



BOOK VIII.

THE FLIGHT FROM MEXICO.

CHAPTER CXXV.

How we went by forced marches, Cortés as well as all his captains and all the followers of Narvaez, except Pánfilo de Narvaez himself and Salvatierra who remained prisoners.



WHEN the news came which I have recorded that Pedro de Alvarado was besieged and Mexico in revolt, the commands that had been given to Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás for the purpose of going to form settlements at Panuco and Coat-zacoalcos were rescinded and neither of them went, for all joined with us. Cortés spoke to the followers of Narvaez, for he felt that they would not accompany us willingly, and to induce them to give that assistance, he begged them to leave behind them their resentment over the affair of Narvaez, and he promised to make them rich and give them office, and as they came to seek a livelihood, and were in a country where they could do service to God and His Majesty and enrich themselves, now was their chance; and so many speeches did he make to them that one and all offered themselves to him to go with us, and if they had known the power of Mexico, it is certain that not one of them would have gone.

We were soon on our way by forced marches until we reached Tlaxcala, where we learnt that up to the time that Montezuma and his captains heard that we had defeated Narvaez they did not cease to attack, and had already killed seven of his [Alvarado's] soldiers and burnt his quarters, but as soon as they heard of our victory they ceased attacking him ; but they added that they [Alvarado's company] were much exhausted through want of water and food, for Montezuma had failed to order food to be given to them.

Some Tlaxcalan Indians brought this news at the very moment we arrived, and Cortés at once ordered a muster to be made of the men he had brought with him and found over thirteen hundred soldiers counting both our people and the followers of Narvaez, and over ninety-six horses and eighty crossbowmen, and as many musketeers, and with these it seemed to Cortés that he had force enough to enter Mexico in safety. In addition to this the Caciques of Tlaxcala gave us two thousand Indian warriors, and we at once set out by forced marches to Texcoco which is a great city, and they paid no honour to us there and not a single chieftain made his appearance, for all were hidden away and ill disposed.

We arrived at Mexico on the day of Señor San Juan de Junio¹ 1520, and no Caciques or Captains or Indians whom we knew appeared in the streets, and all the houses were empty when we reached the quarters where we used to lodge. The great Montezuma came out to the courtyard to embrace and speak to Cortés and bid him welcome, and congratulate him on his victory over Narvaez, and as Cortés was arriving victorious he refused to listen to him, and Montezuma returned to his quarters very sad and depressed.

¹ Midsummer day.

When each one of us was lodged in the quarters he had occupied before we set out from Mexico to go to this affair of Narvaez, and the followers of Narvaez [were lodged] in other quarters, we then saw and talked with Pedro de Alvarado and the soldiers who had stayed with him ; they gave us an account of the attacks the Mexicans had made on them, and the straits in which they [the Mexicans] had placed them, and we told them the story of our victory over Narvaez.

I will leave all this and relate how Cortés tried to find out what was the cause of the revolt in Mexico, for we clearly understood that it made Montezuma unhappy if [we should think] it had been his desire or had been done by his advice. Many of the soldiers who had remained with Pedro de Alvarado through that critical time said, that if Montezuma had had a hand in it, all of them would have been killed, but Montezuma calmed his people until they ceased to attack.

What Pedro de Alvarado told Cortés about the matter was that it was done by the Mexicans in order to liberate Montezuma, and because their Huichilobos ordered it, on account of our having placed the image of our Lady the Virgin Santa Maria and the Cross in his house. Moreover he said that many Indians had come to remove the holy image from the altar where we placed it, and were not able [to move it], and that the Indians looked upon it as a great miracle and had said so to Montezuma, who had told them to leave it in the place and altar in which it stood, and not to attempt to do otherwise, and so it was left.

