

that time there was a settlement by the river, consisting of some Indian houses and groves, and as the sun is very powerful in that country we rested, for, as I have said, we were carrying our arms and pikes. Let us now interrupt our march and I will relate what took place between Juan Velásquez and Narvaez, and one of his captains who was also named Diego Velásquez, and was a nephew of Velásquez the Governor of Cuba, for there he [Juan Velásquez] ran against him.

CHAPTER CXX.

How Juan Velásquez de Leon and Cortés's orderly named Juan del Río arrived at the Camp of Narvaez, and what happened there.

I HAVE already said how Cortés sent Juan Velásquez de Leon with an orderly to accompany him to Cempoala, to see what Narvaez, who was so anxious to have him in his company, wanted of him. Therefore, hardly had they left our camp when Juan Velásquez made such speed on the road, that he reached Cempoala by dawn and dismounted at the house of the fat Cacique, (but Juan del Río had no horse,) and thence they went afoot to the quarters of Narvaez. The Indians recognized him [Juan Velásquez] and they were delighted to see and speak to him and said aloud to some of the soldiers of Narvaez, who were quartered in the house of the fat Cacique, that this was Juan Velásquez de Leon one of Malinche's Captains. As soon as the soldiers heard this they went running to Narvaez to demand rewards for bringing the good news that Juan Velásquez de Leon had come.

When Narvaez heard of his arrival, before Juan Velásquez could reach his quarters, he went out to receive him in the street accompanied by some soldiers. Juan Velásquez and Narvaez on meeting they made a great show

of reverence to one another, and Narvaez embraced Juan Velásquez and pressed him to be seated on a chair, for they at once brought chairs and seats near to him, and he asked him why he did not dismount at his quarters, and he ordered his servants to go at once for the horse and baggage, if he had brought any, so that all might be placed in his house and stables and quarters. Juan Velásquez replied that he wished to return at once, and that he had only come to kiss his hands and those of all the gentlemen of his camp, and to see if his Excellency and Cortés could agree to keep peace and friendship. Then it is said that Narvaez promptly repelled Juan Velásquez, greatly annoyed that such words should be spoken to him. "What! to make friends and peace with a traitor who had rebelled with the fleet against his cousin Diego Velásquez?" and Juan Velásquez replied that Cortés was no traitor but a faithful servant of His Majesty, and that to appeal to our Lord and King as he had done should not be imputed to him as treason, and he begged him [Narvaez] to use no such word in his presence. Then Narvaez began to bribe him [Juan Velásquez] with great promises to [persuade him to] remain with him and to arrange with the followers of Cortés to give him [Cortés] up and to come at once and place themselves under his command, promising him [Velásquez de Leon] with oaths that he should be the foremost captain in all the camp and be the second in command. Juan Velásquez answered that it would be a greater treason to desert the Captain to whom he had sworn [obedience] during war, and to abandon him knowing [as he did] that all that he had done in New Spain was in the service of God our Lord and His Majesty, and that Cortés could not avoid appealing, in the way he had appealed, to our King and Master, and he begged him [Narvaez] to say no more about it.

By that time all the most important Captains from the

Camp of Narvaez had come to see Juan Velásquez and they embraced him with the greatest courtesy for Juan Velásquez was much of a courtier, well made, robust, of good presence and features and with a becoming beard, and he wore a great golden chain thrown over his shoulder giving it two turns under his arm, and it suited him well in the part of the gallant and brave captain. Let us leave the good looks of Juan Velásquez and how all the captains of Narvaez were admiring him, and even our Padre de la Merced also came to see him and speak to him in private, and there also came Andrés de Duero and the chief constable, Bermudez.

