

they were given an apartment in the Great Cue where they might make an altar on which to place the Image of Our Lady and set up a Cross, and that as time went on it would be made plain how good and advantageous it was for their souls, and for giving them health and good harvests and prosperity. Then Montezuma, with sighs and a very sorrowful countenance, said that he would confer with his priests. After much discussion had taken place about it, on the <sup>1</sup> day of the month of <sup>1</sup> in the year fifteen hundred and nineteen, this was done and our altars and an image of Our Lady and a Cross were set up, apart from their curséd Idols, with great reverence and with thanks to God from all of us, and the Padre de la Merced chanted Mass, assisted by the priest Juan Díaz and many of our soldiers. Our captain ordered an old soldier to be stationed there as guardian, and begged Montezuma to order the priests not to touch the altar, but only to keep it swept and to burn incense and keep wax candles burning there by day and night, and to decorate it with branches and flowers.

I will leave off here and say what it led to.

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## CHAPTER CVIII.

How the great Montezuma told our Captain Cortés to leave Mexico with all his soldiers, for all the Caciques and priests wanted to rise and wage war on us until they killed us, for so it had been decreed and advised by their Idols, and what Cortés did about it.

THERE was never a time when we were not subject to surprises of such a kind, that had our Lord God not assisted us, they would have cost us our lives. Thus as

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<sup>1</sup> Blank spaces in the original.

soon as we had placed the image of Our Lady and the Cross on the Altar which we had made on the Great Cue and the Holy Gospel had been preached and Mass said, it seems that Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca spoke to the priests, and told them that they wished to leave their country as they were so badly treated by the Teules, and they did not wish to stay where those figures and the Cross had been placed, nor would they remain there unless we were killed, and this was their answer and they need not expect any other, and they should inform Montezuma and all his Captains, so that they might at once go to war and kill us. The Idols further told them that they could see how all the gold that used to be kept for their honour, had been broken up by us and made into ingots, and let them beware how we were making ourselves lords over the country, and were holding five great Caciques prisoners, and they told them of other misdeeds so as to induce them to attack us. In order that Cortés and all of us should know about this, the Great Montezuma sent word to tell Cortés that he wished to speak to him on very important matters, and the page Orteguilla came and said to him that Montezuma was very sad and much disturbed, and that during the previous night and part of the day many priests and leading Captains had been with him and had said things to him privately that he [the page] could not understand.

When Cortés heard this he went in haste to the palace where Montezuma was staying and took with him Cristóval de Olid, who was Captain of the Guard, and four other Captains and Doña Marina and Jerónimo de Aguilar, and, after they had paid much respect to him, Montezuma said : “ Oh ! Señor Malinche and Captains, how distressed I am at the reply and command which our Teules have given to our priests and to me and all my Captains, which is that we should make war on you and

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kill you, and drive you back across the sea. I have thought it over, and what seems to me best is that you should at once leave this city before you are attacked, and that not one of you should remain here. This, Señor Malinche, I say that you should not fail to do, for it is to your interest, if not you will be killed, remember it is a question of your lives." Cortés and our Captains felt grief at what he said and were even a good deal disquieted, and it was not to be wondered at, the affair coming so suddenly and with such insistence that our lives were at once placed in the greatest danger by it, for the warning was given us with the greatest urgency. Cortés replied that he thanked Montezuma sincerely for the warning, and that at the present time there were two things that troubled him, one was that he had no vessels in which to sail, for he had ordered those in which he had come to be broken up, and the other was that Montezuma would be forced to come with us so that our Great Emperor might see him, and that he begged as a favour that he would place restraint on his priests and captains while three ships were being built at the sand dunes, as it would be more advantageous to them, for if they began the war they would all of them be killed.

He also asked, so that Montezuma might see that he wished to carry out what he had said without delay, that carpenters might be sent with two of our soldiers who were great experts in shipbuilding, to cut wood near to the sand dunes.

