

the other course they would have [power] to give of what was vacant [i.e., Indians who were unallotted] to whomsoever they wished, and they [themselves] would become rich and would have the greater authority, and to this end they stopped doing anything.

It is true that Nuño de Guzman [and the Oidores], when there were any Indians unallotted, promptly handed them over to Conquistadores and settlers, and were not so bad in what they did for the settlers and inhabitants, for they contented them all and gave them food, and if they [the Oidores] were dismissed from out of the Royal Audiencia it was on account of the disputes which they had with Cortés and on account of the branding of free Indians for slaves.

I want to leave this chapter and go on to another and will speak about the perpetual Assignment.

CHAPTER CCXI.

How in the year IVVI [1550] when the Court was at Valladolid there met together in the Royal Council of the Indies certain prelates and gentlemen who came from New Spain and Peru as Proctors, and other noblemen who were present, in order to give the order that the Assignment [of Indians or pueblos] should be in perpetuity, and what was said and done at the meeting is what I shall relate.

IN the year fifteen hundred and fifty the Licentiate de la Gasca came from Peru and went to the Court, which at that time was in Valladolid, and brought in his company a certain Dominican Friar named Don Fray Martin, the Superior, and at that time His Majesty ordered this same Superior to be appointed to the Bishopric of Las Charcas.¹

¹ There is a blank space in the original. The name of the first Bishop of Charcas was Don Fray Tomas de San Martin, of the order of Santo Domingo.—G. G.

Then there came together in [the Court Don] Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, bishop of Chiapa, and Don Vasco de [Quiroga, bishop of Michoacan], and other gentlemen who came [as Proctors from New Spain and from Peru], and certain noblemen who came with lawsuits [to bring] before His Majesty. At that time all these were present at Court, and together with them they sent to summon me from New Spain as the oldest Conquistador.

As de la Gasca and all the other Peruvians had brought many thousands of pesos de oro both for His Majesty and for themselves, they sent what they had brought for His Majesty from Seville to Augusta in Germany, where His Majesty was staying at that time, and in his royal Company was his beloved and cherished son our most felicitous and invincible Don Felipe, King of the Spains and our Lord, may God preserve him.

At that time certain gentlemen went in charge of the gold and as Proctors from Peru to beg His Majesty to be pleased to do us the favour of ordering an assignment [of pueblos] to be made in perpetuity.

It appears that this petition had been made at other times, before this, on behalf of New Spain, when one Gonzalo López went, and a certain Alonzo Villanueva went with other gentlemen as proctors from Mexico. On that occasion His Majesty conferred the Bishopric of Palencia on the Licentiate de la Gasca, who was Bishop and Conde de Pernia, for it was his luck that when he arrived in Castile it had become vacant, and it was the gossip of the Court that even in this he had the good fortune I have mentioned, besides what he had in leaving Peru at peace and in recovering the gold and silver which the Coutreras had robbed him of. To go back to my story of what His Majesty decreed about the Assignment in perpetuity of the Indians. He instructed the Marquis de Mondejar, who was President of the Royal Council of

the Indies, and the Licentiate Gutierrez Velásquez and the Licentiate Tello de Sandoval and Doctor Hernan Pérez de la Fuente and the Licentiate Gregorio López and Doctor Rivadeneyra and the Licentiate Birviesca, who were Oidores of this same Royal Council of the Indies, and other gentlemen of the Royal Councils, all to meet together and consider and discuss how and in what manner the Assignment might be made, in such a way that in every respect the service of God and the Royal Patrimony should be carefully considered and in no wise prejudiced. When all those Prelates and gentlemen were met together in the house of Pero González de Leon, where the Royal Council of the Indies was held, what was said and discussed in that most illustrious Meeting [was] that the Indians should be given in perpetuity in New Spain and in Peru (I do not remember clearly whether the New Kingdom of Granada and Bobotan was named, but it seems to me that it also was included with the rest) and the reasons propounded in that affair were holy and good. The first to be discussed was that, being [assigned] in perpetuity, they would be much better treated and instructed in our Holy Faith, and that if some should fall ill they would be attended to like sons and be excused from a part of their tribute, and that owners would persevere much more in bringing the land into cultivation and [planting] vineyards and sowing seeds and raising cattle, and lawsuits and disputes about Indians would cease, and there would be no need for visiting judges in the pueblos, and there would be peace and concord among the soldiers with the knowledge that Presidents and Governors no longer had power when Indians were unassigned to allot them through nepotism, nor in other ways in which they allotted them at that time.

Moreover, the granting them in perpetuity to those who have served His Majesty was a relief to his royal

conscience, and many other good reasons were expressed. Furthermore it was mentioned that it had become necessary in Peru to get rid of those robber men who were found to have disserved His Majesty.

