

Villalobos, in command of them, to follow the same course by which they had [before] agreed to send and explore; what happened on that voyage I do not well know, except that I have heard rumours, and it is believed to be true, that he went to some Islands where there were Captains of the King of Portugal who traded there, and they took him prisoner and he went to Castile. The same thing happened when the valiant Don Hernando Cortés sent a Captain named Alvaro de Sayavedra Ceron in command of three other ships; thus all that the Adelantado spent was lost and his heirs never recovered anything at all.

CHAPTER CCIV.

What the Marquis did when he was in Castile.

WHEN His Majesty returned to Castile after punishing Ghent, he prepared a great fleet to go against Algiers, and the Marquis del Valle went to serve in it and took with him his firstborn son, who was heir to his estate; and he also took Don Martin Cortés, his son by Doña Marina, and many esquires and servants, and horses and a great company and attendance, and embarked in a fine galley in company with Don Enrique Enríquez. It pleased God to cause such a fierce storm to arise that a great part of the Royal fleet was lost and the galley in which Cortés and his sons sailed was wrecked, and they and most of the other gentlemen who were in her escaped with great risk of their lives. At the same time, when there was not such [calm] reflection as there ought to have been, especially when death stares one in the face, the servants of Cortés alleged that they saw him tie in a handkerchief twisted round his arm certain jewels of

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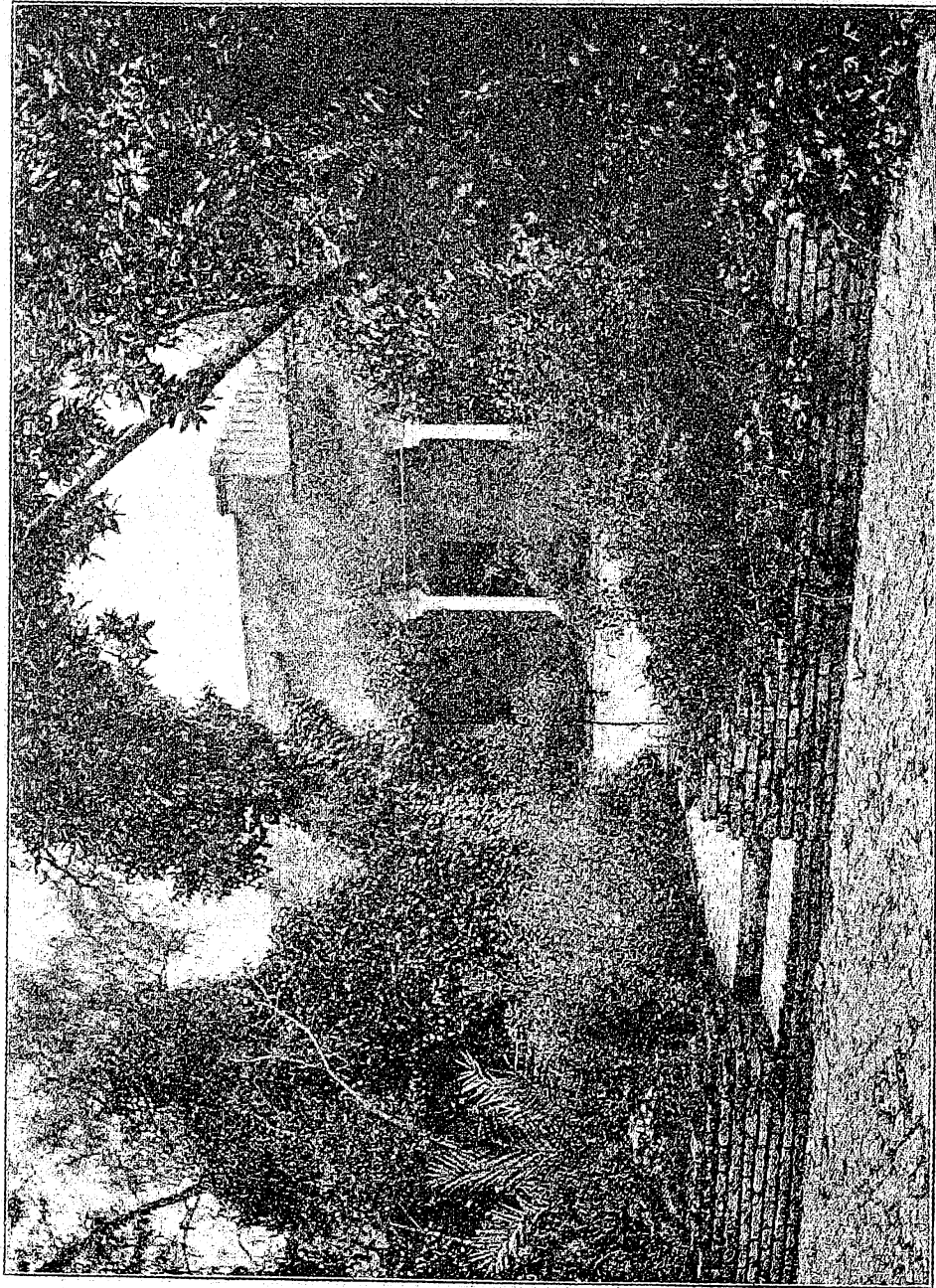
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very precious stones which he carried¹ as a great Lord, and in the confusion of escaping in safety from the galley, among the great crowd of persons who were present, all the jewels and precious stones which he carried, and which were reported to be worth many² pesos de oro, were lost.

