



BOOK VII.

THE EXPEDITION UNDER PÁNFILO DE NARVAEZ.

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.



WE 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.

They say that this same Bishop sent from Castile at that time much help to Diego Velásquez, and advice and orders that he should send and have us captured, and that he, from Spain, would afford him full support for so doing. With this strong support Diego Velásquez got together a fleet of nineteen ships and fourteen hundred soldiers, and they brought with them over twenty cannon and much powder and all sorts of stores of stones and balls, and two gunners¹ (the Captain of the artillery was named Rodrigo Martin) and they brought eighty horsemen and ninety crossbowmen and seventy musketeers. Diego Velásquez, although he was very fat and heavy, himself went about from village to village, and from town to town, provisioning the fleet and inviting the settlers who had Indians, as well as his relations and friends, to go with Pánfilo Narvaez to capture Cortés and us his Captains and soldiers, or at least not to leave any of us alive, and he went about so incensed and angry and with such energy, that he got as far as Guaniguanico which is seventy leagues beyond Havana. When he was going about like this before his armada sailed, it seems that the Royal Audiencia of Santo Domingo and the Geronimite friars, who were the Governors, got to hear of it, for the Licentiate Zuazo sent them the news of it from Cuba, to which island he had come to take the "residencia"² of this same Diego Velásquez. When the Royal Audiencia heard of it—knowing as they did of the many and great and loyal services which we had accomplished for God and His Majesty, and how we had sent our Proctors with great presents to our Lord the King, and knowing that Diego Velásquez had no right nor authority to take vengeance on us by force of arms, but that he should ask for it according to law, and that if

¹ Astilleros in the text, probably in error for Artilleros.

² Residencia = an inquiry into official acts.

he came with his fleet it would greatly interfere with our conquest,—they decided to send a Licentiate named Lucas Vázquez de Ayllon, who was Oidor of this same Royal Audiencia, to stop this fleet of Diego Velásquez and not to let it sail, under pain of heavy penalties. The Oidor came to Cuba and took the needful steps and made protest according to the command of the Royal Audiencia in order that Velásquez should not carry out his project, but all the injunctions and penalties that he proclaimed were of no avail, for as Diego Velásquez had the backing of the Bishop of Burgos, and had spent all he possessed in raising that army against us, he did not care a snap of the fingers for all the injunctions issued against him, on the contrary he became very blustering, and when the Oidor saw this he himself accompanied Narvaez so as to keep the peace and to promote agreement between Cortés and Narvaez. There are other soldiers who say that he came with the intention of giving us assistance, and, if he could not do so, that he meant to take the country himself as Oidor in the name of His Majesty. In this way he came to the port of San Juan de Ulúa, and there I will leave him and go on to say what was done about it.

CHAPTER CX.

How Pánfilo de Narvaez arrived at the port of San Juan de Ulúa, which is called Vera Cruz, with all his fleet, and what happened to him.

AS Pánfilo de Narvaez came across the sea with all his fleet of nineteen ships, it appears that on nearing the Sierra of San Martin, for so it is called, he was struck by a north wind, which is a head wind on that coast, and during the night he lost one ship of small burden which foundered ; her Captain was a gentleman named Cristóbal de