



BOOK XI.

PRELIMINARY EXPEDITIONS.

CHAPTER CXLI.

How our Captain Cortés went on an expedition to the pueblo of Saltocan which stands in a lake about six leagues distant from the City of Mexico, and how he went from there to other pueblos, and what happened on the road I will go on to say.



Over fifteen thousand Tlaxcalans had come to Texcoco with the timber for the launches, and had already been five days in the city without doing anything worth mentioning, and, as they had not brought supplies with them, food was getting scarce, and the Captain of the Tlaxcalans being a very valiant and proud man (I have already said his name was Chichimecatecle), said to Cortés that he wished to go and render some service to our great Emperor by fighting against the Mexicans, both to show his strength and the goodwill he bore us, as well as to avenge the deaths and robberies that the Mexicans had brought upon his brethren and his vassals, in Mexico itself and in his own country, and he begged as a favour from Cortés that he would command and instruct him in what direction he should go and encounter our enemies.

Cortés replied to him that he thought very highly of his good-will, and said that he wished to go himself, the next day, to a pueblo named Saltocan, five or six leagues distant from the City of Texcoco, where, although the houses were built in the waters of a lake, there was an entrance from the land. He had sent three times to summon the people of that pueblo to make peace and they refused to do so, and he had again sent messengers from the people of Tepetescuco¹ and Otumba who were their neighbours, and instead of making peace they ill-treated the messengers and wounded two of them, and the answer that they sent was, that if we came there we would find forces and a fortress as strong as Mexico, and come when we might, we would find them on the field of battle, for they had received word from their Idols that they would kill us there, and their Idols had advised them to send this reply.

It was for this reason that Cortés got ready to go in person on this expedition, and ordered two hundred and fifty soldiers to go in his company with thirty horsemen, and he took with him, Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid and many musketeers and crossbowmen, and all the Tlaxcalans, and a company of warriors from Texcoco, nearly all of them chieftains. He left Gonzalo de Sandoval on guard at Texcoco, and told him to keep a good look out both on the Texcocans, and the launches and the camp, and see that no attack was made on it by night for, as I have already said, we had always to keep on the alert, on the one hand to guard against the Mexicans themselves and on the other, because we were in such a great city, as was Texcoco, where all the inhabitants of the city were relations and friends of the Mexicans. He also ordered Sandoval

¹ Tepetexcoco?

and Martin López, the master carpenter of the launches, to have the vessels ready to be launched and to sail within fifteen days.

Then after hearing Mass, Cortés left Texcoco and set out on that expedition with his army; and as he marched along, not far from Saltocan, he met great squadrons of Mexicans who were awaiting him in a place where they believed that they could get the better of our Spaniards and kill the horses. Cortés ordered the horsemen (and he himself kept with them) as soon as the muskets and crossbows had been discharged, to break in upon the enemy; however, they killed only a few Mexicans, who at once took refuge in the bush, and in places where the horsemen could not follow them, but our friends the Tlaxcalans captured and killed about thirty of them.

That night Cortés went to sleep at some huts, and kept a good look-out with scouts, watchmen, patrols and spies, for they were in a thickly peopled country, and he knew that Guatemoc the Prince of Mexico had sent many squadrons of warriors to Saltocan as reinforcements, and these troops had come in canoes along some deep creeks. Early the next morning the Mexicans and the people of Saltocan began to attack our troops when they were close to the pueblo, and they shot many darts and arrows at them and slung stones from their slings, from the canals where they were posted, and they wounded ten of our soldiers and many of our Tlaxcalan allies, and our horsemen could do them no hurt, for they could not gallop nor cross the creeks which were all full of water. The causeway and road by which they were used to enter the town from the land had been destroyed and broken down by hand only a few days before, and they had so flooded it that it was as full of water as the ditches. Owing to this,

our soldiers found no way by which they could enter the town, or do any damage to its defenders, although the musketeers and crossbowmen kept up a fire against those who went about in canoes, but the canoes were protected by bulwarks of wood, and besides the bulwarks they took good care not to expose themselves. Our soldiers seeing that they could gain no advantage whatever, and that they could not hit on the road and causeway which was there before, because it was all covered with water, cursed the town and our profitless expedition, and were half ashamed because the Mexicans and townspeople shouted at them and called them women, and said that Malinche was a woman too, and that his only bravery was in deceiving them with stories and lies. Just at this moment, two of the Indians, who had come there with our people, who belonged to the pueblo Tepetzcucó and were very hostile to the people of Saltocan, said to one of our soldiers, that three days before they had seen the people of Saltocan breaking open the causeway and they made a ditch [across] it and turned the water of another canal into it, and that not very far ahead the road began again and led to the town. When our soldiers thoroughly understood this, the musketeers and crossbowmen were ranged in good order, some loading while the others fired, and thus, little by little and not altogether, sometimes skipping along and at other times wading waist deep, all our soldiers crossed over, with many of our allies following them. Cortés and the horsemen, turning their backs on our soldiers, kept guard on the land, for they feared that the Mexican squadrons might again fall on our rear. When our men had passed the canals, as I have described, the enemy fell on them with fury, and wounded many of them, but as they had made up their minds to gain the causeway which was close by, they still

forged ahead until they could attack the enemy on land, clear of the water, and then they got to the town. Without further waste of words they fell on the enemy so fiercely that they killed many of them and repaid them well for the trick they had played. Much cotton cloth and gold and other spoil was taken, but, as the town was built in the lake, the Mexicans and the inhabitants soon got into their canoes with all the property they were able to carry, and went off to Mexico.

When our people saw the town deserted, they burned some of the houses, and as they did not dare to sleep there because the town stood in the water, they returned to where Captain Cortés was awaiting them. In that town they captured some very good-looking Indian women, and the Tlaxcalans came out of it rich with cloaks and salt and gold and other spoil. Then they all went to sleep at some huts near some limekilns, about a league distant from Saltocan, and there they dressed their wounds. One soldier died within a few days of an arrow wound in the throat. Sentinels were at once posted, and scouts sent out and every precaution was taken, for all that country was thickly peopled by Culuans.

The next day they marched to the great pueblo named Guautitlan, and as they went on their way, the Indians from the neighbouring villages, and many Mexicans who had joined them, yelled and whistled and shouted insults at our men, but they kept to the canals and the places where the horsemen could not gallop and no harm could be done to them. In this way, our troops arrived at the town which had been abandoned that same day and all property carried off. That night they slept there, well guarded by sentinels and patrols, and the following day marched on to the great pueblo called Tenayuca; this is the place that on our first entrance to Mexico we

called El Pueblo de las Sierpes, because in the principal temple we found the images of two great hideous-looking serpents which were the Idols they worshipped. Let us leave this and go back to this matter of the march. They found this pueblo deserted like the last, and all the Indian inhabitants had assembled together in another town further on called Tacuba. From Tenayuca they marched to Atzacapotzalco,¹ about half a league distant one from the other, and this too was deserted. This town of Atzacapotzalco was where they used to work the gold and silver for the great Montezuma, and we used to call it El pueblo de los Plateros. From there they marched to another town, which I have said was called Tacuba, a distance of half a league one from the other, and this is the place where we halted on that sad night when we came out from Mexico routed, and here they killed some of our soldiers, as I have already said in a former chapter that deals with this subject.

Let us go back to our story: Before our army could reach the town it was met in the open by a large number of troops which were lying in wait for Cortés, gathered from all the pueblos through which the army had passed, as well as those from Tacuba and Mexico, for Mexico was close by. All of them together began an attack on our people in such a manner that our Captain and the horsemen had all they could do to break through their ranks, so close did they keep together. However, our soldiers with good sword play forced them to retreat; then, as it was night-time, they went to sleep in the town after posting sentinels and watchmen.

If there had been many Mexicans gathered together that day, there were many more on the next morning, and in excellent order they advanced to attack our

¹ Escapuçalco in the text.

people with such energy that they killed and wounded some of our soldiers. Nevertheless, our men forced them to retreat to their houses and fortress, so that they found time to enter Tacuba and burn and sack many of the houses. When this was known in Mexico, many more squadrons were ordered to go forth from the city to fight against Cortés, and it was arranged that when they fought with him, they should pretend to turn in flight towards Mexico, and little by little they should draw our army on to the causeway until they had them well on to it, and that they should behave as though they were retreating out of fear.

As it was arranged, so they carried it out, and Cortés believing that he was gaining a victory, ordered the enemy to be followed as far as a bridge. When the Mexicans thought that they had already got Cortés in their trap, and the bridge had been crossed, a huge multitude of Indians turned on him, some in canoes and others by land, and others on the azoteas, and they placed him in such straits and matters looked so serious that he believed himself to be defeated, for at the bridge that he had reached, they fell on him with such force that he could effect little or nothing. A standard bearer who carried a banner, in resisting the charge of the enemy, was badly wounded and fell with his banner from the bridge into the water, and was in danger of being drowned, and the Mexicans had even seized him to drag him into a canoe, but he was so strong that he escaped with his banner. In that fight they killed four or five of our soldiers and wounded many of them, and Cortés recognising the great audacity and want of forethought that he had shown in going on to the causeway in the way I have related, and feeling that the Mexicans had caught him in a trap, ordered all his followers to retire in the best order possible without turning their backs, but with

their faces towards the enemy and hand to hand as though resisting an onset. Of the musketeers and crossbowmen some loaded, while the others fired, and the horsemen made some charges, but they were very few, for the horses were soon wounded. In this way, Cortés escaped that time from the power of the Mexicans, and when he got on dry land he gave great thanks to God.

It was at that causeway and bridge that Pedro de Ircio (often mentioned by me before) said to the standard bearer named Juan Volante, who fell into the lake with his banner, to insult him (for he was not on good terms with him on account of a love affair with a woman who had come at the time of the Narvaez expedition), "that he had drowned the son and now he wished to drown the mother," for the banner that Volante was carrying bore the picture of Our Lady the Virgin Santa Maria. He had no reason for making that remark, for the standard bearer was a gentleman and a very valiant man, as he showed himself to be then and at many other times, and it did not go well with Pedro de Ircio for the ill-will he bore towards Juan Volante.

Let us leave Pedro de Ircio, and say that during the five days that Cortés stayed in Tacuba, he had encounters and battles with the Mexicans, and he then returned to Texcoco along the road by which he had come. On the road, the Mexicans raised shouts, believing that he was turning in flight, and they only suspected what was true; and they laid in wait for him in places where they thought to gain honour by attacking him and killing the horses; and they prepared ambushes, and when Cortés saw that, he too set an ambushade and wounded many of the enemy, but they managed to kill two horses, and after that they did not follow him any further.

By long marches, Cortés arrived at a pueblo subject to Texcoco, named Acolman, about two leagues and a half

distant from Texcoco, and as soon as we knew that he had arrived there we went out with Gonzalo de Sandoval to see him and receive him, accompanied by many horsemen and soldiers and the Caciques of Texcoco, especially by Don Hernando, the principal Cacique of that City. We were greatly delighted at the sight of Cortés, for we had known nothing of what had happened to him for fifteen days. After welcoming him, and having some necessary conversation on military matters, we returned to Texcoco that afternoon, for we did not dare to leave the camp without a sufficient guard. Our Cortés stayed in that pueblo until the following day, when he came to Texcoco, and we gave him another reception. The Tlaxcalans, as they were now rich and came laden with spoil, asked leave to return to their homes, and Cortés granted it, and they went by a road where the Mexicans could not spy on them and saved their property.

