

THE SIEGE AND FALL OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER CXLVII.

How Cortés ordered all the pueblos which were friendly to us in the neighbourhood of Texcoco to make a store of arrows and copper arrow heads, and what other orders he gave in our camp.



AFTER Antonio de Villafaña had been punished, and those had quieted down who jointly with him had conspired to kill Cortés and Pedro de Alvarado and Sandoval and such of us as should try to defend them, as I have already more fully written in the last Chapter, and when Cortés saw that the sloops were already built and their rigging, sails and oars were in place, and that there were spare oars for each sloop, and that the canal by which they were to pass out to the lake was very broad and deep, he sent to advise all the friendly pueblos near Texcoco to make eight thousand arrow heads of copper in each pueblo, and they were to be good ones like some others from Castile which they were given as patterns. And he also ordered them to make and trim for him in each pueblo eight thousand arrows of a very good kind of wood, and for these they also carried away a sample, and

he gave them a limit of eight days in which to bring both the arrows and arrow heads to our camp. They brought them within the time allotted, and there were more than fifty thousand arrow heads and as many thousand arrows, and the arrow heads were better than those from Castile. Then Cortés immediately commanded Pedro Barba, who was at that time captain of the crossbowmen, to divide both arrows and arrow heads among all the crossbowmen, and to order them to polish and oil them, and to put feathers on them with a paste, (which sticks better than that from Castile) which is made from some roots called Zacotle. He also gave an order to Pedro Barba that each crossbowman should have two clean and well plaited cords for his crossbow, and as many spare nuts,¹ so that if a cord should break or a nut fly off, they could at once put another in its place, and that they should always shoot at a mark, and see to what distance the crossbow would carry, and for this purpose he gave them a quantity of Valencia thread for the cords, for in the ship belonging to Juan de Burgos, which I have said arrived from Spain a few days before, much thread was brought and a large quantity of powder and crossbows and many other arms and horseshoes and muskets. Cortés also ordered the horsemen to have their horses shod, and to get their lances ready and to parade every day on horseback and gallop and train their horses to turn swiftly, and to skirmish.

When this was done he sent messengers and letters to our friend Xicotenga the elder, who, I have said at other times, had already become a Christian and was called Don Lorenzo de Vargas, and to his son Xicotenga the younger and to his brothers, and to Chichimecatecle, informing them that when the day of Corpus Christi was passed, we were going to leave this city to proceed against Mexico

¹ Nuez = the catch made of bone into which the cord was hooked.

and to invest it. He told them to send him twenty thousand warriors from their own people at Tlaxcala, and from those of Huexotzingo and Cholula, for all were now friends and brothers in arms, and they all knew the time of meeting and the plan, as he had informed them by their own Indians who were continually leaving our camp laden with the spoils from the expeditions we had made.

He also gave warning to the people of Chalco and Tlamanalco and their vassals, to be prepared when we should send to summon them, and he gave them to understand that we were about to invest Mexico, and the time when we should set out, and he said the same to Don Fernando the Lord of Texcoco and to his chieftains and to all his vassals, and to all the other towns friendly to us. One and all replied that they would do exactly what Cortés sent to order them, and that they would come. The people from Tlaxcala came when the feast of Espíritu Santo was over. When this was done he determined to hold a review on one of the feast days. I will go on to tell the arrangement that he made.

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

How a review was held in the City of Texcoco, in the great courts of that city, and what horsemen and crossbowmen and musketeers and soldiers were present, and the orders that were proclaimed and other things that were done.

AFTER the orders were given, in the manner I have already stated, and messengers and letters had been sent to our friends the people of Tlaxcala and of Chalco, and warning given to the other towns, Cortés decided with our Captains and soldiers that on the second day of the feast of Espíritu Santo (this was the year one thousand five hundred and

twenty one) a review should be held. This review was held in the great Courts of Texcoco and there were present eighty-four horsemen, six hundred and fifty soldiers with swords and shields and many with lances, and one hundred and ninety four crossbowmen and musketeers. From these there were chosen to man the thirteen launches those that I will now mention :—for each launch, twelve crossbowmen and musketeers ; these men were not to row, for in addition to them there were also set apart another twelve men, six on each side as rowers for each launch. These are the dozen I spoke about, and besides these there was a Captain for each launch, so that with the Captain, every launch carried twenty-five soldiers. Thirteen launches each with twenty-five soldiers comes to two hundred and eighty-eight soldiers, and with the artillerymen, which were given them in addition to the twenty-five soldiers, there were in all the launches, three hundred soldiers, according to the account which I have given.¹

He [Cortés] also divided among them all the boat guns and falconets we possessed and the powder he thought they would need. When this was done, he ordered the [following] rules, which we all had to observe, to be proclaimed.

First, no man should dare to blaspheme our Lord Jesus Christ, nor Our Lady, His Blessed Mother, nor the Sainted Apostles, nor any other saints under heavy penalty.

Second, no soldier should illtreat our allies, since they went to help us, or should take anything away from them even if they should be spoils gained by

¹ The arithmetic is confusing, as is also that of Cortés, who says— (Second Letter) “ For the thirteen sloops, I left three hundred men, nearly all of them skilful sailors, so that in each sloop there were twenty-five Spaniards, and each vessel carried a Captain, a Veedor, and six Crossbowmen and Musketeers.”

war, whether Indian men or women or gold or silver or Chalchihuites.

Another was, no soldier should dare to depart either by day or night from our camp to go to any pueblo of our allies, or anywhere else, either to fetch food or for any other matter, under heavy penalties.

Another, all the soldiers should wear very good armour, well quilted, a neck guard, head piece, leggings, and shield, for we knew about the great number of javelins and stones and arrows and lances, and for all of them it was necessary to wear the armour which the proclamation mentioned.

Another, no one should gamble for a horse or arms on any account, under heavy penalty.

Another, no soldier, horseman, crossbowman, or musketeer should go to sleep unless he were fully armed and shod with his sandals, unless it were under the stress of wounds or because he was suffering from illness, so that we might be fully prepared whatsoever time the Mexicans might come to attack us.

In addition to these, the laws were proclaimed which were ordered to be observed in soldiering; that is, that anyone who sleeps when on guard or leaves his post should be punished with death, and it was proclaimed that no soldier should go from one camp to another without leave from his Captain under pain of death.

Another, that any soldier deserting his Captain in war or battle, should suffer death.

This proclamation being issued, I will relate what else was settled.

CHAPTER CXLIX.

How Cortés sought the rowers who were needed to row the launches, and appointed the Captains who were to go in them, and other things that were done.

AFTER the review (which I have already spoken of several times) had taken place, Cortés saw that not enough men who knew how to row could be found to row the launches, although those who had been brought in the ships which we destroyed when we came with Cortés were thoroughly experienced and the sailors from the ships of Narvaez and those from Jamaica also knew how to row, and all of them were placed on the list, and had been warned that they would have to row. Yet counting all of them, there was not a supply for all the thirteen launches. As many of the men refused, and even said that they would not row, Cortés made enquiries to find out who were seamen, or had been seen to go out fishing, and if they came from Palos or Moguer or from Triana or 'El Puerto', or from any other port or place where there were sailors, he ordered them under pain of heavy penalties to go on board the launches. However high born they might say they were, he made them go and row, and in this way he got together one hundred and fifty men as rowers, and they were much freer from hardships than we were who were stationed on the causeways fighting, and they became rich from plunder as I will relate further on.

After Cortés had decided who should go in the launches, he divided the crossbowmen and musketeers and the powder, cannon and arrows and everything else that was necessary among them and ordered them to place in each launch the royal banners and other banners with the name that was given to each launch, besides other things which were needed, and he named as Captains

for each one of them those whom I will now mention here:—Garcí Holguin, Pedro Barba, Juan de Linpias Carvajal the deaf, Juan Jaramillo, Jerónimo Ruíz de la Mota, his companion Caravajal, who is now very old and lives in the street of San Francisco, and one Portillo who had just come from Castile, a good soldier who had a handsome wife, and a Zamora who was a ship's mate and now lives in Oaxaca, a Colmenero who was a seaman and a good soldier, a Lema, a Jínes Nórtes, a Briones a native of Salamanca, another Captain whose name I do not remember, and Miguel Díaz de Auz.

After he had named them, and ordered all the cross-bowmen and musketeers, and the other soldiers who had to row to obey the Captains whom he was placing over them, and not to leave their commands under heavy penalties, he gave instructions to each Captain what he was to do, and to what part of the causeways he was to go, and with which one of the Captains who were on land [he was to co-operate]. When he had finished arranging all that I have mentioned, they came to tell Cortés that the Captains from Tlaxcala with a great number of warriors were approaching, and that Xicotenga, the younger, was coming as their commander in chief, the same who was commander during the wars in Tlaxcala, and it was he who plotted the treachery in Tlaxcalá when we came out in flight from Mexico, as I have many other times recounted, and that he was bringing in his Company his two brothers, sons of the good old man Don Lorenzo de Vargas. He [Xicotenga] was also bringing a great force of Tlaxcalans under the command of Chichimecatecle and men from Huexotzingo, and another regiment of Cholulans, although they were few in number, because, from what I always observed after we had punished the people of Cholula (already spoken about by me in the Chapter treating of it), they never afterwards sided with

Mexicans nor yet with us, but were keeping on the look out,¹ and even when we were expelled from Mexico they were not found in opposition to us.

Let us leave this, and go back to our story. When Cortés knew that Xicotenga and his brothers and other Captains were approaching, (and they were coming one day before the time he had told them to come,) Cortés went out a quarter of a league from Texcoco to receive them with Pedro de Alvarado and others of our Captains, and as soon as he met Xicotenga and his brothers, Cortés paid them great respect and embraced them and all the other Captains. They approached in fine order, all very brilliant with great devices, each regiment by itself with its banners unfurled, and the white bird, like an eagle with its wings outstretched, which is their badge. The ensigns waved their banners and standards, and all carried bows and arrows, two handed swords, javelins and spear throwers; some carried macanas and great lances and others small lances. Adorned with their feather head-dresses, and moving in good order and uttering shouts, cries, and whistles, calling out, "Long live the Emperor our Master", and "Castile, Castile, Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala". they took more than three hours entering Texcoco.

Cortés ordered them to be lodged in good quarters, and to be supplied with everything we had in our camp. After many embraces and promises to enrich them, he took leave of them and told them that next day he would give them orders what they were to do, and that now they were tired and should rest.

At the very moment that these chiefs from Tlaxcala, of whom I have spoken, arrived, letters reached our camp sent by a soldier named Hernando de Barrientos, from a town named Chinantla, distant about ninety leagues

¹ A la mira, *i.e.*, on the look out to see which side to take.

from Mexico, and what was said in them was, that at the time when we were expelled from Mexico, the Mexicans had killed his three companions who were at the farm and mines where the Captain Pizarro (for so he was called) had left them to search and explore all the neighbourhood for rich gold mines, as I have related in the Chapter that treats of that subject, and that Barrientos had taken refuge in the town of Chinantla where he remained, for they [the people of Chinantla] were enemies of the Mexicans. This [Chinantla] was the town whence they brought the pikes when we went against Narvaez ; and because other particulars which were given in the letter, do not concern our story, they will be omitted. Cortés wrote to him [Barrientos] in reply, giving an account of how we were marching to invest Mexico, and telling him to give his compliments to all the chieftains of those provinces, and to take care not to leave that country until he should learn by letter from him what he was to do, lest the Mexicans should kill him on the road. Let us leave this and say how Cortés gave orders as to the way we should go to invest Mexico and who were to be the Captains.

CHAPTER CL.

How Cortés ordered three divisions [each composed] of cavalry crossbowmen and musketeers to go and invest the great city of Mexico, and the Captains that he named for each division, and the soldiers, horsemen, crossbowmen, and musketeers that he divided between them, and the positions and cities where we were to establish our camps.

HE [Cortés] appointed Pedro de Alvarado Captain of one hundred and fifty sword and shield soldiers (and many of them carried lances) and thirty horsemen and eighteen musketeers and crossbowmen, and he named his brother

Jorge de Alvarado, and Gutiérrez de Badajoz and Andrés de Monjaraz to go together with him, and these he appointed to be Captains of fifty soldiers and to divide among the three of them the musketeers and crossbowmen, as many in one Company as in the other. Pedro de Alvarado was to be Captain of the horsemen and General of the three companies, and he gave him eight thousand Tlaxcalans and their Captains, and he selected me and ordered me to go with Pedro de Alvarado, and told us to go and take up our position in the City of Tacuba. He ordered that the armour we took with us should be very good headpieces, neck coverings and leggings, for the Mexicans fought against us with arrows, lances and macanas and other arms such as two handed swords, and the darts and stones were as numerous as hail-stones, and our defence was to go well armoured. Notwithstanding all this, every day that we were fighting there were deaths and wounds, as I will relate further on.

Let us go on to the next division. He gave to Cristóbal de Olid, who was quartermaster, other thirty horsemen and one hundred and seventy-five soldiers and twenty musketeers and crossbowmen all provided with armour, in the same way as the soldiers he gave to Pedro de Alvarado, and he appointed three other Captains who were Andrés de Tápia, Francisco Verdugo, and Francisco de Lugo, and between all three Captains were divided all the soldiers and crossbowmen and musketeers. Cristóbal de Olid was Captain General of the three Captains and of the horsemen, and he gave him another eight thousand Tlaxcalans, and ordered him to go and establish his camp in the city of Coyoacan, which is two leagues from Tacuba.

Cortés made Gonzalo de Sandoval, the chief Alguacil, Captain of the other division of soldiers, and gave him twenty-four horsemen, fourteen musketeers and cross-

bowmen, one hundred and fifty sword, shield and lance soldiers, and more than eight thousand Indian warriors from the people of Chalco and Huexotzingo and of some other friendly pueblos through which Sandoval had to pass, and he gave him as companions and captains, Luis Marin and Pedro de Ircio who were Sandoval's friends, and ordered the soldiers, crossbowmen and musketeers to be divided between the two captains, and that Sandoval should have the horsemen under his command and be the General, and that he should place his camp near to Iztapalapa, and attack it and do it all the damage he could, until Cortés should send him other orders. Sandoval did not leave Texcoco until Cortés, who was Commander in chief of the regiments and of the launches, was quite ready to set out for the lake with the thirteen launches in which he carried three hundred soldiers with crossbowmen and musketeers.

The plan of operation having been thus arranged, directing Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid to march in one direction and Sandoval in the other, I will now explain, in order that those who do not know these cities and the lake may understand it, that although one party went to the right and the other followed a different route, this was because they came round so as nearly to meet again.

Let us stop speaking further about this and say that to each Captain, he [Cortés] gave instructions about what his orders were, and how we were to set out next day in the morning, and so as to avoid confusion on the road, we sent on ahead all the regiments of Tlaxcalans, until they should reach Mexican Territory.

As the Tlaxcalans with their Captain, Chichimecatecle and other Captains with their men, marched carelessly, they did not notice whether Xicotenga, the younger, who was their Captain General, accompanied them and when

Chichimecatecle asked and enquired what had become of him, and where he had stopped, they found out that he had that night returned secretly to Tlaxcala, and was going to seize forcibly the caciqueship and vassals and lands of Chichimecatecle himself. The Tlaxcalans said that the reasons for his so doing were that when Xicotenga, the younger, saw the Captains of Tlaxcala, especially Chichimecatecle, going to the war, [he knew that] there would be nobody to oppose him, for he did not fear his father Xicotenga, the blind, who, being his father would aid him, and our friend Mase Escaci was already dead, and the [only] man he feared was Chichimecatecle. They also said that they always knew that Xicotenga had no wish to go to the war against Mexico, for they heard him say many times that all of us and of them would be killed. As soon as the Cacique Chichimecatecle, to whom the lands and vassals belonged that he [Xicotenga] was going to seize, heard and understood this, he turned back from the march more than swiftly and came to inform Cortés about it.

As soon as Cortés knew of it he at once ordered five Texcocan chieftains and two from Tlaxcala, friends of Xicotenga, to go and force him to return, and to tell him that Cortés begged him to come back at once and go against his enemies the Mexicans, and to reflect that if his father Don Lorenzo de Vargas were not so old and blind he would come against Mexico himself and as all Tlaxcalans were and are very loyal servants of His Majesty, that it did not become him to dishonour them as he was now doing. And he sent to make him many offers and promises that he would give him gold and cloths if he would return. The reply he [Xicotenga] sent was that if the old man his father, and Mase Escasi would have believed him, that he [Cortés] would not have so lorded it over them and made them do all that he wished, and

not to waste more words, he said that he did not intend to return. When Cortés heard that answer he at once gave an order for an Alguacil and four horsemen and five Indian chieftains from Texcoco to go in all haste and wherever they should overtake him to hang him, and he said, "There is never any improvement in this Cacique, but he must always be a traitor and ill-disposed towards us and of bad council", and that there was no time to put up with him any longer, or to ignore what had passed. When Pedro de Alvarado knew of it he petitioned strongly on his [Xicotenga's] behalf, and Cortés gave him a favourable answer, and secretly he ordered the Alguacil and the horsemen not to leave him [Xicotenga] alive. And so it was done and in a town subject to Texcoco they hanged him, and thus his treason was put an end to. There was some Tlaxcalans who said that Don Lorenzo de Vargas, the father of Xicotenga, sent to tell Cortés that this son of his was a bad man and he would not vouch for him, and that he begged Cortés to kill him.

Let us leave this story as it is, and say that for this reason we remained that day without setting out from Texcoco, and the next day the 13th May 1521¹ we set out, both divisions together, for Cristóbal de Olid and Pedro de Alvarado had both to take the same road. We went to sleep at a pueblo subject to Texcoco named Acolman,² often mentioned by me before, and it happened that Cristóbal de Olid sent on ahead to that pueblo to secure quarters, and had green branches placed above the roof of each house as a sign. When we arrived with Pedro de Alvarado we found no place where we could lodge, and over this [matter] the men of our

¹ This date is probably wrong, see appendix "A Diary of the Siege."

² Acuylna in the text.

Company had already put hands to their weapons against those of Cristóbal de Olid and even the Captains were defying one another, but there were not wanting on both sides gentlemen who got between us and somewhat appeased the clamour, yet not so much but that we still all remained dissatisfied, and from that place they sent to inform Cortés, and he at once despatched Fray Pedro de Melgarejo, and the Captain Luis Marin in all haste, and wrote to the Captains and all of us reproving us on the subject, and when they arrived we made friends, but from that time on, the Captains, Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid were not on good terms.

The next day¹ the two Divisions continued their March together and we went to sleep at a large town² which was deserted, for we were already in Mexican territory. The day following³ we went to sleep in another large town named Cuautitlan,⁴ which I have already mentioned at other times, and it also was without inhabitants, and the next day⁵ we passed through two other towns named Tenayuca and Atzacapotzalco,⁶ which were also deserted, and at the hour of vespers we arrived at Tacuba and at once took up our quarters in some large houses and rooms, for this town also was deserted, and there, too, all our friends the Tlaxcalans found quarters, and that very afternoon they went through the farms belonging to those towns and brought in food to eat. We slept there that night [after stationing] good watchmen, sentinels and scouts, for as I have already said at other times, Mexico was close by Tacuba, and when night fell we

¹ Thursday, 23rd May.

² Zitlaltepec, north of the Lake of Zumpango.

³ Friday, 24th May.

⁴ Gualtitlan in the text.

⁵ Saturday, 25th May.

⁶ Escapuçalco in the text.

heard great shouts which they [the Mexicans] raised at us from the lake, crying out much abuse, that we were not men enough to come out and fight them. They had many of their canoes full of warriors and the causeways also were crowded with fighting men, and these words that they said were with the idea of provoking us so that we would come out that night and fight; but as we had gained experience from the affair of the causeways and bridges often mentioned by me, we did not wish to go out until the next day, which was Sunday.¹

After hearing Mass, which was said by Father Juan Díaz, and commending ourselves to God, we agreed that with the two Divisions together, we should go and cut off the water of Chapultepec by which the city was supplied, which was about half a league distant from Tacuba.

As we were marching to break the pipes, we came on many warriors who were waiting for us on the road, for they fully understood that would be the first thing by which we could do them damage, and so when they met us near some bad ground, they began to shoot arrows at us and hurl javelins and stones from slings, and they wounded three of our soldiers, but we quickly made them turn their backs and our friends the Tlaxcalans followed them so that they killed twenty and we captured eighteen of them.