Montezuma was even more sorrowful than before because Cortés told him that he would have to come with us before the Emperor ; he said that he would send the carpenters, and that they should hurry and not waste time in talk, but work, and that meanwhile he would command the priests and captains not to ferment disturbances in the city and he would order Huichilobos to

be appeased with sacrifices, but not of human lives. After this exciting conversation Cortés and his captains took leave of Montezuma, and we were all in the greatest anxiety wondering when they would begin the attack.

Then Cortés ordered Martin López, the ship carpenter, to be summoned and Andrés Nuñez, and the Indian carpenters whom the Great Montezuma had given him and after some discussion as to the size of the three vessels to be built he ordered him at once to set about the work and to get them ready, for in Villa Rica there was everything necessary in the way of iron and blacksmiths, tackle, tow, and calkers and pitch. So they set out and cut the wood on the coast near Villa Rica, and in haste began to build the ships.

What were the instructions given by Cortés to Martin López I do not know, and I say this because the historian Gomara in his history says that he ordered him to make a show, as though it were all a farce of building them, merely so that Montezuma should hear of it. I will defer to what those say who, thank God, are still alive to this day; moreover, Martin Lopez told me in secret that he really worked at them with all speed and left three ships in the dockyard.

Let us leave him building the ships and say how we all went about in that city very much depressed, fearing that at any moment they might attack us; and our friends from Tlaxcala and Doña Marina also told the captain that an attack was probable, and Orteguilla, Montezuma's page, was always in tears. We all kept on the alert and placed a strong Guard over Montezuma, I say that we were on the alert, but there is no necessity to repeat it so often, for neither by day or night did we ever take off our arms or our gorgets or leggings, and we slept in them. Maybe some will ask when we slept and what our beds were like,—they were nothing but a little straw and a mat, and

if one had a curtain, he placed it beneath him, and we slept shod and armed and with all our weapons to hand. The horses stood saddled and bridled all day long, and everything so fully prepared that on a call to arms we stood as though we had already been posted and were waiting for it. Sentinels were posted every night, and there was not a soldier who did not keep watch. There is another thing I must say, but not with the intention of boasting about it, that I grew so accustomed to go about armed, and to sleep in the way I have said, that after the conquest of New Spain I kept to the habit of sleeping in my clothes and without a bed, and I slept thus better than on a mattress.

Now when I go to the towns of my *encomienda* I do not take a bed, and if sometimes I do take one with me, it is not that I want it, but because some gentlemen may happen to go with me, and I do not wish them to think that I have not brought a bed because I do not possess a good one, but in truth I always lie on it dressed. There is another thing I must say. I am only able to sleep for a short time of a night, and have to get up and look at the heavens and the stars, and have to walk about for a time in the dew, and this I do without putting a cap or handkerchief on my head, and I am so used to it that thank God it does me no harm. I have said all this that it may be known how we the true conquistadores lived, and how accustomed we became to our arms and to keeping watch.

Let us stop speaking of this, for I am wandering from my story, and say how our Lord Jesus Christ always showed us many favours and how, in the Island of Cuba, Diego Velásquez was hastening on his armada as I shall go on to relate, and how at this very time a Captain named Pánfilo de Narvaez was setting out for New Spain.





## BOOK VII.

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### THE EXPEDITION UNDER PÁNFILO DE NARVAEZ.

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#### CHAPTER CIX.

How Diego Velásquez the Governor of Cuba hastened to send his Armada against us with Pánfilo de Narvaez as Captain General, and how there came in his company the Licentiate Lucas Vásquez de Ayllon, Oidor of the Royal Audiencia of Santo Domingo, and what was done about it.



**W**E must now go a little way back in our story so that what I am about to relate may be clearly understood. I have already said, in the chapter that treats of that subject, how Diego Velásquez, the Governor of Cuba, knew that we had sent our Proctors to His Majesty, with all the gold that we had obtained, and the sun and moon and a great variety of jewels and gold in grains brought from the mines, and many other things of great value, and that we were not asking assistance of him [Velásquez] about anything. He also knew that Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and Archbishop of Rosano (for so he was called), who at that time was President of the Indies, had everything absolutely under his authority, because His Majesty was in Flanders, and that the Bishop had treated our Proctors very badly.