It seems that at that time certain captains of Narvaez, named Gamarra, and one Juan Fuste, and one Juan Bono de Quexo, a Biscayan, and Salvatierra the swaggerer, advised Narvaez to arrest Juan Velásquez at once, for it seemed to them that he was speaking very freely in favour of Cortés. When Narvaez had already secretly ordered his Captains and Constables to take him prisoner, Augustin Bermudez and Andrés de Duero and our Padre de la Merced and a priest named Juan de Leon, and other persons from among those who had professed themselves friends of Cortés, heard about it, and they said to Narvaez that they were astonished at his ordering Juan Velásquez de Leon to be arrested, for what could Cortés do against him [Narvaez] even if he had another hundred Juan Velásquezes in his Company?—that he should consider the honour and respect that Cortés paid to all those who had gone to his camp, and how he goes out to receive them all, and gives them gold and jewels, and other things such as cloths and fly whisks, and how they came back laden like bees to their hives; that he [Cortés] might easily have arrested Andrés de Duero and the priest Guevara and Amaya and Vergara the notary and Alonzo de Mata and others who had gone to his camp, and he did not do so; on

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the contrary, as they have stated, he paid them great honour; and it would be better once again to speak to Juan Velásquez with much courtesy and to invite him to dinner. This seemed to Narvaez to be good advice, and he promptly spoke again to him [Juan Velásquez] in very affectionate terms so that he should be the mediator through whom Cortés might give himself up with all of us; and he invited him to dinner. Juan Velásquez replied that in that case he would do what he could, although he held Cortés to be very obstinate and stubborn in the matter, and that it would be better to divide the provinces, and his honour [Narvaez] should choose the land that pleased him best. This Juan Velásquez said in order to pacify him.

While these conversations were going on the Padre de la Merced whispered to Narvaez, as his confidant and adviser which he had already become, "Order them to muster all your artillery and cavalry and musketeers and crossbowmen and soldiers so that Juan Velásquez de Leon and the orderly Juan del Rio may see them, and so that Cortés may fear your force and your people and may surrender to your Excellency however unwillingly." This the Friar said to him as though he were his faithful servant and friend and to make him exercise all the horsemen and soldiers that were in the camp. So on the advice of our Friar he [Narvaez] held a review before Juan Velásquez de Leon and Juan del Rio, and in the presence of our cleric. When it was finished Juan Velásquez said to Narvaez, "You have brought a great force with you, may God increase it." Then Narvaez replied, "Ah, you can see that had I wished to go against Cortés I should have taken him prisoner and all of you that are with him." Then Juan Velásquez answered and said "Look on him as taken

and us soldiers too, but we shall know well how to defend ourselves," and so the conversation ended.

The next day Juan Velásquez was invited to dinner, and there was dining with Narvaez a nephew of Diego Velásquez the Governor of Cuba, who was also one of his captains, and while they were eating at table he began to talk of how Cortés had failed to surrender to Narvaez and of the letter and summons that he sent him. And from one speech to another, the nephew of Diego Velásquez (who was also called Diego Velásquez like his uncle) exceeded all bounds and said that Cortés and all of us who were with him were traitors, because they did not come to submit themselves to Narvaez. When Juan Velásquez heard this he rose from the chair on which he was seated and with great ceremony said, "Señor Captain Narvaez, I have already told you that I cannot acquiesce in such words being spoken against Cortés or against any of those who are with him, as those that have been uttered, for it is truly malicious to speak evil of us who have served His Majesty so loyally."

Diego Velásquez replied that his words were well said and that he [Juan Velásquez] was upholding a traitor, and that traitors were as worthless as he was, and that he was not a good Velásquez. Juan Velásquez grasped his sword and said that he lied and that he was a better gentleman than he was, and a good Velásquez, better than him or his uncle, and that he would let him know it, if the Señor Captain Narvaez would give him leave. As there were many captains present, followers of Narvaez as well as some friends of Cortés, they placed themselves between them (for Juan Velásquez was actually going to give him a sword thrust) and they advised Narvaez that he should promptly order him [Juan Velásquez] to leave the camp, both him and the Friar and Juan del Rio for they felt sure that they were doing no good there. At once without

further delay they were ordered to leave, and they, who could hardly await the hour of getting back to our camp, complied.