I will go on to tell about the great storm and loss of knights and soldiers who perished. The quarter-masters and Captains who belonged to the Royal Council of war advised His Majesty at once and without delay to remove the head quarters [of the expedition] against Algiers, and to go by land along the coast, for they saw it was God's will to send them that foul tempest and nothing could be done more than had been done. To that meeting and council Cortés was not summoned to give his opinion, and, when he knew about it, he said that if it pleased His Majesty he would undertake by the help of God and the luck of our Cæsar, with the soldiers then in camp, to take Algiers. Immediately after saying these words he also expressed much praise of his Captains and comrades who were present with him in the capture and conquest of Mexico, saying that they went there to suffer hunger and hardships and wherever he should call them he could perform heroic deeds with them, and that when wounded and enveloped in rags they never ceased fighting and capturing every city or fortress, although they might chance to lose their lives in the act. As many gentlemen overheard those arrogant words, they said to His Majesty that it would have been well to call him to the Council of War, and it was looked upon as a great discourtesy that he had not been summoned. Other gentlemen said that his not being summoned was because they felt sure that the Marquis would be of

¹ Scratched out in the original : "so to say from no necessity."

² Blotted out in the original : "thousands of,"



House at Castilleja de la Cuesta, where Cortés died.

Photo by A. P. M.

contrary opinion ; that during such tempestuous weather there was no need for many councillors, but that His Majesty and the rest of the Royal fleet had to be placed in safety, for they were in great danger, and that at some future time with God's help they would return to besiege Algiers, and so they went along the coast.

Let me leave this subject and I will relate how they returned to Castile from that arduous journey, and how the Marquis was already tired of being in Castile at court, on account of having returned coastwise, weary and worn out from the journey already described by me, and desired greatly to return to New Spain, if they would give him leave. As he had sent to Mexico for his eldest daughter, named Doña Maria Cortés, whom he had arranged to marry to Don Álvaro Pérez Osorio, son of the Marquis de Astorga and heir to the Marquisate, and had promised over a hundred thousand ducats of gold as a marriage portion, and many other matters of clothes and jewels, he went to meet her at Seville. This marriage was broken off, many gentlemen say through the fault of Don Álvaro Pérez Osorio, at which the Marquis was so angry that with fever and dysentery he was very at the end, and, his illness continuing and always getting worse, he decided to leave Seville so as to be free of the many persons who came to visit him and bother him with business, and he went to Castilleja de la Cuesta, there to attend to his soul and arrange his will. After he had settled it as was fitting and had received the Holy Sacraments, Our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to take him from this toilsome life, and he died on the second day of December in the year fifteen hundred and forty-seven. They carried his body to bury it with great pomp and concourse of clergy, with the great grief of many gentlemen of Seville and he was interred in the chapel of the Dukes of Medina