As soon as these squadrons had been put to flight we broke the conduits through which the water flowed to the city, and from that time onwards it never flowed into Mexico so long as the war lasted. When we had accomplished this, our Captains agreed that we should go at once to reconnoitre and advance along the causeway from Tacuba, and do what was possible towards gaining possession of a bridge. When we had marched and reached

¹ Sunday, 26th May.

the causeway, there were so many canoes on the lake full of warriors, and the causeways also were so crowded with them, that we were astounded at it; and they shot so many arrows and javelins and stones from slings that at the first encounter they wounded over thirty soldiers. Still we went on marching along the causeway towards the bridge, and from what I understand they gave way for us to reach it, so as to get us on the other side of the bridge. When they had got us there, I declare that such a host of warriors charged down on us, that we could not hold out against them; for on the causeway, which was eight paces wide, what could we do against such a great force as was stationed on one side and the other of the causeway, and struck at us as at a mark, for although our musketeers and crossbowmen never ceased loading and firing at the canoes, they did them but very little damage for they brought them [the canoes] very well protected with bulwarks of wood. Then when we attacked the squadrons that fought on the causeway itself, they promptly threw themselves into the water, and there were so many of them that we could not prevail against them. Those on horseback did not make any progress whatever for they [the Indians] wounded their horses from one side and from the other, and as soon as they charged after the squadrons they [the Indians] threw themselves in the water. They [the enemy] had raised breastworks where other warriors were stationed in waiting, with long lances which they had made like scythes from the weapons which had been captured from us when they drove us fleeing out of Mexico.

In this manner we stood fighting with them about an hour, and so many stones were showered on us that we could not bear up against them, and we even saw that there was approaching us in another direction a great fleet of canoes to cut off our passage, so as to turn our

flanks, and knowing this, and because we saw that our friends the Tlaxcalans whom we had brought with us were greatly obstructing the causeway, and, if they went off it, it was clear enough that they could not fight in the water, our Captains and all of us soldiers agreed to retreat in good order and not to go further ahead.

When the Mexicans saw us retreating and the Tlaxcalans escaping beyond the causeway what shouts and howls and whistles they gave us, and how they came on to join us foot to foot. I declare that I do not know how to describe it, for all the causeway was heaped up with javelins, arrows, and stones that had been hurled at us, and many more of them must have fallen in the water. When we found ourselves on dry land we gave thanks to God for having freed us from that battle, for by that time eight of our soldiers had fallen dead, and more than fifty were wounded. Through all this, they yelled out at us and shouted abuse from the canoes, and our friends the Tlaxcalans told them to come on land and even if they were double the number they would fight them. These were the first things that we did to cut off the water and reconnoitre the lake, although we gained no honour by them. That night we stayed in our camp while the wounded were attended to, and one horse died, and we posted a good force of sentinels and scouts.

The next morning¹ Captain Cristóbal de Olid said that he wished to go to his station at Coyoacan, a league and a half away, and notwithstanding that Pedro de Alvarado and other gentlemen begged him not to separate the two divisions, but to keep them together, he would not do so ; for as Cristóbal de Olid was very courageous, and in the reconnoissance which we made of the lake, the day before, we had not done well, Cristóbal de Olid said

¹ Monday, 27th May.

that it was Pedro de Alvarado's fault that we had advanced so rashly, so that he never wished to stay and went off to Coyoacan where Cortés had sent him. We remained in our camp, for it was not right to separate one division from the other at that time, and if the Mexicans had known how few soldiers we were during the four or five days that we were there apart before the launches could come, and had fallen on us and on the division of Cristóbal de Olid, we should have incurred great hardship and they would have done [us] great damage. So we stayed in Tacuba and Cristóbal de Olid in his camp, without daring to reconnoitre any further nor to advance along the causeways, and every day we had skirmishes with many squadrons of Mexicans who came on land to fight with us, and even challenged us so as to place us in situations where they could master us and we could do them no damage.

I will leave them there and I will tell how Gonzalo de Sandoval set out from Texcoco four days after the feast of Corpus Christi and came to Iztapalapa;¹ almost all the march was among friends, subjects of Texcoco, and when he reached the town of Iztapalapa he at once began to make war and to burn many of the houses that stood on dry land, for all the rest of the houses stood in the lake. However, many hours did not pass before great squadrons of Mexicans came promptly to the aid of that city and Sandoval had a good battle with them and great encounters when they fought on land; and when they had taken refuge in their canocs they shot many javelins, arrows and stones at him and wounded his soldiers. While they were thus fighting they saw that on a small hill² that was close to Iztapalapa on dry land, great smoke

¹ Friday, 31st May. Cortés gives the date as Friday the day after the Feast of Corpus Christi.

² Cerro de la Estrella.

signals were being made, and they were answered by other smoke signals from other towns standing in the lake, and it was a sign to assemble all the canoes from Mexico and all the towns around the lake, for they saw that Cortés had already set out from Texcoco with the thirteen launches. As soon as Sandoval left Texcoco Cortés did not stay there any longer and the first thing he did on entering the lake was to attack a rocky hill which was on an island¹ near Mexico, where many Mexicans were collected both natives of the city as well as countrymen who had gone there to make fortifications. There came out into the lake against Cortés every canoe that was in the whole of Mexico and from all the towns that had been founded on the coast or near it, which are Xochimilco, Coyoacan, Iztapalapa, Churubusco, Mexicaltzingo and other towns which, so as to avoid delay, I will not name, and all went together against Cortés. For this reason those who were attacking Sandoval at Iztapalapa slackened somewhat, and as nearly all the houses of that city at that time stood in the water he could not do them any damage, but at the beginning he killed many of the enemy, and as he had brought with him a great force of allies, with their aid he captured and made prisoners of many of the people of these towns.

Let us leave Sandoval who remained isolated at Iztapalapa and could go with his people to Coyoacan only by the causeway which passes across the middle of the lake, and if he had advanced along it the enemy would have defeated him because they could attack him on both sides from the water, and he would not have been able to defend himself, and for this reason he remained where he was. Let us leave Sandoval and say that as Cortés observed so many fleets of canoes coming together against his thirteen

¹ Tepepolco, the Peñon del Marqués.

launches, he was greatly in fear of them, and it was enough to frighten him for there were more than a thousand canoes. So he abandoned the fight at the Peñol¹ and stationed himself out in the lake so that if he should find himself hard pressed he would be able to sail with his launches at large, and run to whatever part he chose. He ordered the Captains who came in them [the launches] not to trouble about besetting or bearing down on the canoes until the breeze from the land freshened, for at that moment it began to blow. When the canoes saw that the launches were halting, they thought that it was for fear of them that they were doing it, and then the Mexican Captains gave speed to them [their canoes] and ordered all the people to go at once and surround our launches. At that moment a very strong and favourable breeze sprung up, and what with the great haste that our rowers made, and the time being suitable, Cortés ordered them to engage the fleet of canoes, and they overturned many of them and killed and captured many Indians, and the rest of the canoes went to take refuge among the houses that stood in the lake, and in places where our launches could not reach them.

So this was the first combat that took place on the lake and Cortés gained the victory. Thank God for it all, Amen!

After that was done, Cortés came with his launches towards Coyoacan, where the Camp of Cristóbal de Olid was stationed,² and he fought with many Mexican

¹ Cortés writing about the fight on the Peñol says : "We attacked them in such a way that not one of them escaped except the women and children ; in this fight they wounded twenty-five Spaniards, but it was a very beautiful victory."

² This statement is misleading, Cortés himself states (Third Letter): "My intention was to go and attack that part of the city of Iztapalapa which stood in the water." However he turned aside to capture the island known as the "Peñol del Marques," then after the battle on the lake he chased the canoes across the lake until they took refuge

Squadrons who waited for him in dangerous places, thinking to capture the sloops, and as they attacked him fiercely from the canoes on the lake and from some Idol houses he ordered four cannon to be taken out of the sloops, and with them he attacked and killed and wounded many Indians, and the gunners were in such a hurry that through carelessness they set fire to the powder and some of them even had their hands and faces scorched. Cortés promptly despatched a very fast sloop to Iztapalapa to Sandoval's camp to bring all the powder they possessed, and he wrote to them not to move from the place where they were stationed.

Let us leave Cortés who had constant skirmishes with the Mexicans until he joined the camp of Cristóbal de Olid¹ and during the two days he stayed there many of the enemy were always attacking him.

As at that time I was at Tacuba with Pedro de Alvarado, I will relate what we did in our camp, for, as we knew that Cortés was going about the lake, we advanced along our causeway with great caution, and not like the first time, and we reached the first bridge, the crossbowmen and musketeers acting in concert some firing while others loaded. Pedro de Alvarado ordered the horsemen not to advance with us but to remain on dry land to guard our rear, fearing lest the pueblos I have mentioned through which we had passed, should attack us on the causeway. In this way we stood sometimes attacking, at others on the defensive so as to prevent them [the Mexicans]

in the outskirts of Tenochtitlan where he could not follow them. He then made for the Iztapalapa Causeway, and landed on it from the east side at a place named Acachinanco, half a league from the city, where there were two cues, and where the Iztapalapa Causeway was joined by another small causeway from the direction of Coyoacan. Here Cortés established his camp (see Appendix A, vol. ii. The Iztapalapa Causeway).

¹ This is an error, it should doubtless be "until he was joined at his camp [on the causeway] by Cristóbal de Olid."

reaching land from the causeway, for every day we had encounters and in them they killed three soldiers, and we were also engaged in filling up the bad places.

Let us leave this and say how Gonzalo de Sandoval who was in Iztapalapa seeing that he could do the people of Iztapalapa no harm, (for they were in the water,) although they were able to wound his soldiers, determined to make for a small town¹ and some houses which stood in the lake. He was able to get among the houses and began an attack, and while they were fighting, Guatemoc the great Lord of Mexico, sent many warriors to aid them [the inhabitants], and to destroy and break open the causeway by which Sandoval [and his troops] had entered, so as to shut them in and leave no way of escape, and he [also] sent many warriors to the other side. As Cortés who was with Cristóbal de Olid saw the great fleet of canoes going towards Iztapalapa, he decided to go with the launches and with all Cristóbal de Olid's company to Iztapalapa in search of Sandoval. Cortés went on the lake with the launches, while Cristóbal de Olid kept along the causeway, and they saw a great number of Mexicans [at work] breaking down the causeway and they took it for certain that Sandoval was there in those houses [cut off from the land]. So Cortés went [ahead] with the launches and found Sandoval fighting with the squadron of warriors that Guatemoc had sent. Then the fighting slackened and Cortés at once ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to abandon the [camp] at Iztapalapa and go² by land and invest the other causeway which went from Mexico to a town called Tepeaquilla, which they now call Our Lady of Guadalupe, where she works, and has worked, many holy miracles. Let us now relate how Cortés divided the launches and what more was done.

¹ Mexicaltzingo.

² Sunday, 2nd June.

NOTE TO CHAPTER CL.

THE following passage from the Third Letter of Cortés to the Emperor Charles V does much to clear up topographical details; after describing the battle on the lake between his sloops and the Mexican canoes, he says :—

“As the garrison of Coyoacan saw us following the canoes they set out on their march (most of the horsemen and foot soldiers that were there) for the City of Tenochtitlan, and they fought very stoutly with the Indians who were on the Causeway and captured the barricades that these had made and took and passed on foot and on horseback many of the bridges which they (the Indians) had removed, and with the help of the launches which kept along near the causeway¹ our friends the Tlaxcalan Indians and the Spaniards pursued the enemy and slew some of them and threw others into the water on the other side of the causeway from that on which the launches were sailing. So they went along victoriously for more than a big league² along the causeway until they arrived where I had halted with the launches as I shall relate below.”³

Cortés then returns to the description of his own proceedings after the battle on the lake :—

“We went a good three leagues giving chase to the canoes, those that escaped us reaching the houses of the City, and as it was after the time of Vespers, I ordered the launches to assemble, and we arrived with them at the Causeway, and there I determined to land with thirty men to capture two small Idol towers which were surrounded by a low wall of masonry, and as we jumped ashore the enemy fought very fiercely to defend them from us, but at last after much danger and labour we captured them, and I at once ordered three heavy iron cannon which I had brought with me to be taken on shore, because all the rest of the Causeway from there to the City, which was half a league, was all full of the enemy and the water on one side and the other of the Causeway was all full of canoes with warriors. I placed one of the cannon in position and fired ahead along the Causeway and did much damage to the enemy. Owing to the carelessness of the gunner at that same moment that he fired he ignited the powder which we had there, although it was not much, and at once that night I got a launch ready to go to Iztapalapa

¹ Olid must have already passed the junction of the causeways or he could not have been in touch with the launches.

² This would have brought them within half a league of the City.

³ That is at Acachinanco.

about two leagues distant where the chief Alguacil was stationed, to fetch all the powder he possessed.

“Although at first it was my intention, as soon as I could enter¹ with the launches, to go to Coyoacan and provision it so that an advance could be made with much caution, doing all the damage that was possible, when I landed that day on the Causeway and captured those two towers, I determined to establish my headquarters there and to keep the sloops there near the towers,² and [to order] half the men from Coyoacan and fifty foot soldiers from the chief Alguacil to come there next day. When that was arranged, we remained there that night with every precaution for we were in the greatest danger, and all the people from the city came there along the Causeway and by the water, and at midnight a great host of people arrived in canoes and along the Causeway to fall on our camp, and certainly they greatly surprised and terrified us, the more so because it was night, and [to attack] at such a time was not a thing they were accustomed to do, and they had never been known to fight by night without assurance of victory. As we were fully prepared we began to fight with them from the launches, for each launch carried a small field gun, and they began to fire them off and the crossbowmen and musketeers to do the same, so they [the enemy] did not dare to approach any nearer, nor did they come where we could do them any damage, so they left us what remained of the night without attacking us.

“The next day at dawn there arrived at the camp where I was stationed, fifteen crossbowmen and musketeers and fifty sword and shield men, and seven or eight horsemen from the garrison at Coyoacan, and by the time they arrived the people from the City, in canoes and on the Causeway, were already fighting with us, and so great was the multitude that both on land and on water we could see nothing but people, and they raised such yells and shouts that it seemed as though the world were being destroyed.

“We began to fight with them along the Causeway ahead of us, and we gained one bridge which they had removed, and a barricade that they had made at the entrance, and with the cannon and with the horsemen we did them so much damage that we almost shut them in among the first houses of the City. As the launches could not pass to the other side of the Causeway, and many canoes were moving about [there] and they did us damage with arrows and javelins which they shot at us on the Causeway, I had a part of it broken down near our camp, and enabled four launches to pass to the other side, and these when they got through shut up all the canoes among the houses

¹ *I.e.*, pass through the Causeway.

² That is, at Acachinanco.

of the city, so that they did not dare to come out freely in any direction.

“On the other side of the causeway the other eight launches fought with the canoes and shut them up among the houses, and (themselves) went among the houses although up to that time they had not dared to do so, for there were many shoals and stakes to impede them, and when they found canals where they could enter safely, they fought with the men in the canoes and captured some of them, and they burned many houses in the suburbs, and we passed all that day fighting in the manner already described.

“The following day the Chief Alguacil with the people he had in Iztapalapa, both the Spaniards and our allies, set out for Coyoacan, and from thence to the dry land runs a causeway which extends about a league and a half. As the Chief Alguacil began his march, at about a quarter of a league distance he reached a small city,¹ which also stood in the water, but one could ride on horseback through the greater part of it, and the natives of the place began to fight with him, and he defeated them and killed many, and he destroyed and burnt all the city.

“As I knew that the Indians had broken down much of the causeway and the people could not easily pass, I sent two launches so that they could help them to pass, and with these they made a bridge so that the soldiers could cross over. When they had passed they went into quarters at Coyoacan,² and the Chief Alguacil with ten horsemen took the road along the causeway to where we were encamped, and when he arrived he found us fighting, and he and those who had come with him dismounted and began to fight with the men on the causeway with whom we were engaged. When the Chief Alguacil began to fight, the enemy pierced his foot with a javelin and although they wounded him and some others of us that day, we did much damage to them, with the heavy cannon and the crossbows and muskets, so that neither those in the canoes nor those on the causeway dared to come so near to us and showed more fear and less pride than was usual. In this way we remained six days,³ and every day we had a fight with them, and the launches went about burning all the houses they could in the neighbourhood of the city and they found a canal by which they could enter the environs and suburbs of the city and reach

¹ This must have been Mexicaltzingo. Cortés uses the word “ciudad,” but Mexicaltzingo was a small town or village.

² They must have marched along the Mexicaltzingo Causeway to Coyoacan while Sandoval and ten horsemen parted from the main body at the junction of the causeway and rode to Acachinanco to join Cortés.

³ Until Thursday, 6th June.

the main body of it, which was a very great advantage and stopped the coming of the canoes, so that now not one of them dared to show themselves within a quarter of a league of our camp.”

CHAPTER CLI.

How Cortés ordered the twelve launches to be stationed and ordered the men to be taken out of the smallest one which was called “Busca ruido” (the riot seeker) and what else happened.

As Cortés and all our captains and soldiers understood that without the launches we could not advance along the causeways to fight [our way] to Mexico, he sent four of them to Pedro de Alvarado,¹ and he left six at his own camp (which was that of Cristóbal de Olid)² and he sent two launches to Gonzalo de Sandoval at the Tepeaquilla Causeway, and he ordered the smallest one not to be sent any more on the lake lest the canoes should upset it, for it was of small burden, and he ordered the people and sailors that were in it to be distributed among the other twelve, for there were already twenty men badly wounded among those who manned them.

When we saw ourselves reinforced with these launches in our camp at Tacuba Pedro de Alvarado ordered two of them to go on one side of the causeway and two on the other side, and we began to fight very successfully, for the launches vanquished the canoes which were wont to attack us from the water, and so we had an opportunity to capture several bridges and barricades, and while we were fighting, so numerous were the stones from the slings and the javelins and arrows that they shot at us that although all the soldiers were well protected by

¹ Cortés had broken a way through the Iztapalapa Causeway so that the launches could pass to the west side.

² This is misleading, Cristóbal de Olid's camp was at Coyoacan, but Olid himself and some of his men had joined Cortés at Acachinanco, on the causeway where the six launches were now stationed.

armour they were injured and wounded, and not until night parted us did we cease contending and fighting.¹

I wish to say that from time to time the Mexicans changed about and relieved their squadrons [as we could tell] by the devices and distinguishing marks on their armour. Then, as to the launches, they were checked by the darts arrows and stones with which they were attacked from the Azotcas which fell thicker than hail, and I do not know how to describe it here nor would anyone be able to understand it except those who were present, for they were more numerous than hail stones, and quickly covered the causeway. Then, whenever we left a bridge or barricade unguarded after having captured it with much labour, they would retake and deepen it that same night, and construct stronger defences and even make hidden pits in the water, so that the next day when we were fighting, and it was time for us to retire, we should get entangled [among the defences] and fall into the pits and they would be able to vanquish us from their canoes, for they had also got ready many canoes for the purpose, stationed in places where our launches could not see them, so that when we were in distress in the pits some [were prepared] to fall upon us by land, and others by water. To prevent the launches from coming to our assistance, they had fixed many stakes hidden in the water so that they should get impaled on them. In this way we fought every day,² I have already said before that the cavalry were of little use

¹ On June 9th a general assault was ordered from all three causeways, but Bernal Diaz does not especially allude to it. On that day Cortés reached the great Plaza of Mexico, but retired to his camp on the Iztapalapa Causeway at night.

² Cortés ordered a general assault on June 16th, which was carried out, although Bernal Diaz makes no especial mention of it. On this day Cortés destroyed the palaces round the Plaza in Mexico and then retired to his camp.

on the causeways for if they charged or gave chase to the squadrons that fought with us the Mexicans at once threw themselves into the water, and other squadrons were posted behind breastworks, which they had raised on the causeway, waiting [for the horsemen] with long lances or scythes made very long with the arms captured at the time of the great defeat which they inflicted on us in Mexico. With these lances and great showers of arrows and javelins shot from the lake they wounded and killed the horses before the horsemen could do damage to the enemy. In addition to this those who owned horses did not want to risk them, for at that time a horse cost eight hundred pesos and some even cost more than a thousand, and they could accomplish nothing to speak of, as they could overtake very few of the enemy on the causeway.