Pedro de Alvarado further stated that because Narvaez' message to Montezuma, that he was coming to release him from prison and to capture us, had not turned out to be true, and because Cortés had told Montezuma that as soon as we possessed ships we should go and embark and leave the country entirely, and we were not going, and it

was nothing but empty words, and because it was evident that many more Teules were arriving, it seemed well [to the Mexicans], before the followers of Narvaez or our own men re-entered Mexico to kill Pedro de Alvarado and his soldiers and release the great Montezuma, and afterwards not to leave one of us or of the followers of Narvaez alive, all the more because they had taken it for granted that Narvaez and his soldiers would conquer us.

This discourse and account Pedro de Alvarado rendered to Cortés, and Cortés turned and asked him what was the reason that he attacked them when they were dancing and holding a festival, and he replied that he knew for certain that as soon as they had finished the festivals and dances and the sacrifices that they were offering to their Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca, they would at once come and make an attack according to the agreement they had made between themselves, and this and all the rest he learned from a priest and from two chieftains and from other Mexicans.

Cortés said to him, "but they have told me that they asked your permission to hold festivals [areyto] and dances," he replied that it was true, and it was in order to take them unprepared, and to scare them, so that they should not come to attack him, that he hastened to fall on them.

When Cortés heard this he said to him, very angrily, that it was very ill done and a great mistake¹ and that he wished to God that Montezuma had escaped and not heard such an account from his Idols. So he left him and spoke no more to him about it.

Pedro de Alvarado himself also said² that when he

¹ Scratched out in the original : "and not very true."—G.G.

² Scratched out in the original : "I wish to state that Pedro de Alvarado said that when the Mexican Indians fought against him, many of them said that a great *Teclecigata*, that is a great lady, such another as she who was placed in the great Cue, threw earth in their eyes and blinded them, and that a *guy Teule* (a great God) who rode

advanced against them in that conflict, he ordered a cannon, that was loaded with one ball and many small shot, to be fired, for as many squadrons of Indians were approaching to set fire to his quarters he sallied forth to fight them, and he ordered the cannon to be fired but it did not go off, and after he had made a charge against the squadrons which were attacking him, and many Indians were bearing down on him, while he was retreating to the fortress and quarters, then, without fire being applied to the cannon, the ball and the small shot was discharged and killed many Indians; and had it not so happened the enemy would have killed them all, and they did on that occasion carry off two of his soldiers alive.

Another thing Pedro de Alvarado stated, and this was the only thing that was [also] reported by the other soldiers, for the rest of the stories were told by Alvarado alone, and it is that they had no water to drink, and they dug in the courtyard, and made a well and took out fresh water, all [around] being salt; in all it amounted to many gifts that our Lord God bestowed on us.

Concerning this about the water I will add that in Mexico there was a spring where very often and at most times water¹ welled up. These things and others I heard

on a white horse did them great damage, and that had it not been for them they would have killed them all. And it is stated that his chieftains told this to the great Montezuma, and if this were so, they were great miracles and we must always give thanks to God and to the Virgin Santa Maria Our Lady, His Blessed Mother, that he helped us in all things, and to the fortunate Señor Santiago.—G. G.

¹ Blotted out in the original: "somewhat sweeter than the rest. Some persons say that it was through greed to gain the great quantity of gold and jewels of great value which the Indians wore while dancing that Pedro de Alvarado went to attack them. I do not believe it, and never heard such a thing, nor is it credible that he would do such a thing, although the Bishop Fray Bartolomé de las Casas says so. This and other things never happened, for in truth he fell on them to terrify them and so that with the damage he did to them they should have sufficient to recover from and weep over, and would not come to attack him, and as they say "Who attacks conquers." It was appa-

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related by persons of good faith and reliability, who were with Pedro de Alvarado when this happened, so I will leave off here and tell of the great attack that they promptly made on us, which was in the following manner.

CHAPTER CXXVI.

How they made war on us in Mexico, and the attacks they made on us and other things that happened.

