

his soldiers not to rob the Indians of that town nor of any other. After the usual expressions of courtesy, Cortés placed his signature, as did our Captains and some of the soldiers and I added mine. There accompanied the Friar a soldier named Bartolomé de Usagre, because he was a brother of the artilleryman Usagre who had charge of the artillery of Narvaez.

I will go on to tell what is said to have taken place when our Friar and Usagre arrived at Cempoala where Narvaez was encamped.

CHAPTER CXVII.

How the Fraile de la Merced went to Cempoala where Narvaez and all his captains were stationed and what happened when he gave them the letter.

I WILL not waste further words on repeating how the Fraile de la Merced reached the Camp of Narvaez, for he did what Cortés ordered, which was to call together certain gentlemen followers of Narvaez, and the gunner Rodrigo Martin, for so he was called, and Usagre, who also had charge of the cannon. So as to be sure of attracting Usagre, his brother carried some gold ingots which he secretly gave to him. In the same manner the Friar distributed the gold as Cortés had commanded him, and told Andrés de Duero to come to our camp soon to meet Cortés. In addition to this the Friar went to see Narvaez and speak to him and pretend to be his most humble servant. While this was going on they [the partisans of Narvaez] were very suspicious of what our Friar was about and advised Narvaez to seize him at once, and this he was willing to do. When Andrés de Duero heard of it (he was the Secretary of Diego Velásquez and a native of Tudela de Duero, and

4 5 ★

Narvaez and he considered themselves as relations for Narvaez also came from the neighbourhood of Valladolid, or from Valladolid itself) he, Andrés de Duero, who was a person of importance and highly respected throughout the Armada, went to Narvaez and said to him that he had been told that he wished to arrest the Fraile de la Merced who was the messenger and Ambassador from Cortés, and although some suspicions might be entertained that the Friar was saying things in favour of Cortés, it would not be wise to arrest him, for it had been clearly shown what great honours and gifts Cortés bestowed on all the adherents of Narvaez who went to [visit] him; that the Friar had spoken to him [Andrés de Duero] as soon as he had arrived and given him to understand his desire that he himself and other gentlemen from Cortés's camp should come to give him [Narvaez] a reception, and that they should all be friends. Let him observe how good are the words Cortés speaks to the messengers who are sent to him and how neither he [Cortés] nor any of those with him ever mention [him] Narvaez otherwise than as El Señor Capitan, and [moreover] that it would be mean to arrest a cleric. It were better that Usagre the gunner whose brother had come to visit him should invite the Friar to dinner and find out from him what it was that all the followers of Cortés desired. With those and other palatable speeches Andrés de Duero calmed Narvaez, and when this had come to pass he took leave of him and secretly told the priest what had taken place.

Narvaez sent at once to summon the Friar, and when he came he showed him great respect, and the Friar half laughing, for he was very sly and sagacious, begged him to come aside with him in privacy, and Narvaez went strolling with him in a courtyard, and

the Friar said to him "I know well that your Honour wished to have me arrested but I wish you to know, Sir, that you have no better or more devoted servant in the camp than I am, and you may feel sure that many gentlemen and captains among the followers of Cortés would be glad to see him already in your hands, and I think that we shall all see him there; and so as more [surely] to bring about his undoing they have made him write a nonsensical letter which was signed by the soldiers and was given to me to present to your Honour. I have not wished to show it until now, when we can chat together, and I longed to throw it in a river on account of the foolishness that it contains, and the soldiers and Captains of Cortés have done this so as to ensure his undoing." Narvaez said that the letter should be given to him, and the Friar replied that he had left it at his lodging and that he would go for it, and so he took his leave and went for the letter. Meanwhile the blustering Salvatierra came to the quarters of Narvaez.

The Friar quickly called Duero to go at once to the house of Narvaez for the presentation of the letter, for Duero and others among the captains who had shown themselves favourable to Cortés, knew all about it, as the Friar carried it about with him, but he desired that many persons from that camp should be assembled to hear it [read].

When the Friar arrived with the letter he at once gave it to Narvaez himself and said "Do not be astonished at it, Sir, for Cortés talks as though out of his mind, but I know for certain that if your Honour will speak to him with affection he will promptly yield himself up with all his followers."

Let us leave the arguments of the Friar which were very good, and say that the Captains and soldiers told Narvaez

to read the letter. When they heard it, Narvaez and Salvatierra roared with anger, the others laughed as though making fun of it, and then Andrés de Duero said "Now I do not see how this can be, and I do not understand it, for this Cleric has told me that Cortés and all [the rest] would yield to your Honour, and now he writes these ravings." Then one Augustin Bermudez, who was Captain and chief constable of the Camp of Narvaez, ably helped Duero and said, "I certainly learnt from this Friar of the Order of Mercy, in strict privacy, that if we were to send good mediators that Cortés himself would come to visit your Honour in order to give himself up with his soldiers, and it will be a good thing to send to his camp, which is not far off, the Señor Veedor Salvatierra and the Señor Andrés de Duero, and I will go with them," this he said purposely to see what Salvatierra would say. Narvaez at once said that Andrés de Duero and Salvatierra should go, but Salvatierra answered that he was indisposed, and that he would not go to see a traitor. The Friar said to him, "Señor Veedor, it is good to have moderation, for it is certain that you will have him a prisoner before many days."

As soon as the departure of Andrés de Duero was agreed upon, it seems that, in strict secrecy, Narvaez planned with Duero himself and three other Captains, that he should arrange with Cortés for an interview at some farms and Indian houses, which stood between the camp of Narvaez and ours, and that there an arrangement would be come to as to where we should go with Cortés to settle, and where boundaries should be drawn, and that during the interviews he [Narvaez] would arrest him [Cortés] and to this effect Narvaez had already bespoken twenty soldiers who were his friends.

The Friar knew about this at once, and so did Andrés de Duero, and they informed Cortés of everything.

Let us leave the Friar in the camp of Narvaez where he had already made himself a great friend and kinsman of Salvatierra (for both the Fraile de Olmedo and Salvatierra were from Burgos), and he had his meals with him. Let us say about Andrés de Duero that he was getting ready to go to our Camp and take with him our soldier Bartolomé de Usagre so that Narvaez should not be able to learn from him what was going on, and I will relate what we did in our Camp.

CHAPTER CXVIII.

How in our Camp we held a Muster of the soldiers who were present, and how they brought two hundred and fifty very long pikes with two copper spikes each, which Cortés had ordered to be made in some towns which they call [the towns of] the Chinantecs and how we taught ourselves to handle them so as to defeat the horsemen of Narvaez, and other things that happened in camp.

LET us go back to say something about what else happened before that which I have already related. As soon as Cortés heard news of the fleet that Narvaez was bringing he at once despatched a soldier who had served in Italy and was very skilful with all arms and especially at making play with a pike, and sent him to a province called the [land of the] Chinantecs, near to where our soldiers had stayed when they went to search for mines, for the people of that province were very hostile to the Mexicans and they had accepted our friendship a few days before. They used as arms very long lances, longer than ours from Castile, with two fathoms of flint and [stone] knives,¹ so

¹ Dos brazas de pedernal y navajas ; literally, two fathoms of flint and knives. In Chapter CXXIII they are described as having one fathom of flint knives (unc braza de cuchilla de pedernales). They were probably double-pointed spears with two cutting edges of flint knives extending from the points for some distance along each side of the shaft.