

tell later on, in its proper place. I must not forget to say that when Cortés sent Gonzalo de Sandoval to Villa Rica as his lieutenant, and Captain and Alguacil Mayor, he had ordered him, as soon as he arrived, to send two blacksmiths, with all their apparatus of bellows and tools and much iron from the ships which we had destroyed, and the two great iron chains which were already made, and he told him to send also sails and tackle, and pitch and tow and a mariner's compass, and everything else that was needed to build two sloops to sail on the lake of Mexico. These things Sandoval sent at once following in every particular the orders he had received.

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## CHAPTER XCVII.

How, when the great Montezuma was a prisoner, Cortés and all of us soldiers always entertained him and cheered him up, and even gave him permission to go hunting, and this was given in order to find out what his intentions were.

As our captain was careful in all things, and seeing that Montezuma was a prisoner, and fearing that he might become depressed at being shut in and confined, he endeavoured every day, after prayers (for we then had no wine for Mass) to go and pay court to him, and he went accompanied by four Captains, usually by Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás, and with much reverence they asked Montezuma how he was, and that he should issue his orders and they would all be carried out, so that he should not be weary of his confinement. He answered that on the contrary, being a prisoner rested him, and this was because our gods gave us power to confine him or his Huichilobos permitted it, and in one conversation after another they gave him to

understand more fully the things about our holy faith, and the great power of the Emperor our Lord.

Then sometimes Montezuma and Cortés would play at Totoloque, which is the name they give to a game played with some very smooth small pellets made of gold for this game, and they toss these pellets to some distance as well as some little slabs which were also made of gold, and in five strokes [tries] they gained or lost certain pieces of gold or rich jewels that they staked. I remember that Pedro de Alvarado was keeping the score for Cortés, and one of his nephews, a great cacique, was marking for Montezuma, and Pedro de Alvarado always marked one point more than Cortés gained, and when Montezuma saw it he said courteously and laughingly that he did not like Tonatio (for so they called Pedro de Alvarado) to keep the score for Cortés, because he made so much *yxoxol* in what he marked, which in their language means to say that he cheated, in that he always marked one point too many. Cortés and all of us soldiers who were on guard at the time, could not restrain our laughter at what the great Montezuma said. It may now be asked why we laughed at that expression, and it was because Pedro de Alvarado, although he was so handsome and well mannered, had a mania for excessive talking, and as we knew his temperament, we all laughed so much. To return to the game, if Cortés won, he gave the jewels to those nephews and favourites of Montezuma who attended on him, and if Montezuma won he divided them among us soldiers on guard, and in addition to what he gave us from the game, he never omitted giving us every day presents of gold and cloth, both to us and to the captain of the Guard who, at that time, was Juan Velásquez de Leon, who showed himself in every way to be the friend and servant of Montezuma.

I also remember that at one time there was on guard

a soldier named somebody de Trujillo, a very tall man, in good health and very strong, and he was a seaman, and when it was his turn for the night's watch, he was so inconsiderate that—speaking with all respect for the gentlemen who read this—he acted indecently, and Montezuma heard him, and as he was the valiant King of this country, he considered it a proof of bad manners and disrespect that such a thing should be done in a place where he could hear it regardless of his presence. And he asked his page, Orteguilla, who that ill-conditioned and dirty person was, and the page replied that he was a man who was accustomed to travel on the sea and who knew nothing of courtesy and good breeding, and he also gave him information about the quality of all of us soldiers who were there, which was a gentleman and which not, and in continuation told him many things that Montezuma wished to know. To return to the soldier, Trujillo ; as soon as it was day Montezuma sent to summon him, and asked him why he was so behaved that he had no consideration for his presence, and did not pay him that respect that was due to him, that he begged him never to do such a thing again, then he ordered him to be given a jewel of gold weighing five pesos. Trujillo paid no attention to what was said to him and the next night did the same again purposely, thinking that Montezuma might give him something else, but Montezuma had Juan Velásquez, Captain of the Guard, informed of it, and the Captain immediately removed Trujillo so that he should not again stand guard and they reprimanded him with rough words. It also happened that another soldier named Pedro López, a great crossbowman, a man in good health but who was not easily understood, was placed as sentinel over Montezuma, and on the question whether it was time to change the watch during the night, he had words with an officer and said, “Oh! curse this dog, I am sick to death of keeping