WHEN Cortés saw that they had given us no sort of a reception in Texcoco, and had not even given us food, except bad food and with bad grace, and that we found no chieftains with whom to parley, and he saw that all were scared away and ill disposed, and observed the same condition on coming to Mexico, how no market was held and the whole place was in revolt, and he heard from Pedro de Alvarado about the disorderly manner in which he made his attack, and as it appears that on the march Cortés had spoken to the Captains of Narvaez glorifying himself on the great veneration and command that he enjoyed, and how on the road they [the Indians] would turn out to receive him and celebrate the occasion and give him gold, and that in Mexico he ruled as absolutely over the great Montezuma as over all his Captains, and that they would give him presents of gold, as they were used to do, and when everything turned out contrary to his expectations and they did not even give us food to eat, he was greatly irritated, and haughty towards the numerous

rently much worse, for we were also credibly informed that Montezuma never ordered such an attack to be made, and, while they were fighting with Pedro de Alvarado, Montezuma ordered his people to stop. His followers replied that it was unbearable to have him kept a prisoner, or for them [the Spaniards] to come and kill them, as they had done, while they were dancing. They felt bound to release him and to kill all the Teules who were guarding him.—G. G.

Spaniards that he was bringing with him, and very sad and fretful. At this moment the great Montezuma sent two of his chieftains to beg our Cortés to go and see him, for he wished to speak to him, and the answer that he [Cortés] gave them was "go to, for a dog, who will not even keep open a market, and does not order food to be given us." Then when our Captains, that is Juan Velásquez de Leon, Cristóbal de Olid, Alonzo de Ávila, and Francisco de Lugo, heard Cortés say this, they exclaimed, "Señor, moderate your anger and reflect how much good and honour this king of these countries has done us, who is so good that had it not been for him we should all of us already be dead, and they would have eaten us, and remember that he has even given you his daughters."

When Cortés heard this he was more angry than ever at the words they said to him, as they seemed to be a reproof, and he said, "Why should I be civil to a dog who was treating secretly with Narvaez, and now you can see that he does not even give us food to eat." Our Captains replied, "That is to our minds what he ought to do and it is good advice." As Cortés had so many Spaniards there with him in Mexico, both of our own party and of the followers of Narvaez he did not trouble himself a whit about anything, and he spoke angrily and rudely again, addressing the chieftains and telling them to say to their Lord Montezuma that he should at once order the markets and sales to be held, if not he would see what would happen.

The chieftains well understood the offensive remarks that Cortés made about their Lord and even the reproof that our Captains gave to Cortés about it, for they knew them well as having been those who used to be on guard over their Lord, and they knew that they were good friends of their Montezuma, and according to the way they understood the matter they repeated it to Montezuma.

Either from anger [at this treatment] or because it had already been agreed on that we were to be attacked, it was not a quarter of an hour later that a soldier arrived in great haste and badly wounded. He came from a town close by Mexico named Tacuba and was escorting some Indian women who belonged to Cortés, one of them a daughter of Montezuma, for it appears that he [Cortés] had left them there in charge of the Lord of Tacuba, for they were relations of this same Lord, when we went off on the expedition against Narvaez. This soldier said that all the city and road by which he had come was full of warriors fully armed, and that they had taken from him the Indian women he was bringing and had given him two wounds and that if he had not let them [the women] go, they [the Mexicans] would already have captured him, and would have put him in a canoe and carried him off to be sacrificed, and that they had broken down a bridge.

When Cortés and some of us heard this it certainly depressed us greatly, for we, who were used to Indian fighting, understood thoroughly well what great numbers of them were wont to assemble, and that however well we fought, and notwithstanding the greater number of soldiers we had now brought with us, we should have to undergo great risk of our lives, hunger and hardship, especially as we were in such a powerful city. Let me go on and say that Cortés promptly ordered a Captain named Diego de Ordás to go with four hundred soldiers, and among them most of the crossbowmen and musketeers and some horsemen, and examine into what the soldier had reported who had arrived wounded and had brought the news, and that if he found that he could calm [the Indians] without fighting and disturbance that he should do so.

