

CHAPTER CXCIX.

How Don Hernando Cortés, Marques del Valle, came from Spain, married to the Señora Doña Juana de Zuñiga, and with the title of Marques del Valle and Captain General of New Spain and of the South Sea, and about the reception given to him.

AS Cortés had been a long time in Castile, and was already married, as I have said, and had the title of Marquis and Captain General of New Spain and the South Sea, he had a great desire to return to New Spain to his home and estate and Marquisate, and to take possession of his Marquisate; and, as he knew that Mexican affairs were in the condition that I have related, he hastened and embarked with all his household in certain ships, and meeting with good weather at sea he arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, where a great reception was given to him, and he at once went by way of some towns of his Marquisate, and on reaching Mexico he was given another reception, but not so great as he was accustomed to.

What he intended to do was to present his writ as Marquis and have himself proclaimed Captain General of New Spain and of the South Sea, and to demand of the Viceroy and Royal Audiencia the enumeration of his vassals. This seems to me to have been ordered by His Majesty, that he should count them, for, from what I understand when he was given the Marquisate, he petitioned His Majesty to grant him certain towns and pueblos with so many thousand tributary inhabitants; but because I do not know for certain about this I leave it to the gentlemen and other persons who are better informed about the lawsuits which have been brought over this matter; for, when the Marquis asked that grant of vassals from His Majesty, he was under the

impression that they would count each house of an inhabitant or Cacique or chieftain of those towns as one tributary, as though we should now say that grown up sons who were already married should not count, nor sons-in-law, nor the many other Indians who resided in every house for the service of the owner, but that only each householder [should count] as a tributary, whether or no he had many sons and sons-in-law, dependants or servants.

The Royal Audiencia of Mexico [appointed] an Oidor of the Royal Audiencia itself, named the Doctor Quesada, to go and make the count, and he began to count in this way :—the owner of each house as one tributary, and if he had grown up sons, each son as one tributary, and if he had sons-in-law, each son-in-law as one tributary ; the Indians that he held in his service, even although they were slaves, counted each one as a tributary so that in many of the houses, ten, twelve or fifteen or more tributaries were counted. Cortés held, and so represented to, and demanded of, the Royal Audiencia, that each house was equivalent to one householder and should be counted as one tributary only. If, when the Marquis begged from His Majesty the grant of the Marquisate, he had explained that he should give him a town, such town with the householders and inhabitants it contained, His Majesty would have granted them, and the Marquis believed and felt sure that in demanding the vassals he had secured that object ; however it turned out otherwise, so that there was never any lack of lawsuits, and on this account he was very dissatisfied with the doings of Doctor Quesada who went to make the enumeration, and friction was not wanting even with the Viceroy and the Royal Audiencia, and a report was made to His Majesty by the Royal Audiencia in order to ascertain the way in which the count was to be made.

The counting of the vassals was held in suspense for some years, and the Marquis always exacted his tributes from them without it.

To go back to my story. A few days after this had happened, he went from Mexico to a town of his Marquisate named Cuernavaca ; he took the Marchioness with him and made his home there, and never again took her to the City of Mexico. In addition to this, as he had made a contract with the Serene Empress Doña Ysabel, our lady of glorious memory, and with the Royal Council of the Indies, that he would send fleets to the South Sea to discover new lands further on, all at his own cost, he began to build ships at the port of a town, which at that time belonged to his Marquisate, named Tehuantepec, and in the other ports of Zacatula and Acapulco ; and the fleets which he sent I will tell about later on, for he had no luck in anything he put his hand to, for all turned to thorns, and Nuño de Guzman succeeded much better, as I will relate later on.

CHAPTER CC.

Of the expenditure which the Marquis Don Hernando Cortés incurred for the fleets which he sent on voyages of discovery, and how he had no good luck at all.

IT is necessary to go far back in my story so that what I shall now say may be quite clear. At the time when Marcos de Aguilar was governing New Spain by virtue of the authority which the Licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon had left him when he died, as I have already stated many times, before Cortés went to Castile, [he], the Marquis del Valle, himself despatched four ships which he had built in a province named Zacatula, well supplied with provisions and artillery, with good sailors and fifty