constant guard over him." Montezuma heard the expression, and weighed it in his mind, and when Cortés came to pay his court to him, he heard of it, and was so angry about it, that he had Pedro López, good soldier as he was, flogged in our quarters, and from that time on all the soldiers who came on guard, went through their watch in silence and good manners. However it was not necessary to give orders to many of us who stood guard over him about the civility that we ought to show to this great cacique; he knew each one of us and even knew our names and our characters and he was so kind that to all of us he gave jewels and to some mantles, and handsome Indian women. As I was a young man in those days, whenever I was on guard, or passed in front of him, I doffed my headpiece with the greatest respect, and the page Orteguilla had told him that I had been on two expeditions to discover New Spain before the time of Cortés, so I asked Orteguilla to beg Montezuma to do me the favour of giving me a very pretty Indian woman, and when Montezuma heard this he told them to call me, and he said to me: "Bernal Díaz del Castillo, they tell me that you have quantities of cloth and gold, and I will order them to give you to-day a pretty maid. Treat her very well for she is the daughter of a chieftain, and they will also give you gold and mantles," and I answered him with much reverence, that I kissed his hands for his great favour, and might God our Lord prosper him, and it seems that he asked the page what I had replied to him, and he told him; and Montezuma said to him, "Bernal Díaz seems to me to be a gentleman," for as I have said, he knew all our names, and he told them to give me three small slabs of gold and two loads of mantles.

Let us stop talking of this and tell how of a morning after saying his prayers and making sacrifices to his idols, he took his breakfast, which was a small matter, for he ate

no meat, only chili peppers,<sup>1</sup> then he was occupied for an hour in hearing suits from many parts brought by Caciques who came to him from distant lands. I have already stated in the chapter that tells about it, the manner in which they came in to do their business and the reverence that they showed to Montezuma, and that at such times he always had in his company twenty elderly men who were his judges to decide cases, and as this has been already noted I will not repeat it. It was then that we found out that from among the many women whom he had as his mistresses, he gave wives to his Captains and to very favourite chieftains, and he even gave some of them to our soldiers, and the one he gave to me was a lady from among them, and her bearing clearly showed it, and she was called Doña Francisca. So Montezuma passed his life, sometimes laughing and sometimes thinking about his imprisonment.

I wish to state here, although it has nothing to do with our story, as some inquisitive persons have asked me just why the soldier mentioned by me, who called Montezuma a dog, and even that not in his presence, was flogged by order of Cortés, (there being so few of us soldiers), so that the Indians should hear about it. I say so [again], that at that time all of us and even Cortés himself, when we appeared before the great Montezuma, paid respect to him by always doffing our headpieces and besides being King of New Spain, his person and his rank entitled him to it, and he was so kind and well mannered that he did honour to us all. In addition to all this, one may well remember that our lives were at stake, and at a word to his vassals, they would have removed him from his prison and made war on us. Observing his bearing and royal generosity, and seeing that he always had with him

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<sup>1</sup> Ají.

many chieftains in his company, and the many other chieftains who came from distant lands, who paid great court to him, and the great number of persons to whom he daily gave food and drink, neither more nor less than when he was not in confinement, taking all this into consideration, Cortés was [naturally] very angry when he heard that such a word had been used about him ; and being irritated at it, he at once ordered the punishment as I have said, and it was well deserved.

Let us go on and tell how at that moment there arrived from Villa Rica Indians carrying the thick chains which Cortés had ordered the blacksmiths to make, and they also brought all the things necessary for the sloops that I have spoken about, and when they had all arrived, Montezuma was told of it, and I will leave off here and go on to relate what happened about it.

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## CHAPTER XCVIII.

How Cortés ordered two sloops to be built, of considerable burden and fast sailers, for use on the lake, and how the great Montezuma asked Cortés to give him permission to go and pray at his temples, and what Cortés answered, and how he gave him permission.

AS all the materials for building the two sloops had arrived, Cortés at once went to tell the great Montezuma that he wished to build two small ships so as to take pleasure trips on the lake and asked him to send his carpenters to cut the wood, together with our experts in boat-building, who were named Martin López and Andrés Nuñez. As the oak timber was distant about four leagues, it was soon brought and shaped, and as there were many Indian carpenters, the boats were soon built and caulked and tarred, and their rigging was set up and their sails cut to the right size and measurement, and an awning provided