Diego de Ordás set out in the way that he was ordered with his four hundred soldiers, but he had hardly reached

the middle of the street along which he was to march, when so many squadrons of Mexican warriors fell on him and so many more were on the roofs [of the houses], and they made such fierce attacks that on the first assault they killed eight soldiers and wounded all the rest, and Diego de Ordás himself was wounded in three places, and in this manner he could not advance one step further but had to return little by little to his quarters. During the retreat they killed another good soldier named Lyscano who, with a broadsword, had done the work of a very valiant man.

At that moment, while many squadrons came out against Ordás, many more approached our quarters and shot off so many javelins, and stones from slings, and arrows, that they wounded on that occasion alone over forty-six of our men, and twelve of them died of their wounds; and such a number of warriors fell upon us that Diego de Ordás, who was coming in retreat, could not reach our quarters on account of the fierce assaults they made on him, some from the rear and others in front and others from the roofs.

Little availed our cannon, or our muskets, crossbows and lances, or the thrusts we gave them, or our good fighting, for although we killed and wounded many of them, yet they managed to reach us by pushing forward over the points of our swords and lances and closing up their squadrons never desisted from their brave attack, nor could we push them away from us.

At last, what with cannon and muskets and the damage we did them with our sword-thrusts, Ordás found an opportunity to enter our quarters, and not until then, much as he desired it, could he force a passage with his badly wounded soldiers, fourteen fewer in number. Still many of the squadrons never ceased from attacking us, and telling us that we were like women, and they called us

rogues and other abusive names. But the damage they had done us up to this time was as nothing to what they did afterwards, for such was their daring that, some attacking on one side and some on the other, they penetrated into our quarters and set fire to them, and we could not endure the smoke and the fire until it was remedied by flinging much earth over it, and cutting off other rooms whence the fire came. In truth, they believed that they would burn us alive in there. These conflicts lasted all day long, and even during the night so many squadrons of of them fell on us, and hurled javelins, stones and arrows in masses, and random stones so that what with those [that fell] during the day and those that then [fell] in all the courts and on the ground, it looked like chaff on a thrashing floor.

We passed the night in dressing wounds and in mending the breaches in the walls that they [the enemy] had made, and in getting ready for the next day. Then, as soon as it was dawn, our Captain decided that all of us and Narvaez' men should sally out to fight with them and that we should take the cannon and muskets and crossbows and endeavour to defeat them, or at least to make them feel our strength and valour better than the day before. I may state that when we came to this decision, the Mexicans were arranging the very same thing. We fought very well, but they were so strong, and had so many squadrons which relieved each other from time to time, that even if ten thousand Trojan Hectors and as many more Roldans had been there, they would not have been able to break through them.

So that it may now be understood, I will relate how it happened. We noted [their] tenacity in fighting, but I declare that I do not know how to describe it, for neither cannon nor muskets nor crossbows availed, nor hand-to-hand fighting, nor killing thirty or forty of them every

time we charged, for they still fought on in as close ranks and with more energy than in the beginning. Sometimes when we were gaining a little ground or a part of the street, they pretended to retreat, but it was [merely] to induce us to follow them and cut us off from our fortress and quarters, so as to fall on us in greater safety to themselves, believing that we could not return to our quarters alive, for they did us much damage when we were retreating.

Then, as to going out to burn their houses, I have already said in the chapter that treats of the subject, that between one house and another, they have wooden draw-bridges, and these they raised so that we could only pass through deep water. Then we could not endure the rocks and stones [hurled] from the roofs, in such a way that they damaged and wounded many of our men. I do not know why I write thus, so lukewarmly, for some three or four soldiers who were there with us and who had served in Italy, swore to God many times that they had never seen such fierce fights, not even when they had taken part in such between Christians, and against the artillery of the King of France, or of the Great Turk, nor had they seen men like those Indians with such courage in closing up their ranks.

However, as they said many other things and gave explanations of them, as will be seen further on, I will leave the matter here, and will relate how, with great difficulty we withdrew to our quarters, many squadrons of warriors still pressing on us with loud yells and whistles, and trumpets and drums, calling us villains and cowards who did not dare to meet them all day in battle, but turned in flight.