Sidonia; and later on his bones were carried to New Spain and placed in a tomb at Coyoacan or in Texcoco (I am not sure about this) for so he ordered by his will.¹

I wish to speak of his age, from what I remember, and I will state on this point that in the year when we went with Cortés from Cuba to New Spain—which was in fifteen hundred and nineteen—he then used to say, when he stood talking to all of us comrades who went with him, that he was thirty-four [years old]; and, with the twenty-eight [years] that passed before he died, this would make sixty-two. The legitimate sons and daughters he left were Don Martin Cortés who is now the Marquis, and Doña Maria Cortés (she who I have stated was engaged to be married to Don Álvaro Pérez Osorio, heir to the Marquisate of Astorga: this Doña Maria afterwards married the Conde de Luna de Leon), and Doña Juana who married Don Hernando Enríquez, who was to inherit the Marquisate of Tarifa, and Doña Catalina de Arellano who died in Seville while a girl. I know that the Marchioness Doña Juana de Zuñiga took them with her to Castile when a Friar² named Fray Antonio de Zuñiga came to fetch them, and this Friar was a brother of the Marchioness herself. Another daughter, a spinster named Doña Leonor Cortés, who was in Mexico, married one Juanes de Toloza, a Basque and a very rich man, who possessed over one hundred thousand pesos and some mines;³ at which marriage the Marquis was very angry when he came to New Spain. He left two sons who were bastards named Don Martin Cortés, Comendador of Santiago (this gentleman was born of Doña Marina the Interpreter), and Don Luis Cortés, also a Comendador of Santiago, who was born of another

¹ See Appendix B.

² Blotted out in the original: "of Santo Domingo."

³ Blotted out in the original: "of silver."

lady named Doña Fulano de Hermosilla, and he had three other daughters, one by an Indian woman of Cuba named Doña Fulana Pizarro, and another by another Indian woman, a Mexican, and another, who was born deformed, by another Mexican woman. I know that these young ladies were well dowered, for from childhood he had given them good Indians in some pueblos named Chinantla. What he provided in his will and instructions I am not sure about, but I feel that as a wise man and having plenty of time for it, and because he was old, that he would do it with much deliberation. So as to ease his conscience, he ordered a Hospital and a College to be built in Mexico, and he also provided that in his town, named Coyoacan, which is a matter of two leagues from Mexico, a convent for Nuns should be built; also that his bones should be brought to New Spain. He assigned good revenues to carry out his will and legacies, and they were many and good and [the deeds] of a good Christian. To avoid prolixity I will not state them, and as I do not remember them all I will not quote them.

The motto and blazon which he bore on his coat of arms and banners was that of a very valiant man and appropriate to his heroic deeds, and it [the motto] was in Latin, and as I do not know Latin I do not record it. He had on it seven heads of Kings, who were captives on a chain, and it seems to me, as far as I can see and understand it, these were the Kings whom I now name: Montezuma Great Lord of Mexico, Cacamatzin the nephew of Montezuma who was also Great Lord of Texcoco, and Coadlabaca Lord of Iztapalapa and another pueblo, the Lord of Tacuba, the Lord of Coyoacan, and another great Cacique Lord of two provinces named Tulapa near to Matalzingo; this one as I have stated was said to be the son of a sister of Montezuma, and the nearest heir to Mexico after Montezuma. The last King was

Guatemoc, he who fought us and defended the City when we captured the Great City of Mexico and its provinces.

These seven great Caciques are those whom the Marquis bore on his banners and coat of arms as emblems, for I remember no other Kings who could have been captives and [also] Kings, as I have stated in the chapter that treats of it.

I will go on and speak of the appearance and disposition of Cortés. He was of good stature and figure well proportioned and robust, the colour of his face inclined to be greyish and not very bright, and if his face had been longer he would have been better looking; in his eyes and expression there was something kindly, [but] on the other hand grave. His beard was rather dark, scant and thin, and the hair which at that time he possessed was of the same sort as the beard. He had a deep chest and well shaped shoulders, and was lean and with little belly, and slightly bow-legged, with the legs and thighs well set on. He was a good horseman and skilful with all arms both on foot and on horseback, and knew well how to manage them. Above all [he possessed] courage and spirit which is what matters most of all.

