

APPENDIX B.

THE BURIAL OF CORTÉS.

CORTÉS left instructions in his will for his body to be buried in the church of the parish in which he died, and at the end of ten years for his bones to be carried to New Spain and interred in a Franciscan convent to be called La Concepcion, which he ordered to be founded at Coyoacan. However, his body was not buried in the parish church, but was placed in the tomb of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia in the Convent of San Isidro extra Muros at Seville. His bones were taken later to New Spain in accordance with his will, but as the convent which he had ordered to be founded at Coyoacan had not been built, they were placed in the Church of San Francisco at Texcoco. Thence they were removed and buried with great pomp in the Church of the Monastery of San Francisco in Mexico City on the 24th February, 1629.

In 1794 the remains of Cortés were removed to the Hospital de Jesus, which Cortés had himself founded and endowed, and were interred within a monumental tomb.

Here it might be supposed that his bones would have been allowed to remain in peace. However, during the heat of the revolution against the dominion of Spain, everything Spanish was abhorred, and it was even proposed in Congress that the bones of Cortés should be dug up and burnt. In the year 1823 this sacrilege would have been consummated but for the care of the authorities of the Hospital, who secretly exhumed the coffin and buried it in another part of the church and removed the

metal bust and ornaments from the tomb. These latter were afterwards sent to Palermo to the Duque de Terranova, the representative of the Cortés family, but whether the remains of the great Conquistador were also sent abroad is not clear—probably they still rest unmarked in the Church of the Hospital de Jesus.

These notes are abstracted from the account written by Don Lucas Alaman,¹ who was himself concerned in saving the remains from desecration.

¹ *Disertaciones sobre la historia de la Republica Mexicana*, vol. ii, pp. 48-62.

THE FIFTH LETTER
OF
HERNANDO CORTÉS
TO THE
EMPEROR CHARLES V.



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HOLY CATHOLIC CÆSARÉAN MAJESTY—

On the 23rd day of the month of October of last year, 1523, I sent a ship to the Island of Hispaniola from the town of Trujillo, of the Port and Cape of Honduras, and by a servant of mine whom I sent in it, who had to remain in that kingdom [Spain], I wrote to your Majesty about certain events that had taken place in what is called the Gulf of Hibuera, between the Captains whom I had sent there and Captain Gil Gonzáles who went afterwards.

As I was unable, at the time I sent off that vessel and messenger, to give your Majesty a report of my journey and what happened to me on it, from the time I left this great City of Tenochtitlan until I came upon the people of those parts, and they are matters which it is right your Majesty should know, and so as not to fail in the custom which I have followed, which is not to leave anything unexplained to your Majesty, I will relate them shortly as well as I am able, for to detail them as they happened is more than I could do, nor for all that I could say would they be understood there [in Spain]. However, I will relate the most notable and important events that happened to me on the said journey, although it will be no more than a summary, for each event would afford material for a long letter.