At the end of four days, during which our Captain was resting, and hurrying on the building of the launches, the people from some pueblos on the North Coast came to ask for peace and offer themselves as vassals to His Majesty and these pueblos were named Tuxpan and Matalcingo and Nautla¹ and other small pueblos in the neighbourhood, and they brought a present of gold and of cotton cloth. They came before Cortés with the greatest reverence and when they had offered their present, they begged him to graciously admit them to his friendship, as they wished to become vassals of the King of Castile. They said that when the Mexicans had killed six Teules in the affair at Almeria, the Mexican Captain was Quetzalpopoca whom we had already burned in punishment, and that all the pueblos which had now come to him went to the help of

¹ Tuçapan y MasCalzingo y Navtlan in the text. Matalcingo is not shown on the modern map, but on an old map is marked near C. de Palmas in the neighbourhood of Tuxpan.

the Teules. When Cortés heard this, although he knew that they had been concerned with the Mexicans in the death of Juan de Escalante and the six soldiers who were slain in the affair at Almeria (as I have already related in the Chapter that treats of the matter) he showed them much good-will and accepted the present, and received them as vassals of our Lord the Emperor, and he did not demand an explanation of what had happened, nor call it to mind, for it was not a convenient time to take other steps, and with kind words and promises he dismissed them. At this same time, there came to Cortés other pueblos from among those who had become our friends, asking for help against the Mexicans, and they said that we must come and help them because great squadrons of Mexicans were coming against them and had entered their territory and were carrying off many of their Indians as prisoners, and had wounded others. There also came at the same time, people from Chalco and Tlamanalco who said that if we did not come to their assistance they would all be lost, for many garrisons of their enemies had attacked them, and they told a most pitiful tale, and brought a piece of hennequen cloth, painted with an exact representation of the squadrons of Mexicans which had come against them. Cortés did not know what to say, nor how to answer them or help them, either one way or the other, for he had seen that many of our soldiers were wounded and ill, and eight had died of pains in the back, and from throwing up clotted blood mixed with mud from the mouth and nose, and it was from the fatigue of always wearing armour on our backs, and from the everlasting going on expeditions and from the dust that we swallowed. In addition to this, he saw that three or four horses had died of their wounds, and that we never stopped going on expeditions, some coming and others going. So the answer he gave to the first pueblos

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was to flatter them, and to say that he would soon come to help them, but that while he was on the way, they should get help from other pueblos, their neighbours, and should wait for the Mexicans in the open, and all of them together should attack the enemy, and that if the Mexicans should see that they showed a bold front and matched their strength against them, they would be afraid, for the Mexicans had no longer the forces with which to attack them that they used to have, as they had so many enemies to oppose. He said so much to them, through our interpreters, that he encouraged and put heart into them, and they at once asked for letters for two pueblos in their neighbourhood, which were allies of ours, ordering them to come to their assistance. They did not understand the letters at the time, but they knew well that among us it was a sure thing that when letters were sent they contained commands or signs that we were ordering something of importance. With these letters they went off well contented and showed them to their friends and summoned them to their assistance. As Cortés had ordered them, they awaited the Mexicans in the open and fought a battle with them, and with the help of our allies, their neighbours to whom they had delivered the letters, they did not do badly.

Let us return to the people of Chalco ; as our Cortés saw how important it was for us that this province and the road through it should be freed from Mexicans, (for as I have already said, it was the way we had to come and go to Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz and to Tlaxcala, and we had to supply our camp from that province, for it was a land that produced much Maize), he at once ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval the Chief Alguazil to get ready to start the next morning for Chalco, and he ordered him to take twenty horsemen and two hundred soldiers, twelve crossbowmen and ten musketeers and the Tlaxcalans who

were in camp, who were very few, (for as I have already said in this Chapter, the greater number of them had gone to their homes laden with spoil) and Sandoval, also took with him a company of Texcocans, and Captain Luis Marin who was his intimate friend. Cortés and Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid remained behind to guard the city and the launches.

Before Gonzalo de Sandoval goes to Chalco, as had been arranged, I wish to say here, that while I was writing this story about all that had happened to Cortés in his expedition to Saltocan, there happened to be present two gentlemen who were much interested, as they had read Gomara's History, and they said to me, that there were three things that I had forgotten to write down, which the historian Gomara had written about this same expedition of Cortés; the one was that Cortés visited Mexico with thirteen launches and fought a good battle with the great forces of Guatemoc in their great canoes and pirogues on the lake; the other was that when Cortés entered on the causeway to Mexico, that he held conversations with the Mexican Lords and Caciques, and told them that he would cut off their food supply and they would die of hunger; and the other was that Cortés did not wish to tell the people of Texcoco that he was going to Saltocan lest they should give warning to the people of that town. I answered these same gentlemen that at that time the launches were not finished building, and how could they carry launches overland, or horses or so many people across the lake? It is laughable to write about such a thing. When Cortés advanced along the causeway, as I have related, he had quite enough to do to make his escape with his army, and at that time we had not blockaded Mexico so as to deprive them of food, and they were not suffering from hunger, and they were lords of all their vassals, and what happened many days later when we had

them in our grip, Gomara places here. In what he says, that Cortés went away by another road to go to Saltocan so that the people of Texcoco should not know, I say that they were obliged to go through the pueblos and lands of Texcoco, for the road lay in that direction and in no other, and what he writes is mere nonsense. As I understand it the fault is not his, but that of the man who gave him the information and who told him the story which he has written down, possibly giving him money in order to heighten the praise and glorify him and exaggerate his exploits. He was told these stories so that he should not publish our heroic deeds and that is the truth.

When these two gentlemen who had told me about it saw clearly that what I said was true, they swore that they would tear up the book and history of Gomara which they had in their possession, for so many things he describes as happening in a certain way, are not true.

Let us leave this matter and turn to Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval who left Texcoco after hearing Mass, and arrived near Chalco early in the morning, and what happened I will go on to tell.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTERS CXLII TO CXLV.

DURING the expeditions described in the four following Chapters, the Spaniards passed out of the Valley of Mexico through the gap between the Serrania of Ajusco and the slopes of Popocatepetl, and descended into the plains of Morelos and Cuernavaca. The towns of Yecapixtla, Oaxtepec, Yautepec, and Cuernavaca all stand at somewhat the same altitude, about 5000 ft. above the level of the sea and a little more than 2000 ft. below the level of the Valley of Mexico. The Serrania of Ajusco, with its innumerable extinct craters and somewhat recent lava fields, and the mass of Popocatepetl, form a lofty barrier to the north of these towns, which is edged near Tepostlan and towards the East by a fringe of broken

and abrupt conglomerate rock, forming hills and cliffs, with spurs running southward into the plains of Morelos and Cuernavaca. Just to the south of this rampart, several isolated hills of a few hundred feet in height arise somewhat abruptly from the plain, and it was on one of these hills that the Indians took refuge.

Ixtlilxochitl¹ says that Tlayacapan, which lies halfway between Yecapixtla and Teposlan, is the hill or Peñol which was so successfully defended against the attack of the Spaniards, and there is no doubt that the Peñol must have been in that neighbourhood.

Neither Bernal Díaz nor Cortés appear to have visited Yecapixtla, and their descriptions of its position are somewhat misleading. The town is not situated on a lofty eminence, but, like Cuernavaca, although on slightly rising ground, it hardly stands out from the surrounding plain. These plains slope gradually to the south, and are deeply scored by the numerous small streams which, flowing from the mountains to the north, have cut their way deep down through soil and rock, forming ravines or barrancas, which, in chosen spots, render fortifications almost unnecessary. Both Yecapixtla and Cuernavaca are nearly surrounded by such ravines.

Bernal Díaz falls into an error, with regard to Yautepec, when describing the route followed by the army; this error is corrected in a foot-note on page 67. Cortés, in his third letter, says that after leaving Yautepec they went to Gilutepeque. No such name is now known, and we can safely follow Bernal Díaz, who says that the town was Tepostlan (although Orozco y Berra says that Bernal Díaz "confounds" the name with that of Tepostlan). From the nature of the ground, the pursuit by the horsemen after leaving Yautepec must have been in the direction of Tepostlan, and that position also fits in with the march two days later to Cuernavaca.

The return march from Cuernavaca across the Serrania de Ajusco was a most laborious undertaking, as a height of at least 10,000 ft. above sea level had to be reached before descending to the valley in the direction of Xochimilco.

By an unfortunate error, Tlamanalco is not marked in the map of the Valley of Mexico, issued in Vol. III. Its position between Chalco and Amecameca is given in the map showing the route of the Spaniards from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, issued with Vol. I.

¹ "Historia Chichimeca," Cap. 93. MS., see Orozco y Berra, *Hist. Antigua*, vol. iv, p. 541.

CHAPTER CXLII.

How Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval went to Chalco and Tlamanalco with the whole of his army; and I will go on to tell what happened on the march.

I HAVE already said in the last Chapter that the pueblos of Chalco and Tlamanalco came to ask Cortés to send them help, because there were great companies and squadrons of Mexicans in their neighbourhood who had come to attack them. They told such a tale of woe that he ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to go to their aid with two hundred soldiers, twenty horsemen, ten or twelve cross-bowmen and some musketeers, and our Tlaxcalan friends, and a company of Indians from Texcoco. Sandoval took Captain Luis Marin with him as a companion, for they were great friends.

After hearing Mass, he set out on the 12th March in the year 1521, and they slept at some farms belonging to Chalco, and on the next morning arrived at Tlamanalco where the Caciques and Captains gave him a good reception and provided food, and advised him to go at once in the direction of a great pueblo called Oaxtepec,¹ for he would find the whole of the Mexican forces either assembled at Oaxtepec or on the road thither; and they said that all the warriors from the province of Chalco would accompany him.

Sandoval thought it advisable to set out at once, so the order was given, and they went on to sleep at another pueblo subject to Chalco called Chimaluacan, for the spies, sent by the people of Chalco to watch the Culuas, came to report that the enemy's forces were lying in wait for them in some rocky defiles in the neighbourhood of that town.

¹ Guaxtepeque in the text.

As Sandoval was very crafty and well advised, he sent the musketeers and crossbowmen in advance, and ordered the horsemen to keep together in parties of three, and, when the crossbowmen and musketeers had fired their shots, to charge the enemy at a hand gallop with their lances held short, so as to strike the faces of their enemies and put them to flight, and always to keep together in parties of three. He ordered the foot soldiers always to keep their close formation and not to charge the enemy until he gave the order, for it was reported that the enemy were very numerous, and this proved to be true. As the enemy was posted in broken ground and it was not known if they had dug pits or raised barricades, Sandoval wished to keep his soldiers well in hand so as to avoid any disaster.