I have heard it said that when he was a youth in the Island of Hispañola he was somewhat dissolute about women, and that he fought with knives several times with strong and dexterous men, and always came off victorious. He had a scar from a knife wound near his under-lip, and if one looked hard at it, he was inclined to cover it up more with his beard. This scar was given him when he indulged in those quarrels. In all of which he showed both by his appearance and in his speech and conversation, and in eating and in his dress, signs of being a great Lord.

The clothes he wore were in accordance with the time and fashion, and he thought nothing about wearing many

silks and damasks or satins, but [dressed] simply and very neatly, nor did he wear grand gold chains, except a small chain of gold of finest workmanship and a small pendant with the image of Our Lady the Virgin Santa Maria with her precious son in her arms, and with a motto in Latin on one side with Our Lady, and on the other side of the jewel St. John the Baptist with another motto. He wore besides on his finger a very rich ring with a diamond, and on the cap, which then was [usually] made of velvet, he wore a medal. I do not remember what design was on it, but on the medal were written his initials. Later on in the course of time he always wore a cloth cap without a medal. He was luxuriously attended as a great Lord by two stewards and mayordomos and many pages, and all the service of his house was very complete, with great table services of silver and gold. He dined well and drank a good cup of wine and water which held a pint, and he also took supper, but was not dainty, nor did he care to eat of delicate or costly dishes except when he saw that expenditure was necessary or he was obliged to give them¹.

He was very affably disposed to all his Captains and comrades, especially with those of us who went [with him] from the Island of Cuba on the first occasion. He was a Latin scholar, and I have heard it said that he was a bachelor of laws, and when he spoke with educated men or Latin scholars he replied to what they said in Latin. He was something of a poet and composed couplets both in rhyme and prose, and in what he talked about he spoke with moderation and with very good expression. He recited prayers every morning out of a Book of Hours, and heard Mass with devoutness. He took as his especial patron saint Our Lady the Virgin Mary, whom

¹ Blotted out in the original : "to visitors or invited guests !"

all we faithful Christians should take as our intercessor and advocate, and he also held by Señor San Pedro, and Santiago, and Señor Saint John the Baptist. He was charitable with alms, and when he used an oath he said "on my conscience," and when he was angered with one of us soldiers who were his friends he would say "Oh evil take you;" and when he was very angry a vein on his throat swelled up and another on his forehead, and sometimes when very angry he raised a cry to heaven, but he never said a foul or injurious word to any Captain or soldier.

He was very long-suffering, for there were very inconsiderate soldiers who said insolent things to him, and he did not answer them with anything haughty or unpleasant, although there may have been reason to do so; the most that he said to them was "Be quiet!" or "God go with you and for the future be more careful what you say or it will cost you dear." He was very obstinate, especially about warlike matters, however much advice and persuasion we might offer to him about imprudent attacks and expeditions which he ordered us to undertake—[such as] when we marched round the great pueblos of the Lakes, or on the rocky hills which they now call the "Peñoles del Marques," when we told him that we could not climb up to the fortifications and rocky heights, but that we would keep them beleaguered, because of the many boulders which came bounding down hurled at us from the top of the fortress, for it was impossible to protect ourselves from the shock and impetus with which they came, and it was risking all our lives, for valour and counsel and prudence were of no avail; yet still he contended against all of us, and we had to begin to ascend again and we were in extreme danger, and eight soldiers were killed, and all the rest of us injured in the head and wounded, without accomplishing anything worth mentioning until

we changed to other plans. Furthermore when we went on our march to the Hibueras on the affair of Cristóbal de Olid, when he revolted with the fleet, I told him many times that we ought to go by the Sierras, but he contended that it was better along the coast and he was wrong again, for if we went the way I said it led all through a populous country, and, so that it may be well understood [by persons] who have never marched across it, [I state] that from Coatzacoalcos to Chiapa is a straight road, and from Chiapa to Guatemala, and from Guatemala to Naco, where at that time Cristóbal de Olid was stationed.