Let us leave this subject. When we drew off in the night we treated our wounds by searing them with oil, and a soldier named Juan Catalan blessed them for us and made charms, and truly we found that our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to give us strength in addition to the many mercies he vouchsafed us every day, for they healed rapidly.

Wounded and tied up in rags [as we were] we had to fight from morning until night, for if the wounded had remained in camp without coming out to fight, there would not have been twenty men in each company well enough to go out.

When our friends the Tlaxcalans saw that the man I have mentioned cured us by making the sign of the cross over us, all the wounded and injured went to him, and they were so numerous that he could hardly cure them all in the day.

Then I wish to speak of our captains and ensign and our standard bearers, who were covered with wounds and

their banners ragged, and I declare that we had need of a [fresh] standard bearer every day for we [all] came out in such a condition that they were not able to advance fighting and carry the banners a second time.

Then with all this did we perchance have enough to eat? I do not speak of want of maize cakes, for we had enough of them, but of some refreshing food for the wounded. The cursed stuff that kept life in us was some Quilites,¹ these are herbs that the Indians eat, and the cherries of the country while they lasted, and afterwards tunas² which came into season at that time.

Much the same as we did in our camp they did in the camp where Cortés was stationed and in that of Sandoval. There was never a day passed that large companies of Mexicans did not come to attack them, as I have already said at other times, from dawn until night. It was for this purpose that Guatemoc had told off Captains and Squadrons as reinforcements for each causeway, and Tlatelolco and the towns on the Lake often mentioned by me had been warned that on seeing a signal on the great Cue of Tlatelolco they should hasten to assist, some in canoes and others by land; and the Mexican captains had been fully prepared and advised how and when and to what points they were to bring assistance.

Let us leave this and say how we changed our order and manner of fighting, I will explain it thus:—When we saw that however many water openings we captured by day the Mexicans returned and closed them up again, and while capturing them they killed our soldiers and most of us were wounded, we agreed that we should all go and station ourselves on the causeway³ in a small plaza

¹ Quilitl, a generic term for vegetables.

² Fruit of the Nopal cactus, prickly pears.

³ About Thursday, 20th June.

where there were some Idol towers which we had already taken, and where there was space to erect our "ranchos," although they were very poor ones and when it rained we all got wet, and they were fit for nothing but to cover us from the dew.¹

We left the Indian women who made bread for us in Tacuba, and all the horsemen and our friends the Tlaxcalans were left to guard them, and to watch and guard the passes so that they [the enemy] should not come from the neighbouring pueblos and attack our rearguard on the causeway while we were fighting.

So when once we had set up our ranchos where I have stated, thenceforward we endeavoured quickly to destroy the houses and blocks of buildings and to fill up the water openings that we captured. We levelled the houses to the ground, for if we set fire to them they took too long to burn, and one house would not catch fire from another, for, as I have already said at other times, each house stood in the water, and one could not pass from one to the other without crossing bridges or going in canoes. If we wanted to cross the water by swimming they did us much damage from the azoteas, so that we were more secure when the houses were demolished. As soon as we had captured some barrier or bridge or bad pass where they offered much resistance, we endeavoured to guard it by day and by night. This was the way in which all our companies kept guard together during the night, and the following arrangement was made about it:—The first company, which numbered more than forty soldiers, kept watch from night fall until midnight, and from midnight until two hours before dawn another company, also of forty men, kept watch, and the first company did not

¹ This "plaza where there were some Idol towers" was probably situated on the causeway C-D of the Maguey Plan. See vol. iii, pp. 12-14.

leave their post but we slept there on the ground ; this [second] watch is called the *modorra*,¹ and soon another forty soldiers came and kept the *alba* [dawn] watch, which is the two hours until daylight, but those who watched the *modorra* could not leave, but had to stay there, so that when dawn came there were over one hundred and twenty soldiers all on watch together. Moreover on some nights, when we judged that there was special danger we kept watch together, from nightfall until dawn, awaiting a great sally of the Mexicans in fear lest they should break through, for we had warning through some of the Mexican Captains whom we had captured in battle, that Guatemoc had formed the idea, and had talked it over with his captains, of breaking through us on our causeway either by night or day, and that when he had defeated us on our side, he could promptly defeat and rout those on the other two causeways where Cortés was stationed, and where Gonzalo de Sandoval was posted. He also had it arranged that the nine pueblos on the lake and Tacuba itself and Atzacapotzalco and Tenayuca should unite, and choose a day to break through and fall upon us, attacking us on our flanks on the causeway, and that some night they would suddenly carry off the Indian women in Tacuba who made bread for us and our stores. When we got to know this we prepared for it and the horsemen who were in Tacuba and our friends the Tlaxcalans were on watch all night through and kept on the alert.

As Guatemoc had planned it, so he carried it out, and on several nights great squadrons came to attack us and break through at midnight, and others during the *modorra* and others during the dawn watch, and they came sometimes without commotion and at others with loud yells and whistles, and when they arrived where we were

¹ *Modorra*—the drowsy time, before dawn.

keeping night watch, what javelins and stones and arrows they let fly, and there were many others with lances, and although they wounded some of us, yet we resisted them, and sent back many of them wounded. Many other warriors who came to fall on our baggage were defeated by our horsemen and the Tlaxcalans, for as it was night time they did not make much of a stand. And in the way I have described we kept watch in spite of the rain and wind and cold, and even though we were wounded and posted in the midst of mud sloughs, there we had to stay, with this miserable supply of tortillas, herbs, or tunas on which to feed on the top of the work of fighting, which the officers said was a matter of course. Then, notwithstanding all the precautions we took, they would turn on us and open some bridge or causeway which we had captured, and we could not defend it from them in the night so as to prevent them doing it, and the next day it was our turn again to capture it and stop it up, and then they would come again to open it and strengthen it with walls, until the Mexicans changed their method of fighting which I will tell about in its proper time.

Let us cease talking about the many battles we fought every day, and as many more in the camp of Cortés and that of Sandoval, and say that it proved advantageous to have prevented food and water getting to them (the enemy) by way of the three causeways, but our launches were not very useful stationed at our camp and were only serviceable when we were fighting, protecting our flanks from the warriors in the canoes, and from those who fought from the azoteas. The Mexicans brought in much food and water from the nine towns built on the lake, which supplied them with provisions [carried] in canoes by night, and from other friendly pueblos they were supplied with maize and poultry and all that they needed. To prevent these supplies being brought to them, it was arranged

between all the three camps that two launches should cruize in the lake by night and should capture all the canoes they were able, and destroy or bring them to our camps. When this arrangement was made it was a good one, although we had to do without the two launches for fighting and to guard us during the night, but they were of great use in preventing the entrance of food and water. But even with all this, many laden canoes did not fail to get in, and as the Mexicans went about in their canoes carrying supplies without any precautions, there was never a day when the launches that went in search of them did not bring in a prize of canoes and many Indians hanging from the yards.

Let us leave this and tell of the stratagem which the Mexicans employed to capture our launches and kill those that went in them, it was in this way:—As I have said, every night and in the early morning they [the Spaniards] went looking after canoes on the lake, and overturned them with the launches and captured many of them; so they [the Mexicans,] agreed to arm thirty *piraguas*, which are very large canoes, with specially good rowers and warriors, and by night they posted all thirty amongst some reed beds in a place where the launches could not see them; then they sent out before nightfall, with good rowers, two or three canoes covered over with branches as though they were carrying provisions or bringing in water. In the track which, in the opinion of the Mexicans, the launches would follow when they were fighting with them, they had driven numerous strong timbers made pointed like stakes so that they should get impaled on them. Then as the canoes were going over the lake showing signs of being afraid and drew near to the reed beds, two of our launches set out after them, and the two canoes made as though they were retreating to the land, to the place where the thirty *piraguas* were posted

in ambush, and the launches followed them and as soon as they reached the ambush all the piraguas together sallied out and made for the launches and quickly wounded all the soldiers, rowers, and captains, and they [the launches] could go neither in one direction or another on account of the stakes that had been fixed. In this way they [the Mexicans] killed a captain named somebody de Portilla, an excellent soldier who had been in Italy, and they wounded Pedro Barba who was another very good captain, and they captured his launch, and within three days he died of his wounds. These two launches belonged to the camp of Cortés, and he was greatly distressed about it, moreover within a few days they were very successful with other ambushes they planned about which I will speak at the proper time. Let us cease talking about these things now and relate how in Cortés's camp and in that of Gonzalo de Sandoval they were constantly engaged in heavy fighting, the more so in that of Cortés, because he ordered houses to be demolished and burnt and bridges to be filled up, and all that he gained each day he filled up. He sent an order to Pedro de Alvarado not to pass beyond any bridge or opening in the causeway without first filling it up, and that not a house should be left without being pulled down and set on fire, and with the adobes and timbers of the houses that we demolished we should fill up the passes and openings of the bridges, and our friends from Tlaxcala aided us in all this warfare very manfully.

Let us leave this and say that when the Mexicans saw that we were levelling all the houses to the ground and were filling up the bridges and openings they decided on another way of fighting, and that was, to open a bridge and a very wide and deep channel which we had to pass wading through the water, and it was sometimes out of our depth, and they had dug many pits which we could not see under the water and had made walls and barricades

both on the one side and the other of the opening, and had driven in many pointed stakes of heavy timber in places where our launches would run on to them if they should come to our assistance when we were fighting to capture this fort, for they well knew that the first thing we must do was to destroy the barricade and [pass through] that open space of water so as to reach the City. At the same time they had prepared in hidden places many canoes well manned with warriors and good rowers. One Sunday morning¹ great squadrons of warriors began to approach from three directions and attacked us in such a way that it was all we could do to hold our own and prevent them from defeating us.

At that time Pedro de Alvarado had ordered half the horsemen who used to stay in Tacuba to sleep on the causeway, for there was not so much risk as at the beginning, as there were no longer any azoteas for nearly all the houses had been demolished, and they could move quickly along some parts of the causeway without [fear] that the enemy would be able to wound their horses from the canoes and azoteas. To go back to my story, those three squadrons came on very fearlessly, the one from the direction of the great open space of water, the other by way of some houses that we had pulled down, and the other squadron had taken us in the rear from the direction of Tacuba, and we were surrounded. The horsemen with our Tlaxcalan, friends broke through the squadron that had taken us in the rear and we all of us fought very valiantly with the other two squadrons until we forced them to retreat. However, that seeming flight that they made was a pretence, but we captured the first barricade where they made a stand, nevertheless they abandoned it and we, thinking that we were victorious, crossed that water at a run, for where we

¹ Sunday, 23rd June.

passed there were no pits and we followed up our advance among some great houses and temple towers. The enemy acted as though they were still retreating but they did not cease to shoot javelins and stones from slings and many arrows and when we were least expecting it a great multitude of warriors who were hidden in a place we were not able to see, and many others from the azoteas and houses joined the combat, and those who at first acted as though they were retreating, turned round on us all at once and dealt us such treatment that we could not withstand them. We then decided to retreat with great caution, but at the water opening which we had captured [that is to say] at the place where we had crossed the first time, where there were no pits, they had stationed such a fleet of canoes that we were not able to cross at that ford, and they forced us to go across in another direction, where, as I have said, the water was very deep, and they had dug many pits. As such a multitude of warriors were coming against us, and we were in retreat, we crossed the water by swimming and wading, and nearly all the soldiers fell in the pits; then the canoes came down upon us and there the Mexicans carried off five of our companions and took them alive to Guatemoc and they wounded nearly all of us. Moreover the launches which were guarding us could not come to our assistance because they were impaled on the stakes which had been fixed there, and from the canoes and azoteas the Mexicans attacked them so fiercely with javelins and arrows that they killed three soldiers and rowers and wounded many of us. To go back to the pits and the opening, I declare it was a wonder that we were not all killed in them. Concerning myself I may say that many Indians had already laid hold of me, but I managed to get my arm free, and our Lord Jesus Christ gave me strength so that by some good sword thrusts that I gave them I saved myself, but I was badly wounded in one arm, and when I found myself

out of that water in safety, I became insensible and without power to stand on my feet and altogether breathless, and this was caused by the great strain that I exerted in getting away from that rabble and from the quantity of blood I had lost. I declare that when they had me in their clutches, that in my thoughts I was commending myself to our Lord God and to our Lady His Blessed Mother and He gave me the strength I have spoken of by which I saved myself; thank God for the mercy that He vouchsafed me.

There is another thing I wish to mention, that Pedro de Alvarado and the horsemen, when they had thoroughly routed the squadrons that came on our rear from Tacuba, did not any of them pass that water or the barricades, with the exception of one horseman who had come only a short time before from Spain, and there they killed him, both him and his horse. The horsemen were already advancing to our assistance when they saw us coming back in retreat and if they had crossed there, we should have been forced to turn back against the Indians and if [after crossing] they should have again retreated, there would not have been one of them, nor of the horses, nor of us left alive, for the affair was so cunningly [arranged] that they would have fallen in the pits, and there were ever so many warriors who would have killed the horses with lances they had prepared for the purpose, and [by attacking them] from the many azoteas that there were [around], for all this took place in the heart of the City. Flushed with the victory they had gained, the Mexicans continued during that whole day, which as I have said was a Sunday, to send so vast a host of warriors against our camp, that we could not prevail against them, and they expected for certain to rout us, but we held our own against them by [the help of] some bronze cannon and hard fighting, and by all the companies together keeping guard every night.

Let us leave this and say that when Cortés heard of it he was very angry, and he wrote at once to Pedro de Alvarado and [sent the letter] in a launch¹ [to say] that he should take care that neither for good nor evil should he leave a single opening unclosed, and that all the horsemen should sleep on the causeway and keep [their horses] saddled and bridled all night long, and that we should not attempt to go a single step forward until we had filled up that great opening with adobes and timber and that every precaution should be taken in the camp. Then when we saw that it was our fault that great disaster had happened, we began then and there to fill in that opening, and although it meant great labour and many wounds which the enemy inflicted while we were at work, and the death of six soldiers, in four days we had it filled in,² and at night we kept watch on the place itself, all three companies in the order I have already mentioned.

I want to say that at this time the Mexicans were quite close to us as we kept watch, and they too had their sentinels and changed them in watches, and it was in this way; they lighted great fires that burned all night through, but those who were on guard stood away from the fires and from afar we were not able to distinguish them, and although on account of the brightness of the wood that was always burning we could not see the Indians who were watching, yet we could always tell when they were changing guard, for then they came to feed the fire. On many nights, as it rained heavily at that season it happened that their fire was put out, and they rekindled it without making any noise nor a word spoken among them, for they understood one another by means of whistles.

¹ Cortés states (Third Letter) that he visited Alvarado's camp himself, and was astonished to find how much he had done and how far he had penetrated into the City.

² By Friday, 28th June

I wish to say that very often our musketeers and cross-bowmen when we knew that they [the enemy] were going to change guard threw stones and shot arrows at a venture at groups of them, but they did them no harm, because they were in a place which even if we had wished to get at them in the night we should not have been able to reach them on account of another great and very deep opening of the canal, which they had made by hand and of the barricades and walls they had raised, and they also shot at us volleys of stones, javelins and arrows.

Let us stop speaking about keeping watch and say how each day we advanced along the causeway fighting in the most regular order and we captured the opening, which I have spoken of, where they kept guard ; but such was the multitude of the enemy who came against us every day, and the javelins, arrows and stones they shot, that they wounded us all, although we proceeded with the greatest caution and were well armoured.

Then after having passed all the day fighting, when it was growing late and there was no opportunity for a further advance, only of turning back in retreat, that would be the [very] time they held many squadrons in readiness, believing that with the great energy of their attacks as we retired, they would be able to rout us, for they came on as fierce as tigers and fought us hand to hand. As soon as we found out this plan of theirs, we made the following arrangement for retreating ; the first thing we did was to get our friends the Tlaxcalans off the causeway, for as they were very numerous, they longed with our support to get to blows with the Mexicans, and as the Mexicans were cunning, they wished nothing better than to see us entangled with our friends, thus they made fierce attacks on us from two or three directions, so as to enclose us in the middle and intercept some of us, and, with the many Tlaxcalans who embarrassed us, prevent us from fighting

on all sides, and this was the reason that we got them [the Tlaxcalans] off the causeway to where we could place them in safety. As soon as we found ourselves no longer hampered by them, we retreated to our camp without turning our backs, but always facing the enemy, some of the crossbowmen and musketeers shooting and others loading, and with our four launches in the lake, two on each side of the causeway, protecting us against the fleets of canoes and the many stones from the azoteas and houses which were destined to be pulled down. Yet with all this caution every one of us ran great personal risk until we reached our ranchos. There we at once treated our wounds with oil and bandaged them with native cloth, and supped on the tortillas they had brought us from Tacuba, and on herbs, and such as had them, on Tunas. Then we at once mounted guard at the water-opening which I have mentioned, and the next morning we promptly returned to fight, for we could do nothing else, for however early in the morning it might be, battalions of the enemy were there ready to attack us, and they even reached our camp and shouted abuse at us, and in such manner we underwent our hardships.

Let us stop talking for a time about our camp which is that of Pedro de Alvarado and turn to that of Cortés which the enemy constantly attacked by day and by night and killed and wounded many of his soldiers in the same way as they did to us in the camp at Tacuba. Two launches were always employed every night to give chase to the canoes that entered Mexico with food and water, and it appears that one launch captured two chieftains who came in one of the many canoes that brought food, and from them Cortés found out that forty piraguas and other canoes were lying in ambush in a thicket in order to capture one of our launches, as they did the other time. Cortés flattered these two chieftains who had been captured

and gave them beads, and made them many promises that when Mexico was taken he would give them territory, and through our interpreters Doña Marina and Aguilar, he asked them where the piraguas were stationed, for it would not be in the same place as before, and they pointed out the place where they were stationed and even gave warning that many heavy timber stakes had been driven in at certain places so that should the launches turn to flight before the piraguas they would get impaled upon the stakes, and their crews would be carried off and killed. When Cortés had received this warning, he got six launches ready to go that night and place themselves in some reed beds about a quarter of a league from where the piraguas were in ambush, and [ordered them] to be covered over with branches ; so they set out with muffled oars and stayed all the night watching. Very early in the morning Cortés ordered a launch to set out as though it were going in chase of the canoes that went in with the food, and he ordered the two Indian chieftains who had been captured to go in the launch to point out where the piraguas were stationed, so that the launch should go in that direction. At the same time our enemies the Mexicans arranged, as they did the other time, to send out two decoy canoes in the direction of the ambush, pretending to carry supplies, in order to lure the launch to go after them. Thus they had one idea and our people another which was just the same as theirs, and when the launch which the cunning Cortés had sent out saw the canoes which the Indians had sent out as a bait, it went after them and the two canoes behaved as though they were fleeing to land to their ambush and piraguas. Our launch at once pretended that it did not dare to approach the land and turned in retreat, and when the piraguas and many other canoes saw that it had turned round, they came out after it with great fury and rowed as hard as they could and went in pursuit of it, and the

launch went as if in flight to where the other six launches were stationed in ambush, the piraguas still in pursuit. At that moment a gun was fired off which was the signal for our launches to come out ; and when they heard the signal they came out with a great spurt and attacked the piraguas and canoes and overturned them and killed and captured many warriors, and the launch that we sent out as a decoy, which had already got some distance off, also returned to assist its companions so that a good prize of prisoners and canoes was carried off, and from that time onward the Mexicans did not dare to lay any more ambushes nor did they dare to bring in supplies or water so openly as they had been used to do, and in this way the warfare of the launches on the lakes and our battles on the causeways were carried on.

Let me now say that the towns situated in the lake (which I have already named on other occasions) when they saw how day by day we were victorious both on water and on land, and that the people of Chalco, Tlaxcala, Texcoco and other pueblos had made friends with us whilst we continued making war against all of them and doing them much harm and damage, and capturing many of their men and women, apparently all united and decided to sue Cortés for peace and with great humility they asked pardon if in any way they had offended us, and said that they had been under orders and could not do otherwise.¹ Cortés rejoiced greatly to see them come in that way, and when we heard the news in our camp, that of Pedro de Alvarado, and in that of Sandoval, all of us soldiers rejoiced ; but to return to my story, Cortés with a pleased countenance and much flattery pardoned them [although he] told them that they deserved to be severely punished

¹ From Cortés's account the submission of these towns appears to have taken place about 18th June.

for having helped the Mexicans. The towns that came in were Iztapalapa, Churubusco, Culucan, and Mixquic and all those of the fresh water lake, and Cortés told them that we should not move the camp until the Mexicans sued for peace or he had destroyed them by war. He ordered them to aid us with all the canoes that they possessed to fight against Mexico, and to come and build ranchos for Cortés and to bring him food, and they replied that they would do so, and they built the ranchos but brought no food or very little and that with ill will. Our ranchos where Pedro de Alvarado was stationed were never rebuilt so we remained in the rain, for those who have been in this country know that through the months of June, July and August it rains every day in these parts.

