

CHAPTER CXCIIL.

How, after the death of the Licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon, the Licentiate Marcos de Aguilar began to govern, and the disputes that arose about it; and how Captain Luis Marin and all those of us who were in his company chanced to meet Pedro de Alvarado who was marching in search of Cortés, and how both parties rejoiced, because the country was hostile and could not be traversed without great danger.

WHEN Marcos de Aguilar undertook the Government of New Spain in accordance with the will of Luis Ponce de Leon, many persons who were on bad terms with Cortés and all their friends and the majority of the Conquistadores wished the Residencia to be proceeded with as the Licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon had begun it, but Cortés objected that he [Aguilar] could not deal with it under the authority of Luis Ponce de Leon's last will, however, if Marcos de Aguilar desired to go on with it, that he was welcome to do so.

Another objection was raised by the Municipality of Mexico urging that Luis Ponce had no power to dispose in his will that the Licentiate Aguilar should govern alone, firstly because he was very old, in his dotage, and crippled with tumours, and had little authority and showed this in his appearance, and he knew nothing about the affairs of the country nor had he informed himself about them, nor about the persons who were worthy. Moreover, they would neither respect him nor dread him. It might [therefore] be best for him to take Cortés as his colleague in the government, until His Majesty should order otherwise, in order that all should fear [him] and the justice of His Majesty be greatly revered.

Marcos de Aguilar replied that he would depart neither much nor little from what Luis Ponce ordered in his will, and that he must govern alone, and that if they intended

to install another Governor by force they would not be doing what His Majesty commanded. Added to what Marcos de Aguilar said, Cortés was afraid of further steps being taken, notwithstanding the speeches which the proctors of the cities and towns of New Spain made to him that he should endeavour to become Governor, and that they would persuade Marcos de Aguilar to [agree to] it by sound arguments, for it was clear that he was very infirm, and it would be to the service of God and of His Majesty. However, for all they said to Cortés, he would never touch on that point again but [preferred] that the aged Aguilar should be sole governor, although he was so infirm and consumptive that he was provided with a Castilian woman to suckle him, and some she-goats that he might drink their milk as well. At that time a son whom he had brought with him died of sleeping sickness in the same way that Luis Ponce died.

I will leave this to its proper time, as I wish to turn far back in my story and relate what was done by Captain Luis Marin, who stayed behind with all the people at Naco, awaiting a reply from Sandoval in order to know whether or not Cortés had embarked, and we received no reply whatever. I have already told how Sandoval left us to go and force Cortés to embark and go to New Spain, and promised to write to us what happened, so that we could go with Luis Marin on the road to Mexico; and, although Sandoval and Cortés wrote on two separate occasions, we never received a reply, and Sayavedra never cared to write to us. So it was decided by Luis Marin, and all of us who had come with him, that ten mounted soldiers should go quickly to Trujillo to find out about Cortés, and Francisco de Marmolejo went as our Captain, and I was one of the ten. We went inland through a hostile country until we reached Olancho, which is now called Guayape, where the rich gold mines were, and there

we heard the news from two invalid Spaniards and from a Negro how Cortés had embarked a few days before with all the gentlemen and conquistadores who were with him, because the City of Mexico had sent to summon him as all the settlers in Mexico were willing to obey him, and that a Franciscan Friar had come for him ; and that Sayavedra, Cortés's cousin, remained behind as Captain in some hostile towns near by.

We were delighted at the news and at once wrote to Captain Sayavedra, by some Indians of that pueblo of Olancho which was at peace, and in four days a reply came which told us of certain things which have already been stated, and we gave many thanks to God for it, and with forced marches we returned to where Luis Marin was stationed. I remember that we hurled stones at the country we were leaving behind, crying "Stay where you are evil land, for with God's help we will march to Mexico," and continuing our journey we found Luis Marin in a pueblo called Acalteca, and when we arrived with our news he was greatly cheered. Presently we struck the road to a pueblo named Maniani and found there six soldiers belonging to the company of Pedro de Alvarado who were searching for us, and one of them was Diego López de Villa Nueva who is now a settler in Guatemala, and when we recognised each other we embraced, and on asking after their Captain Pedro de Alvarado they replied that he was close by with many gentlemen who had come in search of Cortés, and they told us all that had happened in Mexico, which I have already related, and how they had sent to summon Pedro de Alvarado to become governor, and the reason why he did not go, which I have stated in the chapter that treats of the subject. Continuing our march, within two days we met Pedro de Alvarado and his soldiers near a town called Choluteca Malalaca.

