

him that he should take care that His Excellency in person should take charge of the food, so that it should not be seized as on the last occasion; this he did, and went ahead together with Sandoval and Luis Marin and took possession of all of it and divided it up, and the next day about midday they reached Acalá, and the Caciques went to bid him welcome and carried food to him, and I will leave them there and will relate what else happened.

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## CHAPTER CLXXVII.

What Cortés attended to after reaching Acalá, and how, in another pueblo further ahead, subject to this same Acalá, he ordered Guatemoc the Great Cacique of Mexico, and another Cacique, the lord of Tacuba, to be hanged, and the reason why he did it, and other things that happened.

WHEN Cortés had arrived at Gueyacala—for so it is called—the Caciques of that pueblo approached him peaceably and he spoke to them through Doña Marina the interpreter in such a way that to all appearance they were satisfied, and Cortés gave them articles from Spain, and they brought maize and provisions, and then he ordered all the Caciques to be summoned and asked them for information about the road we had to take, and questioned them whether they knew of other men with beards like us and with horses, and whether they had seen ships sailing on the sea. They replied that eight days' journey from there were many men with beards, and women from Castile, and horses and three Acales, for in their language they call ships Acales. Cortés was delighted to hear this news, and, on asking about the pueblos and the road along which we must go, they brought it to him all drawn on some cloths, even to

the rivers and swamps and miry places, and he begged them to build bridges over the rivers and to bring canoes, for they had numerous followers and there were populous villages. The Caciques replied that because there were more than twenty pueblos, most of which would not obey them, especially certain pueblos situated between some rivers, it was necessary for Cortés at once to send some of his Teules (for so they called the soldiers) to make them bring maize and other things, and order them to obey them [the Caciques], for they were their subjects.

When Cortés understood this, he at once summoned a certain Diego de Mazariegos (a cousin of the Treasurer Alonzo de Estrada who was left as governor in Mexico) and in order that he might see and understand that he (Cortés) held him in great esteem, he honoured him by sending him as Captain against those pueblos and others in the neighbourhood, and when he despatched him he told him secretly that as he did not well understand the ways of the country, being newly arrived from Castile, and had not so much experience in dealing with Indians, he should take me in his company and not swerve from what I advised. This he did, and I should not write this in my story so that I might appear to boast of it, and I would not write it down but that it was made known throughout the camp, and later on I have even seen it engrossed in certain letters and reports which Cortés wrote to His Majesty informing him of all that happened during this journey in the Indies, and for this reason I write it down.

To return to my story, we started with Mazariegos, a company of eighty soldiers in canoes which the Caciques gave us, and when we arrived at the villages, all with the utmost willingness gave us of what they possessed, and we brought back over one hundred canoes with maize

and supplies, and fowls, honey and salt, and ten Indian women whom they held as slaves, and the Caciques came to see Cortés. So the whole camp had plenty to eat, and within four days nearly all the Caciques took to flight and only three of the guides remained with whom we set out on the road.

We crossed two rivers, one on bridges which promptly broke down on our crossing them, and the other on rafts, and we went to another pueblo subject to Acalá, which was already abandoned, and there we searched for food which had been hidden away in the forest.

Let us cease talking about our hardships and journey and I will relate how Guatemoc the great Cacique of Mexico, and other Mexican chieftains who accompanied us, had been deliberating or had arranged to kill us all and return to Mexico, and when they had reached their city to unite all their great forces and attack those [Spaniards] who remained in Mexico.

Those who made this known to Cortés were two great Caciques named Tápia and Juan Velásquez: this Juan Velásquez was Guatemoc's Captain-General when they were fighting us in Mexico. When this came to the knowledge of Cortés he had the evidence taken down [in writing] not only of the two who revealed the plot, but of other Caciques who were involved in it. What they confessed was, that as they saw us travelling over the roads carelessly and discontentedly, and many soldiers suffering from illness, and that food was always wanting, and that the four players on the oboe, and the acrobat, and eleven or twelve soldiers, had already died of hunger; and three other soldiers had fled back on the way to Mexico and had taken their chance of a state of war along the road by which we had come, and preferred to die rather than continue the advance; it would be a favourable opportunity to attack us when

we were crossing some river or swamp, for the Mexicans numbered three thousand, bearing arms and lances, and some of them had swords. Guatemoc confessed that it was as the others had said, but the plot was not hatched by him, and he did not know if they were all privy to it or would bring it to pass, that he never thought to carry it out but only [joined in] the talk there was about it. The Cacique of Tacuba stated that he and Guatemoc had said that it were better to die once for all than die every day on the journey, considering how their followers and kinsmen were suffering famine.

Without awaiting further proofs Cortés ordered Guatemoc and his cousin the Lord of Tacuba to be hanged; and before they were hanged the Franciscan Friars aided them and commended them to God through the interpreter Doña Marina.

When they were about to hang him, Guatemoc said "Oh! Malinche I have long known that you meant to kill me and I have understood your false speeches for you kill me unjustly, and God will call you to account for it, for I did not do myself justice when you delivered yourself to me [into my hands] in my city of Mexico." The Lord of Tacuba said that death was welcome, dying as he did with his Lord Guatemoc. Before they were hanged the Franciscan Friars confessed them through the interpreter Doña Marina.

In truth I grieved keenly for Guatemoc and his cousin, having known them as such great lords, and they had even done me honour during the journey when occasion offered, especially in giving me Indians to bring forage for my horse, and this death which they suffered very unjustly was considered wrong by all those who were with us.