It is said that Juan Velásquez mounted on his good mare in his coat of mail, which he always wore, and helmet and great golden chain, went to take leave of Narvaez, and Diego Velásquez, the youth who had quarrelled, was there with Narvaez, and he [Juan Velásquez] said to Narvaez, "What are your Honour's orders for our camp?" Narvaez replied in a great rage that he should get him gone and that it would have been better had he never come, and the youth Diego Velásquez uttered threats and offensive words to Juan Velásquez, who answered that he was very audacious and deserved chastisement for the words he had spoken, and placing his hand on his beard [he cried] by this [my beard I swear] that I will see before many days whether your courage is as good as your words. As six or seven from the camp of Narvaez who had already been won over to the side of Cortés had come with Juan Velásquez to take leave of him, it is reported that they disputed with him as though they were angry, and told him to be off and not trouble himself to talk any more. So they parted, and keeping their horses at a good pace they set off for our camp, for Juan Velásquez was promptly warned that Narvaez wished to arrest them and many horsemen were got in readiness to follow after them. Keeping on their way they met us at the river I have spoken of which is now near Vera Cruz.

We were halted on this river which I have mentioned, taking a rest (for in that country the heat is very great, and as we marched with all our arms on our backs, each one carrying a pike, we were tired), when at that moment one of our scouts came to give word to Cortés that, a good way off, two or three persons were approaching on horseback, and we at once assumed that it would be

our ambassador Juan Velásquez de Leon and the Friar and Juan del Rio. When they arrived where we were, what delight and happiness we all experienced, and how many caresses and what praise did Cortés bestow on Juan Velásquez, and on our Friar, and he had good cause, for they were his faithful servants.

Then Juan Velásquez related, step by step, all that I have already stated had happened to them with Narvaez, and how he sent secretly to give the chains and ingots and jewels of gold to the persons whom Cortés had indicated. Then you should have heard our Friar! Being of a merry disposition, he well knew how to mimic his own behaviour as Narvaez's faithful servant, and [to tell] how, in sheer mockery, he advised him to hold the review and call out his artillery, and with what astuteness and cunning he gave him the letter. Then he next related what happened to him with Salvatierra, with whom he claimed close relationship (the Friar being a native of Olmedo and Salvatierra from beyond Burgos), and [told us] what fierce threats Salvatierra uttered as to what he would do and what would happen when he captured Cortés and all of us, and that he even complained to him about the soldiers who had stolen his horse and that of the other captain, and we were all as delighted at hearing about it as though we were going to a wedding or a merry-making, [although] we knew that the next day we should be going into battle and must conquer or die in it, we being but two hundred and sixty six soldiers and those of Narvaez being five times as numerous as we were. Let us go back to our story, which is that we all marched at once towards Cempoala, and we went to sleep near a small stream about a league from Cempoala where there was a bridge at that time, and where now there is a cattle ranch. Let us leave off there, and I will relate what was done in the camp of Narvaez after the departure of Juan Velásquez and the

Friar and Juan del Rio and then I will at once return to relate what we did in our camp. As two or three events took place simultaneously I am obliged to leave some of them so as to relate what is most pertinent to this story.

CHAPTER CXXI.

What was done in the camp of Narvaez after our ambassadors had left it.

IT seems that when Juan Velásquez and the Friar and Juan del Rio went back, Narvaez was told by his captains that a belief had arisen in the camp that Cortés had sent many jewels of gold, and had gained friends to his side in the camp itself, and that it would be well to be much on the alert, and to warn the soldiers to have their arms and horses ready. In addition to this the fat Cacique, already mentioned by me, was in great fear of Cortés because he had allowed Narvaez to take the cloths and gold and to seize the Indian women, moreover he always had spies out [to see] where we slept and by what road we were coming, for so Narvaez had compelled him to do by force. When he knew that we were already arriving near to Cempoala the fat Cacique said to Narvaez: "What are you about? you are behaving very carelessly; do you think that Malinche and the Teules that he brings with him are the same as you are? Well, I tell you that when you least expect it he will be here and will kill you." Although they made fun of those words that the fat Cacique said to them, they did not fail to get ready, and the first thing they did was to declare war against us with fire and sword and free loot. This we heard from a soldier called El Galleguillo,¹ who came fleeing from the camp of Narvaez,

¹ El Galleguillo—the little Galician.