

I wish to say that not a day passed that there were not seven or eight thousand Indians at work on the ditch and canal and they opened and broadened it so well that ships of great size could have floated in it. As at that time we had over seven thousand Tlaxcalans in our company and they were anxious to gain honour and fight against the Mexicans, Cortés determined, that as we had such faithful comrades, we would make an expedition and have a look at a fine town named Iztapalapa, through which we had passed when we first came to Mexico. It was the Lord of Iztapalapa who had been raised to be King of Mexico on the death of the Great Montezuma, and I have often said that his name was Cuitlahuac.<sup>1</sup> We knew that this town was doing us all the harm that was possible because it was very hostile to Chalco and Tlamanalco, and Amecameca and Chimaloacan which pueblos wanted to make friends with us, and the people of Iztapalapa prevented them. As we had already been twelve days in Texcoco without doing anything to record, beyond what I have already related, we made this expedition to Iztapalapa, and what happened there I will now relate.

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## CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

How we went to Iztapalapa with Cortés who took Cristóbal de Olid and Pedro de Alvarado in his company and left Gonzalo de Sandoval to guard Texcoco, and what happened to us in the capture of the town, and other things that were done there.

AFTER spending twelve days in Texcoco the Tlaxcalans, whom I have repeatedly mentioned, had exhausted their provisions, and they were so numerous that the people of Texcoco were unable to furnish them with sufficient quan-

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<sup>1</sup> Coadlabaca in the text.

tities of food. As we were unwilling that they should become a burden to them [the people of Texcoco] and as the Tlaxcalans themselves were most desirous of fighting the Mexicans and avenging the death of the many Tlaxcalans who had been killed and offered as sacrifices during the past defeats that I have described, Cortés determined that we should set out on our march to Iztapalapa (which is distant about four leagues<sup>1</sup> from Texcoco,) with himself as Commander in Chief, and with Andrés de Tápia, Cristóbal de Olid, and thirteen horsemen, twenty crossbowmen, six musketeers and two hundred and twenty soldiers, and our Tlaxcalan allies, besides twenty chieftains from Texcoco given us by Don Hernando, (and we knew that these latter were the cousins and relations of this same Cacique and enemies of Guatemoc who had already been raised to be King in Mexico). I have already said before in the Chapter<sup>2</sup> [LXXXVII] which speaks of it, that more than half the houses [in Iztapalapa] were built in the water and the other half on dry land. We kept on our way in good order, as was our custom, and as the Mexicans always held watchmen and garrisons and warriors ready to oppose us and to reinforce any of their towns when they knew that we were going to attack them, they warned the people of Iztapalapa to be prepared, and sent over eight thousand Mexicans to help them. Like good warriors they awaited our coming on dry land, both the people of Iztapalapa and the Mexicans who had come to their assistance, and for a good while they fought very bravely against us. Then the horsemen broke through their ranks, followed by the crossbows and muskets, and all our Tlaxcalan allies who charged on them like mad dogs, and the enemy quickly abandoned the open ground and took refuge in

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<sup>1</sup> Really about 30 miles.

<sup>2</sup> There is a blank space in the original.

the town. However, this was an arranged thing and a stratagem that they had planned, and it would have caused us damage enough if we had not quickly got out of the town into which they had retired. This was the way they did it: they fled and got into their canoes which were in the water, and into the houses which stood in the lake, others retired among the reeds, and as it was a dark night, they gave us a chance, (without making a noise or showing signs of hostility) to take up quarters on dry land,<sup>1</sup> well contented with the spoil we had taken and still more with the victory we had gained. While we were in this situation, with watchmen posted, and spies, patrols and even scouts sent out, when we least expected it such a flood of water rushed through the whole town, that if the chieftains whom we had brought from Texcoco had not cried out, and warned us to get out of the houses to dry land as quickly as we could, we should all have been drowned, for the enemy had burst open the canals of fresh and salt water and torn down a causeway, so that the water rose up all of a sudden. As our allies the Tlaxcalans were not accustomed to water and did not know how to swim, two of them were drowned, and we, at great risk to our lives, all thoroughly drenched and with our powder spoilt, managed to get out without our belongings, and in that condition, very cold, and without any supper, we passed a bad night. Worst of all were the jeers and the shouts and whistles which the people of Iztapalapa and the Mexicans uttered from their houses and canoes. However, there was still a worse thing to happen to us, for as they knew in Mexico about the plan that had been made to drown us by breaking

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<sup>1</sup> This is rather confusing; the Spaniards must have occupied houses built on land only a few inches above the level of the lake, and the term "dry land" must have been used to distinguish them from houses built on piles in the lake.

down the causeway and canals, we found waiting for us on land and in the lake many batalions of warriors, and, as soon as day dawned, they made such an attack on us that we could hardly bear up against it ; but they did not defeat us, although they killed two soldiers and one horse, and wounded many both of us and the Tlaxcalans. Little by little the attack slackened and we returned to Texcoco, half ashamed at the trick and stratagem to throw us into the water, and also because we gained very little credit in the battle they fought against us afterwards, as our powder was exhausted. Nevertheless, it frightened them, and they had enough to do in burying and burning their dead, and curing their wounds and rebuilding their houses. There I will leave them, and relate how other pueblos came to Texcoco to make peace, and what else happened.

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### CHAPTER CXXXIX.

How three pueblos in the neighbourhood of Texcoco sent to ask for peace and pardon for the wars that were passed, and for the death of Spaniards, and the excuses that they made about it, and how Gonzalo de Sandoval went to Chalco and Tlamanalco<sup>1</sup> to help them against the Mexicans, and what else happened.

WHEN we had been two days in Texcoco after our return from the expedition to Iztapalapa, three pueblos came peaceably to Cortès to beg pardon for the past wars and the deaths of Spaniards whom they had killed. The excuses they gave were that it was by the order of the Prince of Mexico, called Cuitlahuac<sup>2</sup> (who was chosen after the death of Montezuma) that they went out to fight

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<sup>1</sup> By an unfortunate oversight Tlamanalco is not marked in the Map of the Valley of Mexico ; it is marked on the Map in Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Coadlavaca in the text.