

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

soldiers and much merchandise and trifles from Castile for barter, and everything that was necessary for victuals, and biscuits for more than a year. And he sent with them as commander-in-chief a gentleman of birth named Álvaro de Sayavedra Zeron, with orders to lay his course for the Moluccas or Spice Islands or China, and this was by the command of His Majesty, which he had written to Cortés from the City of Granada on the twenty-second of June fifteen hundred and twenty-six, and because Cortés showed the letter itself to me and other Conquistadores, who were in his company, I say it and assert it here, and His Majesty even commanded Cortés to order the Captains whom he should send to go and search for a fleet which had sailed from Castile to China, with a certain Don Fray Garcia de Loayza, Knight Commander of the order of St. John of Rhodes, as Captain.

At the time when Sayavedra was getting ready for the voyage, a tender came into port on the coast of Tehuantepec which was one of those which had sailed from Castile with the fleet of this same Comendador whom I have mentioned; and one Ortuño de Lango, a native of Portugelate, came as Captain of this same tender. From this Captain and the pilots who came in the tender Álvaro de Sayavedra Zeron learned all that he wished to know, and he even carried off in his company a pilot and two sailors and paid them very well so that they might return again with him, and he took notes of the whole voyage they had made and of the courses which must be followed.

After he had issued the instructions and notices, which Captains and Pilots going on voyages of discovery are accustomed to give to their fleets, and had heard Mass and commended himself to God, they set sail from the port of Çiguatanejo, which is in the province of Colima or Zacatula.—I do not clearly know which—and it was in

the month of December in the year fifteen hundred and twenty-seven or twenty-eight,¹ and it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ to guide them so that they went to the Moluccas and other Islands. The hardships and dangers they passed through, and even the many of them who died on that voyage, I know nothing about, but I saw in Mexico, three years later, one of the sailors who had gone with Sayavedra, and he related things about those Islands and Cities where they went that astonished me. These were the Islands whither they now go from Mexico with a fleet to make discoveries and to trade. I have even heard it said that the Portuguese reside as Captains in them [the Islands] and arrested Sayavedra or his people and took them to Castile, or that His Majesty heard news of it; but it is many years ago, and I was not concerned in it beyond, as I have said, having seen the letter which His Majesty wrote to Cortés, so I will say no more about it.

I must now relate that in the month of May in the year fifteen hundred and thirty-two, after Cortés came from Castile, he despatched from the port of Acapulco another Armada of two ships, well found with all sorts of provisions, and with a full complement of sailors and artillery and goods for barter, and with eighty soldiers both musketeers and crossbowmen, and he sent one Diego Hurtado de Mendosa in command. These two ships he sent to explore the South coast and search for Islands and new lands, and the reason of it was that, as I have already said in the Chapter which treats of it, he had made a contract [to that effect] with the Royal Council of the Indies when His Majesty went to Flanders.

To return to the account of the voyage of the two ships,

¹ Blotted out in the original: "I do not remember clearly which year it was."

it turned out that Captain Hurtado intended neither to search for Islands nor to go far out to sea, nor to do anything worth telling. More than half the soldiers he took with him mutinied, and went off with one ship, and it is even said that an arrangement was come to between the Captain and the mutineers to give them the ship, in which they could return to New Spain. This however can never be believed, that the Captain would give them permission, but [it is more likely] that they took it.

When they turned back they met with foul weather which drove them ashore, and they sprang a leak and with much difficulty got to Jalisco; they spread the news of it in Jalisco and thence the news flew to Mexico at which Cortés was much grieved.

Diego Hurtado always hugged the coast and nothing more was heard of him or his ship and he never appeared again. I must stop speaking about this Armada, for it was lost, and I will relate how Cortés promptly despatched two other ships which were already built in the port of Tehuantepec, provisioning them very fully both with bread and meat and all the necessities which at this time could be obtained, and with much artillery and good sailors and seventy soldiers and certain things for barter; and [he appointed] as commander of them a gentleman of birth named Diego Beserra de Mendoza of the Beserras of Badajoz or Merida, and in the other ship one Hernando de Grijalva went as Captain, and this Grijalva was under the orders of Beserra. As chief pilot there went a Biscayan named Ortuño Ximénez, a great cosmographer.

Cortés ordered Beserra to go to sea in search of Diego Hurtado, and, if he could not find him, to go out as far as he could on the high seas and look for islands and new countries, for there was a report of rich islands and pearls, and the Pilot Ortuño Ximénez, when he was talking

to other pilots about things of the sea before they started on that voyage, said and promised to lead them to lands favoured by fortune with riches—[the Fortunate Islands], for so they called them—and said so much about how they would all become rich, that some persons believed it.

On the first night after they sailed from the port of Tehuantepec, a head wind arose which drove the two ships apart, and they never saw one another again. They could easily have come together again, for good weather at once set in, but that Hernando de Grijalva, so as not to be under the orders of Beserra, went at once out to sea and departed with his ship, for Beserra was very haughty and illconditioned, and that was the end of it, as I shall relate further on. Hernando de Grijalva also withdrew because he wished to gain honour for himself if he should discover some fine Island, and he went out to sea more than two hundred leagues and discovered an Island which he named San Tome, but it was uninhabited.