As he continued his march he saw the Mexican squadrons approaching him in three divisions, shouting and whistling and sounding trumpets and drums. The Indians were armed with all their usual weapons and they came on to the attack like fierce lions. When Sandoval saw how bold they were, he did not keep to the orders he had given, but told the horsemen to charge them at once before they could reach our men. Cheering on his troops by shouting "Santiago and at them," Sandoval led the charge himself, and by that movement, he nearly routed some of the Mexican squadrons, but not all of them, so that they soon turned and showed a firm front, for they were helped by the bad track and broken ground, and the horsemen owing to the rough ground were not able to gallop and could not get in rear of them. For this reason, Sandoval turned, and ordered the musketeers and crossbowmen to go ahead in good formation and told the shield bearers to keep on their flanks, and when they could see that they were wounding and damaging the enemy and should hear a shot fired from this other side of the barranca, that it would be a signal for all the horsemen to charge together and hurl

the enemy from that position, for he thought that they could be driven on to the level ground near by. He also warned his [Indian] allies to be ready to support the Spaniards. Sandoval's orders were carried out, and in that movement many of our men were wounded, for the enemies who attacked them were very numerous. To finish my story, the Mexicans were forced into retreat but their flight was towards other bad passes. Sandoval and the horsemen went in pursuit, but overtook only three or four of the enemy. During that pursuit, owing to the badness of the road, the horse of a cavalryman, named Gonzalo Domínguez, fell with his rider beneath him, and the man died from his injuries within a few days. I call this to mind because Gonzalo Domínguez was one of the best horsemen and one of the most valiant men that Cortés had brought in his Company, and we held him in as much esteem for his valour, as we did Cristóbal de Olid and Gonzalo de Sandoval, so that we all felt the loss greatly.

To go back to Sandoval and his army ; they followed the enemy to the neighbourhood of a pueblo already mentioned by me which is called Oaxtepec, but before reaching the town, over fifteen thousand Mexicans emerged from it and began to surround our soldiers and wounded many of them and five horses, but as the ground was level in some places, our horsemen, making a united effort, broke up two of their squadrons, and the rest turned tail and fled towards the town in order to guard some barricades which they had raised, but our soldiers and the allies followed so close that they had no time to defend them, and the horsemen kept up the pursuit in other directions until they had shut the enemy up in a part of the town where they could not be reached. Thinking that the enemy would not again renew the attack on that day, Sandoval ordered his men to rest and tend their wounds, and they began to take their

food, and much spoil was taken in that town. While they were eating, two horsemen and two soldiers who had been told off before the men began to eat, the horsemen as scouts and the soldiers as sentinels, ran in crying "To arms, to arms; the Mexicans are coming in great force." As they were always accustomed to have their arms in readiness, the horsemen were soon mounted and they came out into a great plaza. At that moment the enemy were upon them, and there they fought another good battle. After the enemy had been for some time showing us a good front from some barricades and wounding some of our men, Sandoval fell on them so suddenly with his horsemen, that with the help of the muskets and crossbows and the sword-play of the soldiers, he drove them from the town into some neighbouring barrancas, and they did not come back again that day.

When Captain Sandoval found himself free from that struggle, he gave thanks to God and went to rest and sleep in an orchard within the town, which was so beautiful and contained such fine buildings that it was the best worth beholding of anything we had seen in New Spain.¹ There were so many things in it to look at that it was really wonderful and was certainly the orchard of a great prince, and they could not go all through it then, for it was more than a quarter of a league in length.

Let us stop talking about the orchard and say that I

¹ Blotted out in the original: "both on account of the arrangement and diversity of the many kinds of fruit trees and of the roses and other sweet-scented plants, and for the arrangement made for the supply of water from a river which was led into the garden, and the rich chambers and the decoration of them, and the sweet-scented cedar wood and the excellent furniture, and the - - - benches, and the numerous houses, all coated with plaster and adorned with a thousand pictures, and the avenues and the weaving together of the branches, and in other parts the medicinal herbs and the vegetables, many of them very good to eat."

did not go myself on this expedition, nor did I then walk about this orchard, but I went there about twenty days later when, in company with Cortés, we made the round of the great towns of the lakes, as I shall tell later on. The reason why I did not go this first time was because I had been badly wounded by a spear-thrust in the throat, and was in danger of dying from it, and I still bear the scar. The wound was given me during the Iztapalapa affair, when they tried to drown us. As I was not in this expedition, for this reason, I say in telling the story, "they went" and "they did" so and so, and such a thing "happened to them," and I do not say, "we did" it or "I did" it, nor saw it, nor "I was there." Nevertheless, all that I have written about it, happened as I have stated, for one soon learns in camp what happens on an expedition, and one is not able to leave out or exaggerate anything that happened.

Let us stop talking of this and return to Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval, who on the following day, when he noticed that there was no sound of movement on the part of the Mexican warriors, sent to summon the Caciques of the town, despatching as messengers, five Indians, natives of the place, whom he had captured in battle, two of whom were chieftains. He ordered them to tell the Caciques to have no fear, and to come and make peace and he would pardon them for all that had happened, and used other good arguments. The messengers who were sent, treated for peace, but the Caciques did not dare to come in for fear of the Mexicans.

The same day, Sandoval sent to another large pueblo called Yecapixtla,¹ about two leagues distant from Oaxtepec, to tell the people to consider what a good thing it was to be at peace and not desire war and that they

¹ Acapistla in the text.

should bear in mind and take warning from what had happened to the squadrons of Culuas stationed in the pueblo of Oaxtepec, how they had all been defeated, and he told them that they had better make peace and expel the Mexican garrisons who were guarding their country, and that if they did not do so he would come and make war on them and chastise them. The answer returned was that they [the Spaniards] might come when they liked, for they were looking forward to feast on their flesh and provide sacrifices for their Idols.

When this reply was given, the Caciques from Chalco, who were with Sandoval, knew that there must be a large force of Mexicans in garrison at Yecapixtla ready to make war on Chalco as soon as Sandoval should retire ; and for this reason they begged him to go to Yecapixtla and drive the Mexicans out of the place. However, Sandoval was not willing to go, one reason being that many of his soldiers and horses were wounded, and the other that he had already fought three battles and he did not wish to exceed the instructions that Cortés had given him. Moreover, some of the gentlemen whom he had brought in his company, men from the army of Narvaez, advised him to return to Texcoco and not go to Yecapixtla, which was strongly fortified, lest some disaster should befall him. However, the Captain, Luis Marin, counselled him not to fail to go to that fortress and do what he could, for the Caciques from Chalco said that if he turned back without defeating the force which was assembled in that fortress, that as soon as they saw or heard that he had returned to Texcoco, the enemy would at once attack Chalco.

As it was only two leagues from Oaxtepec to Yecapixtla, Sandoval decided to go there and gave orders to his soldiers and they set out. As soon as he came in sight of the town, before reaching it, a host of warriors came out and began to shoot darts and arrows and cast stones

from their slings, so that they fell like hail, and three horses and many soldiers were wounded without our men being able to do any harm to the enemy. Then the enemy climbed up among their crags and strongholds and from thence shouted, yelled and whistled and sounded their trumpets and drums. When Sandoval heard this, he ordered some of his horsemen to dismount, and the rest to remain in the fields where it was open ground and to keep on the alert to see that no reinforcement of Mexicans should reach Yecapixtla whilst he was attacking the town. When he observed that the Caciques from Chalco and their Captains and many of the Indian warriors were manœuvring round about without daring to attack the enemy, on purpose to try them and to see what they would answer, Sandoval said to them, "What are you doing: why don't you begin to fight and get into the town and fortress, for we are here and will defend you." They replied that they did not dare to do it, that the enemy were in a stronghold, and it was for this very purpose that Sandoval and his brother Teules had come with them and that the people of Chalco had come under his protection relying on his help to drive the enemy out.

So Sandoval and all his soldiers and musketeers and crossbowmen began the attack and ascent and many were wounded as they clambered up and Sandoval himself was again wounded in the head, and many of our allies were wounded, for they too entered the town and did much damage to it, and it was the Indians from Chalco and our allies from Tlaxcala who did most damage to the enemy, for our soldiers after breaking up their ranks and putting them to flight, would not give a sword-thrust at the enemy, for it seemed to them mere cruelty, and they were chiefly occupied in looking out for pretty Indian women or seeking for plunder, and they frequently quarrelled with our allies on account of their cruelty, and took the Indian

men and women away from them to prevent their being killed.

Let us stop talking about this and say that the Indian warriors in order to defend themselves, took refuge among the crags down below, which were near the town, and as many of those who went to hide themselves in the gorge of the river were wounded and bleeding, the water became somewhat turbid with blood but the discolouration did not last long, not half an Ave Maria, but it is here that the historian Gomara says in his history that our soldiers were parched with thirst because the river ran red with blood. I say that there are so many springs and so much clear water below there, that there was no need of more water.¹

I must go on to say that when this was over, Sandoval and all his army returned to Texcoco with much spoil, especially of good looking Indian women.

When the lord of Mexico, who was called Guatemoc, heard of the defeat of his armies it is said that he showed much resentment at it, and still more at the thought that the people of Chalco, who were his subjects and vassals, should dare to take up arms three times against his forces.

He was so angry that he resolved that as soon as Sandoval should return to his camp at Texcoco he would send out a great force of warriors, which he at once assembled in the city of Mexico, and another force which was got together from the lake, equipped with every sort

¹ Bernal Díaz need not have fallen foul of Gomara over this incident, although it was probably a gross exaggeration, for Cortés himself in his 3rd letter to the Emperor says "and as our Indian Allies pursued them, and the enemy saw that they were conquered, so great was the slaughter at the hands of our people, and of those thrown down from above, that all who were there present affirm that a small river which almost surrounds the town was tinged with blood for more than an hour and prevented them from drinking, and as it was very hot, they were in great need of water."

of arms, and would despatch this force, numbering over twenty thousand Mexicans, in two thousand large canoes to make a sudden descent on Chalco, to do all the damage that it was possible to do.

This was all accomplished with such skill and rapidity that Sandoval had hardly arrived at Texcoco and spoken to Cortés, when again messengers came in canoes across the lake begging help from Cortés, telling him that more than two thousand canoes carrying over twenty thousand Mexicans had come to Chalco, and they begged him to come at once to their assistance.

At the very moment that Cortés heard this news Sandoval came to speak to him and to give him an account of what he had done during the expedition from which he had just then returned, but Cortés was so angry with him he would not listen to him, believing that it was through some fault or carelessness on his part that our friends at Chalco were experiencing this trouble, and without any delay, and without listening to him, Cortés ordered Sandoval to leave all his wounded men in camp and to go back again in all haste with those who were sound.

Sandoval was much distressed at the words Cortés used to him, and at his refusal to listen to him, but he set out at once for Chalco where his men arrived tired out with the weight of their arms and their long march. It appears that the people of Chalco, learning through their spies that the Mexicans were coming so suddenly upon them, and that Guatemoc had determined that they should be attacked, as I have already said, before any help could reach them from us, had sent to summon aid from the people of the province of Huexotzingo which was near by, and the men from Huexotzingo arrived that same night, all equipped with their arms, and joined with those from Chalco, so that in all there were more than twenty thousand of them. As they had already lost their fear

of the Mexicans they quietly awaited their arrival in camp and fought like brave men, and although the Mexicans killed many of them and took many prisoners, the people of Chalco killed many more of the Mexicans and took as prisoners fifteen captains and chieftains and many other warriors of lesser rank. The Mexicans looked upon this battle as a much greater disgrace, seeing that the people of Chalco had defeated them, than if they had been defeated by us.