Let us leave this talk and I will say that when we came with the fleet to Villa Rica and presently began to build a fort, the first to do his share and dig out earth for the foundations was Cortés. In battles, I always saw him enter them in close company with us, and I will begin with the battles of Tabasco where he was in command of the horsemen, and he fought very well. Let us go on to Villa Rica: I have already spoken about the fortress, [then he did well] in scuttling as we did eleven ships on the advice of our valiant Captains and brave soldiers (and not as Gomara represents it). Then in the wars in Tlaxcala in three battles he proved himself very valiant, and in the entry into Mexico with four hundred soldiers, which is a thing to wonder at, and moreover in having the daring to seize Montezuma within his own palace—[Montezuma] who possessed such a vast number of warriors (and I also state that we seized him on the advice of the Captains and nearly all the soldiers); and another thing which must not be forgotten, the burning in front of his palace Montezuma's Captains who were concerned in the death of our Captain named Juan de Escalante and of seven other soldiers; these Indian Captains were called Quetzalpopoca (I do not remember the name of the other, but it does not matter,

as it is not to the point). Then, too, what daring and boldness it showed to attack with gifts of gold and strategems of war Panfilo de Narvaez the Captain of Diego Velásquez, who brought over thirteen hundred soldiers and ninety horsemen and as many more cross-bowmen and eighty espingarderos [Gunners], for so we called them, and we with two hundred and sixty-five comrades, without horses or muskets or crossbows, with only pikes and swords, daggers and shields, defeated them and captured Narvaez and other Captains. Let us go on ahead, for I want to state how when we entered Mexico a second time in aid of Pedro de Alvarado and before we left it fleeing, when we ascended the great Cue of Huichilobos I saw that he showed himself to be very brave, although his valour and ours availed us nothing. Then in the rout and very celebrated battle of Otumba, when we were expecting all the flower of the valiant Mexican warriors and all their subjects to kill us, there too he proved himself very courageous when he attacked the Captain and standard-bearer of Guatemoc, and made him lower his standard and loose the great vigour of the intrepid attack of all his squadrons which fought against us so bravely. After God our valiant captains who helped him were Gonzalo de Sandoval, Cristóbal de Olid, Diego de Ordás, Gonzalo Domínguez, and one Lares, and other brave soldiers whom I do not name here, who had no horses, and of the followers of Narvaez there were gallant men who helped very much. He who killed the Captain of the standard was one Juan de Salamanca, a native of Ontiveras, and he took from him a rich plume and gave it to Cortés. Let us go on and I will state that Cortés found himself engaged in a very dangerous battle during the affair of Iztapalapa, and bore himself as a good Captain; and in the affair of Xochimilco, when the Mexican squadrons dragged him

off the flat-nosed horse, and some of our friends the Tlaxcalans came to his assistance, and above all our brave soldier named Cristóbal de Olea, a native of Old Castile. (It should be noted that I say one was Cristóbal de Olid who was quartermaster, and the other Cristóbal de Olea of Old Castile, and this I state here so that it should not be questioned, and they cannot say that I am making a mistake).

Our Cortés also proved himself very valiant while we were in Mexico, and the Mexicans defeated him on a small causeway and carried off for sacrifice sixty two soldiers, and they had seized Cortés himself and were grappling with him to carry him off for sacrifice, and they had wounded him in the leg. It pleased God that through his own valour, and because there came to his aid the same most gallant soldier Cristóbal de Olea (he who on the other occasion in Xochimilco freed him from the Mexicans), who helped him to mount his horse, that the life of Cortés was saved, and the gallant Olea was left there dead with the others, as I have already stated. As I am writing now I have before my mind the manner and resolution of the personality of Cristóbal de Olea and his very great valour, and it still makes me sad, for he came from my house, and was the relation of my kindred.

I do not wish to speak of many other deeds of prowess and valour which I saw done by our Marquis Don Hernando Cortés, for they are so numerous and of such a nature that I could not relate them quickly enough.