One can hardly describe his delight when he knew that Cortés had gone to Mexico, for it released him from the laborious journey which he was to take in search of him, and was a relief to them all.

While we were there in this pueblo of Chuluteca, there arrived at the same time certain Captains of Pedrarias de Ávila named Garavito and Canpañon, and others whose names I forget, and, according to what they said, they came to explore the country and to settle boundaries with Pedro de Alvarado. After we arrived at that pueblo with Captain Luis Marin we all stayed together there for three days—the people of Pedro Arias de Ávila and Pedro de Alvarado and ourselves.

From this place Pedro de Alvarado sent Gaspar Arias de Ávila, who was [afterwards] a settler in Guatemala, to discuss certain matters of business with the Governor Pedro Arias de Ávila, and I have heard say that it was about marriages, for Gaspar Arias de Ávila paid great court to Pedro de Alvarado.

To go on with our journey—the people of Pedro Arias stayed in that pueblo and we continued our march towards Guatemala. Before reaching the province of Cuscatlan¹ it rained heavily, and a river called Lempa came down in flood and we had no means whatever of crossing it, so we decided to fell a tree called a Ceiba, and it was large enough to make into a canoe, larger than any that had ever been seen in these parts. With great labour we crossed the river in five days, and there was a great scarcity of maize. After the passage of the river we came on some pueblos which we called “los Chaparristiques,” for such is their name, where the Indians, natives of those pueblos, killed a soldier named Nicuesa and wounded three of our men who had gone to search

¹ A province of Salvador.

for food. We went to rescue them, and they [the Indians] were already routed, but in order to avoid delay they were left unpunished, and this happened in the province where now the town of San Miguel is settled.

From there we entered the province of Cuscatlan, which was hostile, and we found plenty to eat, and from there we came to some pueblos near to Petapa. The Guatemaltecos had some hills intrenched on the road and some very deep gullies where they awaited us, and we were three days in capturing and passing them. There they wounded me with an arrow, but the wound was of no importance.

Then we came to Petapa, and the next day came upon this valley, which they called the [valley of the] cross-eyed, where now this city of Guatemala¹ is settled. At that time it was altogether hostile and we found many barricades and pits, and we fought with the natives to force a passage; and I remember that as we were descending a slope the earth began to tremble so that many soldiers fell to the ground, for the earthquake continued a long time.

Then we went to the site of the old city of Guatemala,² where the Caciques named Zinacan and Sacachul used to reside. Before entering the city there was a very deep gully where the squadrons of Guatemaltecos were waiting to prevent our entry, and we made them flee, unfortunately for them, and went on to sleep in the city, and the lodgings and houses were good and the buildings very fine, in fact befitting Caciques who ruled all the neighbouring provinces. From there we went out to the plain and built ranchos and huts, and stayed in them for ten days, for Pedro de Alvarado sent twice to summon the people of Guatemala and other pueblos in the neigh-

¹ Now Antigua.

² Iximché.

bourhood to make peace, and we waited the time I have mentioned to learn their reply. As none of them would come in, we went on by long days' marches without halting to where Pedro de Alvarado had left his army settled, for it was a hostile country and he had left his brother named Gonzalo de Alvarado there as Captain.

The village where we found them was called Olintepéc, and we rested there several days and then we went to Soconusco and thence to Tehuantepec. At this time two Spaniards, settlers in Mexico, who had come with us on that toilsome march, died, as well as a Mexican Cacique named Juan Velásquez, one of Guatemoc's Captains, already mentioned by me. Then we went post haste to Oaxaca, for by that time we had got to know about the death of Luis Ponce and other things already related by me, and they said much good of him, and that he came to carry out what His Majesty had ordered, and we could hardly await the hour of our arrival in Mexico.