Let us leave this and return to our causeway and the attacks that we made on the Mexicans every day and how we succeeded in capturing many idol towers, houses canals, and other openings and bridges which they had constructed from house to house, and we filled them all up with adobes and the timbers from the houses that we pulled down and destroyed and we kept guard over them, but notwithstanding all this trouble that we took, they [the enemy] came back and deepened them and widened the openings and erected more barricades. And because our three companies considered it a dishonour that some should be fighting and facing the Mexican squadrons and others should be filling up passes and openings and bridges, Pedro de Alvarado, so as to avoid quarrels as to who should be fighting or filling up openings, ordered that one company should have charge of the filling in and look after that work one day, while the other two companies should fight and face the enemy, and that this should be done in rotation one day one company, and another day another company, until each company should have had its turn, and owing to this arrangement there was nothing captured

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that was not razed to the ground, and our friends the Tlaxcalans helped us. So we went on penetrating into the City, but at the hour for retiring all three companies had to fight in union, for that was the time when we ran the greatest risk, and, as I have already related, first of all we sent all the Tlaxcalans off the causeway, for it was clear that they were a considerable embarrassment when we were fighting.

Let us cease speaking of our camp and return to that of Cortés and that of Sandoval which continuously both by day and night had many of the enemy upon them both by land and in fleets of canoes from the lake, and they were always being attacked and could not get rid of their enemies. In the camp of Cortés [the Spaniards endeavoured] to capture a bridge and deep opening which was difficult to take, for the Mexicans had placed many breastworks and barricades there, so that the only way to cross was by swimming, and whenever an attempt was made to cross it, many warriors were ready waiting with arrows and stones from slings and javelins, macanas, two handed swords, and lances made like scythes set with swords that they had taken from us, and the lake was full of war canoes, and from the neighbouring barricades and azoteas they showered down stones and the launches could give no help on account of the stakes that had been placed [there]. In capturing this fort, bridge and opening the troops of Cortés endured great hardships and four soldiers were killed in the fighting, and more than thirty soldiers were wounded, and as it was already late when they effected the capture, they had no time to close up the opening, and they retreated again with great difficulty and danger and with more than thirty soldiers wounded, besides many more Tlaxcalans injured.

Let us leave this and tell of another way in which Guatemoc ordered his companies to fight and for which he

ordered all his forces to be prepared. It happened that as the next day¹ was the feast of the Señor San Juan de Junio, and exactly one year was completed since we entered Mexico (when we came to the relief of Pedro de Alvarado and they defeated us as I have related in the chapter that treats of it), it seems that they had kept count of it, and Guatemoc ordered us to be attacked at all three camps, by all his troops and with all the energy that was possible both on land and by water with canoes, and he ordered them to go by night during the modorra watch ; and so that the launches should not be able to assist us, stakes had been placed in most parts of the water of the lake so that the launches might get impaled on them. They came on with so furious an impetus that had it not been for those who were on the watch, who were over one hundred and twenty soldiers well used to fighting, they would have penetrated into our camp, and we ran a great risk as it was, but by fighting in good order we withstood them, and they wounded fifteen of our men and two of them died of their wounds within eight days.

Also in the camp of Cortés they placed our troops in the greatest straits and difficulties and many were killed and wounded, and in the camp of Sandoval the same thing happened, and in this way they came on two successive nights and many Mexicans also were killed in these encounters and many more wounded. When Guatemoc and his captains and priests saw that the attack that they made on those two nights profited them nothing, they decided to come with all their combined forces at the dawn watch and attack our camp, which was called the Tacuba camp, and they came on so fearlessly that they surrounded us on two sides, and had even half

¹ 24th June. The events must be here misplaced ; the 23rd was the day on which Alvarado was defeated as already related.

defeated us and cut us off, when it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ to give us strength to turn and close our ranks, and we sheltered ourselves to a certain degree with the launches, and with good cut and thrust, and advancing shoulder to shoulder, we drove them off from us somewhat, and the horsemen were not idle, and the musketeers and crossbowmen did what they could, and were even able to break up other squadrons which had already attacked us on the flanks. In that battle they killed eight and wounded many of our soldiers and they even injured Pedro de Alvarado. If the Tlaxcalans had slept on the causeway that night we should have run great risk from the embarrassment they would have caused us on account of their numbers, but the experience of what had happened before made us promptly get them off the causeway and send them to Tacuba, and we remained free from care. To go back to our battle, we killed many Mexicans and took prisoners four persons of importance. I well understand that interested readers will be surfeited with seeing so many fights every day, but one cannot do less, for during the ninety and three days that we besieged this strong and great City we had war and combats every day and every night as well. For this reason we must recount many times how, when, and in what way they happened ; I have not made a chapter of what we accomplished each day, as it seems to me that it would be greatly spinning it out and a matter that could never be brought to an end, like the books of Amadis or of chivalry, and as henceforth I do not wish to waste time in recording so many battles and encounters as we went through, every day, I will relate them as briefly as I can. For when it seemed to us that we were victorious, great disasters were really coming upon us, and we were in the greatest danger of perishing in all three camps, as will be seen later on.

CHAPTER CLII.

About the battles and encounters that we went through and about the defeat that Cortés suffered at his camp, and about many other things that happened in our camp at Tacuba, and how they carried off sixty six soldiers whom they sacrificed.

AS Cortés saw that it was impossible to fill in all the openings, bridges, and canals of water that we captured day by day, which the Mexicans reopened during the night and made stronger than they had been before with barricades, and that it was very hard work fighting and filling in bridges and keeping watch all of us together (all the more as we were most of us wounded and twenty had died), he decided to consult his captains and soldiers who were in his camp, that is Cristóbal de Olid, Francisco Verdugo, Andrés de Tápia, the ensign Corral and Francisco de Lugo, and he also wrote to us in the camp of Pedro de Alvarado and to the camp of Sandoval to take the opinion of all us captains and soldiers. The question he asked was, whether it seemed good to us to make an advance into the City with a rush, so as to reach Tlatelolco, which is the great market of Mexico and is much broader and larger than that of Salamanca, and that if we could reach it, whether it would be well to station all our three camps there, as from thence we should be able to fight through the streets of Mexico without having such difficulty in retreating and should not have so much to fill in, or have to guard the bridges. As was likely to happen in such discussions and consultations, some of us said that it was not good advice or a good idea to intrude ourselves so entirely into the heart of the City, but that we should remain as we were, fighting and pulling down and levelling the houses. We who held the latter opinion gave as the most obvious reason for it that if we stationed ourselves in

Tlatelolco and left the causeways and bridges unguarded and deserted the Mexicans—having so many warriors and canoes—would reopen the bridges and causeways and we would no longer be masters of these. They would attack us with their powerful forces by night and day, and as they always had many impediments made with stakes ready prepared our launches would not be able to help us, thus by the plan that Cortés was proposing we would be the besieged and they [the enemy] would have possession of the land, the country and the lake, and we wrote to him about his proposal so that “it should not happen to us as it had happened before” (as the saying of the Mazegatos runs), when we went fleeing out of Mexico.

After Cortés had heard our opinions and the good reasons we gave for them the only result of all the discussion was that on the following day we were to advance with all the energy we could from all three camps, horsemen as well as crossbowmen, musketeers and soldiers and to push forward until [we reached] the great market place at Tlatelolco many times mentioned by me. When all was ready in all the three camps and our friends the Tlaxcalans [had been warned] as well as the people of Texcoco and those from the towns of the lake who had again given their fealty to His Majesty, who were to come with their canoes to help the launches, one Sunday¹ morning, after having heard mass, we set out from our camp with Pedro de Alvarado, and Cortés set out for his camp, and Sandoval with his companies, and in full force each company advanced capturing bridges and barricades, and the enemy fought like brave warriors and Cortés on his side gained many victories, so too did Gonzalo de Sandoval on his side. Then we on our side had already captured another barricade and a bridge, which was done

¹ Sunday, 30th June.

with much difficulty because Guatemoc had great forces guarding them, and we came out of the fight with many of our soldiers wounded, and one soon died of his wounds. and more than a thousand of our Tlaxcalan friends alone came out of it injured, but still we followed up our victory very cheerfully. Let us return to Cortés and all his army and mention that they captured a rather deep water-opening with a small and very narrow causeway across it which the Mexicans had constructed cleverly and cunningly, for they had foreseen the very thing that now happened to Cortés, and that was, that as he and his captains and soldiers were victorious, and the causeway was crowded with allies, they would go on in pursuit of the enemy who, although they pretended to be fleeing, never ceased shooting javelins, arrows and stones and made some slight stands as though they would resist Cortés until they lured him on to follow them. When they saw that he was indeed following up his victory, they pretended to flee before him. Then, as bad fortune turns the wheel and many sorrows follow on the greatest prosperity, while Cortés was going victoriously in the pursuit of the enemy, either through great carelessness on his part (or because Our Lord Jesus Christ allowed it) he and his captains and soldiers omitted to fill in the water-opening¹ which they had captured. This little causeway by which they had passed had, with cunning, been made [by the Mexicans] very narrow, and the water even penetrated through it in places, and there was much mud and mire. When the Mexicans saw him cross that passage without filling it in they wished for nothing better, and for that very event they had got ready great squadrons of warriors with very valiant captains and many canoes on

¹ In a street between the Calle de Tacuba and the Market of Tlatelolco.

the lake in places where our launches could do them no damage whatever on account of the great stakes which they had fixed there on which they would get impaled. Then there turned upon Cortés and all his soldiers such a furious rush of Mexican squadrons with such cries yells and whistles that our people were not able to withstand the great impetus and force with which they came to fight against Cortés, and all the soldiers and captains and ensigns decided to retreat in very good order, but the enemy came against them with fury until they had driven them to that bad passage, and the allies whom they [the Spaniards] had brought with them, who were very numerous, were so confused that they turned their backs and took to flight without making any resistance. When Cortés saw them thus turning away defeated he encouraged them and cried "Stop, stop Gentlemen, stand firm, what is this that you are doing turning your backs", but he could not check them. Then in that passage which they had neglected to fill up, and on the little causeway which was narrow and unsound, aided by the canoes they [the enemy] defeated Cortés and wounded him in the leg, and they carried off alive sixty six soldiers and killed eight horses. Six or seven Mexican Captains had already seized hold of Cortés, but it pleased Our Lord God to help him and to give him strength to defend himself although he was wounded in one leg, for in the nick of time there promptly came [to his rescue] a very valiant soldier named Cristóbal de Olea, a native of Old Castile, and as soon as he saw Cortés assailed by so many Indians, this soldier Olea fought so bravely that he quickly killed with sword thrusts four of the captains who had hold of him, and another brave soldier named Lerma also helped. They did so much by their personal bravery that they [the Indian Captains] let go of Cortés, but in defending him Olea lost his life there, and even Lerma was at the point

of death. Many soldiers soon ran to assist and although they were badly wounded they laid hands on Cortés and helped him out of that danger and the mire in which he was then standing, and the quarter master Cristóbal de Olid also came in great haste and they took him [Cortés] by the arms and helped him to get out of the water and the mud and brought him a horse on which he escaped from death. At that moment his mayor-domo named Cristóbal de Guzman also arrived and brought him another horse. Meanwhile the Mexican warriors kept on fighting very fearlessly and successfully from the azoteas greatly to our damage, and they captured Cristóbal de Guzman and carried him alive to Guatemoc. The Mexicans kept following in pursuit of Cortés and all his soldiers until they reached their camp. Even after that disaster had happened and they had reached camp, the Mexican squadrons did not cease following them and hunting them down yelling and calling out much abuse and calling them cowards.

Let us cease speaking about Cortés and his defeat and return to our army, which is that of Pedro de Alvarado, in the City of Tacuba, and [say] how we advanced victoriously, and, when we least expected it, we saw advancing against us with loud yells very many squadrons of Mexicans with very handsome ensigns and plumes, and they cast in front of us five heads streaming with blood which they had just cut off the men whom they had captured from Cortés, and they cried:—"Thus will we kill you as we have killed Malinche and Sandoval, and all whom they had brought with them, and these are their heads and by them you may know them well", and saying these words they closed in on us until they laid hands on us and neither cut nor thrust nor crossbows nor muskets availed to stop them, all they did was to rush at us as at a mark. Even so we lost nothing of our order in retreating, for we at once

commanded our friends the Tlaxcalans to clear off quickly from the causeways and bad passages, and this time they did it with a will, for when they saw the five heads of our companions dripping with blood and heard the Mexicans say that they had killed Malinche and Sandoval and all the Teules whom they had brought with them, and that so they would do to us also and to the Tlaxcalans, they were thoroughly frightened, thinking it was true, and for this reason, I say, they cleared off the causeway very completely.

Let us go back to say that as we were retreating we heard the sound of trumpets from the great Cuc, (where stand the idols Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca) which from its height dominates the whole City, and also a drum, a most dismal sound indeed it was, like an instrument of demons, as it resounded so that one could hear it two leagues off, and with it many small tambourines and shell trumpets, horns and whistles. At that moment, as we afterwards learnt, they were offering the hearts of ten of our comrades and much blood to the idols that I have mentioned.

Let us leave the sacrifice and return to our retreat and the great attack they made on us both from the causeway and from the azoteas and the canoes on the lake. Simultaneously there came against us many squadrons which Guatemoc had newly sent out, and he ordered his horn to be sounded. When this horn was sounded it was a signal that his captains and warriors must fight so as to capture their enemies or die in the attempt, and the sound that it made echoed in their ears, and when his captains and squadrons heard it, the fury and courage with which they threw themselves on us, in order to lay hold of us, was terrifying, and I do not know how to describe it here; even now when I stop to remember, it is as though I could see it [all] at this minute, and were

present [again], in that fight and battle. But I reassert that our Lord Jesus Christ saved us, for if he had not given us strength, seeing that we were all wounded, we should never otherwise have been able to reach our ranchos, and I give thanks and praise to God for it, that I escaped that time and many others from the power of the Mexicans.

To go back to our story, the horsemen made charges, and with two heavy cannon that we placed near our ranchos with some loading while others fired we held our own, for the causeway was crowded to the utmost with the enemy and they came after us up to the houses, as though we were already conquered and shot javelins and stones at us, and as I have said, with those cannon we killed many of them. The man who was most helpful that day was a gentleman named Pedro Moreno Medrano, who lives now in Puebla, for he acted as gunner because the artillerymen we used to have with us were some of them dead and the others wounded, and Pedro Moreno besides always being a brave soldier was on that day a great help to us. Being as we were in that condition, thoroughly miserable and wounded, we knew nothing of either Cortés or Sandoval nor of their armies, whether they had been killed or routed, as the Mexicans told us they were when they cast [before us] the five heads which they brought tied together by the hair and the beards, saying that Malinche and all the Teules were already dead, and that thus they were going to kill all of us that very day. We were not able to get news from them because we were fighting half a league apart one from the other, and where they had defeated Cortés was furthest off, and for this very reason we were much distressed, but by all of us both wounded and sound keeping together in a body we held out against the shock of the fury of the Mexicans who came against us, and who did not believe

that there would be a trace of us left after the attack that they made upon us.

Then they had already captured one of our launches and killed three soldiers and wounded the captain and most of the soldiers who were in it, and it was rescued by another launch of which Juan Xaramillo was captain. Yet another launch was impaled in a place from which it could not move, and its captain was Juan de Linpias Caravajal, who went deaf at that time, and now lives in Puebla. He himself fought most valiantly and so encouraged his soldiers, who were rowing the launch that day, that they broke the stakes [on which they were impaled] and got away, all badly wounded, and saved their launch. This Linpias was the first to break the stakes and it was a great thing for all of us.

Let us return to Cortés ; when he and his people were nearly all killed or wounded the Mexican squadrons went towards his camp to attack it, and they even cast before the Soldiers, who were resisting the attack of the Mexicans, four other heads dripping with blood [which were those] of soldiers who had been carried off from Cortés himself, and they said that these were [the heads of] Tonatio, that is of Pedro de Alvarado, and of Sandoval and of Bernal Díaz and other Teules, and that they had already killed all of us who were at Tacuba. Then Cortés was much more depressed than he had been before and tears started from his eyes (and the eyes of all who were with him,) but not to such an extent as to permit them to notice depression or weakness in him. He at once ordered Cristóbal de Olid, who was quarter-master, and his captains to take care that the many Mexicans who were pressing on them did not break into the camp, and to keep both wounded and sound all close together in one body. He sent Andrés de Tápia with three horsemen post-haste by land, at the risk of their lives, to Tacuba which was our

camp, to find out if we were alive, and, if we were not routed, [to tell us] to keep a good look out in our camp and to form up in one body and to keep watch all together both by day and by night, and what he now sent to order us to do we had already made our custom. The Captain Andrés de Tápia and the three horsemen who came with him made great haste, although Tápia and two of those who came with him were wounded, and they were called Guillen de la Loa and Baldenebro and a Juan de Cuellar, all valiant men. When they reached our camp and found us fighting with the Mexican force which was still close to us, they rejoiced in their hearts and related to us what had happened about the defeat of Cortés and what he had sent to tell us, but they did not care to state that so many were dead, and said that about twenty five [had been killed] and that all the rest were well.

Let us stop talking of this and turn to Sandoval and his captains and soldiers, who marched on victoriously in the part and streets they had captured, and when the Mexicans had defeated Cortés they turned on Sandoval and his army and captains so effectively that he could make no headway, and they killed six soldiers and wounded all whom he had brought with him, and gave him [Sandoval himself] three wounds one in the thigh, another in the head and another in the left arm. While Sandoval was battling with the enemy they placed before him six heads of Cortés's men whom they had killed, and said they were the heads of Malinche and of Tonatio and other Captains, and that they meant so to do with Sandoval and those who were with him, and they attacked him fiercely. When Sandoval saw this he ordered all his captains and soldiers to show a brave spirit and not be dismayed, and to take care that in retreating there should not be any confusion on the causeway which was narrow, and first of all he ordered his allies, who were numerous, to clear off the

causeway so as not to embarrass him, and with [the help of] his two launches and of his musketeers and crossbowmen, with great difficulty he retired to his quarters, with all his men badly wounded and even discouraged and six of them dead. When he found himself clear of the causeway, although he was surrounded by Mexicans, he encouraged his people and their captains and charged them all to be sure to keep together in a body by day and by night so as to guard the camp and avoid defeat. Then when he learned from the captain Luis Marin, that they were well able to do it, wounded and bound up in rags as he was, he took two other horsemen with him and rode post haste to the camp of Cortés. When Sandoval saw Cortés he said "Oh Sir Captain, what is this? Are these the counsels and stratagems of warfare that you have always impressed on us, how has this disaster happened?" Cortés replied with tears springing to his eyes, "Oh my son Sandoval, for my sins this has been permitted, however I do not deserve as much blame in the matter as all my captains and soldiers impute, but the Treasurer Julian de Alderete to whom I gave the order to fill in that passage where they defeated us, and he did not do it, for he is not used to war nor to receive orders from Captains. Then the treasurer himself answered, for he was there by Cortés and had come to see and speak with Sandoval and to find out if his army was dead or defeated, and he said that Cortés himself was to blame and not he, and the reason he gave was that as Cortés was advancing victoriously and in order to follow up his advantage he cried out "Forward gentlemen" and never ordered them to fill in the bridge or bad passage, and that if he had ordered him to do so, his Captain and the allies would have done it. He also blamed Cortés for not ordering the many allies that he had with him to clear off the causeway in good time, and there were many other discussions and replies from Cortés to the

Treasurer which were spoken in anger, they will be left untold, and I will state how at that moment there arrived two launches which Cortés kept in the lake and by the causeway, and they had not come in nor had anything been known about them since the defeat. It seems that they had been detained and impaled on some stakes, and, according to what the captains reported, they had been kept there surrounded by canoes which attacked them, and they all came in wounded, and said that God in the first place aided them with a wind, and thanks to the great energy with which they rowed they broke the stakes; at this Cortés was well pleased, for up to that time, although he did not publish it so as not to dishearten the soldiers, he knew nothing about the launches and had held them as lost.