I will still say of his disposition that he was very fond of games of cards and dice, and when he played he was very sociable in playing, and would use certain witty expressions which those who play at dice are wont to repeat; and he was addicted to women in excess, and

jealous in guarding his own¹. He was most careful during all the conquests that we made, even by night, and on many nights he went the rounds and challenged the sentinels and entered into the Ranchos and shelters of our soldiers, and, if he found one without his arms and with his shoes off, he admonished him and said to him that "to a worthless sheep the wool seems heavy," and upraided him with bitter words.

When we went to the Hibueras I noticed that he took liquor before breakfast, a thing he was not used to do in the earlier wars, and when he had dined if he did not take a nap his stomach was upset and it made him feel ill, and in order to avoid this indisposition when we were on the march they placed a rug or a cloak, which was carried handy for that purpose, under a tree or other shade, and however powerful the sun might be he did not fail to sleep a little and then at once to go on marching. I also noticed that during the wars of New Spain he was lean and with little belly, but after our return from the Hibueras he was much more corpulent with a great belly, and I also noticed that the beard which was black before had become whitened. I also wish to say that he used to be very open-handed when he was in New Spain, and the first time he went to Castile ; but when he returned the second time in the year fifteen hundred and forty they thought him niggardly, and one of his servants named Ulloa, brother of the other Ulloa whom they killed, brought a law-suit against him for not paying him his wages ; and, if one considers and looks into it well, after we had conquered New Spain he was always in difficulties and spent many pesos de oro on the fleets which he sent to California, nor in the journey to the Hibueras did he have any luck. (No more has apparently his son

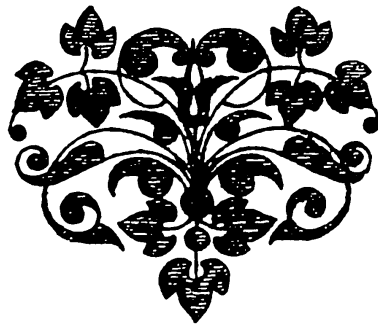
¹ Blotted out in the original : "his Indian women."

Don Martin Cortés either, who, being the Lord of such a great revenue, has met with such a great disaster as they relate of him and his brothers.) May our Lord Jesus Christ remedy it and may He pardon the Marquis Don Hernando Cortés his sins.

I well believe that I may have forgotten to write down other things about the habits of his valiant person ; what I remember and saw, that I have written down.

Concerning the other young lady, his daughter, I do not know whether they made her a nun or married her off. I have heard it said that she went to Valladolid and a gentleman married her, but I am not sure. His other daughter, who was deformed on one side, I have been told became a nun in Seville, or in San Lucar. I do not know their names, and so do not give them, nor can I say what was done with so many thousand pesos de oro which they had for their dowries¹.

¹ Blotted out in the original : "there was much talk and suspicion about her marriage. I don't know about it nor do I touch more on this point, so help me God, and pardon me my sins, Amen. I knew that the friar the brother of the Marchioness was very avaricious and had an evil face and worse squinting eyes."



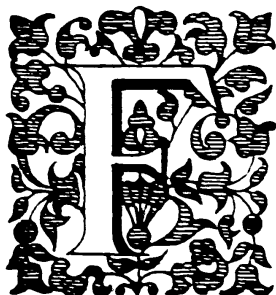


BOOK XVII.

THE RECORD OF THE CONQUISTADORES.

CHAPTER CCV

A record of the gallant Captains and stout and valiant soldiers who left the Island of Cuba with the daring and courageous Captain Don Hernando Cortés, who after conquering Mexico became Marquis del Valle and had other titles.



FIRST of all the Marquis Don Hernando Cortés, who died near Seville in a town or place called Castilleja de la Cuesta.

Then Don Pedro de Alvarado, who, after the conquest of Mexico was Comendador de Santiago and Adelantado and Governor of Guatemala ;¹ he died in the affair of Jalisco, when he was on his way to relieve an army which was camped on the rocky hills of Nochistlan.

Gonzalo de Sandoval, who was a prominent Captain and chief Alguazil during the affair at Mexico, and for some time was Governor in New Spain in association with the Treasurer Alonzo de Estrada. His Majesty received the highest reports of him, and he died in Castile

¹ Blotted out in the original : "and Honduras and Chiapa."