Then, as we were [a company] of over eighty soldiers with Pedro de Alvarado among them, when we arrived at a pueblo named Chalco we sent messengers thence to inform Cortés that we would enter Mexico on the following day, so that they might have quarters prepared for us, for we were arriving very much worn out, as it was more than two years and three months since we set out from that city. When it was known in Mexico that we had reached Iztapalapa, Cortés and many gentlemen came out on the causeway to receive us, and when we arrived, before going anywhere else, we went to the principal church to give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ who had brought us back to that City. From the Church Cortés took us to his Palace, where they had prepared a grand feast for us very well served. Alvarado's quarters were already prepared, as the fortress was then his home,

for at that time he was appointed Alcayde of the fortress and the arsenal. Sandoval took Captain Luis Marin to lodge in his house, and Andrés de Tápia took me and another friend named Captain Miguel Sánchez to lodge in his house, and he paid us great honour. Sandoval sent me clothes in which to array myself, and gold and cacao to spend, and so did Cortés and other settlers in the city to soldiers and friends among those who had come there.

The following day, after commending ourselves to God, I and my companion Captain Luis Sánchez set out through the city, and we took with us as intercessors Captain Sandoval and Andrés de Tápia, and we went to see and speak to the Licentiate Marcos de Aguilar, who, as I have said, was governor through the authority that Luis Ponce had left to that effect. The mediators who went with us, whom I have already said were Captain Sandoval and Andrés de Tápia, made a statement to Marcos de Aguilar concerning our persons and services, in order to beg him to give us Indians in Mexico, as those in Coatzacoalcos were of no use to us. After many speeches and promises which he made to us on the subject, he said that he had no authority either to give or take away any Indians whatever, for so Luis Ponce de Leon left in his will when he died, that all the affairs and lawsuits and unemployed Indians in New Spain should remain in the condition in which they stood until His Majesty should send to order otherwise; that if he were sent authority for [assigning] Indians he would give us the best he could find in the country. We then took our leave of him.

At this time a certain Diego de Ordás, very often mentioned by me, arrived from the Island of Cuba,¹ and as it

¹ Blotted out in the original: "who had gone to purchase mares and calves, as I have originally stated."

was he who had written the letter to the Factor stating that all of us who had gone out from Mexico with Cortés were dead, Sandoval and other gentlemen asked him with very bitter words why he had written this, when he neither knew nor possessed any evidence of it, and [added] that those letters which he sent to the Factor were so mischievous that New Spain might have been lost through them. Diego de Ordás replied with solemn oaths that he never wrote such a thing, but only that he had received news from a pueblo named Xicalango that the pilots and sailors of two ships had quarrelled and killed each other, and that the Indians had ended by killing certain sailors who were left in the ships, and that if the letters themselves should be produced they would see if it were not true; and that if the Factor altered them or substituted others he [Diego de Ordás] was not to blame, and if Cortés wished to find out the truth,—the Factor and Veedor were [still] prisoners in the cages. However, Cortés did not dare to bring them to justice on account of the orders left by Luis Ponce de Leon, and as he had many other contentions [on hand] he decided to keep quiet in this case of the Factor until orders came from His Majesty, and he was afraid lest further ill consequences should follow; also because at that time he made claim that they should return a great quantity of his property which they had sold, and spent for funeral honours and to say Masses for his soul, although those funeral honours and Masses were celebrated with malice and to instil belief throughout the city, and they conferred benedictions and paid funeral honours to Cortés and ourselves so that it should be believed to be true that we were all dead. Concerned in these lawsuits a settler in Mexico, called Juan Cáceres the rich, purchased the benedictions and Masses which had been celebrated for the soul of Cortés, to be applied to that of Cáceres.

