

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.

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## 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 1521<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 day<sup>1</sup> the two Divisions continued their March together and we went to sleep at a large town<sup>2</sup> which was deserted, for we were already in Mexican territory. The day following<sup>3</sup> we went to sleep in another large town named Cuautitlan,<sup>4</sup> which I have already mentioned at other times, and it also was without inhabitants, and the next day<sup>5</sup> we passed through two other towns named Tenayuca and Atzacapotzalco,<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Thursday, 23rd May.

<sup>2</sup> Zitlaltepec, north of the Lake of Zumpango.

<sup>3</sup> Friday, 24th May.

<sup>4</sup> Gualtitlan in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Saturday, 25th May.

<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 morning<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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;<sup>1</sup> 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 hill<sup>2</sup> that was close to Iztapalapa on dry land, great smoke

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 island<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Peñol<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> and he fought with many Mexican

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<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>2</sup> 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 Olid<sup>1</sup> 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]

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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).

<sup>1</sup> 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 town<sup>1</sup> 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 go<sup>2</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Mexicaltzingo.

<sup>2</sup> 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 causeway<sup>1</sup> 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 league<sup>2</sup> along the causeway until they arrived where I had halted with the launches as I shall relate below.”<sup>3</sup>

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

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

<sup>2</sup> This would have brought them within half a league of the City.

<sup>3</sup> 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 enter<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, pass through the Causeway.

<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.”

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## 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,<sup>1</sup> and he left six at his own camp (which was that of Cristóbal de Olid)<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.