Let us leave this and return to Cortés who next strongly advised Sandoval to proceed at once post haste to our camp of Pedro de Alvarado, which was called Tacuba, and see whether we were routed, or how we stood, and if we were alive he should help us to keep up the defence so that they should not break into our camp, and he told Francisco de Lugo who accompanied him (Sandoval) (for he well knew that there were Mexican squadrons on the road), that he had already sent Andrés de Tápia with three horsemen to get news of us, and he feared that they had been killed on the road. After saying this to him and taking leave of him he went to embrace Sandoval, and said, "Look here, my son, as I am not able to go everywhere, for you can see that I am wounded, I commit this work to your care so that you may inspire confidence in all three camps. I know well that Pedro de Alvarado and all his captains and brothers and soldiers have fought valiantly and acted like gentlemen, but I fear the great forces of these dogs may have defeated him, and as for me and my army, you observe in what condition I am."

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Sandoval and Francisco de Lugo came post haste to where we were and when he arrived it was a little after dusk (*visperas*) and it seems that the defeat of Cortés took place before noon (*misa mayor*). When Sandoval arrived he found us fighting with the Mexicans who wanted to get into our camp by way of some houses which we had pulled down, and others by the causeway, and many canoes by the lake, and they had already got one launch stranded on the land, and of the soldiers who were in it two were dead and most of them wounded. Sandoval saw me and six other soldiers standing more than waist high in the water helping the launch to get off into deep water, and many Indians attacking us with swords which they had captured from us when Cortés was defeated, and others with broadswords [edged] with [flint] knives and were giving us sword cuts (and they gave me an arrow wound and a sword cut in the leg) so as to prevent us helping the launch, which, judging from the energy they were displaying, they intended to carry off with their canoes. They had attached many ropes to it with which to tow it off and place it inside the City. When Sandoval saw us in that position he said to us “Oh! Brothers put your strength into it and prevent them carrying off the launch” and we exerted so much strength that we soon hauled it out in safety, although as I have said, all of the sailors came out wounded and two dead.

At that time many companies of Mexicans came to the causeway and wounded the horsemen as well as all of us, and they gave Sandoval a good blow with a stone in the face. Then Pedro de Alvarado and other horsemen went to his assistance. As so many squadrons approached I and twenty other soldiers faced them, and Sandoval ordered us to retreat little by little so that they should not kill the horses, and because we did not retreat as quickly as he wished he said to us with fury “Do you wish that

through your selfishness they should kill me and all these horsemen? For the love of me, dear brothers, do fall back", at that moment the enemy again wounded him and his horse. Just then we cleared our allies off the causeway, and [we retreated] little by little keeping our faces [to the enemy] and not turning our backs, as though to form a dam. Some of the crossbowmen and musketeers were shooting and others loading their guns for they did not fire them off all together, and the horsemen made charges, and Pedro Moreno Medrano, already mentioned by me, loaded and fired his cannon, yet, notwithstanding the number of Mexicans that the balls were sweeping away, we could not fend them off, on the contrary they kept on following us thinking that this very night they would carry us off to be sacrificed.

When we had retreated near to our quarters and had already crossed a great opening where there was much water, the arrows, javelins and stones could no longer reach us. Sandoval, Francisco de Lugo and Andrés de Tápia were standing with Pedro de Alvarado each one relating what had happened to him and what Cortés had ordered, when again there was sounded the dismal drum of Huichilobos and many other shells and horns and things like trumpets and the sound of them all was terrifying, and we all looked towards the lofty Cue where they were being sounded, and saw that our comrades whom they had captured when they defeated Cortés were being carried by force up the steps, and they were taking them to be sacrificed. When they got them up to a small square in [front of] the oratory, where their accursed idols are kept, we saw them place plumes on the heads of many of them and with things like rans [in their hands?] they forced them to dance before Huichilobos, and after they had danced they immediately placed them on their backs on some rather narrow stones which had

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been prepared as [places for] sacrifice, and with stone knives they sawed open their chests and drew out their palpitating hearts and offered them to the idols that were there, and they kicked the bodies down the steps, and Indian butchers who were waiting below cut off the arms and feet and flayed [the skin off] the faces, and prepared it afterwards like glove leather with the beards on, and kept those for the festivals when they celebrated drunken orgies, and the flesh they ate in *chilmole*. In the same way they sacrificed all the others and ate the legs and arms and offered the hearts and blood to their idols, as I have said, and the bodies, that is their entrails and feet, they threw to the tigers and lions which they kept in the house of the carnivores which I have spoken about in an earlier chapter.

When we saw those cruelties all of us in our camp and Pedro de Alvarado and Gonzalo de Sandoval and all the other captains (let the interested readers who peruse this, note what ills we suffered from them [the Mexicans]) said the one to the other "thank God that they are not carrying me off to day to be sacrificed."

It should also be noted that we were not far away from them, yet we could render them no help, and could only pray God to guard us from such a death.

Then, at the moment that they were making the sacrifices, great squadrons of Mexicans fell on us suddenly and gave us plenty to do on all sides and neither in one way or the other could we prevail against them.

And they cried:—"Look, that is the way in which you will all have to die, for our gods have promised it to us many times." Then the words and threats which they said to our friends the Tlaxcalans were so injurious and evil that they disheartened them, and they threw them roasted legs of Indians and the arms of our soldiers and cried to them:—"Eat of the flesh of these Teules and

of your brothers for we are already glutted with it, and you can stuff yourselves with this which is over, and observe that as for the houses which you have destroyed, we shall have to bring you to rebuild them much better with white stone and well worked masonry, so go on helping the Teules, for you will see them all sacrificed."

There was another thing that Guatemoc ordered to be done when he won that victory, he sent to all the towns of our allies and friends and to their relations, the hands and feet of our soldiers and the flayed faces with the beards, and the heads of the horses that they had killed, and he sent word that more than half of us were dead and he would soon finish us off, and he told them to give up their friendship [with us] and come to Mexico and if they did not give it up promptly, he would come and destroy them, and he sent to tell them many other things to induce them to leave our camp and desert us, and then we should be killed by his hands.

As they still went on attacking us both by day and by night, all of us in our camp kept watch together, Gonzalo de Sandoval and Pedro de Alvarado and the other captains keeping us company during our watch, and although during the night great companies of warriors came [against us] we withstood them. Both by day and night half the horsemen remained in Tacuba and the other half were on the causeway.

There was another greater evil that they did us; no matter how carefully we had filled in [the water spaces] since we advanced along the causeway, they returned and opened them all and constructed barricades stronger than before. Then our friends of the cities of the lake who had again accepted our friendship and had come to aid us with their canoes believed that they "came to gather wool and went back shorn" for many of them lost their lives and many more returned wounded, and they lost more than

half of the canoes they had brought with them, but, even with all this, thenceforward they did not help the Mexicans, for they were hostile to them, but they carefully watched events as they happened.

Let us cease talking about misfortunes and once again tell about the caution, and the manner of it, that from now on we exercised, and how Gonzalo de Sandoval and Francisco de Lugo and Andrés de Tápia and Julio de Cuellar and Baldenebro and the other soldiers who had come to our camp thought it would be well to return to their posts and to give a report to Cortés as to how and in what position we stood. So they went post haste and told Cortés that Pedro de Alvarado and all his soldiers were using great caution both in fighting as well as in keeping watch, and moreover Sandoval, as he considered me a friend, said to Cortés that he had found me and the soldiers fighting more than waist high in water defending a stranded launch, and that if it had not been for us they [the enemy] would surely have killed the captain and soldiers who were on board, and because he said other things in my praise about when he ordered me to retreat, I am not going to repeat them here for other persons told of it, and it was known throughout the camp of Cortés and in our own, but I do not wish to recite it here. When Cortés clearly understood the great caution that we observed in our camp it greatly eased his heart, and from that time onwards he ordered all three camps not to fight with the Mexicans either too much or too little, meaning that we were not to trouble about capturing any bridge or barricade, and, except in defence of our camps, we were not to go out to fight with the enemy.

Nevertheless the day had hardly dawned when they were attacking our camp discharging many stones from slings, and javelins and arrows and shouting out hideous abuse, and as we had near the camp a very broad and

deep opening of water we remained for four days in succession without crossing it. Cortés remained as long in his camp and Sandoval in his. This determination, not to go out and fight and endeavour to capture the barricades which they [the Mexicans] had returned to open and fortify, was because we were all badly wounded and worn out with hardships, both from keeping watch and bearing arms without anything sustaining to eat ; and because we had lost the day before over sixty and odd soldiers from all the camps, and eight horses and so that we might obtain some rest, and take mature counsel as to what should be done. From that time onwards Cortés ordered us to remain quiet, as I have said, so I will leave off here and tell how and in what way we fought and everything else that happened in our camp.

CHAPTER CLIII.

About the way in which we fought, and the many attacks that the Mexicans made on us, and the parleys we had with them, and how our allies left us and went to their towns, and many other things that happened.

OUR method of fighting in all three camps was as follows :—All the soldiers kept watch on the causeways together with our launches on either side, half the horsemen went the rounds in Tacuba, where the bread was made for us and where we kept our baggage, and the other half guarded the bridges and the causeway. Early in the morning we prepared our arms to fight with the enemy, who tried to penetrate into our camp and endeavoured to defeat us, and they acted in the same way at the camp of Cortés and of Sandoval. This lasted only during five days for then we adopted another plan which I will speak about later on. Let me tell now how

the Mexicans offered great sacrifice and celebrated festivals every night at their great Cue at Tlatelolco and sounded their cursed drum, trumpets, kettle drums and shells, and uttered yells and howls, and kept many bonfires of burning wood going all night long. Then they sacrificed our comrades to their accursed Huichilobos and Tescatepuca whom they consulted, and inasmuch as they are evil, they replied so as to delude them and prevent their making peace, inducing them to believe that on the morning following that very night they were sure to kill all of us and the Tlaxcalans and all others who might come to our assistance. When our allies heard this they believed it to be true because they had seen us defeated and saw that we were not fighting as we used to do.

Let us leave these sayings that came from their accursed idols and relate that in the morning many regiments came to surround us and attack us, and they relieved one another from time to time, some with one kind of device and plumes and distinguishing marks and then others with a different uniform. Then when we were fighting with them they shouted many insults calling us cowards, and good-for-nothings, neither for making houses nor plantations of maize; and that we only came to plunder their city and were evil men fleeing from our own country and king and master. This they said on account of what Narvaez had sent to tell them, that we had come without the permission of our King, as I have stated in the chapter that deals with that matter. They further said that within eight days not one of us would remain alive, for so, last night, their Gods had promised them, and they said many other bad words to us, and last of all they exclaimed "Look what rogues and villains you are, even your flesh is bad to eat, it is as bitter as gall and we cannot swallow it so bitter is it." It seems that they had satiated themselves during those days on the flesh of our soldiers and comrades

and possibly our Lord had willed their flesh to turn bitter. If they used abusive language to us they treated our friends the Tlaxcalans much worse and threatened to keep them as slaves for sacrifice and for planting their crops and rebuilding the houses they had destroyed, and that they would have to make them of well laid masonry for this their Huichilobos had promised them. After they had said this, how fearlessly they fought and approaching by way of some houses that had been pulled down, and in the many canoes that they possessed, they took us in the rear and sometimes they had us even cut off on the causeway, but our Lord supported us every day, for our own strength alone was insufficient. Still we sent back many of them wounded and others fell dead. Let us cease speaking of these great attacks which they made on us and say how our friends, the people of Tlaxcala and Cholula and Huexotzingo and even those of Texcoco and Chalco and Tlamanalco, decided to return to their own Countries, and nearly all of them went off without Cortés or Pedro de Alvarado or Sandoval knowing about it. There only remained in Cortés camp Ixlilxochitl,¹ who was afterwards baptized and named Don Carlos (he was the brother of Don Fernando the Lord of Texcoco and was a very valiant man) and about forty of his relations and friends. In Sandoval's camp there remained another cacique from Huexotzingo with about fifty men, and in our camp there remained two sons of Lorenzo de Vargas and the brave Chichimecatecle with about eighty Tlaxcalans, his relations and vassals. When we found ourselves alone² with so few allies we were distressed, and Cortés and Sandoval each of

¹ Este Suchel in the text.

² Bernal Díaz must have been misinformed as to the number of the allies in the three camps ; had they been as few as he states Cortés could not have ventured to despatch the expedition under Andrés de Tápia only a few days later.

them asked the allies that remained in his camp, why the others had gone off in that way, and they replied that they had observed Mexicans speaking with their Idols during the night who promised them that they should kill us, and they believed it to be true; so it was through fear that they left, and what made it more credible was seeing us all wounded and many of us dead, and of their own people more than twelve hundred were missing, and they feared that we should all be killed. Moreover Xicotenga the younger, whom Cortés had ordered to be hanged on the confines of Texcoco, had always told them that he knew by his magic that they [the Mexicans] would kill all of us and not leave one of them alive. These were the reasons why they went off and although Cortés in private showed how it weighed upon him, yet he told them with a cheerful countenance to have no fear, for what the Mexicans had told them was a lie to make them lose heart, and he made so many promises to them in affectionate terms that he gave them courage to stay with him, and we said the like to Chichimecatecle and to the two youthful Xicotengas. In those conversations which Cortés had with Ixlilxochitl, who as I have already said was called Don Carlos, for he was Lord over his people and a brave man, he replied to Cortés "Señor Malinche, do not be distressed because you cannot fight every day with the Mexicans, get your foot well, and take my advice, and that is to stay some days in your camp, and tell Tonatio (Pedro de Alvarado for so they called him) to do the same and stay in his camp and Sandoval in Tepeaquilla, and keep the launches on the move night and day to prevent supplies of provisions or water from getting to them, [the enemy] for there are within this great City so many thousand *xiquipeles*¹ of warriors that they must of necessity eat up the food that

¹ A division numbering 8,000 men.

they possess, and the water they are now drinking is from some springs they have made, and it is half salt, and as it rains every day and sometimes at night they catch the water and live on that, but what can they do if you stop their food and water? They will suffer more from hunger and thirst than from war." When Cortés understood this advice he threw his arms round him and thanked him for it and made him promises that he would give him pueblos. This advice many of us soldiers had already discussed, but, such is our nature, that we did not wish to wait so long a time, but to advance into the city. When Cortés had well considered what the cacique had said (although we had already sent to say the same thing on our own account, and the captains and soldiers had said it on theirs) he ordered two launches to go to our camp and to that of Sandoval to tell us that he ordered us to remain another three days without advancing into the city. As at that time the Mexicans were victorious he did not dare to send out one launch alone and this was the reason why he sent two, and there was one thing that helped us much, which was that our launches now ventured to break the stakes that the Mexicans had placed in the lake to impale them, and they did it in this way, they rowed with all their strength, and so that the rowing should carry greater impetus they set about it from some distance back and got wind into their sails and rowed their best, so they were masters of the lake and even of a good many houses that stood apart from the city, and when the Mexicans saw this they lost some of their courage.

Let us leave this and return to our battles; now, as we had no allies, we ourselves began to fill in and stop up the great opening that, I have said before, was near our camp, and the first company on the rota worked hard at carrying adobes and timber to fill it in, while the other two companies did the fighting, (I have said

before we had arranged that it should go in rotation) and in the four days that all of us worked at it we had it filled in and levelled. Cortés did the same in his camp where the same arrangement prevailed, and even he himself was at work carrying adobes and timber, until the bridges and causeways and openings were secure so that a retreat could be effected in safety; and Sandoval did neither more nor less in his camp. With our launches close by us, and free from any fear of stakes we advanced in this manner little by little.

Let us return to the great squadrons which continually attacked us, and very bravely and victoriously came to fight us hand to hand. From time to time some squadrons retired and others came on. Then to tell of the yells and shouts that they uttered, and at that moment the horn of Guatemoc would resound and then they pressed on us so hotly that the sword cuts and thrusts which we gave them availed us nothing, and they tried to lay hands on us. As, after God, we had to rely on our own good fighting we held out very stoutly against them, and with the muskets and crossbows and charges by the horsemen, half of whom were continually with us, and with [the help of] the launches which no longer feared the stakes, we held them at bay, and little by little we went on advancing, and in this way we went on fighting until near night time, which was the time to retreat. Then, when we were retreating, it had to be done, as I have said before, with great caution, for that was the time when they endeavoured to cut us off on the causeway and the bad passages, and if they had sometimes attempted it before, in these days after their late victory they set about it much more energetically, and I declare that in three places they had broken through us, but it pleased our Lord God that, although they wounded many of us, we closed our ranks and we killed and captured many of the enemy. We had no allies to be

sent off from the causeway, and the horsemen helped us valiantly, although in that skirmish and combat two of their horses were wounded, [nevertheless] we returned badly wounded to our camp where we treated our hurts with oil and bound them up with cloths and ate our tortillas with red peppers and herbs and tunas, and then all went on watch.

Let me say now what the Mexicans did during the night on their great and lofty Cues, and that was to sound the cursed drum, which I again declare had the most accursed sound and the most dismal that it was possible to invent, and the sound carried far over of the country, and they sounded other worse instruments and diabolical things, and they made great fires and uttered the loudest yells and whistles, for at that moment they were sacrificing our comrades whom they had captured from Cortés and we knew that it took them ten days in succession to complete the sacrificing of all our soldiers, and they left to the last Cristóbal de Guzman whom they kept alive for twelve or thirteen days, according to the report of the three Mexican captains whom we captured. Whenever they sacrificed them then their Huichilobos spoke to them and promised them victory, and that we should die by their hands within eight days and told them to make vigorous attacks on us although many should die in them and in this way he kept them deluded.

Let us leave their sacrifice, and say once more that as soon as another day dawned all the greatest forces that Guatemoc could collect were already down upon us, and as we had filled up the opening and causeway and bridge they could pass it dryshod. My faith! They had the daring to come up to our ranchos and hurl javelins and stones and arrows, but with the cannon we could always make them draw off, for Pedro Moreno who had charge of the cannon did much damage to the enemy.

I wish to say that they shot our own arrows at us from crossbows, for while they held five crossbowmen alive and Cristóbal de Guzman with them, they made them load the crossbows and show them how they were to be discharged, and either they or the Mexicans discharged those shots deliberately, but they did no harm with them.

In the same way as they fought with us, and even more vigorously, they fought with Cortés and with Sandoval, and shot darts at them, but did them no harm, and we knew about this because the launches knew it, which went from our camp to that of Cortés and from Cortés's camp to ours and to that of Sandoval, and he [Cortés] was always writing to us about how we were to fight and all that we were to do, and impressing watchfulness on us, and that half the horsemen should always remain in Tacuba guarding our baggage and the Indian women who made our bread, and that we should take care that they did not break in on us in the night, for some prisoners who had been captured in Cortés's camp reported that Guatemoc was often saying that they would attack by night as we had no Tlaxcalans to help us, for they well knew that all our allies had already left us; and, I have already often said that we were most diligent in keeping watch.