I must stop telling old stories and will relate how Diego de Ordás, who was a man of good counsel, seeing that they no longer respected Cortés and took no account of him after the coming of Luis Ponce de Leon, and that the Government had been taken from him and many persons were insolent to him and held him of no account, advised him to claim treatment as a nobleman, and style himself "My Lord," and to assume a title and not be called simply Cortés but Don Hernando Cortés. Ordás also told him that he should remember that the Factor was a servant of the Commendador Mayor, Don Francisco de los Cobos, the man who ruled all Castile, and that some day he might need the help of Don Francisco de los Cobos, and that Cortés himself was in no great favour with His Majesty nor with the members of his Royal Council of the Indies, and that he had better beware of killing the Factor until he was sentenced by the Courts, for there were strong suspicions in Mexico that he [Cortés] wished to despatch and kill him in the cage itself.

As we now come to the point, I wish to state before going on with my story, why I am so concise in all that I write, and, when it comes to conversations, in mentioning Cortés I have not called him and will not call him Don Hernando Cortés, nor by other titles of Marquis or Captain, but only plainly Cortés. The reason of this is because he himself preferred to be called simply Cortés, and at that time he was not a Marquis, for this name of Cortés was as highly considered and esteemed throughout Castile¹ as that of Julius Cæsar or Pompey was in the time of the Romans, or in our times we hold that of Gonzalo Hernández surnamed "The Great Captain," or among the Carthaginians that of Hannibal, or of that

¹ Blotted out in the original: "and in many parts of the Christian world."

valiant and never vanquished gentleman Diego García de Paredes.

Let us stop talking of these past glories and I will relate how at that time the Treasurer Alonzo de Estrada married his two daughters, one to Jorge de Alvarado, brother of Don Pedro de Alvarado, and the other to a gentleman named Don Luis de Guzman, son of Don Juan de Sayavedra Count of Castellar, and then it was arranged that Don Pedro de Alvarado should go to Castile to beg His Majesty to grant him the Government of Guatemala, and while he was away he sent Jorge de Alvarado as his Captain for the pacification of Guatemala. When Jorge de Alvarado went, he took with him on the road more than two hundred Indians from Tlaxcala, Cholula, Mexico and Guacachula and other provinces, and they aided him in the wars. At that time also Marcos de Aguilar sent to settle the province of Chiapa, and a gentleman named Don Juan de Enríquez de Guzman, a near relation of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, went [with this expedition]. He also sent to settle the province of Tabasco, which is on the river called Grijalva, and a gentleman named Baltazar Osorio, a native of Seville, went as Captain. He also sent to pacify the pueblos of the Zapotecs, which stand among very high sierras, and there went as Captain one Alonzo de Herrera, a native of Jérez, and this Captain was one of Cortés' soldiers. Not to enumerate at present what each of these Captains did in his conquests, I will leave the account of them until the proper time and season shall arrive, and I wish to relate how at this time Marcos de Aguilar died, and what happened about the will he made that the Treasurer should become Governor.

CHAPTER CXCIV.

How Marcos de Aguilar died, and by his will appointed the Treasurer Alonzo de Estrada as Governor (but he was not to give judgment in the suits of the Factor or Veedor, nor to grant or take away Indians, until His Majesty should ordain what was most to his advantage), in the same way as Luis Ponce had delegated his authority to him.

WHILE Marcos de Aguilar held the government, as I have stated, he was very consumptive and suffering from boils, and the doctors ordered him to be suckled by a woman of Castile, [by which means] and the milk of goats he supported himself for about eight months, then from those diseases and fevers which he caught he died.

In the will which he executed he enacted that the Treasurer Alonzo de Estrada should be sole Governor, with neither more nor less powers than he himself had received from Luis Ponce de Leon.

The Cabildo of Mexico and the procurators of certain cities, who at the time happened to be in Mexico, realised that Alonzo de Estrada would not be able to govern as well as the circumstances required, for the [following] reason: Nuño de Guzman, who two years previously had come from Castile to govern the province of Panuco, occupied the border-lands of Mexico, claiming that they belonged to his province. He came full of fury and regardless of the orders His Majesty had given in the decrees relating to the matter, which he had brought [with him]. Then because a settler from Mexico named Pedro Gonzáles de Trujillo, a man of high birth, had said that he did not wish to stay under his rule but under that of Mexico (because the Indians of his "encomienda" were not natives of Panuco), and on account of other words that passed; without giving him [Pedro Gonzáles] a chance to defend himself, he ordered him to be