Let us leave Grijalva and his course, and I will relate what happened to Diego Beserra with the Pilot Ortuño Ximénez, which is that they quarrelled on the voyage, and, as Beserra was disliked by most of the soldiers who went in the ship, Ortuño conspired with other Biscayan sailors, and with the soldiers with whom Beserra had had words, to fall on him in the night and kill him ; this they did when he was asleep, and they despatched Beserra and some other soldiers, and had it not been for two Franciscan Friars, who went with that Armada, who separated them, worse evils would have happened. The Pilot Ximénez and his companions rose in rebellion with the ship and at the prayers of the Friars they were put ashore at Jalisco—both the Friars as well as some others who were wounded—and Ortuño Ximénez set sail and went to an Island which he named Santa Cruz,

where it was said that there were pearls, and it was inhabited by Indians who were like savages. When he went ashore the natives of that bay or Island were hostile and killed them, so that none escaped except the sailors who remained on the ship. When they saw that all had been killed, they returned to the port of Jalisco with the ship and told the news of what had happened, and certified that the land was good and well peopled and rich in pearls.¹

This news soon reached Mexico, and when Cortés knew about it he was much grieved at what had happened,² and as he was a courageous man, and did not sit still under such results, he determined not to send more Captains but to go himself, and at that time he had already launched from the dockyard and into the harbour of Tehuantepec three ships of a good size. As they had brought the news to him that there were pearls where Ortuño Ximénez was killed, and because he always had it in his mind to discover great townships by the south sea, he wished to go and form a settlement, for so he had contracted with the most Serene Empress Doña Ysabel of glorious memory, as I have already related, and with the Royal Council of the Indies, when His Majesty went to Flanders.

When it was known in New Spain that the Marquis was

¹ Blotted out in the original: "at which Nuño de Guzman was envious, and to find out if it were true that there were pearls, he thoroughly equipped this same ship that had brought the news, both with soldiers and Captain and supplies, and sent it to the same land to find out what it was like, and the Captain and soldiers whom he sent [soon] wished to return, for they found no pearls and nothing which the sailors had described, and they got back to Jalisco to stay in pueblos of his Encomienda and brought no news to Nuño de Guzman, and because at that time good gold mines were found in that land, for one reason and another they did nothing which was profitable."

² Blotted out in the original: "How that Nuño de Guzman should take the ship."

going in person, they thought that it was an affair of certainty and riches, and so many soldiers came to serve him, both horsemen, musketeers, and crossbowmen (and among them thirty or forty married men), that there joined him in all over three hundred and twenty persons including the married women. After thoroughly supplying the three ships with much biscuit, meat, and oil and even wine, and vinegar and other things necessary for food, he took a quantity of goods for barter, and three blacksmiths with their forges and two ships' carpenters with their tools, and many other things which I will not enumerate here so as to avoid delay, and engaged good and expert pilots and sailors. He ordered those who wished to go and embark at the port of Tehuantepec, where the three ships were lying, to start, and this [he did] so as not to carry so many impedimenta by land. He himself went from Mexico with Captain Andrés de Tápia and other Captains and soldiers, and took with him priests and monks who said Mass, and he took doctors and surgeons and pharmacy stores. When he reached the port whence they were to sail, the three ships which had come from Tehuantepec were already there, and, as soon as all the soldiers were united with their officers and ready to start, Cortés embarked with those who, it seemed to him, should go in the first passage to the Island or Bay which they had named Santa Cruz, where they said the pearls were, and after a prosperous voyage Cortés arrived at the Island; this was in the month of May in the year fifteen hundred and thirty-six or thirty-seven. He promptly sent off the ships so that they should return with the other soldiers and married women and horses which were left waiting with Captain Andrés de Tápia. These were at once embarked and sail set, and as they were going on their course a storm struck them, which drove them near to a great river which they named San Pedro and San Pablo. Then as the

weather moderated they continued their voyage, when another Tempest struck them and separated all three of the vessels. One of them reached the port of Santa Cruz where Cortés was stationed ; another ran aground and was wrecked on the coast of Jalisco, and of the soldiers on board, who were very discontented with the voyage and the many hardships, some returned to New Spain and others stayed in Jalisco.