Let us leave this and say that every day we had very hard fights but we did not cease to advance capturing barricades bridges and water openings, and as our launches dared to go where ever they chose in the lake, and did not fear the stakes, they helped us very much. Let me say that as usual the launches that Cortés had at his camp cruised about giving chase to the canoes that were bringing in supplies and water and collecting in the lake a sort of ooze which when it was dried had the flavour of cheese, and these launches brought in many Indian prisoners. Let us turn to the camp of Cortés and to that of Gonzalo de Sandoval, where every day they were conquering and

capturing barricades and causeways and bridges, and in these perils and battles twelve or thirteen days had gone by since the defeat of Cortés. As soon as Ixtilxochitl, the brother of Don Fernando the Lord of Texcoco, observed that we had thoroughly recovered ourselves, and what the Mexicans said that they were sure to kill us within ten days was not true (which was what their Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca had promised them,) he sent to advise his brother Don Fernando to send to Cortés, at once, the whole force of warriors that he could muster in Texcoco, and within two days of the time of his sending to tell him, more than two thousand warriors arrived. I remember Pedro Sánchez Farfan and Antonio de Villa Real, who was the husband of Isabel de Ojeda, came with them, for Cortés had left those two soldiers in that City. Pedro Sánchez Farfan was a captain and Villa Real was the tutor to Don Fernando, and when Cortés saw such a good reinforcement he was greatly delighted and said flattering words to them. At that time many Tlaxcalans with their captains also returned and a cacique from Topeyanco named Tepaneca came as their general. Many Indians also came from Huexotzingo and a very few from Cholula. When Cortés knew that they had returned he ordered that all of them, as they arrived, should come to his camp so that he could speak to them. Before they arrived he ordered guards of our soldiers to be placed on the roads to protect them, in case the Mexicans should come out to attack them. When they came before Cortés he made them a speech through Doña Marina and Gerónimo de Aguilar and told them that they had fully understood and knew for certain about the good will with which he had always regarded them and still bore them, both because they had served his Majesty, as well as for the good offices that we had received at their hands, and if he had, after reaching this city, commanded them to join

us in destroying the Mexicans, he intended them to profit by it, and return to their land rich men, and to revenge themselves on their enemies, and not that we should capture that great City solely for his benefit, and although he had always found them useful and they had helped us in everything, they must have seen clearly that we ordered them off the causeways every day, because we were less hampered when we fought without them, and that he who gave us victory and aided us in everything was Our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe and whom we worship as he had already often told them and warned them at other times. Because they went away at the most critical time of the war they were deserving of death, for deserting their captains when they were fighting and for forsaking them, but as they did not understand our laws and ordinances he pardoned them, and in order to understand it [the situation] better they should observe that without their help we still continued destroying houses and capturing barricades. From that time forward he ordered them not to kill any Mexicans, for he wished to conquer them by kindness. When he had made this speech to them he embraced Chichimecatecle and the two youthful Xicotengas, and Ixlilxochitl, the brother of Don Fernando, and promised to give them territory and vassals in addition to what they now held. He esteemed highly those who had remained in our camp and he also spoke very kindly to Tecapaneca the Lord of Topeyanco and to the Caciques of Huexotzingo and Cholula who were usually stationed in the camp of Sandoval. After the conversation with them as I have related he ordered them to depart, and each one went to his camp.

Let us return to our great warfare that was always going on and the attacks they made on us, and as every day and night we did nothing but fight, and retreat in the afternoon, they wounded many of our soldiers. I will omit

relating in full all that happened, and wish to say that during those days it rained in the afternoon, and we were delighted when the rain storms came early for as the enemy got wet they did not fight so fiercely, and allowed us to retreat in safety and in this way we got some rest. Because I am tired of writing about battles (and I was even more tired and wounded when I was present at them) it will appear to my readers prolix to tell about them so many times, but as I have already said, I could do no less, for during ninety three days¹ we were fighting all the time, but from now on, if it may be excused, I will not call them so often to my mind in this story.

Let us then return to our story, as from all three camps we were advancing into the City, Cortés on his side, Sandoval on his and Pedro de Alvarado on our side, we reached the spot where the spring was, that I have already spoken about, where they drank the brackish water, and we broke it up and destroyed it so that they might not make use of it. Some Mexicans were guarding it and we had a good skirmish with javelins, stones, and arrows and many long lances with which they were waiting for the horses, but we could already move freely through all parts of the streets we had captured, for they were already levelled and free from water and openings and the horses could move very easily.

Let us cease talking of this and relate how Cortés sent messengers to Guatemoc begging him to make peace, and it was in the way I will go on to relate.

¹ This count cannot be correct.

CHAPTER CLIV.

How Cortés sent three Mexican chieftains, who had been taken prisoners in the recent battles, to beg Guatemoc to make peace with us, and what Guatemoc replied, and what else happened.

AS soon as Cortés saw that we were capturing many bridges, causeways and barricades in the City and were destroying the houses, he ordered three Mexican captains, persons of importance whom he held as prisoners, to go and speak to Guatemoc and induce him to make peace with us. These chieftains replied that they did not dare to go with such a message for their Lord Guatemoc would order them to be killed. However after further conversation Cortés begged them so [earnestly] that what with the promises that he made them, and the cloths he gave them they decided to set out. What he ordered them to tell Guatemoc was, that he had a great regard for him as so near a relation of his friend the great Montezuma, and being married to his daughter, and moreover it was a pity that so great a city should be totally destroyed, and in order to avoid the great slaughter that took place every day among its inhabitants and their neighbours, he begged him to make peace, and, in the name of His Majesty, he [Cortés] would pardon all the deaths and damage they had inflicted on us and would do them many favours. Let them remember that he had already sent this message four times, and that he [Guatemoc] owing to his youth, and through his counsellors, and principally on account of his accursed idols and priests who gave him evil advice, had not wished to agree to make peace but [preferred] to make war on us ; but he had already seen how many deaths had resulted from the battles they had fought against us, and that we had on our side all the cities and pueblos throughout the district, and that every day new ones were rising

against him, and he condoled with him on such loss of vassals and cities. He also sent to say that we knew they had exhausted their provisions, and had no more water, and [he sent] many other messages well expressed. The three chieftains understood it all very clearly through our interpreters, and asked Cortés for a letter, not because the letter would be understood, but because they already knew clearly that when we sent a message or some thing that we were commanding them [to do] it was [through] a paper, (the same as they call *Amales*), as a sign that it was a command.

When the three messengers appeared before their Lord Guatemoc, with tears and great sobs they told him what Cortés had ordered them, and Guatemoc when he heard it in the presence of the Captains that were with him, as we afterwards learned, was in a rage with them for daring to come with those messages. Now Guatemoc was a youth, and a very excellent man for an Indian, of a good disposition and a cheerful countenance, and of a colour that inclined more to white than to the tint of an Indian, he was twenty five or twenty six years old and was married to a very handsome woman the daughter of his uncle the great Montezuma, and as we afterwards got to know he was inclined to make peace. In order to discuss the matter, he ordered all his chieftains and captains and the priests of the idols to assemble, and he told them that he had no wish to fight against Malinche and all of us. The discourse that he made about it to them was, that he had already tried everything that he could do in the war and had changed his manner of fighting many times, but we were of such a nature that when they thought that they held us conquered we turned the more vigorously against them, and he knew about the great host of allies who had lately joined us and that all the cities were against them, and that the launches had already broken through the stakes

and the horsemen were galloping through all the streets of his City. He placed before them many other disadvantages that they experienced both about food and water, and he begged or ordered each one of them to give his opinion, and the priests also were to give theirs and to state what they had heard the Gods Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca say and promise. No one was to have any fear of speaking the truth about what he felt. It appears that they replied "Señor and our great Lord, we already have thee for our king and the government is well exercised by thee, then in everything thou hast shown thyself manful, and the kingdom comes to thee by right ; the peace that thou speakest of as good is imaginary, now just reflect how ever since these Teules entered this land and this city we have gone from bad to worse, think of the benefits and presents thy uncle the great Montezuma bestowed upon them, of the end thy cousin Cacamatzin came to, and consequently of what became of thy relations the lords of Iztapalapa, Coyoacan, Tacuba and Talatzingo, and of the sons of our great Montezuma, they are all dead, all the gold and riches of this City have been wasted and thou seest already that they have made slaves and branded the faces of all thy subjects and vassals at Chalco and Tepeaca and even at Texcoco and of all thy cities and pueblos. Consider first what thy Gods have promised thee and take good advice about it, and place no trust in Malinche and his words ; it is better that we should all die in this city than see ourselves in the power of those who would make slaves of us and torture us for gold."

At that moment the priests also announced that three nights in succession, when they sacrificed to their idols, they had promised them victory. Then Guatemoc said rather angrily, "If you will have it so, take good care of the maize and supplies that we possess, and we will all die fighting, and from now on let no one be rash enough to

ask for peace for I will order him to be killed." Then and there all promised to fight day and night or die in defence of the City.

When this was settled they made arrangements with the people of Xochimilco and other towns to bring water in canoes by night, and they opened other springs in places where there was water although it was somewhat brackish.

Let us stop talking about their plans and say that Cortés and all of us remained two days without advancing into their city while we waited for a reply, and, when we least expected it great squadrons of Indian warriors came against all three camps and made fierce war upon us, and they fell on us like brave lions thinking to carry us off vanquished. What I here relate took place on our side, that of Pedro de Alvarado, and on those of Cortés and Sandoval they also say that they [the enemy] came to their camps [in a way] that they could not resist in spite of the number of them that they killed and wounded, and whilst they [the enemy] were fighting the horn of Guatemoc was sounded and then we had to close up so that they should not rout us, for as I have said before, they impaled themselves on the points of our swords and lances so as to lay hands on us. As we already were used to these encounters, for every day they killed and wounded some of us, we held our own against them hand to hand, and in this manner they fought for six or seven days in succession, and we killed and wounded many of them and for all that, they cared nothing about death.

I remember that they said to us "Why does Malinche go about every day asking us to make peace, as for us, our Idols have already promised us victory and we have plenty of food and water and we are not going to leave any of you alive, so do not talk any more about peace, such talk is for women and arms are for men." And after saying this they came upon us one and all like

mad dogs, and we fought until night separated us and then, as I have said, we retreated with great caution for great companies of them came following after us. We got our allies off the causeway, for many more of them had come than there were before, and we retired to our huts and at once went on guard all of us together, and we supped while keeping watch, as I have often related before, and by early dawn we were fighting again, for they did not give us much rest.

In this way we held out for many days, and while it went on another bad change took place, and it was that an army got together from the three provinces called Mataltzingo and Malinalco and some other towns called (I cannot now remember the name of them, but they were eight or ten leagues distant from Mexico) ready to fall upon us while we were fighting with the Mexicans and attack us in the rear and in our camps so that when the Mexican forces could sally out, and with one force on one side and the other force on the other, they thought that they would rout us. As other discussions took place, I will go on to say what happened about it.

CHAPTER CLV.

How Guatemoc had arranged with the provinces of Mataltzingo and Tulapa and Malinalco and other pueblos to come to his assistance and make an attack on our camp, which is that of Tacuba, and on that of Cortés, and how the whole force of Mexico would sally out while they were fighting with us and would attack us on the flank, and what was done about it.

So that this may be clearly understood it is necessary to go back and speak of the time following the defeat of Cortés, when they carried off sixty and odd soldiers to be sacrificed, and I may as well say sixty eight for they

amounted to that number when they were carefully counted. I have also said that Guatemoc sent the heads of the horses and the faces which they had flayed and the hands and feet of our soldiers whom they had sacrificed, to many pueblos and to Mataltzingo and Malinalco and Tulapa, and he sent them word that more than half of our people were already dead, and he begged them, in order that they might kill every one of us, to come and help him and to attack our camps by day or night so that we should be forced to fight and defend ourselves, and while we were fighting they would come out from Mexico and attack us on the other side, so they would conquer us and capture many of us for sacrifice to their idols and [be able] to satiate themselves on our bodies. He sent to say this in such a manner that they believed it and took it to be true. Moreover Guatemoc had many relations on his mother's side in Mataltzingo and in Tulapa, and when they saw the faces and heads of our soldiers that I have spoken about, and heard what he sent to tell them, they promptly set to work to get together all the forces they could raise to come in aid of Mexico and their relation Guatemoc. They actually were already on their way against us, and on the road they passed three pueblos of our allies, and they began to attack them and to rob their farms and maize fields and to kill children for sacrifice. These pueblos sent post haste to let Cortés know about it, so that he might send them help and assistance, and he at once sent Andrés de Tápia with twenty horsemen and one hundred soldiers and many Tlaxcalan allies to succour them effectively, and they made them (the enemy) retire to their pueblos and then came back to camp, at which Cortés was much pleased.

In the same manner and at the same moment there came other messengers from the town of Cuernavaca to claim assistance, for these same people of Mataltzingo

and Malinalco and Tulapa and other provinces were coming down upon them, and [they begged Cortés] to send help. For this purpose he sent Gonzalo de Sandoval with twenty horsemen and eighty soldiers, the soundest that were in all three camps, and many of our allies. God knows that those left behind ran great personal risk in all three camps, for nearly all were wounded and they had no comforts whatever with which to refresh themselves.

A great deal might be said about what Sandoval did and how he defeated the enemy, but I must omit saying more than that he returned very quickly to the relief of his camp (that of Sandoval), and that we brought with us two chieftains of Mataltzingo, and left them (the pueblos) more peaceful than before. That expedition was of great advantage, on the one hand in preventing our friends from receiving more damage than they had already received, on the other in preventing them [the enemy] from coming to our camps to attack us as they had set out to do, and, furthermore, in showing Guatemoc and his captains that they could no longer look for help or favour from those provinces, or say (when they were fighting with us,) that they were going to kill us with the help of Mataltzingo and the other provinces as their idols had promised them.

Let us cease talking of this expedition and the assistance that Sandoval rendered and turn to relate how Cortés sent to Guatemoc to beg him to make peace and he would pardon all that had passed, and to tell him that the king our Master had lately sent to order him not to complete the destruction of the city, and for this reason during the past five days he had not attacked nor entered it fighting. Let him (Guatemoc) observe that he no longer had any supplies of food nor water and that more than two thirds of the City were levelled with the ground, and, as to the help that he expected from Mataltzingo, let

him enquire from those two chieftains whom he [Cortés] now sent to him and what had happened to them on their expedition. He also sent to tell him other things [in the nature] of many promises. There went with these two messengers the two Indians from Mataltzingo and six Mexican chieftains who had been taken prisoners in the late battles. When Guatemoc saw the prisoners from Mataltzingo and learned from them what had happened he would give them no answer beyond telling them to return to their pueblo and leave Mexico at once.

Let us leave the messengers : The Mexicans promptly sallied out on three sides with the greatest fury that we had seen up to this time, and fell upon us in all three camps and made a fierce war upon us, and as we wounded and killed a great many of them it seemed to me as if they wished to die fighting. Then when they were pressing on us most fiercely, fighting hand to hand (they killed ten of our soldiers whose heads they cut off) that they had and said to us “ Quitlenquitoa rrey castilla quitlenquitoa ” which means to say in their language, which is the same as they speak to-day, “ The King of Castille ” and with these words they began to shoot javelins and stones and arrows which covered the ground and causeway. Let us leave this, for we were already advancing and capturing a large part of the City, and we noticed that although the enemy were fighting very manfully fewer squadrons than usual came in relief, and they no longer opened canals or [broke down] causeways ; but another thing they most certainly did, which is that at the time when we retired they followed us until they could lay hands on us. I also wish to say that we had already finished our powder in all three camps, and just then a ship had arrived at Villa Rica belonging to the fleet of a licenciado Lucas Vásquez de Ayllon, which was lost or destroyed in the Island of Florida, and this ship made that

port and some soldiers and powder and crossbows came in it. The lieutenant who was in Villa Rica, named Rodrigo Rangel, who was in charge of Narvaez, promptly sent the powder, crossbows and soldiers to Cortés.

Let us get back to our conquest, so as to be concise ; Cortés settled with all the other captains and soldiers that we should push forward into the City as far as we were able until we reached Tlatelolco, which is the great market place where there were seven lofty Cues and Oratories, and Cortés on his side, and Gonzalo de Sandoval from his, and we from ours advanced capturing bridges and barricades. Cortés advanced to a little plaza where there were some oratories and small towers,¹ and in one of the houses there were some beams set upright and on them many of the heads of our Spaniards whom they had killed and sacrificed during the recent battles, and their hair and beards had grown much longer than when they were alive, and I would not have believed it if I had not seen it. I recognized three soldiers as my comrades, and when we saw them in that condition it saddened our hearts. At that time we left them where they were, but twelve days later they were removed, and we took those and other heads that had been offered to the idols and we buried them in a church that we made, which is now called The Martyrs near the bridge named El Salto de Alvarado (Alvarado's leap.)

Let us stop speaking about this and say that the ten Companies of Pedro de Alvarado advanced fighting and reached Tlatelolco, and there were so many Mexicans guarding their Idols and lofty cues, and they had raised so many barricades that we were fully two hours before we were able to capture them and get inside. Now that the horses had space to gallop, although most of them were

¹ Zacaculco, now the church of Sta. Ana, 26th July.

wounded, they helped us very much, and the horsemen speared many Mexicans. As the enemy were so numerous the ten¹ companies were divided into three parts to fight against them, and Pedro de Alvarado ordered the company commanded by a captain named Gutierre de Badajoz to ascend the lofty Cue of Huichilobos which has one hundred and fourteen steps, and he fought very well against the enemy and against the many priests who were in the houses of the oratories, but the enemy attacked Gutierre Badajoz and his company in such a way that they sent him rolling down ten or twelve steps, and we promptly went to his assistance.

Let us leave the combat in which we were engaged with many of the enemy ; as we advanced the squadrons with which we were fighting followed us, and we ran great risk of our lives, but nevertheless we ascended the steps which as I have said before were one hundred and fourteen in number. It is as well to mention here the great danger we were in, both one [company] and the other, in capturing those fortresses which I have already said many times were very lofty, and in those battles they once more wounded us all very badly, nevertheless we set them [the oratories] on fire and burned the idols, and we planted our banners and were fighting on the level after we had set fire [to the oratories] until night time, but we could do nothing against so many warriors.

Let us stop speaking about it and say that Cortés and his captains saw the next day, (from where they were fighting on their side, in other districts and streets far from the lofty cue,) by the sudden blaze of flame, that the great Cue was burning, for it had not been extinguished, and on seeing our banners on the top he was greatly rejoiced, and

¹ In the text "dos capitánias" evidently a mistake for "diez capitánias" as above.

he wished that he also was there, and they even say that he was envious, but he could not have done it, for it was a quarter of a league from one place to the other, and there were many bridges and water openings to be captured, and wherever he turned they made fierce attacks on him, and he could not advance as quickly as he wished into the heart of the City, as we of Alvarado's (company) had done. However, within four days both Cortés and Sandoval joined us, and we could go from one camp to the other along the streets over the houses that had been pulled down and the bridges, barricades, and water openings, now all filled in.

At this time Guatemoc and all his warriors were retreating to a part of the City within the lake for the houses and palaces in which he had lived were already levelled to the ground, but with all this they never ceased to turn out every day to attack us, and when it was time for us to retire they followed us up closer than ever. When Cortés saw this, and that many days passed and they did not sue for peace, and had no thought of doing so, he agreed with all our captains that we should form some ambuscades, and this was the way of it. From all three camps we got together about thirty horsemen and one hundred soldiers, the most active and warlike that Cortés could find, and he sent to summon from all three camps one thousand Tlaxcalans, then we placed ourselves in some large houses which had belonged to a Mexican Lord. This was done early in the morning and Cortés made his advance along the streets and causeways with the rest of the horse that were with him, and his soldiers, crossbowmen and musketeers fighting in the usual way and pretending that he was filling in the water openings and bridges. The Mexican squadrons that were ready for the task were already engaged with him, and also many others whom Guatemoc had sent to guard the bridge. When

Cortés saw that the enemy were in great numbers, he pretended to retreat and ordered the allies to be got off the causeway, so that they [the enemy] should believe that he was retreating, and they came in pursuit of him, at first slowly but when they saw that he really acted as though he were fleeing, all the troops that were on the causeway rushed after him and attacked him. When Cortés saw that they had passed a little beyond the houses where the ambush was placed, he ordered two shots to be fired close together, which was the signal that we were to sally out of the ambush. The horsemen came out first and then all of us soldiers, and we fell on the enemy as we chose. Then Cortés quickly turned round with his men, and our friends the Tlaxcalans did great damage to the enemy so that many were killed and wounded, and from that time forward they did not follow us when it was time for us to retire. Another ambush was laid for them in the Camp of Pedro de Alvarado, but it came to nothing. On that day I was not present in the Camp of Pedro de Alvarado as Cortés had sent me orders to go to his camp for the ambush.

Let us leave this and say that as we were all of us in Tlatelolco, Cortés ordered all the companies to take up their quarters, and keep watch there, because from our camp we had to come more than half a league from where we were now fighting. So we stayed there three days without doing anything worth mentioning, because Cortés ordered us not to advance any further into the City nor to destroy more houses, for he wished to stop and demand peace. During those days that we were waiting in Tlatelolco Cortés sent to Guatemoc begging him to surrender, and not to have any fear, and with many promises he undertook that his (Guatemoc's) person should be much respected and honoured by him, and that he should govern Mexico and all his territory and cities as

he was used to do, and he sent him food and presents such as tortillas, poultry, tunas and cacao, for he had nothing else to send. Guatemoc took counsel with his captains and what they advised him to reply was that he desired peace but that he would wait three days before giving an answer, and that at the end of three days Guatemoc and Cortés should meet and make arrangements about the peace, and that during those three days they would have time to know more fully the wishes and reply of their Huichilobos, and [he might have added] to mend bridges and to make openings in the causeway and prepare arrows, javelins, and stones and make barricades.

