

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.

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

for each one, and they turned out to be as good and fast as though they had taken a month to set up the models, for Martin López was a past master of the art, and it was he who afterwards built the thirteen sloops to aid in capturing Mexico, as I shall relate further on ; he was also a good soldier in war time.

Let us leave this and say that Montezuma told Cortés that he wished to go to his temples and make sacrifices, and pay the devotion to his gods that it was his duty to do, so that his Captains and chieftains might observe it, especially certain nephews of his, who came every day to tell him that they wished to free him and to attack us, and he answered them, that it pleased him to be with us, so they should think it was as he had told them, that his God Huichilobos had commanded him to stay with us, as he had made them believe before. Cortés replied that as to this permission he asked for, he should beware not to do anything for which he might lose his life, and so as to prevent any disorders, or commands to his Captains or priests either to release him, or attack us, he would send Captains and soldiers [with him] who would immediately stab him to death, should any change be noticed in his bearing. He might go and welcome, but must not sacrifice any human beings, for that was a great offence against the true God, that was to the God we were preaching to him about, and there stood our altars and the image of Our Lady, before whom he could pray. Montezuma said that he would not sacrifice a single human being, and he set off in his rich litter in great state with many great Caciques in his company as was his custom, and they carried his insignia in front of him in the form of a sort of staff or rod, which was the sign that his royal person was going that way (just as they do [now] to the Viceroys of New Spain). There went with him as a guard four of our Captains, namely, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Pedro de

Alvarado, Alonzo de Ávila and Francisco de Lugo and one hundred and fifty soldiers, and the Padre de la Merced also went with us to stop the sacrifice if he should offer human beings. So we went to the Cue of Huichilobos and when we came near to that cursed temple, he [Montezuma] ordered them to take him from his litter and he was carried on the shoulders of his nephews and of other Caciques until he arrived at the temple ; as I have already stated, as he went through the streets all the chieftains cast down their eyes and never looked at his face. When we arrived at the foot of the steps leading to the oratory there were many priests waiting to help him with their arms in the ascent.

There had already been sacrificed the night before four Indians, and in spite of what our Captain said and the dissuasions of the Padre de la Merced, he paid no heed but persisted in killing men and boys to accomplish his sacrifice, and we could do nothing at that time only pretend not to notice it, for Mexico and the other great cities were very ready to rebel under the nephews of Montezuma, as I shall explain further on. When he [Montezuma] had completed his sacrifices, and he did not tarry much in making them, we returned with him to our quarters, and he was very cheerful, and gave presents of golden jewels to us soldiers who had accompanied him.

Let us leave this here, and I will relate what next happened.

CHAPTER XCIX.

How we launched the two sloops, and how the Great Montezuma said that he wished to go hunting, and went in the sloops to a rocky Island¹ where there were many deer and much other game, for no one went hunting there under pain of very severe punishment.

WHEN the two sloops were finished building and had been launched, and the masts and rigging had been set up and adorned with the Royal and Imperial banners, and the sailors had been got ready to navigate them, they went out in them both rowing and sailing, and they sailed very well. When Montezuma heard of it, he said to Cortés that he wished to go hunting on a rocky Island standing in the lake which was preserved so that no one dared to hunt there, however great a chief he might be, under pain of death. Cortés replied that he was very welcome to go, but he must remember what he had told him on the former occasion when he went to visit his Idols, that to raise any disturbances was more than his life was worth ; [moreover] he could go in the sloops, as it was better sailing in them than in the canoes and pirogues however large they might be. Montezuma said that he would be delighted to sail in the sloop that was the swiftest, and he took with him many lords and chieftains, and advised his huntsmen to follow in canoes and pirogues. A son of Montezuma and many Caciques went in the other sloop. Then Cortés ordered Velásquez de Leon who was captain of the Guard and Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid, Alonzo de Ávila with two hundred soldiers, to accompany Montezuma, and to remember the great responsibility he was placing on them in looking after him, and as all those Captains whom I have named were very alert, they took on board all the soldiers I have spoken about, and four

¹ The *Peñon de Tepepolco* or *del Marques*.