Let us turn to continue our march, which we did with the greatest caution from fear lest the Mexicans seeing

their chieftains hanged, should rise in revolt; however, they were bearing such sufferings through hunger and sickness that they could give no thought to it. After the chieftains had been hanged as I have related, we at once continued our march towards another small pueblo, and before entering it we passed a deep river on rafts and found the town uninhabited, for the people had fled that day. We searched for food among the farms and we found eight Indians who were priests of Idols, and they willingly returned to their pueblo with us. Cortés told them through Doña Marina to summon the inhabitants and to have no fear, but to bring us food. They replied to Cortés begging him to give orders that no one should go near some Idols, which were close to a house where Cortés was lodged, and they would bring food and do all they were able. Cortés told them he would do what they requested and nothing should happen to the Idols, but "why did they care for such Idols which were made of clay and old wood for they were evil things which deceived them?" and he preached such [convincing] things through the Friars and Doña Marina, that they replied favourably to what he said, and [declared] they would abandon them, and they brought twenty loads of maize and some fowls.

Cortés then asked them how many days journey from there were there men with beards like us, and they replied seven days journey, and that the pueblo where the men with horses lived was called Nito, and that they would go as guides as far as the next pueblo, but we should have to sleep one night in an uninhabited country before reaching it.

Cortés ordered them to make a cross on a very large tree called a Ceiba which stood near the houses where they had their Idols.

I also wish to say that Cortés was in a bad humour,

and even very regretful and discontented at the hardships of the journey we had undertaken, and because of having ordered Guatemoc and his cousin the Lord of Tacuba to be hanged, and at the daily hunger, and the sickness and death of so many Mexicans, and it appears that he did not rest at night through thinking about it, but got up from his bed where he slept to walk about in a room where the Idols stood, which was the principal apartment of that small pueblo where they kept other Idols, and he was careless and fell. It was a fall of more than twice the height of a man and he injured his head, but he kept quiet and said nothing about it only tended the wound and endured and suffered it all. The next day very early in the morning we began to march with our guides without anything happening worth recording, and slept by a lagoon near some forests, and the next day we continued our march and about the time of high mass arrived at a new pueblo, and its inhabitants had deserted it that same day and taken refuge in some swamps. The houses had been newly built only a few days before, and in the town were many barricades of thick beams and all surrounded by other beams of great strength, and there were deep ditches in front of the entrance, and inside two fences, one like a barbican with towers and loopholes, and in one part in place of a fence were some very lofty rocks full of stones fashioned by hand, with great breast-works, and on the other side was a great swamp which was [as good as] a fortress.

When we entered the houses we found so many turkeys and fowls cooked in the way the Indians eat them, with chili peppers and maize cakes—which among them are called ‘tamales’—that on the one hand we wondered at so novel an event, and on the other we were delighted at the plentiful food. We also found a large house full of small lances and arrows, and we searched the neighbour-

hood of that town for maize plantations and people, but found none, not even a grain of maize.

While we were thus situated, fifteen Indians approached from the swamps and they were the chieftains of that town, and they placed their hands on the ground and kissed the earth and said, half weeping, to Cortés, that they begged as a favour that he would not allow anything in the pueblo to be burned, because they were but newly arrived there and had to fortify it on account of their enemies, (who it seems to me that they said were called Lacandones,) who had burnt and destroyed the two pueblos where they had lived, and had robbed them and killed many of their people. These pueblos we would see further along the road we must follow, which was [over] a very level country, and they then gave an account of how and in what manner they [the Lacandones] attacked them and why they were their enemies.

Cortés asked them how it happened that they had so many turkeys and fowls ready cooked, and they replied that they were hourly expecting their enemies to come and attack them, and, that if they were conquered, the enemy would be sure to seize their goods and their poultry and carry them off captive, and so that they should not do that or have the benefit of them, they wished to eat them first; [on the other hand] if they defeated their enemies they would go to their pueblos and seize their goods.

Cortés said that he was sorry for it and for their war, but as he must continue his march he could not mend matters.

This pueblo and other great settlements which we passed the next day are called the Mazatecas, which in their tongue means the pueblos or lands of deer, and they have good reason for giving that name as what I will relate later shows. Two of these Indians accom-

panied us and showed us their burnt townships and gave information to Cortés about the Spaniards who were on ahead of us. I will leave off here and relate how the next day we left that pueblo, and what else happened on the journey.

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## CHAPTER CLXXVIII.

How we went on our way, and what happened to us.

WHEN we left the "fenced pueblo" (for so we called it), we entered from there onwards on a good and flat road all through treeless savannahs with a sun so hot and strong that greater noontide heat we had never felt throughout our march. As we went along those flat plains we saw many deer and they hardly ran at all, so that we soon overtook them on horseback, however little we raced after them, and over twenty of them were killed.

On asking the guides we had with us why the deer ran so little, and why they were not frightened at the horses nor at anything else, they replied that in those pueblos, which I have already said they call the *Mazatecas*, they are considered to be gods, because gods have appeared in their shape, and their Idol has commanded them not to kill or frighten them, and they have not done so, and this is the reason why they do not run away.

During that chase the horse of a relation of Cortés, named Palacios Rubios, died, for the fat of his body melted from having galloped so much.

Let us leave this chase and I will say that we soon reached the settlements already mentioned by me, and it was sad to see them all destroyed and burnt. As we went on our way, as Cortés always sent scouts ahead on horseback and active men on foot, they overtook two