When Sandoval arrived at Chalco and found that there was nothing for him to do, and nothing more to be feared as the Mexicans would not return again to Chalco, he marched back again to Texcoco and took the Mexican prisoners with him.

Whereat Cortés was delighted but Sandoval showed great resentment towards our captain for what had happened, and did not go to see or speak to him, until Cortés sent to tell him that he had misunderstood the affair, thinking that it was through some carelessness on the part of Sandoval that things had gone wrong, and that although he had set out with a large force of soldiers and horsemen he had returned without defeating the Mexicans.

I will cease speaking about this matter, for Cortés and Sandoval soon became fast friends again and there was nothing Cortés would not do to please Sandoval.

I will stop here and tell how we resolved that all the men and women slaves should be branded, for they were becoming very numerous, and how at that time a ship arrived from Spain, and what else happened.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

How the slaves were branded in Texcoco, and how the news came that a ship had arrived at the Port of Villa Rica, and what passengers had come in her and other things that happened, which I will go on to relate.

AS Gonzalo de Sandoval had arrived in Texcoco with a great booty of slaves and there were many others which had been captured in the late expeditions, it was decided that they should at once be branded. When proclamation was made that they were to be taken to a certain house to be branded, most of us soldiers took those slaves that we possessed to be marked with the brand of His Majesty, which was a G. which was meant to signify Guerra (war), in the way that we had already arranged with Cortés, as I have already related in the Chapter that treats of that subject. We thought that they [our slaves] would be returned to us after the Royal fifth had been paid, and that a price would be put on the women slaves in accordance with the value of each one of them. However it was not so done, and if the affair was badly managed at Tepeaca, it was managed much worse here at Texcoco; for after the Royal fifth had been deducted, another fifth was deducted for Cortés, and another fraction for his captains, and during the night when the slaves had been collected together, the best looking Indian women disappeared. Cortés had stated and promised us that the best looking women should be sold by auction for what they were worth, and those that were not so attractive for a lower price, but he made no such arrangement, and the Royal officials did just as they pleased, so that if wrong was done the first time, this time it was much worse. From this time on many of us soldiers when we captured good looking Indian women, so that they should not be taken

from us, as had been done in the past, hid them away and did not take them to be branded, but gave out that they had escaped ; or if we were favourites of Cortés we took them secretly by night to be branded, and they were valued at their worth, the Royal fifth paid and they were marked with the iron. Many others remained in our lodgings and we said that they were free servants from the pueblos that had made peace, or from Tlaxcala.

I also wish to say that as some of these women slaves had already been in our company for two or three months, it was well known throughout the camp which of the soldiers was kind and which brutal, and who treated his Indian women and servants well and who treated them badly, and who had the reputation of being a gentleman and who was otherwise. It often happened that when they were sold by auction and were bought by soldiers whom the Indian men and women were not content to serve, or by men who had treated them badly, the slaves at once disappeared and were not seen again. As for asking for them one might as well seek for Mahomet in Granada, or write to "my son the batchelor of Arts in Salamanca." In the end it all figured as debt in the books of the King, both the accounts of the auction and the fifths, and as for paying assessment on the gold, it came to the point that not one or very few soldiers brought their share of gold [to be assessed] for they already owed it all and much more than what the King's officials would leave to them.

Let us leave this, and I will relate how at that time a ship arrived from Spain in which came Julian de Alderete, a native of Tordesillas, as his Majesty's Treasurer, and a certain Orduña, the elder, also a native of Tordesillas who after Mexico was conquered became a settler at Puebla and brought out some daughters who made very honourable marriages. There also came a friar of San Francis named Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, a native of Seville who

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brought some Bulls of Señor San Pedro¹ so that we might put ourselves right if we had fallen somewhat in his debt during the wars which we were waging. Thus in a few months the friar returned to Spain rich and contented and left others discontented behind him ; then he sent as his deputy to take charge of the Bulls Gerónimo López who was afterwards secretary in Mexico. There also arrived one Antonio de Carvajal who, now a very old man, lives in Mexico, he was captain of a launch, and Gerónimo Ruiz de la Mota, a native of Burgos, who after the capture of Mexico became son-in-law of Orduña, he also was captain of a launch, and a certain Briones a native of Salamanca. This Briones was hanged in this province of Guatemala as a mutineer in the army, four years after he returned from the expedition to Honduras. Many others also arrived whose names I forget, also a certain Alonzo Díaz de la Reguera who became a settler in Guatemala and now lives in Valladolid.

A great store of arms and powder was brought in this ship, in fact as was to be expected in a ship coming from Spain it came well laden, and we rejoiced at its arrival and at the news from Spain that it brought. I don't remember very well, but I think that they told us that the Bishop of Burgos had already lost [his position] and did not stand well with his Majesty since he had come to know of our many good and memorable services. As the Bishop was in the habit of writing to his Majesty in Flanders the opposite to what really took place, and in favour of Diego Velásquez, when his Majesty found out for certain that all our procurators had told him on our behalf was quite true, he would not listen to anything more that the Bishop had to say.

Let us leave this and say that Cortés now saw that

¹ *I.e.* of the Pope as successor to St. Peter.

the building of the launches was finished, and noted the eagerness of all of us soldiers to commence the siege of Mexico. At that time the people of Chalco sent again to say that the Mexicans were attacking them, and begged for help, and Cortés sent to tell them that he intended to go himself to their pueblos and territories and not to return until the enemy was finally driven from their neighbourhood. He ordered three hundred soldiers and thirty horsemen and nearly all the musketeers and crossbowmen and the men of Texcoco to be in readiness, and Pedro de Alvarado, and Andrés de Tápia and Cristóbal de Olid went in his company as well as the Treasurer Julian de Alderete and the Friar Fray Pedro Melgarejo who by that time had arrived in our camp. I too went with Cortés for he ordered me to do so, and what happened during that expedition I will go on to relate.

CHAPTER CXLIV.

How our Captain Cortés went on an expedition and made a circuit of the lake and of all the cities and large pueblos that were to be found in its neighbourhood, and what else happened on that expedition.

AS Cortés had told the people of Chalco that he was coming to help them so that the Mexicans should no longer come and attack them, (for we had been going there and back every week to assist them) he ordered all the force of soldiers already mentioned to be prepared, and they were three hundred soldiers, thirty horsemen, twenty crossbowmen and fifteen musketeers, and the Treasurer Julian Alderete, Pedro de Alvarado, Andrés de Tápia, Cristóbal de Olid, and the Friar Pedro Melgarejo went also, and Cortés ordered me to go with him, and there were many Tlaxcalans and allies from Texcoco in

his company. He left Gonzalo de Sandoval behind with a good company of soldiers and horsemen to guard Texcoco and the launches.

On the morning of Friday the 5th April 1521 after hearing Mass we set out for Tlamanalco, where we were well received, and we slept there. The next day we went to Chalco, for the one town is quite close to the other, and there Cortés ordered all the Caciques of the province to be called together, and he made them a speech through our interpreters Doña Marina and Gerónimo de Aguilar, in which he gave them to understand that we were now going to try whether we could bring to peace some of the towns in the neighbourhood of the lake, and also to view the land and position before blockading Mexico, and that we were going to place thirteen launches on the lake, and we begged them to be ready to accompany us on the next day with all their warriors. When they understood this all with one voice promised that they would willingly do what we asked.

The next day we went to sleep at another pueblo, subject to Chalco, called Chimaluacan, and there we met more than twenty thousand allies from Chalco, Texcoco, and Huexotzingo and from Tlaxcala and other towns, and in all the expeditions in which I have been engaged in New Spain, never have I known so many of our allied warriors to accompany us as joined us now.

As I have already said before, many of them came in hope of gathering spoil, and it is also true that they came to gorge on human flesh, if there should be any fighting, for they knew for certain that we should have to fight battles. It was the same, so to say, as when in Italy an army marches from one place to another it is followed by crows and kites and other birds of prey which live on the dead bodies that are left in the field after a bloody battle, so I believe it was for the same reason that we were followed by so many thousand Indians.

Let us leave this subject and return to our story. About that time we received news, that in a plain near by, there were many companies and squadrons of Mexicans and all their allies from the country round about waiting to attack us. So Cortés held us in readiness and after hearing Mass we set out early in the morning from the pueblo of Chimaluacan where we had slept, and keeping in good formation and much on the alert, we marched among some high rocks between two hills where there were fortifications and barricades, where many Indians both men and women were safely sheltered, and from these strongholds they yelled and shouted at us, but we did not care to attack them, but kept quietly on our way towards a large pueblo called Yautepec, which we found deserted, and passed by without stopping,¹ and arrived at a plain where there were some springs with very little water, and on one side was a high rocky hill² with a fortress very difficult to subdue, as the attempt soon proved, and when we arrived in the neighbourhood of this hill, we saw that it was crowded with warriors, and from the summit they shouted at us and threw stones and shot darts and arrows, and wounded three of our soldiers. Then Cortés ordered us to halt there, and said "it seems that all these Mexicans who shut themselves up in fortresses make mock of us as long as we do not attack them," and he said this thinking of those whom we had left behind among the foot hills, and he ordered some horsemen and crossbowmen to go round to the other side of the hill and see if there was any other place where we could ascend and find a more convenient

¹ This is misleading ; they were on their way to Yautepec, but it was not until two days later that they passed by that town without stopping. The two peñoles where the fighting took place must have been situated between Chimal and Oaxtepec (cf. Cortés Third Letter).

² Probably Tlayacapan (see Orozco y Berra, Vol. IV, p. 541, and Itlilxochtl, Historia Chichimeca Cap. 93).

opening whence to attack them. They returned to say that the best approach was where we then were, for there was no other place where it was possible to climb up, for it was all steep rock. Then Cortés ordered us to make an attack, The standard bearer Cristóbal del Corral led the way with other ensigns and all of us followed him while Cortés and the horsemen kept guard on the plain, so that no other troops of Mexicans should fall on the baggage or on us during our attack on the stronghold. As we began to climb up the hill, the Indians who were posted above rolled down so many huge stones and rocks that it was terrifying to see them hurtling and bounding down, and it was a miracle that we were not all of us killed. One soldier fell dead at my feet, he was one Martínez, a Valencian who had been Maestrasala to a Señor de Salva, in Castile ; he had a helmet on his head but he gave no cry and never spoke another word. Still we kept on, but as the great *Galgas*, as we call these big rocks in this country, came rolling and tearing and bounding down and breaking in pieces, they soon killed two more good soldiers, Gaspar Sánchez, nephew of the Treasurer of Cuba, and a man named Bravo, but still we kept on. Then another valiant soldier named Alonzo Rodríguez was killed, and two others were wounded in the head, and nearly all the rest was wounded in the legs, and still we persevered and pushed on ahead.