Guatemoc sent four Mexican chieftains with that reply, and we believed that the [promise of] peace was true, and Cortés ordered the messengers to be given plenty to eat and drink and then sent them back to Guatemoc, and with them he sent more refreshments the same as before. Then Guatemoc sent other messengers, and by them two rich mantles, and they said that Guatemoc would come when everything was ready. Not to waste more words about the matter he never intended to come, (for they had counselled him not to believe Cortés and had reminded him of the end of his uncle the great Montezuma, and of his relations, and the destruction of all the noble families of Mexico; [and had advised him] to say that he was ill) but intended that all should sally out to fight and that it would please their Gods to give them the victory they had so often promised them. As we were waiting for Guatemoc and he did not come, we understood their deceit and at that very moment so many battalions of Mexicans with their distinguishing marks sallied out and made an attack on Cortés that he could not withstand it, and as many more went in the direction of our camp and in that of Sandoval's. They came on in such a way that it seemed as though they had just then

begun the fighting all over again, and as we were posted rather carelessly, believing that they had already made peace, they wounded many of our soldiers, three of them very severely, and two horses, but they did not get off with much to brag of, for we paid them out well. When Cortés saw this he ordered us again to make war on them and to advance into the City in the part where they had taken refuge. When they saw that we were advancing and capturing the whole City, Guatemoc sent two chiefs to tell Cortés that he desired to speak with him across a canal, Cortés to stand on one bank and Guatemoc on the other and they fixed the time for the morning of the following day, Cortés went, but Guatemoc would not keep the appointment but sent chieftains who said that their Lord did not dare to come out for fear lest, while they were talking, guns and crossbows should be discharged at him and should kill him. Then Cortés promised him on his oath that he should not be molested in any way that he did not approve of, but it was no use, they did not believe him and said "lest what happened to Montezuma should happen to him." At that time two of the chieftains who were talking to Cortés drew out from a bag which they carried some tortillas and the leg of a fowl and cherries, and seated themselves in a very leisurely manner and began to eat so that Cortés might observe it and believe that they were not hungry. When Cortés observed it he sent to tell them that as they did not wish to make peace, he would soon enter into all their houses to see if they had any maize and how much more poultry.

We went on in this way for another four or five days without attacking them, and about this time many poor Indians who had nothing to eat, would come out every night, and they came to our camp worn out by hunger. As soon as Cortés saw this he ordered us not to attack them for perhaps they would change their minds about

making peace, but they would not make peace although we sent to entreat them.

In Cortés's camp there was a soldier who said that he had been in Italy in the Company of the Great Captain¹ and was in the skirmish of Garallano and in other great battles, and he talked much about engines of war and that he could make a catapult in Tlatelolco by which, if they only bombarded the houses and part of the city where Guatemoc had sought refuge, for two days, they would make them surrender peacefully. So many things did he say to Cortés about this, for he was a very faithful soldier that he [Cortés] promptly set to work to make the catapult and they brought lime and stone in the way the soldier required, and carpenters and nails and all that was necessary for making the catapult, and they made two slings of strong bags and cords, and brought him great stones, larger than an arroba jar.² When the catapult was made and set up in the way that the soldier ordered, and he said it was ready to be discharged, they placed a suitable stone in the sling which had been made and all this stone did was to rise no higher than the catapult and fall back upon it where it had been set up. When Cortés saw this he was angry with the soldier who gave the order for making it, and with himself for believing him, and he said that he knew well that in war one ought not to speak much about a thing that vexes one, and that the man had only been talking for talking's sake, as had been found out in the way that I have said. This soldier was called, according to his own account, something de Sotello, a native of Seville. Cortés at once ordered the catapult to be taken to pieces. Let us leave this and say

¹ Gonzalvo de Córdoba.

² Arroba—a weight of twenty-five pounds, here, a sort of demi-john.

that, when he saw that the catapult was a thing to be laughed at, he decided that Gonzalo de Sandoval should go in command of all the twelve launches and invade that part of the City whither Guatemoc had retreated, which was in a part where we could not reach the houses and palaces by land, but only by water. Sandoval at once summoned all the Captains of the launches and what he did I will go on to relate.

CHAPTER CLVI.

How Gonzalo de Sandoval with twelve launches entered into the part of the City where Guatemoc was [had taken refuge] and took him prisoner, and what happened about it.

As I have said Cortés not only saw that the Catapult was useless but was angry with the soldier who advised him to have it made, and in consequence of Guatemoc and his Captains not wishing for peace of any sort, he ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to invade that part of the City where Guatemoc had taken refuge with all the flower of his Captains and the most distinguished persons that were in Mexico, and he ordered him not to kill or wound any Indians unless they should attack him, and even if they did attack him, he was only to defend himself and not do them any other harm, but he should destroy their houses and the many defences they had erected in the lake. Cortés ascended the great Cue of Tlatelolco to see how Sandoval advanced with the launches, and at that time Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco Verdugo, Luis Marin and other soldiers were there with Cortés.

Sandoval advanced with great ardour upon the place where the Houses of Guatemoc stood, and when Guatemoc saw himself surrounded, he was afraid that they would

capture him or kill him, and he had got ready fifty great piraguas with good rowers so that when he saw himself hard pressed he could save himself by going to hide in some reed beds and get from thence to land and hide himself in another town, and those were the instructions he had given his captains and the persons of most importance who were with him in that fortified part of the city, so that they should do the same.

When they saw that the launches were getting among the houses they embarked in the fifty canoes, and they had already placed [on board] the property and gold and jewels of Guatemoc and all his family and women, and he had embarked himself and shot out into the lake ahead, accompanied by many Captains. As many other canoes set out at the same time, the lake was full of them, and Sandoval quickly received the news that Guatemoc was fleeing, and ordered all the launches to stop destroying the houses and fortifications and follow the flight of the canoes, and to have a care that they kept track of where Guatemoc was going, and not to molest him or do him any injury but try to capture him without using violence. As a certain García Holguin a friend of Sandoval, was captain of a launch which was very fast and a good sailor and was manned by good rowers Sandoval ordered him to follow in the direction in which they told him that Guatemoc was fleeing with his great piraguas, and instructed him not to do him [Guatemoc] any injury whatever beyond capturing him in case he should overtake him, and Sandoval went in another direction with other launches which kept him company. It pleased our Lord God that García Holguin should overtake the canoes and piraguas in which Guatemoc was travelling, and from the style and the awnings and the seat he was using he knew that it was Guatemoc the great Lord of Mexico, and he made signals for them to stop, but they would not stop, so he made as

though he were going to discharge muskets and crossbows. When Guatemoc saw that, he was afraid and said "Do not shoot, I am the king of this City and they call me Guatemoc, and what I ask of you is not to disturb my things that I am taking with me nor my wife nor my relations, but carry me at once to Malinche." When Holguin heard him he was greatly delighted, and with much respect he embraced him and placed him in the launch, him and his wife and about thirty chieftains and seated him in the poop on some mats and cloths, and gave him to eat of the food that he had brought with him, and he touched nothing whatever in the canoes that carried his [Guatemoc's] property but brought it along with the launch. By this time Gonzalo de Sandoval had ordered all the launches to assemble together, and he knew that Holguin had captured Guatemoc and was carrying him to Cortés, and when he heard it he told the rowers on board his launch to make all the speed possible and he overtook Holguin and claimed the prisoner, and Holguin would not give him up and said that he had captured him and not Sandoval, and Sandoval replied that that was true, but that he was the Captain General of the launches, and that García Holguin sailed under his command and banner, and it was because he was his friend and his launch the fastest that he had ordered him to follow after Guatemoc, to capture him, and that to him as his General he must give up his prisoner. Still Holguin contended that he did not wish to do so, and at that moment another launch went in great haste to Cortés (who was very close by in Tlatelolco, watching from the top of the Cue how Sandoval was advancing) to demand a reward for the good news, and they told Cortés of the dispute which Sandoval was having with Holguin over the capture of the prisoner. When Cortés knew of it he at once dispatched Captain Luis Marin and Francisco de Verdugo to summon Sandoval and Holguin to come as

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they were in their launches without further discussion, and to bring Guatemoc and his wife and family with all [signs of] respect, and that he would settle whose was the prisoner and to whom was due the honour of it [the capture].

While they were bringing him, Cortés ordered a guest chamber to be prepared as well as could be done at the time, with mats and cloths and seats, and a good supply of the food which Cortés had reserved for himself. Sandoval and Holguin soon arrived with Guatemoc, and the two captains between them led him up to Cortés, and when he came in front of him he paid him great respect, and Cortés embraced Guatemoc with delight, and was very affectionate to him and his captains. Then Guatemoc said to Cortés “Señor Malinche, I have surely done my duty in defence of my City, and I can do no more and I come by force and a prisoner into your presence and into your power, take that dagger that you have in your belt and kill me at once with it”¹ and when he said this he wept tears and sobbed and other great Lords whom he had brought with him also wept. Cortés answered him through Doña Marina and Aguilar our interpreters, very affectionately, that he esteemed him all the more for having been so brave as to defend the City, and he was deserving of no blame, on the contrary [this circumstance] must be more in his favour than otherwise.

What he wished was that he [Guatemoc] had made peace of his own free will before the city had been so far destroyed, and so many of his Mexicans had died, but now, that both had happened there was no help for it and it could not be mended, let his spirit and the spirit of his Captains take rest, and he should rule in Mexico and over his provinces as he did before. Then Guatemoc and his

¹ Blotted out in the original “and Guatemoc himself was going to lay hold of it.”

Captains said that they accepted his favour, and Cortés asked after his wife and other great ladies, the wives of other Captains who, he had been told, had come with Guatemoc. Guatemoc himself answered and said that he had begged Gonzalo de Sandoval and García Holguin that they might remain in the canoes while he came to see what orders Malinche gave them. Cortés at once sent for them and ordered them all to be given of the best that at that time there was in the camp to eat, and as it was late and was beginning to rain, Cortés arranged for them to go to Coyoacan,¹ and took Guatemoc and all his family and household and many chieftains with him and he ordered Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval and the other captains each to go to his own quarters and camp, and we went to Tacuba, Sandoval to Tepeaquilla and Cortés to Coyoacan. Guatemoc and his captains were captured on the thirteenth day of August at the time of vespers on the day of Señor San Hipólito in the year one thousand five hundred and twenty-one, thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady the Virgin Santa Maria, His Blessed Mother, Amen.

It rained and thundered and lightning flashed that afternoon and up to midnight heavier rain fell than usual. After Guatemoc had been captured all the soldiers turned as deaf as if some one had stood shouting from the top of a belfry with many bells clanging and in the midst of their ringing all of a sudden they had ceased to sound. I say this purposely, for during all the ninety-three days that we were besieging this city, both by night and day, some of the Mexican Captains kept on uttering so many shouts and yells, whilst they were mustering the squadrons and warriors who were to fight on the causeway, and others

¹ Betancurt, *Teatro Mexicano, Sucesos Militares*, chap. x, say Cortés sent them to Acachinanco.

were calling out to those in the canoes who were to fight with the launches, and with us on the bridges, again others to those driving in piles and opening and deepening the water openings and bridges and making breastworks, or those who were making javelins and arrows, or to the women preparing rounded stones to hurl from the slings, while from the oratories and towers of the Idols, the accursed drums, trumpets and mournful kettle-drums never ceased sounding, and in this way both by night and by day, there was such a great din that we could not hear one another. On the capture of Guatemoc, the shouts and all the clamour ceased, and it is for this reason I have said that up to then we seemed to be standing in a belfry.

Let us leave this and say that Guatemoc was of a very graceful make both in figure and features. His face was rather long, but cheerful, and when his eyes looked at you, they appeared rather grave than gentle, and there was no waver in them ; he was twenty-one years of age,¹ and his colour inclined rather more to white than the colour of the brown Indians, and they say that he was a nephew of Montezuma, the son of one of his sisters, and he was married to a daughter of this same uncle Montezuma, who was a young and beautiful woman.

Before we go any further, let me relate how the dispute between Sandoval and García Holguin came to an end. It was in this way ; Cortés told them a story about the Romans having just such another dispute between Marius and Cornelius Sylla. It took place when Sylla brought Jugurtha a prisoner to Rome with his father-in-law, the King Bocos. When they entered Rome glorying over the deeds and exploits they had accomplished, it seems that Sylla placed Jugurtha in his triumphal procession with an iron chain round his neck, and Marius said that he

¹ Blotted out in the original, "twenty-three or twenty-four years."

and not Sylla should have done this, and that before Sylla had thus placed him he must explain that Marius gave him the right to do so, and had sent him in his stead so that he might take Jugurtha prisoner in Marius's name, and that the King Bocos gave himself up to the name of Marius. Then as Marius was Captain General and he (Sylla) was fighting under his command and banner, and as Sylla was one of the Roman patricians and was held in high favour, and as Marius came from a town near Rome named Arpino and therefore a foreigner, although he had been several times Consul, he was not in as high favour as Sylla, and about this matter there were Civil Wars between Marius and Sylla, and it was never settled to whom should be given the honour of capturing Jugurtha.

Let me take up the thread of my story, which is that Cortés said that he would refer the matter to His Majesty as to which of the two he would favour by making it [the subject of] a grant of arms, and that the decision about it would be brought from Spain, and in two years time there came a command from His Majesty that Cortés should have in the ornaments of his Coat of Arms, seven kings, who were Montezuma, the great Lord of Mexico, Cacamatzin, the Lord of Texcoco, and the Lords of Iztapalapa, Coyoacan, Tacuba and another great Lord who was a nephew of Montezuma, to whom they said would come the Caciqueship and Lordship of Mexico, (he was the Lord of Mataltzingo and of other provinces,) and this Guatemoc about whom the dispute arose.

Let us leave this and let us speak of the dead bodies and heads that were in the houses where Guatemoc had taken refuge. I say on my oath, Amen, that all the houses and the palisades in the lake were full of heads and corpses and I do not know how to describe it for in the streets and courts of Tlatelolco there was no difference, and we could not walk except among corpses and heads of dead Indians.

I have read about the destruction of Jerusalem but I know not for certain if there was greater mortality than this, for of the great number of the warriors from all the provinces and towns subject to Mexico who had crowded in [to the city] most of them died, and as I have already said, thus the land and the lake and the palisades were all full of dead bodies, and stank so much that no one could endure it, and for this reason, as soon as Guatemoc was captured, each one of the Captains went to his own camp, as I have already said, and even Cortés was ill from the stench which assailed his nostrils, and from headache, during the days we were in Tlatelolco.

Let us leave this and go on ahead and say that the soldiers who went about in the launches were the best off, and gained much spoil because they were able to go to the houses in certain quarters in the lake where they knew that there was cloth and gold and other riches, and they also went to search in the reed beds whither the Mexicans had carried it [their property] so as to hide it when we gained possession of some houses or quarter [of the city]. Also because under pretext of giving chase to canoes which carried food or water, when they came on those in which some of the chieftains were fleeing to the mainland to get among the pueblos of the Otomies who were their neighbours, they robbed them of all they carried with them. I wish to say that we, the soldiers who were fighting on the causeways and on land gained no profit except arrow and lance wounds, and wounds from darts and stones, because when we captured any houses, the inhabitants had already carried off whatever property they possessed; and we were not able to go through the water without first of all closing up the openings and bridges and, for this reason, I have said, in the chapter which tells of [the time] when Cortés was looking for sailors to go in the launches, that they were the

best off, and not we who fought on land. This seems clear, for the Mexican Captains and even Guatemoc, when Cortés demanded from them the treasure of Montezuma, told him that the crews of the launches had stolen the greater part of it.

Let us stop speaking of this until later on, and say that as there was so great a stench in the city, Guatemoc asked permission of Cortés for all the Mexican forces left in the city to go out to the neighbouring pueblos, and they were promptly told to do so. I assert that during three days and nights they never ceased streaming out and all three causeways were crowded with men, women and children, so thin, yellow, dirty and stinking, that it was pitiful to see them. When the city was free of them, Cortés went to examine it and we found the houses full of corpses and there were some poor Mexicans, who could not move out, still among them, and what they excreted from their bodies was a filth such as thin swine pass which have been fed upon nothing but grass, and all the city was as though it had been ploughed up and the roots of the herbs dug out and they had eaten them and even cooked the bark of some of the trees, and there was no fresh water to be found, only salt water. I also wish to state that they did not eat the flesh of their own Mexicans, only that of our people and our Tlaxcalan allies whom they had captured, and there had been no births for a long time, as they had suffered so much from hunger and thirst and continual fighting.

Let us continue. Cortés ordered all the launches to assemble where some dockyards were built later on. To go back to my story, when this great and populous city so famed throughout the whole world had been captured, after giving many thanks to God our Lord and Our Lady His Blessed Mother, and having made certain offerings to Our Lord God, Cortés ordered a banquet to be held at

Coyoacan in celebration of the capture of the city, and had already procured plenty of wine for the purpose out of a ship which had come from Spain to the port of Villa Rica, and he had pigs which they had brought him from Cuba and in order to make a festival of the occasion he ordered all the captains and soldiers whom he thought worth consideration from all three camps to be invited, and when we went to the banquet there were neither seats nor tables placed sufficient for a third part of the captains and soldiers who came, and there was much disorder, and it would have been better not to have given that banquet on account of many things which happened at it which were not creditable¹; and they gambled, and this also it would have been better not to have done, and all the gold should have been used for holy purposes and given with

¹ Blotted out in the original, "such as to get rid of all this supper and the kinds of dances and the and other things that were not suitable and also because this plant of Noah's made some people behave crazily, and men walked on the top of the tables after they had eaten and could not find the way out to the patio. Others said that they must buy horses with golden saddles and there were crossbowmen who said that all the darts and guides that they would have in their quivers must be made of gold from the share which would be given them, and others went rolling down the steps. Then when they had cleared away the tables, such ladies as were present, went out to dance with the gallants who were weighted with their (quilted) cotton armour and it seemed to me to be a thing to be laughed at. They were ladies whom I will not here describe for there were no others in camp nor in the whole of New Spain. First of all, the elderly Maria Destrada who afterwards married Pero Sanchez Farfan, and Francisca de Ordás who married a gentleman, Juan Gonzalo de Leon; la Bermuda, who married Olmos de Portillo, him of Mexico; another lady, the wife of Captain Portillo who died in (one of) the launches, but as she was a widow they did not bring her to the feast; and a somebody Gómez, who was the wife of Benito de Vargas; and another beautiful lady called la Bermuda—I don't remember her Christian name—who married one Hernan Martin and went to live in Oaxaca; and another elderly woman named Ysabel Rodríguez, who at that time, was the wife of a somebody Guadalupe, and another somewhat elderly woman who was called Mari Hernández who was the wife of the rich Juan de Cáceres. I cannot call to mind any others who were then in New Spain. Let us leave the banquet and capering and dances, for the next day that dawned, the tables"

thanks to God for the many benefits and favours He had already shown us and continued to show us.

Let us cease to speak of this, for I wish to tell of other things that happened which I was forgetting, and which do not belong here, but should have been reported somewhat earlier, and it is that our friends Chichimecatecle and the two jouthful Xicotengas, the sons of Don Lorenzo de Vargas, who used to be called Xicotenga the old and blind, fought very valiantly against the great forces of Mexico, and helped us very much, and so too did a brother of Don Fernando, the Lord of Texcoco, many times mentioned by me, who was called Ixtlilxochitl,¹ who was afterwards named Don Carlos; he did the deeds of a very daring and valiant man. There was another Indian Captain whose name I do not remember, a native of a pueblo on the lake, who performed wonders, and many other captains from the pueblos which assisted us. All fought very mightily, and Cortés gave them many thanks and much praise for having helped us, and made them many promises that he would make them rulers, and he would give them in time to come lands and vassals, and he bid them farewell, and as they were all rich and weighed down with the gold and spoil they had taken they went back to their lands and even carried with them the dried flesh of the Mexicans and divided it among their relations and friends as pertaining to their enemies, and they ate it at festivals.