The other ship made port in the bay which they called Guayabal, and they gave it this name because there was much fruit there called Guayava, and, as she had grounded beam on, they were so long delayed that they could not get to where Cortés was stationed, and they were hourly expected, for they [the first arrivals] had run out of provisions, and the meat and biscuit and nearly all the food was in the ship which went ashore on the coast of Jalisco, and on this account Cortés as well as all the soldiers was very greatly distressed, for they had nothing to eat and the natives of that country do not grow maize, but are wild savages and uncivilised, and all they eat are fruits which grow there and fish and shell fish. Twenty-three of the soldiers who were with Cortés died of hunger and disease, and many more of them were ill, and they cursed Cortés and his Island, his Bay, and his discovery. When he saw this he decided to proceed in person with the ship which was there in harbour, with fifty soldiers and two blacksmiths and carpenters and three calkers, in search of the other two ships ; for, from the [state of the] weather and the winds that had blown, he inferred that they must have been driven ashore, and in the course of his search of them he found one stranded, as I have stated, on the coast of Jalisco with no soldiers in her, and the other was near some reefs, and with great labour in repairing and calking them he returned to the Island of Santa Cruz with his three ships and the supplies.

The soldiers who were awaiting him, already weakened from not having eaten anything sustaining for many days past, ate so much meat that it gave them diarrhœa and so much sickness that the half of those who had remained behind died.

So as not to keep such horrors before his eyes Cortés went on to explore other lands and then came upon California, which is a bay. As Cortés was so weary he was wishing to get back to New Spain, however through obstinacy, so that they should not charge him with having expended great numbers of pesos de oro without finding any new lands of value, and having no luck in matters to which he put his hand, and on account of the soldiers,¹ he did not go.

At that very same time, as the Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, his wife, had received no news of him, and more than that one ship had gone ashore on the coast of Jalisco, she felt very anxious, thinking that he might be dead or lost, and she promptly sent two ships in search of him; one of these was the ship in which Grijalva, who had sailed with Beserra, had returned to New Spain, the other a new ship which they had just finished building in Tehuantepec, and these ships were laden with all the provisions which could be obtained at that time.

She sent as Captain of one of them a certain Fulano [Francisco] De Ulloa, and wrote most affectionately to the Marquis, her husband, praying him to return at once to Mexico to his estate and Marquisate, and to remember the sons and daughters he possessed, and cease to contend any more with fortune, but be content with the heroic deeds and the fame of his person which had spread everywhere. Thus too the most illustrious Viceroy Don

¹ Blotted out in the original : "and Conquistadores of New Spain."

Antonio Mendoza wrote to him most charmingly and affectionately, begging him to return to New Spain.

After a favourable passage these two ships arrived where Cortés was stationed, and, as soon as he saw the letters of the Viceroy and the entreaties of his wife the Marchioness and his children, he left Francisco de Ulloa as Captain with the people he had there, and all the provisions they had brought for him, and at once embarked and came to the port of Acapulco, and going ashore after a favourable journey he reached Cuernavaca where the Marchioness was living, which caused great rejoicing.

All the settlers in Mexico and the Conquistadores were delighted at his arrival, and even the Viceroy and Royal Audiencia, for there was report of a rumour current in Mexico that all the Caciques of New Spain, knowing that Cortés was not in the country, intended to revolt. Furthermore, all the soldiers came back whom he had left in those Islands or Bay called California, and I do not know how this return was effected or in fact why they returned, or whether the Viceroy and Royal Audiencia gave them permission to do so.

Within a few months, when Cortés was already somewhat rested, he despatched two other ships well supplied both with bread and meat, as well as other sailors and sixty soldiers and good pilots; and Francisco de Ulloa, mentioned by me before, went with them as Captain.

The reason why he sent these ships was because the Royal Audiencia expressly ordered him to send them in fulfilment of the contract with Her Majesty, as I have mentioned in former Chapters which treat of it.

To return to my story, which is, that they sailed from the Port of Natividad in the month of June in the year fifteen hundred and thirty odd, (this matter of the years I do not remember), and Cortés ordered the Captain to follow along the coast and finish the

circumnavigation of California, and endeavour to search for Captain Diego Hurtado, who never appeared again.

Ulloa occupied seven months on the voyage in going and coming, and I know he did nothing worth recording. He then returned to the port of Jalisco and, within a few days of his coming on shore to rest himself, one of the soldiers whom he had taken in his company lay in wait for him and dealt him sword thrusts and killed him.

The voyages and explorations made by the Marquis came to an end with what I have now related, and I have heard him say, even many times, that he had expended over three hundred thousand pesos de oro on fleets. In order that His Majesty should repay him something on account of it, and of the enumeration of his vassals, he decided to go to Castile, also to demand from Nuño de Guzman a certain sum of pesos de oro which the Royal Audiencia had decreed that he should pay¹ because he had ordered his [Cortés's] effects to be sold, for by this time Nuño de Guzman had gone to Castile as a prisoner.

If we think of it, in nothing at all did he [Cortés] have any luck after we had conquered New Spain.

CHAPTER CCI.

How great festivities and banquets were celebrated in Mexico and what rejoicing [took place] at the peace [made] between the Most Christian Emperor our Lord of Glorious Memory, and Don Francisco the King of France, when they met at Aguas Muertas.

IN the year thirty-eight [1538] news reached Mexico that the most Christian Emperor, our Lord of Glorious Memory,

¹ Blotted out in the original : "To Cortés."