As I was active in those days, I kept on following the Standard bearer Corral, and we got beneath some hollows and cavities which there were in the hillside so as to avoid a chance rock hitting me and I clambered up from hollow to hollow to escape being killed. The standard bearer Cristóbal del Corral was sheltering himself behind some thick trees covered with thorns which grow in these hollows, his face was streaming with blood

and his banner was broken, and he called out, "Oh Señor Bernal Díaz del Castillo, it is impossible to go on any further, keep in the shelter of the hollow and take care that none of those galgas or boulders strike you, for one can hardly hold on with one's hands and feet, much less climb any higher." Just then I saw that Pedro Barba, a captain of the crossbowmen, and two other soldiers were coming up in the same way that Corral and I had done, climbing from hollow to hollow. I called out from above, "Señor Capitan, don't come up any further, for you can't hold on with hands and feet, but will roll down again." When I said this to him he replied as though he were very valiant, or some great lord and could make no other reply, "Go ahead." I took that reply as a personal insult, and answered him, "let us see you come to where I am," and I went up still higher. At that very moment such a lot of great stones came rolling down on us from above where they had stored them for the purpose, that Pedro Barba was wounded and one soldier killed, and they could not climb a single step higher.

Then the Standard bearer Corral cried out that they should pass the word to Cortés, from mouth to mouth, that we could not get any higher, and that to retreat was equally dangerous.

When Cortés heard this he understood what was happening, for there below where he stood on the level ground two or three soldiers had been killed and seven of them wounded by the great impetus of the boulders which they hurled down on them, and Cortés thought for certain that nearly all of us who had made the ascent must have been killed or badly wounded, for from where he stood he could not see the folds in the hill. So by signs and shouts and by the shots that they fired, we up above knew that they were meant as signals for us to

retreat, and in good order we descended from hollow to hollow, our bodies bruised and streaming with blood, the banners rent, and eight men dead. When Cortés saw us he gave thanks to God and they related to him what had happened between Pedro Barba and me. Pedro Barba himself and the Standard Bearer Corral were telling him about the great strength of the hill and that it was a marvel that the boulders did not carry us away as they flew down, and the story was soon known throughout the camp.

Let us leave these empty tales and say how there were many companies of Mexicans lying in wait in places where we could neither see nor observe them, hoping to bring help and succour to those posted on the hill, for they well knew that we should not be able to force our way into the stronghold, and they had arranged that while we were fighting, the warriors on the hill on one side, and they on the other, would make an attack on us, and as it had been arranged so they came to the assistance of those on the hill. When Cortés knew that they were approaching, he ordered the horsemen and all of us to go and attack them, and this we did, for the ground was level in places as there were fields lying between the small hills, and we pursued the enemy until they reached another very strong hill.

We killed very few Indians during the pursuit for they took refuge in places where we could not reach them. So we returned to the stronghold which we had attempted to scale, and seeing that there was no water there, and that neither we nor the horses had had anything to drink that day, for the springs which I have spoken about as being there contained nothing but mud, because the many allies whom we had brought with us crowded into them and would not let them flow. For this reason orders were given to shift our camp, and we went down

through some fields to another hill which was distant from the first about a league and a half, thinking that we should find water there, but we found very little of it. Near this hill were some native mulberry trees and there we camped, and there were some twelve or thirteen houses at the foot of the stronghold. As soon as we arrived the Indians began to shout and shoot darts and arrows and roll down boulders from above.

There were many more people in this fortress than there were in the first hill, and it was much stronger, as we afterwards found out.

Our musketeers and crossbowmen fired up at them but they were so high up and protected by so many barricades that we could not do them any harm, besides there was no possibility of climbing up and forcing our way in. Although we made two attempts, from the houses that stood there, over some steps by which we could mount up for two stages, beyond that, as I have already said, it was worse than the first hill, so that we did not increase our reputation at this stronghold any more than at the first, and the victory lay with the Mexicans and their allies.

That night we slept in the mulberry grove and were half dead with thirst. It was arranged that on the next day all the musketeers and crossbowmen should go to another hill which was close by the large one, and should climb up it, for there was a way up although it was not an easy one, to see if from that hill their muskets and crossbows would carry as far as the stronghold on the other, so that they could attack it. Cortés ordered Francisco Verdugo and the Treasurer Juan de Alderete who boasted that they were good crossbowmen, and Pedro Barba who was a Captain, to go as leaders, and all the rest of the soldiers to attack from the steps and tracks of [above] the houses which I have already spoken of, and to climb up as best we could. So we began the ascent, but they

hurled down so many stones both great and small that many of the soldiers were wounded, and in addition to this it was quite useless to attempt the ascent, for even using both our hands and feet we could climb no further. While we were making these attempts the musketeers and crossbowmen from the other hill of which I have spoken, managed to reach the enemy with their muskets and crossbows but they could only just do it, however they killed some and wounded others. In this way we went on attacking them for about half an hour when it pleased our Lord God that they agreed to make peace. The reason why they did so was that they had not got a drop of water, and there was a great number of people on the level ground on the hill top and the people from all the neighbourhood round had taken refuge there both men, women and children and slaves. So that we down below should understand that they wished for peace, the women on the hill waved their shawls and clapped the palms of their hands together as a sign that they would make bread or tortillas for us and the warriors ceased shooting arrows and darts and hurling down stones.

When Cortés observed this he ordered that no more harm should be done to them, and by signs he made them understand that five of their chiefs should come down to treat for peace. When they came down with much reverence they asked Cortés to pardon them for having protected and defended themselves by taking refuge in that stronghold. Cortés replied somewhat angrily through our interpreters Doña Marina and Aguilar that they deserved death for having begun the war, but as they had come to make peace, they must go at once to the other hill and summon the Caciques and chiefs who were stationed there and bring in the dead bodies, and that if they came in peace he would pardon what had happened, if not, that we should attack them and besiege them until

they died of thirst, for we knew well that there [too] they had no water, for there is very little in all that part of the country. So they went off at once to summon the Caciques as they were told to do.

I will stop talking about this until they come back with the reply and will relate that Cortés was standing talking to the Friar Melgarejo and the Treasurer Alderete about the wars that we had already waged before they came, which were just as bad as the attack on the hill, and of the great power of the Mexicans and about the great cities that we had seen since leaving Spain, and was saying that if our Lord the Emperor was told the truth, (instead of the Bishop of Burgos writing to him the reverse) that he would send and give us great rewards, for no other king in the world had had such services done for him as we had performed in winning so many cities for him without his knowing anything whatever about it.

Let us leave out much more conversation that took place and relate how Cortés sent the Standard bearer Corral, and two other captains namely Juan Jaramillo and Pedro de Ircio and me, who happened to be there with them, to ascend the hill and see what the stronghold was like, whether there were many Indians wounded or killed by the arrows and muskets and how many people were gathered there.

When he gave us these orders he said, "Look to it, Sirs, that you do not take from them a single grain of maize, and as I understood it he meant that we should help ourselves, and it was for that reason that he sent us and told me to go with the others. We ascended the hill by a track, and I must say that it was stronger than the first hill for it was sheer rock, and when we reached the top the entrance into the stronghold was no wider than the two mouths of a silo or an oven. At

the very top it was level ground and there was a great breadth of meadow land all crowded with people, both warriors and many women and children, and we found twenty dead men and many wounded, and they had not a drop of water to drink. All their clothes and other property was done up in bundles and there were many bales of cloaks which were the tribute they paid to Guatemoc, and when I saw so many loads of cloths and knew that it was intended for tribute I began to load four Tlaxcalans, my free servants whom I had brought with me, and I also put four other bales on the backs of four other Indians who were guarding the tribute, one bale on each man's back. When Pedro de Ircio saw this he said that [the bales] should not be taken, and I contended that they should, but as he was a Captain, I did as he ordered, for he threatened to tell Cortés about it. Pedro de Ircio said to me that I had heard what Cortés had said, that we should not take a single grain of maize, and I replied that was true, and that it was on account of those very words I wished to carry off these robes. However, he would not let me carry off anything at all, and we went down to tell Cortés what we had seen concerning the things on which he had sent us to report. Then Pedro de Ircio told Cortés about the contention that I had had with him which pleased Cortés greatly, after giving an account of what there was there, Pedro de Ircio said, "I took nothing from them although Bernal Díaz del Castillo had already laden eight Indians with cloth and would have brought them away loaded had I not stopped him." Then Cortés replied, half angrily "Why did he not bring them, you ought to have stayed there with the cloth and the Indians" and he added "See how they understand me, I sent them to help themselves, and from Bernal Díaz who did understand me, they took away the spoil which he was taking from those dogs who

will sit there laughing at us in the company of those whom we have killed and wounded.”

When Pedro de Ircio heard this he wished to go up to the stronghold again, but he was told that there was no reason for his going, and that on no account should he return there.

Let us leave this talk and say that the people from the other hill came in, and, after much discussion about their being pardoned for their past deeds, all gave their fealty to His Majesty. As there was no water in that place we went at once to a fine pueblo already mentioned by me in the last chapter called Oaxtepec, where is the garden which I have said is the best that I have ever seen in all my life, and so said the Treasurer Alderete and the monk Fray Pedro Melgarejo and our Cortés. When they saw it and walked about in it they admired it greatly and said that they had never seen a better garden in Spain. I must add that we all found quarters in the garden that night. The Caciques of the town came to speak and offer their services to Cortés, for Gonzalo de Sandoval had already brought them to peace when he entered the town, as I have written fully in the chapter which treats of that event. That night we slept there and the next morning very early we left for Cuernavaca¹ and we met some squadrons of Mexicans who had come out from that town and the horsemen pursued them more than a league and a half until they took refuge in another large pueblo called Tepostlan where the inhabitants were so completely off their guard that we fell upon them before their spies whom they had sent to watch us could reach them.