Now that I am [far] away from the conflicts and arduous battles which we fought against the Mexicans by night and day, for which I give many thanks to God who delivered me from them, I wish to relate a thing that happened to me after seeing the sixty-two soldiers of Cortés, who were carried off alive, sacrificed, and their

¹ Este suchel in the text.

chests cut open and their hearts offered to the Idols. What I shall say now will appear to some persons to be due to my want of any great inclination for fighting, but on the other hand, if it is well thought out, it arose out of the reckless daring and great courage with which in those days, I was obliged to expose myself in the thickest of the fights, for at that time it was expected of a good soldier and was necessary in order to maintain that reputation, that one should do whatever the boldest soldier was obliged to do. As each day I beheld my companions carried off to be sacrificed, and had seen how they sawed open their chests and tore out their still beating hearts and cut off their feet and arms and ate them, to the number of sixty-two, as I have already said, besides ten of our company whom they had captured before that, I feared that one day or another they would do the same to me, for they had already seized me twice to carry me off to be sacrificed, but it pleased God that I should escape from their power. When I called to mind those hideous deaths, and as the proverb says, "The little pitcher which goes many times to the fountain, &c.," for this reason, from that time I always feared death more than ever. I say this because, before going into battle there was a horror and sadness in my heart, and I fasted once or twice, commending myself to God and His Blessed Mother, but on going into battle it was always the same, the fear promptly left me.

I also wish to say what a very new sensation it seemed to me to feel that unaccustomed fear, for I had been present in many battles and many very dangerous warlike encounters, and my heart as well as my courage and spirit must have been well hardened and now at the very end it ought to have been more so than ever. For I can easily recount and remember how from the time I came as discoverer with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and

Grijalva, and again with Cortés, I was present at the affairs of Punta de Catoche, and in that of Lazaro, which is also called Campeche, and at Potonchan, and in Florida, as I have written about more fully when I came exploring with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba. Let us leave this and go on to speak of the expedition under Grijalva and in that same the affair at Potonchan and now with Cortés in the affair at Tabasco and that of Cingapacinga and in all the battles and encounters in Tlaxcala and that of Cholula, and how when we defeated Narvaez they picked me out and I was among those who went to capture the artillery, which numbered eighteen guns, all loaded with stones and balls, and we captured them and it was a critical moment of great danger ; and I was present in the first defeat when the Mexicans drove us out of Mexico, when they killed within about eight days over eight hundred and fifty of our soldiers, and I was present during the expeditions to Tepeaca and Quechula and their neighbourhood, and in other encounters we had with the Mexicans, when we were in Texcoco, about seizing the maize-fields, and I was present at the affair of Iztapalapa when they wanted to drown us, and I was present when we climbed the Peñoles, as they now call the forts or fortresses which Cortés captured, and at the affair of Xochimilco in four battles and many other skirmishes, and I was among the first to go with Pedro de Alvarado to invest Mexico, when we cut off the water of Chapultepec, and was in the first expedition along the causeway with Alvarado himself and afterwards when they defeated our Company on the same causeway and carried off eight soldiers, and they seized me and carried me off to be sacrificed, and in all the battles already recorded by me which took place every day, up to the time that I saw, as I have stated, the cruel deaths which they inflicted on our companions before my eyes, [I repeat as] I have already

said, that although I had passed through all these battles and risks of death, I had never felt fear so greatly as I felt it now at the last. Let those gentlemen who understand soldiering and have been at critical moments in peril of death, say to what cause they attribute my dread, whether to faint-heartedness or to excessive valour; for, as I have said, I felt in my mind that having to thrust myself when fighting into such dangerous positions, I must of necessity fear death then more than at other times, and that was the reason why my heart trembled, for it feared death. All these battles at which I was present and of which I have here spoken, they will see in this my story. And when and how and where and in what way I took part in many other expeditions and encounters from now onwards, which I do not record until their proper time and place, they will see further on in the story. I may add that I was not always in very good health for I was often badly wounded, and for this reason was not able to go on all the expeditions. Still, the hardships and risks of death that I have personally encountered are not insignificant, for after we had captured this great and strong city of Mexico, I went through other conflicts in company with captains who understood soldiering, as will be seen later on when the opportunity occurs.

Let us leave this now and I will state and declare why in all these Mexican wars, when they killed our comrades, I have said, "they carried them off," and not "they killed them," and the reason was this, because the warriors who fought with us although they were able to kill those of our soldiers whom they carried off alive, did not kill them at once, but gave them dangerous wounds so that they could not defend themselves, and carried them off alive to sacrifice to their Idols, and they even first made them dance before Huichilobos, who was their Idol of War; and this is the reason why I have said, "they carried

them off." Let us leave this subject and I will relate what Cortés did after the capture of Mexico.

CHAPTER CLVII.

What Cortés ordered to be done and certain commands that he gave after the Very Great City of Mexico had been captured and Guatemoc and his captains had been made prisoners.

THE first order that Cortés gave to Guatemoc was, that they [the Mexicans] should repair the water pipes from Chapultepec in the way they used to be, so that the water should at once come through the pipes and enter the City of Mexico; next, that all the streets should be cleared of the bodies and heads of the dead, and that they should be buried so that the city could be kept clean and free from any stench; that all the bridges and causeways should be thoroughly restored to their former condition, and that they should rebuild the palaces and houses, and within two months they should return to live in them, and he (Cortés) marked out where they were to settle and what part they were to leave clear so that we could settle there.

Let us leave these orders and others which I no longer remember and relate what Guatemoc and his captains told Cortés, that many of the captains and soldiers who went as crews of the launches as well as those who had marched along the causeways fighting, had carried off many of the daughters and wives of the chieftains, and they begged him as a favour that they should be given back to them and Cortés answered that it would be difficult to take the women from those who held them, but they might seek them out and bring them before him and he would see if they had become Christians or preferred to return to their homes to their fathers and husbands, [in the latter case] he

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would at once order them to be given up, and he gave them, [the Mexicans] permission to go and look for them in all three camps, and an order that any soldier who might have any of them should at once give them up, if the Indian women of their free will wished to go back. Many chieftains went in search of the women from house to house and they were so persistent in their search that they found them, but there were many women who did not wish to go either with their fathers or mothers or husbands but to remain with the soldiers with whom they were, and others hid themselves and others said that they did not wish to return to Idolators, and some of them were already pregnant, and so they did not bring more than three of them whom Cortés especially ordered to be given up.

Let us leave this and tell how he [Cortés] at once ordered docks and a fort to be made where the launches could be stationed, and it seems to me that he appointed Pedro de Alvarado to be Alcaide to take charge of it, until Salazar de la Pedrada, who was appointed by his Majesty, came from Castile.

Let me speak of another matter : all were agreed that all the gold and silver and jewels that there were in Mexico should be collected together, and apparently it amounted to very little, for there was a report that Guatemoc had thrown all the rest into the lake four days before he was captured, and in addition to this the Tlaxcalans and the people of Texcoco, Huexotzingo, Cholula and all the rest of our friends who were present at the war, and the Teules who went about in the launches had stolen their share of it, so that the officers of the Royal Treasury of the King our Lord alleged and proclaimed that Guatemoc had hidden it [the treasure] and that Cortés was delighted that he would not give it up so that he might take it all for himself, and for this reason the Officers

of the Royal Treasury determined to torture Guatemoc and the Lord of Tacuba who was his cousin and his great favourite, and certainly Cortés was much distressed that they should torture a Prince like Guatemoc for greed of gold, for they had already made many inquiries about it [the treasure] and all the Mayor-domos of Guatemoc said that there was no more than the Kings officers already had in their possession, which amounted to three hundred and eighty thousand gold pesos, which had already been melted and cast in bars, and from that was taken the Royal fifth, and another fifth for Cortés. When the conquistadores who bore Cortés ill will saw how little Gold there was, they told the treasurer Julian de Alderete (for so he was called) that they suspected Cortés did not want Guatemoc or his captains to be captured or tortured, in order to keep the gold for himself, so, to avoid their imputing anything to Cortés about this matter and as he could not prevent it, they tortured (Guatemoc) by burning his feet with oil, and they did the same thing to the Lord of Tacuba, and what they confessed was that, four days before, they had thrown into the lake both the gold as well as the cannon and muskets which they had captured from us when they drove us out of Mexico, and when this last time, they defeated Cortés. They went to the place which Guatemoc pointed out as the spot where he had thrown it [the treasure], and good swimmers went in, but they found nothing at all.

What I myself saw was that we went with Guatemoc to the houses in which he used to live where there was a sort of reservoir of water, and from that tank we took out a golden sun, like the one Montezuma gave us and many jewels and pieces of little value which belonged to Guatemoc himself.

The Lord of Tacuba said that he had in some of his houses in Tacuba, about four leagues distant, certain

objects of gold, and if we would take him there he would tell us where they were buried and would give them to us; so Pedro de Alvarado and six soldiers went and I went in his company. When we arrived the cacique said that it was so as to be killed on the road that he had told that story, and we were to kill him, for he possessed neither gold nor jewels, so we returned without them. Matters remained in this state, and we obtained no more gold to melt down. The truth is that the treasure of Montezuma which Guatemoc took possession of and held after his death, did not contain many jewels or ornaments of gold, for all [the best] had been especially selected to form the offering we made to His Majesty, and because it comprised many jewels of various shapes and different workmanship, all so excellent, if I should stop to describe each piece and its workmanship by itself it would be very tedious and I will omit the account from this story, but I assert that it was worth twice as much as the fifth which was taken out for His Majesty, and for Cortés, all of this we sent to our Lord the Emperor by Alonzo de Avila, who at that time came from the Island of Santo Domingo, and Antonio de Quiñones went in company with him to Castile, and further on I will relate how and in what way and when [this took place].

Let us stop talking about this and again state that in the lake where they said that Guatemoc had thrown the gold, I and other soldiers by diving were always able to fetch out small pieces of little value, which Cortés and the Treasurer Julian de Alderete promptly demanded of us as gold belonging to His Majesty, and they themselves went with us where we had taken it out, and took with them good swimmers and succeeded in getting out a matter of eighty or ninety pesos in small strings [of beads] and ducks and little dogs and pendants and small necklaces and other things of no value, for so one can express

it considering the earlier report of what they had thrown into the lake.

Let us stop talking about it and relate how all of us captains and soldiers were somewhat thoughtful when we saw how little gold there was and how poor and unjust were our shares, and the Fraile de la Merced, Pedro de Alvarado, Cristóbal de Olid and other captains said to Cortés that as there was so little gold the [entire] share belonging to all of us should be given to and divided among those who were maimed and lame, blind, one eyed or deaf, and others who were crippled and had pains in their stomachs, and others who had been burned by the powder, and all those who were ill from pains in their sides, that to them all the gold should be given for to such like it would be right to give it, and all the rest of us who were fairly sound would look upon it as a good thing. This they said to Cortés after due consideration, believing that he would give us more than the [our] shares for there was a strong suspicion that he had it [gold] hidden away. What Cortés answered was that he would take care that we came out right, and would find means to attain that end. As all of us captains and soldiers wished to see what would fall to our share, we were in a hurry for the account to be issued, and a declaration made how many pesos would result for each of us, and after they had apportioned it they said that there fell to the horsemen eighty pesos and to a cross-bowman, musketeer and shield-bearer sixty or fifty pesos, I do not remember well which, and when those shares were made known to us not a single soldier wanted to accept them. Then we grumbled against Cortés, and they said that he had seized and hidden it, and the Treasurer Alderete in order to exculpate himself from our accusations, answered that he could do no more, for Cortés had taken another fifth (equal to that of His Majesty) from

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the heap for himself, and in repayment of the great cost of the horses that had died, moreover many pieces of gold which we ought to have sent to His Majesty had not been placed on the heap, and we had better take Cortés to task and not him. As in all three camps and in the launches there were soldiers who had been friends and comrades of Diego Velásquez the Governor of Cuba, [especially] among those who had come with Narvaez, who bore no good will towards Cortés but hated him, when they saw in the division of the gold that he did not give them the shares they desired, they would not take what he gave them, and said, "How came all the gold to be in the possession of him who held it?" and they were impertinent enough to say that Cortés had hidden it.

While Cortés was in Coyoacan lodging in some palaces which had their walls plastered and white-washed where it was easy to write on them with charcoal and other inks, numerous rather malicious sentences appeared [on them] every morning, some written in prose and others in verse, in the way lampoons are arranged. In some they said that the sun, moon and stars, the sea and land follow their [prescribed] courses, and if at any time they deviate beyond their limits from the plane for which they were created, they revert to their [original] elements, and thus it would be with the ambition of Cortés for power, and he would have to go back to his first condition. Others said he had given us a worse defeat than what we gave to Mexico, and that we were not to call ourselves conquerors of New Spain but the conquered of Hernando Cortés. Others said that a general's share had not satisfied him, but a king's share, not counting other profits, and others said how sad is my spirit until Cortés gives back all the gold that he has taken and hidden ; and others said that Diego Velásquez spent his fortune and discovered all the North Coast as far as Panuco, and Cortés came to have the

benefit of it and rose in revolt with the land and the gold and other things of a similar nature and even used expressions that cannot be put into this story. When Cortés came out of his quarters of a morning and read them, as they were both in verse and in prose and in very elegant style and rhyme, each sentence and couplet with pointed meaning, and at last got in its reproof, and not as simply as I have here stated, and as Cortés was something of a poet [himself] and took a pride in giving answers tending to the praise of his great and noteworthy deeds and belittling those of Diego Velásquez, Grijalva and Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, and as he had taken Narvaez prisoner, he also answered by good rhymes much to the point. In all this writing the couplets and mottoes that they scored up became each day more impudent until Cortés wrote up “a blank wall is the paper of fools” and there appeared written further on “even of wise men and of Truths and His Majesty would soon know it.” Cortés knew well that those who had written it were a certain Tirado, a friend of Diego Velásquez, who was [afterwards] son-in-law of Ramíres the Elder and lived in Puebla, and one Villalobos who went to Castile, and another named Manzilla and several more who willingly aided in order that Cortés should feel to the full that they were thwarting him.

Cortés was enraged and said publicly that they should not write up malicious things, and that he would punish the shameless villains.

Let us leave this affair [and say] how there were many debts among us, some of us owed for crossbows fifty or sixty pesos, and others fifty for a sword, and in like manner all the things we had bought were dear; then there was a surgeon named Maestre Juan who tended some bad wounds and charged excessive prices for his cures, also a half quack named Múrcia who was an apothecary and barber

who also doctored us, and thirty other traps and cheatings for which payment was demanded out of the shares that we were given.

The remedy that Cortés provided was the appointment of two trustworthy persons who understood business and what each article that we had taken on credit was worth, so that they might be valued, and these valuers were named Santa Clara, a very honourable man, and another called something de Llerena also an honourable man ; and it was ordered that the value they placed on the things that had been sold to us and the cures the surgeons had made should be accepted, and that if we did not possess the money they should wait for it for two years.

Another thing was also done ; to all the gold that was melted down they added three carats more than its standard weight¹ so as to help in the payments, and also because at that time ships and traders had come to Villa Rica, and they believed that in putting in the three carats they were helping us, [that is] the land and the conquistadores, but it did not help us in any way, on the contrary it was to our prejudice, for with the object of making a profit corresponding to the three carats, the merchants charged 5 carats more on the merchandise and articles they had for sale, and in this way the gold of the three carats was current for five or six years more, and for this reason the gold of the three carats was called *Tepusque* which means in the language of the Indians, copper, and we still have a way of saying when we mention any persons who are distinguished or meritorious. “Senor Don so and so of such a name, Juan, Martin or Alonso, but of other persons who are not of the same quality when we mention their names, so as to make a difference between the one and the other we say ‘So and so of such a name *Tepusque*.’”

¹ That is, they debased the gold one-eighth.

To go back to my story, considering that it was not just that the gold should be current in this way, information was sent to His Majesty in order to have the additional three carats removed and barred from currency in New Spain, and His Majesty was pleased to order that it should no longer be current and whatever had to be paid in export or import duties or fines to the Treasury should be paid in that base gold until it was used up and was no longer remembered, and in this way it was all taken to Castile and was there melted down and restored to the proper standard.

I wish to relate that at the time when this happened they hanged two Silversmiths who forged the royal carat marks and had put in much more pure copper. I have loitered on the way to tell these old stories, and have turned aside from my story, let us get back to it, and [I will relate] how when Cortés saw that many of the soldiers were insolent in demanding larger shares, saying that he had taken all for himself and had stolen it, and begged him to lend them money, he determined to free himself from this hold [that they had] over him and to send out and make settlements in all the provinces which he thought it would be advisable to settle. He ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to go and settle at Tustepec and to chastise some Mexican garrisons which at the time we were driven out of Mexico had killed seventy eight men and six Spanish women belonging to the followers of Narvaez, who had remained there to settle in a small town which they had called Medellin, and then to go on to Coatzacoalcos and form a settlement at that port. He also ordered a certain Pineda and Vicente Lopez to go and conquer the province of Panuco ; and he ordered Rodrigo Rangel to stay in Villa Rica, as I have already stated, and Pedro de Ircio in his company, and [sent] Juan Álvarez the younger to Colima and a

certain Villafuerte to Zacatula and Cristóbal de Olid to Michoacan. By this time Cristóbal de Olid was already married to a Portuguese lady named Doña Felipa de Arauz or Zarauz, who had come He also sent Francisco de Orozco to settle in Oaxaca, for at the time when we had captured Mexico, as it became known in all those provinces that I have mentioned that Mexico was destroyed, their caciques and Lords could not believe it, and as they were far off they sent chieftains to congratulate Cortés on his victories, and yield themselves as vassals to His Majesty, and to see if it were true that a place that was as dreaded among them as was Mexico had been levelled to the ground. They all brought great presents of gold which they gave to Cortés, and they even brought their small children with them and showed them Mexico and explained it to them much as we might say "Here stood Troy."

Let us leave this and make some remarks about what is well should be made clear; many interested readers have asked me what is the reason that the true conquistadores who won New Spain and the great and strong City of Mexico, did not remain to settle in it, but went to other provinces. I say that they have every reason and justification to ask it, I wish to state the cause of it, and it is this which I [now] relate; In the tribute books of Montezuma we saw whence they brought him tribute of gold and where there were mines and cacao, and garments of [cotton] cloth, and we wished to go to those places whence, we saw from the books and the accounts contained in them, they brought these things to Montezuma, all the more when we saw a captain so eminent and such a friend of Cortés as Sandoval start out from Mexico, and also because we observed that in the towns of the neighbourhood of Mexico they had neither gold, nor mines, nor cotton, only much maize and maguey plantations from which they obtained their wine. On this account we considered it to be poor

land and went off to settle in other provinces, and we were all thoroughly deceived.

I remember that when I went to ask Cortés to give me leave to go with Sandoval he said to me "On my conscience Señor Bernal Díaz del Castillo you are making a mistake, I would prefer your staying here with me, but if it is your wish to go with your friend Sandoval, go and good luck to you. I shall always consider your wishes but I know well that you will repent of having left me."

Let me turn back to the division of the gold and say that [finally] it all fell to the share of the king's officials on account of the slaves that had been sold by auction.

I do not wish to call to mind here the number of horsemen, musketeers, crossbowmen, and soldiers, nor on what day of what month Cortés despatched the captains mentioned by me, who went to settle in the provinces named by me above, for it would be a long story, except to state it took place a few days after the taking of Mexico and the Capture of Guatemoc, and two months later on Cortés sent other captains to other provinces.

Let us now cease to speak of Cortés and say that at the same time there arrived at the port of Villa Rica, with two ships, the Veedor of the smelting works which had been established in the Island of Santo Domingo, others said that he was Alcaide of the fortress in that Island, and he brought writs, and letters patent from Don Juan Rodrigo de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and Archbishop of Rosano, sent in His Majesty's name, to the effect that Cristóbal de Tápia should be governor of New Spain, and what happened about it I will go on to relate.





BOOK XIII.

THE SETTLEMENT.

CHAPTER CLVIII.

How letters reached Cortés [to say] that a certain Cristóbal de Tápia had arrived at the Port of Vera Cruz with two ships and was bringing commissions from His Majesty appointing him to rule New Spain, and what was decided and done about it.



AS soon as Cortés had despatched the Captains and soldiers, already named by me, to pacify and settle in the provinces, at that [very] time Cristóbal de Tápia the Veedor of the Island of Santo Domingo came with commissions from His Majesty, by advice and direction of Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca Bishop of Burgos and Archbishop of Rosano (for so he was called), to take over the Government of New Spain.

Besides these commissions he brought many letters from the Bishop himself for Cortés and for many others of the conquistadores and of the captains who had come with Narvaez inducing them to support Cristóbal de Tápia. In addition to the letters which came closed and sealed by the Archbishop he brought many left blank, so that Tápia could write in them all that he wished, and could name such