After what I have mentioned had been fully discussed by all those at this Illustrious Meeting, most of the proctors and the other gentlemen gave our opinions and votes that the assignments should be perpetual. But just then most contrary opinions were advanced. The first of these was by the Bishop of Chiapa, and he was supported by his companion Fray Rodrigo of the order of Santo Domingo, also by the Licentiate Gasca who was Bishop of Palencia, and Conde de Pernia, and Bishop Fray Don Martin¹ (for by that time they had given him the Bishopric of Las Charcas,) and by the Marquis de Mondejar, and two Oidores of the Royal Council of His Majesty. What those gentlemen named by me put forward in opposition (except the Marquis de Mondejar who did not wish to show partiality on one side or the other but to observe what they said and who had the most votes) was, how could they [bring themselves] to give Indians in perpetuity or in any other way, on the contrary they ought not to be given but to be taken from those who at that time held them, for there were people among them in Peru drawing a good rent from Indians who deserved to be chopped into pieces, and now as a climax they are to get them in perpetuity, how could they imagine in Peru that peace could be found and the country settled? There would be soldiers who when they saw that there was nothing [more] to be given them would revolt, and there would be even greater discords. Then Don Vasco de Quirova Bishop of Michoacan, who was on our side,

¹ Here again the author leaves a blank space; it must refer, as we point out in a former note, to the Dominican Don Fray Tomás de San Martín.—G. G.

replied and asked the Licentiate de la Gasca why he did not punish the bandits and traitors? for he knew them, and their offences were notorious, yet he himself had given them Indians.

To this de la Gasca answered, and he paused to laugh, and said, will the Señores believe that I performed no small feat in emerging in peace and in safety from among them—some of them I quartered and I executed justice.

Other opinions on the same subject were exchanged and then we and many of the gentlemen who were there present with us said, that they should be given in perpetuity in New Spain to the true Conquistadores who went over with Cortés, and to the followers of Panfilo de Narvaez and those of Garay, for very few of us remained; all the rest had died in the battles fighting in the service of His Majesty, and we had served him very faithfully, and that with the others there could be other arrangements. When we made these statements on our part and took the course which I have mentioned, there were not wanting prelates and lords of His Majesty's Council who said that all should be postponed until Our Lords the Emperor and the Prince, who were daily expected, should come to Castile, so that in a matter of such weight and importance they should be present.

Nevertheless, by the Bishop of Michoacan and certain gentlemen who were from New Spain, and I with them, answer was repeatedly made that, as the votes were already given to that effect, [the Assignments] should be given in perpetuity in New Spain, and that the Proctors from Peru should solicit on their own account, for His Most Christian Majesty had sent a command, and in his royal command showed inclination towards giving them in perpetuity in New Spain. About that matter there was much discussion and argument, and we said that

even if they should not be given in Peru, they should consider the many and great services which we had rendered to His Majesty and all Christendom. However we availed nothing with the Lords of the Royal Council of the Indies, and the Bishop Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and Fray Rodrigo his companion, and with the Bishop of Las Charcas, Don Fray Martin¹ and they said that as soon as His Majesty came from Augusta it would be adjusted in such a way that the Conquistadores would be very contented, and thus it remained pending.

I will leave this discussion and [say] that we wrote post haste by a ship [going] to New Spain, and when the matters related above, which took place at Court, were known in the City of Mexico, the Conquistadores arranged to send Proctors to His Majesty on their own account alone. Captain Andrés de Tápia and one Pedro Moreno Medrano even wrote to me from Mexico to this city of Guatemala, and Juan de Linpias Carvajal, the deaf, from Puebla—for at that time I had already returned from the court—and what they wrote to me was to give an account and report of the Conquistadores whom they were sending with their power of attorney. In the memorial they included me as one of the oldest of them. I showed the letters in the City of Guatemala to other Conquistadores so that they could help with money to send the Proctors, for it appears their despatch could not be managed for want of pesos de oro. What they next arranged in Mexico was that the Conquistadores together with the whole community should send Proctors to Castile, but such an excellent thing was never effected, and in this manner we proceed, like a lame mule, from bad to worse, and from one Viceroy to another and from Governor to Governor. After this our invincible Lord and King Don Felipe, may God

¹ There is a blank space in the original. See the former note.

guard him, and may he live many years with increase of more kingdoms, commanded, in his Royal Ordinances and Decrees which he has issued for that purpose, that as to the Conquistadores and their children, we are to experience improvement in every sense, and next [in order] that the old married settlers [were to benefit] as will be seen in his Royal Edicts.

CHAPTER CCXII.

About other discussions and stories which are here made known and will be pleasant to hear.¹

WHEN I had finished the fair copy of this my story, two Licentiates begged me to lend it to them for two days so as to know more clearly what we went through during the conquest of Mexico and New Spain, and to see in what way it differed from what the Chroniclers Gomara and Doctor Yllescas had written about the heroic deeds and exploits we accomplished in company with the valiant Marquis Cortés. So I lent them a rough draft, for it seems to me that wise men always [try to] impress a bit of their wisdom on unlearned fools such as I am, and I told them not to alter a single thing,² for all that I write is quite true. When they had seen and read it, one of them who was very eloquent and had a very good opinion of himself, after extolling and praising the good memory I must have not to forget any item of all we went through from the time we came to New Spain in the year seventeen [1517] up to that of sixty-eight [1568], said that, as to the style, it followed the customary speech of Old Castile, and that in these times it is accounted the more agreeable because

¹ See note at end of Chapter.

² Blotted out in the original: "neither to add or to subtract."