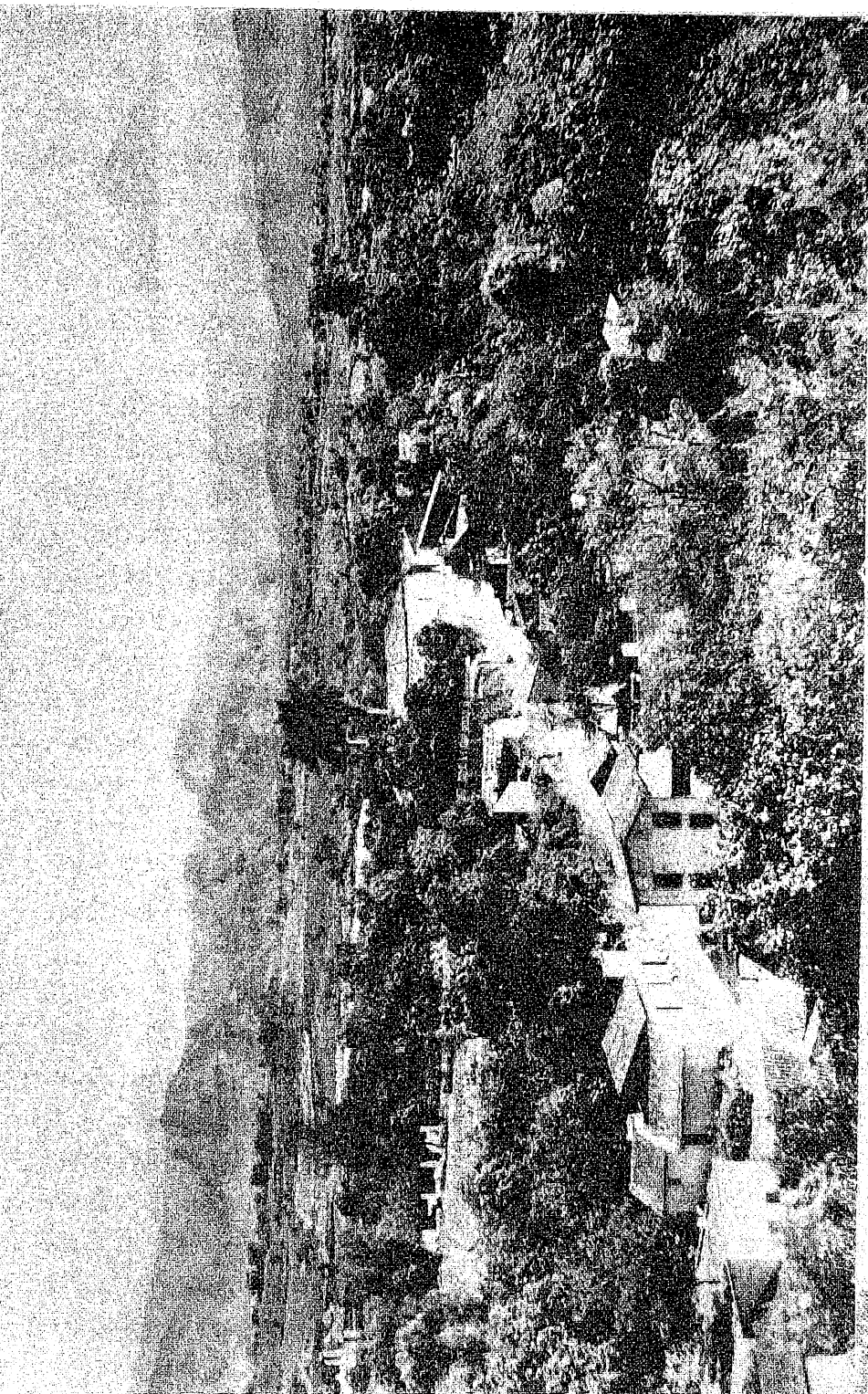
Here we found some very good-looking Indian women and much spoil, but none of the Mexicans nor any of the

¹ Coadlabaca in the text (Mex. Cuauhnahuac). In this instance the name is given in mistake for Yautepec. (Cf. Cortés's Third Letter.)

inhabitants waited for us in the town, so Cortés sent three or four times to summon the Caciques to come and make peace, and said that if they did not come he would burn the town and go in search of them. They replied that they did not mean to come, therefore, so as to strike fear into the other pueblos, Cortés ordered half the houses round about to be set on fire. At that very moment the Caciques from the pueblo that we had passed that day which I have said is called Yautepec came and gave their fealty to His Majesty. The next day we took the road for a much better and larger town named Coadlabaca (at the present time we usually alter the spelling and call it Cuernavaca), and it was garrisoned by many warriors both Mexican and Native, and was very strong on account of the Barrancas more than eight fathoms deep, with running water at the bottom, but the volume of water is small. However, they made the place into a stronghold and there was no way of entering for horses except by two bridges which had already been broken down. This protection was sufficient to prevent our forcing an entrance so we fought with them from across the stream and ravine, and they shot many arrows and lances at us and hurled stones from their slings, so that they fell thicker than hail. While this was happening Cortés was informed that about half a league further on there was a place where horses could pass, and he at once set off with all the horsemen while all of us remained looking for some way to get across, and we saw that by means of some trees which stood near the edge one could get over to the other side of that deep ravine, and although three soldiers fell from the trees into the water below, and one of them broke his leg, nevertheless we did cross over although the danger was great. As for me I will say truly that when I was crossing and saw how bad and dangerous the passage was, I turned quite giddy, still I got across, I and others of our soldiers and

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*A View from Cuernavaca
Looking N.E.*

many Tlaxcalans, and we fell on the rear of the Mexicans who were shooting stones and darts and arrows at our people, and when they saw us they could not believe it, and thought that we were more numerous than we were. At that moment Cristóbal de Olid and Andrés de Tápia and other horsemen who at great risk had crossed by a broken bridge, arrived on the scene and we fell on the enemy so that they turned their backs and fled into the thickets about the deep ravine where we could not reach them. Soon afterwards Cortés himself arrived with the rest of the horsemen.

In this town we took great spoil both of large bales of cloth as well as good-looking women. Cortés ordered us to remain there that day and we all found quarters in the beautiful garden of the chief of the town.

Although I feel bound to speak many times in the course of this story about the great precautions of sentinels, spies and scouts which were taken wherever we were, whether encamped or on the march, it would be tedious to repeat it too often, and for this reason I will go on and say that our scouts came to tell Cortés that twenty Indians were approaching, and that from their movements and appearance they seemed to be Caciques and chieftains who were bringing messages or coming to seek for peace. They proved to be the Caciques of the town, and when they arrived where Cortés was standing they paid him great respect and presented him with some gold jewels and asked him to pardon them for not meeting him peacefully, but they said the Lord of Mexico commanded them to stay in their stronghold and thence to make war on us, and had sent a large force of Mexicans to aid them, but from what they had now seen, there was no place, however strong it might be, that we would not attack and dominate, and they begged him [Cortés] to have mercy and make peace with them. Cortés received

them graciously, and told them that we were the vassals of a great Prince, the Emperor Don Carlos, who was good to all those who wished to serve him and that in his Royal Name he would receive them in peace, and they then gave their fealty to His Majesty. I remember that those Caciques said that our gods had warned their gods that their persons and property and towns would be chastized. We must leave them there and relate how very early on the next day we set out for another great town named Xochimilco and what happened on the road and in the city, and the attacks that were made on us I will go on to tell about, up to our return to Texcoco.

CHAPTER CXLV.

About the great thirst that we endured on the march and the great danger that we were in at Xochimilco from the many battles and skirmishes which we fought against the Mexicans and the natives of that city, and the many other warlike encounters which we went through before returning to Texcoco.

So we set out towards Xochimilco, which is a great city where nearly all the houses are built in a fresh water lake, distant about two and a half leagues from Mexico. We marched with great circumspection and in close order as it was always our custom to do, and we passed through some pine forests, but there was no water whatever along the road. As we carried our arms on our backs and it was already late and the sun was very hot we suffered much from thirst, but we did not know if there was any water ahead of us, for we had marched two or three leagues and we were still uncertain how far off was the pool which we had been told was on the road. When Cortés saw that the whole of the army was tired out and our allies the Tlaxcalans were dispirited, and one of them

had died of thirst, and I believe one of our soldiers who was old and ailing also died of thirst, he ordered a halt to be made in the shade of some pine trees and sent six horsemen ahead on the road to Xochimilco to see how far off the nearest village, or farm, or pool of water might be, so that we might know if it were near and might go and sleep there.

When the horsemen (who were Cristóbal de Olid and a certain Valdenebro, and Pedro González de Trujillo and some other energetic men) set out, I made up my mind to step aside so that neither Cortés nor the horsemen should see me, and with my three strong and active Tlaxcalan servants I followed behind the horsemen until they observed me coming behind them, and stopped in order to turn me back for fear that there should be some unexpected attack by Mexican warriors from which I could not defend myself. Nevertheless I preferred to go on with them, and Cristóbal de Olid, as he was a friend of mine, said that I might go but should keep my hands ready to fight and my feet ready to place myself in safety if there was any fear of warriors, however, my thirst was so great that I would have risked my life to satisfy it. About half a league ahead there were a number of farms and cottages on the hillsides belonging to the people of Xochimilco. The horsemen left me and went to search for pools of water and they found some and satisfied their thirst, and one of my Tlaxcalans brought out of a house a large pitcher of very cold water (for they have very large pitchers in that country) from which I quenched my thirst, and so did they.

Then I determined to return to where Cortés was resting, for the dwellers in the farms were already giving the call to arms and shouting and whistling at us. With the help of the Tlaxcalans I carried along the pitcher full of water and I found Cortés who was beginning to

march again with his army. I told him that there was water at the farms near by and that I had already had a drink and was bringing water in a pitcher which the Tlaxcalans were bringing very carefully hidden, so that it should not be taken from me, for thirst has no laws, and Cortés and some of the other gentlemen drank from it, and he was well satisfied and all were rejoiced and hastened on their march so that we arrived at the farms before the sun had set.

Water was found in the houses, but not very much of it, and owing to the hunger and thirst that they suffered some of the soldiers ate some plants like thistles which hurt their tongues and mouths.

Just then the horsemen returned and reported that the pool of water was a long way off, and that all the country was being called to arms, and that it would be advisable to sleep where we were. So sentinels and watchmen and scouts were at once posted and I was one of the watchmen, and I remember that it rained a little that night and there was a very high wind.

The next day very early in the morning we began our march again and about eight o'clock we arrived at Xochimilco. I cannot estimate the great number of the warriors who were waiting for us, some on the land and others in a passage by a broken bridge, and the great number of breast works and barricades which had been thrown up, and the lances which they carried made from the swords captured from us during the great slaughter on the causeways at Mexico. Many of the Indian captains carried shining swords, taken from us, fixed on the end of long lances, and there were archers and those who used double-pointed javelins and slings with stones and two handed swords like broadswords edged with stone knives. I say that all the mainland was covered with them, and at the passage of that bridge we were fighting

them for more than half an hour and could not get through, neither muskets nor crossbows nor the many great charges that we made were of any avail, and the worst of all was that many other squadrons of them were already coming to attack us on our flanks. When we saw that, we dashed through the water and bridge, some half swimming and others jumping, and here some of our soldiers, much against their will, had perforce to drink so much of the water beneath the bridge that their bellies were swollen up from it.

To go back to the battle, at the passage of the bridge many of our soldiers were wounded, but we soon brought the enemy to the sword's point along some streets where there was solid ground ahead of us. Cortés and the horsemen turned in another direction on the mainland where they came on more than ten thousand Indians, all Mexicans, who had come as reinforcements to help the people in the city, and they fought in such a way with our troops that, with their lances in rest, they awaited the attack of the horsemen and wounded four of them. Cortés was in the middle of the press and the horse he was riding, which was a very good one, a dark chestnut called "el Romo"¹ either because he was too fat, or was tired, (for he was a pampered horse,) broke down, and the Mexican warriors who were around in great numbers laid hold of Cortés and dragged him from the horse; others say that by sheer strength they threw the horse down. Whichever way it may have happened, Cortés and the horse fell to the ground, and at that very moment many more Mexican warriors pressed up to see if they could carry him off alive. When some Tlaxcalans and also a very valiant soldier named Cristóbal de Olea (a native of

¹ The flat nosed.

Old Castille in the neighbourhood of Medina del Campo) saw what had happened, they at once came up and with good cuts and thrusts they cleared a space so that Cortés could mount again although he was badly wounded in the head. Olea was also very badly wounded with three sword cuts. By that time all of us soldiers who were anywhere near came to their help. At that time, as every street in the City was crowded with squadrons of warriors and as we were obliged to follow their banners, we were not able all to keep together, but some of us to attack in some places and some of us in others as Cortés commanded us. However we all knew from the shouts and cries, yells and whistles that we heard, that where Cortés and the horsemen were engaged the fight was hottest, and, without further explanation, although there were swarms of warriors round us, we went at great risk to ourselves to join Cortés. Fifteen horsemen had already joined him and were fighting near some canals where the enemy had thrown up breastworks and barricades. When we came up we put the Mexicans to flight, but not all of them turned their backs on us, and because the soldier Olea who had helped our Cortés was very badly wounded with three sword cuts and was bleeding, and because the streets of the city were crowded with warriors, we advised Cortés to turn back to some barricades, so that he and Olea and the horse might be attended to.

So we turned back, but not without anxiety on account of the stones, arrows and javelins which they fired at us from the barricades, for the Mexicans thought that we were turning to retreat and they followed us with great fury. At this moment Andrés de Tápia and Cristóbal de Olid came up, and all the rest of the horsemen who had gone off with them in other directions. Blood was streaming down Olid's face, and from his

horse and from all the rest of them, for everyone was wounded, and they said that they had been fighting against such a host of Mexicans in the open fields that they could make no headway against them, for when we had passed the bridge which I have mentioned it seems that Cortés had divided the horsemen so that half went in one direction and half in the other, one half following one set of squadrons and the other half another set of squadrons.

While we were treating the wounds by searing them with oil, there was a great noise of yells, trumpets, shells and drums from some of the streets on the mainland, and along them came a host of Mexicans into the court where we were tending the wounded, and they let fly such a number of javelins and stones that they at once wounded many of our soldiers. However, the enemy did not come very well out of that incursion for we at once charged on them and with good cuts and thrusts we left most of them stretched out on the ground.

The horsemen too were not slow in riding out to the attack and killed many of them, but two of the horses were wounded. We drove them out of that place or court, and when Cortés saw that there were no more of the enemy we went to rest in another great court where stood the great oratories of the city.

Many of our soldiers ascended the highest temple where the Idols were kept, and from thence looked over the Great City of Mexico and the lakes, for one had a commanding view of it all, and they could see approaching more than two thousand canoes full of warriors who were coming straight towards us from Mexico. Later on we learnt that the Prince of Mexico named Guatemoc had sent them to attack us that night or next day, and at the same time he sent another ten thousand warriors by land so that by attacking us both on one side and the other,

not one of us should go out of that city alive. He had also got ready another ten thousand men as a reinforcement when the attack was made. All this we found out on the following day from five Mexican captains who were captured during the battle.

However, our Lord ordained that it should be otherwise, for when that great fleet of canoes was observed and it was known that they were coming to attack us, we agreed to keep a very good watch throughout the camp, especially at the landing places and canals where they had to disembark. The horsemen were waiting very much on the alert all night through, with the horses saddled and bridled on the causeway and on the mainland, and Cortés and all his captains were keeping watch and going the rounds all night long. I and two other soldiers were posted as sentinels on some masonry walls, and we had [got together] many stones where we were posted, and the soldiers of our company were provided with cross-bows and muskets and long lances, so that if the enemy should reach the landing place on the canals we could resist them and make them turn back; other soldiers were posted as guards on other canals.

While my companions and I were watching we heard a sound of many canoes being paddled, although they approached with muffled paddles, to disembark at the landing place where we were posted, and with a good shower of stones and with the lances we opposed them so that they did not dare to disembark. We sent one of our companions to give warning to Cortés, and while this was happening there again approached many more canoes laden with warriors, and they began to shoot many darts and stones and arrows at us, and as we again opposed them, two of our soldiers were wounded in the head, but as it was night time and very dark the canoes went to join the captains of the whole fleet of canoes and

they all went off together to disembark at another landing place where the canals were deeper. As they were not used to fight during the night, they all went to join the squadrons that Guatemoc had sent by land which already numbered more than fifteen thousand Indians.

I also wish to relate, but not for the purpose of boasting about it, that when our companion went to report to Cortés that many canoes full of warriors had reached the landing place where we were watching, Cortés himself accompanied by ten horsemen came at once to speak to us, and as he came close to us without speaking we cried out, I and Gonzalo Sánchez, a Portuguese from Algarve, and we shouted "who comes there, are not you able to speak, what do you want?" and we threw three or four stones at him. When Cortés recognised my voice and that of my companion he said to the Treasurer Julian de Alderete and to Fray Pedro Melgarejo and the Maestre de Campo, Cristóbal de Olid, who were accompanying him on his rounds "We need no further security here than the two men who are here stationed as watchmen, they are men who have been with me from the earliest times and we can fully trust them to keep a good look out even in a case of still greater danger" and then they spoke to us and explained the danger that was threatening us.

In the same way without saying more to us they went on to examine the other outposts and when I was least expecting it, we heard how they flogged two soldiers who were lounging through their watch, these were some of Narvaez's men.

There is another matter which I call to mind, which is that our musketeers had no more powder, and the crossbowmen no arrows, for on the day before they had fired so quickly that all had been used up. That same night Cortés ordered the crossbowmen to get ready all [the arrows] they possessed and to feather them and

fix on the arrow heads, for on these expeditions we always carried many loads of materials for arrows and over five loads of arrow heads made of copper, so that we could always make arrows when they were needed. So all that night every crossbowman was occupied feathering and putting heads on the arrows, and Pedro Barba, who was their Captain never ceased from overseeing the work and from time to time Cortés assisted him.

Let us leave this and relate that as soon as there was daylight we saw all the Mexican squadrons closing in on the court where we were encamped, and, as they never caught us napping, the horsemen in one direction where there was firm ground, and we and our Tlaxcalan allies in another, charged through them and killed and wounded three of their captains who died the next day, and our allies made a good capture and took as prisoners five chieftains, from whom we learnt what orders had been given by Guatemoc, as I have already related.

Many of our soldiers were wounded in that battle, but this encounter was not the end of the fighting, for our horsemen following on the heels of the enemy, came on the ten thousand warriors whom Guatemoc had sent as reinforcements to help and support those whom he had sent in advance. The Mexican Captains who came with this force carried swords captured from us, and made many demonstrations of the valour with which they would use them saying that they would slay us with our own arms. When our horsemen who were few in number found themselves close to the enemy and saw the great number of squadrons, they feared to attack them, and they moved aside so as not to meet them until Cortés and all of us could come to their aid. When we heard of this, without a moment's delay, all the horsemen who were left in mounted their horses although both men and horses were wounded, and all the soldiers and crossbowmen and our

Tlaxcalan allies marched out and we charged in such a way that we broke the ranks of the enemy and got at them hand to hand and with good sword play made them abandon their unlucky enterprise and leave us the field of battle.

Let us leave this and go on to say that we captured some other chieftains there and heard from them that Guatemoc had ordered another great flotilla of Canoes to be despatched and was sending many more warriors by land, and had said to his warriors that when we were weary from our recent encounters and had many dead and wounded, we would become careless, thinking that no more squadrons would be sent against us, and that with the large force he was then sending they would be able to defeat us. When this was known, if we had been on the alert before we were much more so now, and it was agreed that the next day we should leave the city and not wait for more attacks. That day we spent in attending to the wounded, and in cleaning our arms and making arrows.

It appears that in this city there were many rich men who had very large houses full of mantles and cloth and Indian cotton shirts, and they possessed gold and feather work and much other property. It so happened that while we were occupied as I have described, the Tlaxcalans and some of our soldiers chanced to find out in what part of the town these houses were situated, and some of the Xochimilco prisoners went with them to point them out. These houses stood in the fresh water lake and one could reach them by a causeway, but there were two or three small bridges in the causeway where it crossed some deep canals, and as our soldiers went to the houses and found them full of cloth and no one was guarding them, they loaded themselves and many of the Tlaxcalans with the cloth and the gold ornaments and came with it to the camp. Some of the other soldiers when they saw this,

also set out for the houses, and while they were inside taking the cloth out of some huge wooden boxes, at that very moment a great flotilla of canoes arrived full of Indians from Mexico who fell upon them and wounded many of the soldiers, and carried off four of them alive and took them to Mexico, but the rest escaped.

One of those who was carried off was Juan de Lara and another Alonzo Hernández, but I forget the names of the others. When these four soldiers were taken to Guatemoc he learnt how few of us we were who had come with Cortés and that many of us were wounded, and all that he wished to know about our journey. When he had thoroughly informed himself about all this, he ordered the arms, feet and heads of our unfortunate companions to be cut off and sent them to the towns of our allies, to those that had already made peace with us, and he sent to tell them that he did not think there would be one of us left alive to return to Texcoco. The hearts and blood were offered to the Idols.

Let us leave this and say how he at once sent many fleets of canoes full of warriors, and other companions by land, and told them to see to it that we did not leave Xochimilco alive. As I am tired of writing about the many battles and encounters which we fought against the Mexicans in those days, and yet cannot omit to mention them, I will say that as soon as dawn broke there came such a host of Culuans, that is Mexicans, by the waterways and others by the causeways and by the mainland that we could hardly break them up. So we then went out from the city to a great Plaza which stood at a little distance from the town, where they were used to hold their markets, and halted there with all our baggage ready for the march. Cortés then began to make us a speech about the danger in which we were placed, for we knew for certain that in the bad passes on the roads, at the creeks and on the

canals the whole power of Mexico and its allies would be lying in wait for us, and he told us that it would be a good thing, and it was his command, that we should march unencumbered and should leave the baggage and the cloths so that it should not impede us when it came to fighting. When we heard this with one voice we answered that, please God we were men enough to defend our property and persons and his also, and that it would show great cowardice to do such a thing. When Cortés knew our wishes and heard our reply he said that he prayed God to help us, and then knowing the strength and power of the enemy, we arranged the order of march, the baggage and the wounded in the middle, the horsemen divided so that half of them marched ahead and half as a rearguard. The crossbowmen and our native allies we also placed near the middle as a security, for the Mexicans were accustomed to attack the baggage. Of the musketeers we did not take much count for they had no powder left.

In this order we began our march, and when the squadrons of Mexicans whom Guatemoc had sent out that day saw us retreating from Xochimilco they thought that it was from fear and that we did not dare to meet them, which was true, and so great a host of them started off at once and came directly against us that they wounded eight soldiers of whom two died within eight days, and they thought to defeat us and break into the baggage, but as we marched in the order I have described they were not able to do it. However, all along the road until we reached a large town called Coyoacan, about two leagues distant from Xochimilco, the warriors never ceased to make sudden attacks on us from positions where we could not well get at them, but whence they could assail us with javelins and stones and arrows, and then take refuge in the neighbouring creeks and ditches.

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When we arrived at Coyoacan about ten o'clock in the morning we found it deserted.

I wish now to say that there are many cities standing about two leagues apart from one another, near the Great City of Mexico, such as Xochimilco, Coyoacan, Churubusco, Iztapalapa, Cuitlahuac and Mexquic¹ and two or three other pueblos, (the greater part of them built in the water,) which stand a league and a half or two leagues one from the other, and from all of them many Indian warriors had assembled in Xochimilco to fight against us. I will go on to say that when we arrived at this large town and found it deserted, as it stands on level ground, we determined to rest there that day and the next so as to attend to the wounded and to make arrows, for we understood very well that we should have to fight more battles before returning to our camp at Texcoco.

Next day early in the morning we began our march in the same formation that we were accustomed to keep, following the road to Tacuba, which stands about two leagues from our starting place. At one place on the road many squadrons of warriors divided into three parties came out to attack us, but we resisted all three attacks, and the horsemen followed the enemy over the level ground until they took refuge in the creeks and canals.

As we kept on our way in the manner I have described, Cortés left us with ten horsemen to prepare an ambush for the Mexicans who came out from the creeks and made attacks on us. He took with him four pages and the Mexicans pretended that they were running away and Cortés with the horsemen and servants followed them. Then Cortés saw that there was a large force of the enemy placed in ambush who fell upon him and his horsemen

¹ Suchimillco, Cuyuacan, Huichilubusco, Yztalapa, Cuedlavaca and Mezquique in the text,

and wounded some horses and if they had not retreated at once they would all have been killed or taken prisoners. As it was, the Mexicans carried off alive two out of the four soldiers who were pages to Cortés, and they carried them to Guatemoc who had them sacrificed.

Let us stop talking about this disaster and say that we arrived at Tacuba with our banners flying and with all the army and the baggage. The rest of the horsemen had come in with Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid, but Cortés and the ten horsemen who were with him did not appear, and we had an uncomfortable suspicion that some disaster might have overtaken him. Then Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid and other horsemen went in search of him, in the direction of the creeks where we had seen him turn off. At that moment the other two pages who had gone with Cortés and who had escaped with their lives came into camp, (one who was named Monroy and the other Tomás de Rijoles,) and they told us all that I have already related, and said that they had escaped because they were fleet of foot, and that Cortés and the others were following slowly because their horses were wounded. While we were talking Cortés appeared, at which we all rejoiced, although he had arrived very sad and almost tearful. The two pages who were carried off to Mexico to be sacrificed were called one of them Francisco Martin Bendaval (and this name of Bendaval was given to him because he was a little mad) and the other was called Pedro Gallego.

When we arrived at Tacuba it rained heavily and we took shelter for nearly two hours in some large courts, and Cortés with some other captains and the treasurer Alderete, who was unwell, and the Friar Melgarejo and many of us soldiers ascended the lofty temple of that town whence one had a good view of the city of Mexico which is quite near, and of the lake and the other cities

that I have spoken of, which are built in the water. When the Friar and the treasurer Alderete saw so many and such great cities all standing in the water, they were astonished, and when they looked at the Great City of Mexico and the lake and the great multitude of canoes, some going laden with food, others out fishing and others empty, much more did they marvel, and said that our coming to this New Spain, was not an act of human beings but that it was the great Mercy of God who had ordained that we should hold the country and protect it, and that they had already said that they never remembered to have read in any writing of any vassals who had done such great services for their King as we had done, and that now they said it the more positively and that they would send an account of it to His Majesty.

I will omit the rest of the conversation that took place there, and how the Friar consoled Cortés for the loss of his pages, for he was deeply grieved about them, and will say how Cortés and all of us stood there viewing from Tacuba the great Temple of Huichilobos and Tlatelolco and the buildings where we had been used to lodge, and we could see all the city and the bridges and the causeway along which we had fled. At that moment Cortés heaved a sigh of great sadness, very much greater than he had felt before, thinking of his men who had been killed before he descended that lofty temple. From this originated the song or romance :—

En Tacuba esta Cortés	Cortés stood in Tacuba
Con su esquadron esforzado	With his valiant company
Triste estaba y muy penoso	Sad he was, and very anxious
Triste y con gran cuydado	Sad and weighed down with care
Una mano en la mexilla	One hand was to his face
Y la otra en el costado, etc.	The other to his side, etc.

I remember that then a soldier called the Bachelor Alonzo Pérez, who after New Spain was conquered was

the fiscal and a settler in Mexico, said to him, "Señor, do not feel so sad—such things must happen in war, and it will not be said of your honour :

Mira Nero de Tarpeya	Nero from the Tarpean rock
A Roma como se ardia	Watched Rome as it was burning"

Cortés answered him, "you have seen how many times I have sent to Mexico praying them to make peace, for I am not grieving over one matter only, but at the thought of the great hardships through which we must pass before we gain the mastery, and that with the help of God we will soon set to the work."

Enough of these dialogues and romances, for it was not the right time for them; let me say that there was a suggestion made among our soldiers and captains to go and take a look at the causeway, as it ran so close to where we were in Tacuba. However as we had no powder, and very few arrows, and nearly all the soldiers in the army were wounded, and remembering that it was little more than a month since Cortés had been there and had tried to pass along the causeway with a large number of soldiers, and had been in such great danger that there was fear of his being defeated, (as I have related in the chapter which treats of that matter), it was agreed that we should keep on our march, for fear lest some day or night we should become involved in a contest with the Mexicans, for Tacuba is very close to the great city of Mexico and Guatemoc might exert his great powers so as to carry off some of our soldiers alive.

So we began our march, and passed by Atzcapotzalco¹ which we found to be deserted, and went on to Tenayuca which is the large town we were accustomed to call El pueblo de las Sierpes, for I have already said in the

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¹ Escapuçalco in the text.

chapter that treats of it, that there were three serpents in the chief oratory in which they worshipped and they had them for their Idols. This town was also deserted. From thence we went to Guatitlan, and throughout the day it never ceased raining with heavy rainstorms, and as we marched with our arms shouldered and never took off [our harness] by day or night, what with the weight and the soaking we got, we were quite broken down. We arrived at that large town when night was falling but it also was deserted. It never ceased raining all night long and the mud was very deep. The natives of the place and some squadrons of Mexicans yelled at us all night from the canals and other places where we could do them no harm. As it was raining and very dark no sentinels could be posted or rounds made, and no order was kept, nor could we find those who were posted, and this I can myself assert for they stationed me as a watchman for the first watch, and neither officer nor patrol visited me, and so it was throughout the camp.

Let us leave this carelessness and say that the next day we continued our march to another large pueblo¹ of which I do not remember the name; the mud was very deep in it, and we found it deserted. The following day we passed by other deserted pueblos and the day after we reached a pueblo called Aculman, subject to Texcoco. • When they knew in Texcoco that we were coming, they came out to receive Cortés, and there were many Spaniards who had lately come from Spain. Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval with many soldiers also came out to receive us and with him came the Lord of Texcoco, who as I have already said was called Don Fernando.

Cortés had a good reception both from our own people

¹ Gilotepeque (Cortés Third Letter), *i.e.*, Citlaltepec.

and from those recently come from Spain, and a still more cordial reception from the natives of the neighbouring towns who at once brought us food.

That night Sandoval returned to Texcoco with all his soldiers to protect his camp, and the next morning Cortés and all of us continued our march to Texcoco. So we marched on weary and wounded, and having left many of our soldier companions behind us dead, or in the power of the Mexicans to be sacrificed, and instead of resting and curing our wounds we had to meet a conspiracy organized by certain persons of quality who were partisans of Narvaez, for the purpose of killing Cortés and Gonzalo de Sandoval, Pedro de Alvarado and Andrés de Tápia.

What else happened I will go on to relate.

CHAPTER CXLVI.

How when we arrived at Texcoco with Cortés and all our army from the expedition after making a circuit of the towns of the lake, it had been settled among certain of those persons who came with Narvaez to kill Cortés and all who should go to his defence. And he who was the principal author of this farce was one who had been a servant of Diego Velásquez the Governor of Cuba, and Cortés ordered this soldier to be hanged; and how the slaves were branded, and all the camp and the friendly towns were got ready, and a review was held, and orders given and other things that happened.

AS I have already said we returned broken up and wounded from the expedition that I have recorded. It appears that a great friend of the Governor of Cuba named Antonio de Villafañá, a native of Zamora or Toro, planned with other soldiers of the party of Narvaez, (I will not mention their names for their honour's sake), that when Cortés should thus return from that expedition

they would kill him with dagger thrusts. As a Spanish ship had arrived at that time it was to happen in this way: when Cortés should be seated at table dining with his Captains, one of the persons who had made the plot should bring him a letter firmly closed up and sealed as though it came from Castile, and should say that it came from his father Martin Cortés, and while he was reading it they should stab him with daggers, both Cortés and all the Captains and soldiers who should happen to be near Cortés and would defend him.

When all that I have spoken about had already been talked over and prepared, it pleased Our Lord that those who had arranged it should give a share in the affair to two important persons (I wish also to avoid mentioning their names) who had gone on the expeditions with us, and in the plan that had been made they had named one of these persons to be captain general when they had killed Cortés, and other soldiers of the party of Narvaez they appointed chief alguazil and ensign, and alcaldes, magistrates, treasurer and inspector and other officers of that sort; and they had even divided among themselves our property and horses, and this plot was kept secret until two days after our arrival at Texcoco.

It pleased our Lord God that such a thing should not come to pass, for New Spain would have been lost and all of us, for parties and follies would have sprung up at once.

It seems that a soldier divulged it [the plot] to Cortés, who at once put a stop to it before more fuel could be added to the fire, for that good soldier asserted that many persons of quality were concerned in it. When Cortés knew of it, after making great promises and gifts, which he gave to the man who disclosed it to him, he at once secretly informed all our Captains, namely, Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Lugo, Cristóbal de Olid,

Andrés de Tápia, Gonzalo de Sandoval and me, and the two alcaldes who were on duty that year, namely, Luis Marin and Pedro de Írcio and all of us who were adherents of Cortés.

As soon as we knew about it we got ready, and without further delay went with Cortés to the lodging of Antonio Villafaña, and there were present with him many of those who were in the conspiracy, and with the aid of four alguaciles whom Cortés had brought with him we promptly laid hands on Villafaña, and the Captains and soldiers who were with him at once began to flee and Cortés ordered them to be seized and detained. As soon as we held Villafaña prisoner Cortés drew from his [Villafaña's] breast the memorandum which he possessed with the signatures of all who were in the conspiracy, and after he had read it and had seen that there were many persons of quality in it, so as not to dishonour them, he spread the report that Villafaña had swallowed the memorandum and that he [Cortés] had neither seen nor read it, and he at once brought him to trial. When his [Villafaña's] statement was taken he spoke the truth and with the many witnesses of good faith and credibility whose evidence they took on the case, the regular Alcaldes jointly with Cortés and the Quarter Master Cristóbal de Olid gave sentence, and after he had confessed with the priest Juan Díaz, they hanged him from the window of a room where he had lodged.

Cortés did not wish that anyone else should be dishonoured in that affair, although at that time many were made prisoners in order to frighten them, and to make a show that he wished to punish others, but as the time was not suitable he overlooked it.

Cortés at once agreed to have a guard for his person, and the Captain of it was a gentleman named Antonio

de Quiñones a native of Zamora, with six soldiers, good and valiant men who guarded him [Cortés] day and night. And he begged us, whom he knew belonged to his party, to look after his person. Although from that time forth he showed great kindness to those who were in the conspiracy, he distrusted them.

Let us leave this subject and say that he at once ordered it to be proclaimed that, within two days, all the Indian men and women that we had captured on those expeditions should be brought to be branded, and a house was designated for the purpose.

So as not to waste more words in this story about the way that they were sold at the auction, (beyond what I have said at other times on the two other occasions when they were branded,) if it were done badly before, it was done much worse this time, for, after taking out the royal fifth, Cortés took his fifth and further thefts for Captains, and if those we sent to be branded were handsome and good Indian women they stole them by night from the crowd, so that they should not reappear from then till doomsday and on this account many women were left out, who we afterwards kept as free servants.

Let us leave this subject and say what orders were afterwards given in our camp.





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