On that day they killed ten or twelve more soldiers and we all returned badly wounded. What took place during the night was the arrangement that in two days' time all

the soldiers in camp, as many as were able, should sally out with four engines like towers built of strong timber, in such a manner that five and twenty men could find shelter under each of them, and they were provided with apertures and loopholes through which to shoot, and musketeers and crossbowmen accompanied them, and close by them were to march the other soldiers, musketeers and crossbowmen and the guns, and all the rest, and the horsemen were to make charges.

When this plan was settled, as we spent all that day in carrying out the work and in strengthening many breaches that they had made in the walls, we did not go out to fight.

I do not know how to tell of the great squadrons of warriors who came to attack us in our quarters, not only in ten or twelve places; but in more than twenty, for we were distributed over them all and in many other places, and while we built up and fortified [ourselves], as I have related, many other squadrons openly endeavoured to penetrate into our quarters, and neither with guns, crossbows nor muskets, nor with many charges and sword-thrusts could we force them back, for they said that not one of us should remain [alive] that day and they would sacrifice our hearts and blood to their gods, and would have enough to glut [their appetites] and hold feasts on our arms and legs, and would throw our bodies to the tigers, lions, vipers and snakes, which they kept caged, so that they might gorge on them, and for that reason they had ordered them not to be given food for the past two days. As for the gold we possessed, we would get little satisfaction from it or from all the cloths; and as for the Tlaxcalans who were with us, they said that they would place them in cages to fatten, and little by little they would offer their bodies in sacrifice; and, very tenderly, they said that we should give up to them their great Lord Montezuma, and they said other

things. Night by night, in like manner, there were always many yells and whistles and showers of darts, stones and arrows.

As soon as dawn came, after commending ourselves to God, we sallied out from our quarters with our towers (and it seems to me that in other countries where I have been¹, in wars where such things were necessary, they were called "Buros" and "Mantas") with the cannon, muskets and crossbows in advance, and the horsemen making charges, but, as I have stated, although we killed many of them it availed nothing towards making them turn their backs, indeed if they had fought bravely on the two previous days, they proved themselves far more vigorous and displayed much greater forces and squadrons on this day. Nevertheless, we determined, although it should cost the lives of all of us, to push on with our towers and engines as far as the great Cue of Huichilobos.

I will not relate at length, the fights we had with them in a fortified house, nor will I tell how they wounded the horses, nor were they [the horses] of any use to us, because although they charged the squadrons to break through them, so many arrows, darts and stones were hurled at them, that they, well protected by armour though they were, could not prevail against them [the enemy], and if they pursued and overtook them, the Mexicans promptly dropped for safety into the canals and lagoons where they had raised other walls against the horsemen, and many other Indians were stationed with very long lances to finish killing them. Thus it benefited us nothing to turn aside to burn or demolish a house, it was quite useless, for, as I have said, they all stood in the water, and between house and house there was a movable bridge, and to cross

¹ The text says "donde me he hallado en guerra," but Bernal Díaz had not been in any wars except wars in America.

by swimming was very dangerous, for on the roofs they had such store of rocks and stones and such defences, that it was certain destruction to risk it. In addition to this, where we did set fire to some houses, a single house took a whole day to burn, and the houses did not catch fire one from the other, as, for one reason, they stood apart with the water between ; and, for the other, were provided with flat roofs (azoteas) ; thus it was useless toil to risk our persons in the attempt, so we went towards the great Cue of their Idols. Then, all of a sudden, more than four thousand Mexicans ascended it, not counting other Companies that were posted on it with long lances and stones and darts, and placed themselves on the defensive, and resisted our ascent for a good while, and neither the towers nor the cannon or crossbows, nor the muskets were of any avail, nor the horsemen, for, although they wished to charge [with] their horses, the whole of the courtyard was paved with very large flagstones, so that the horses lost their foothold, and they [the stones] were so slippery that they [the horses] fell. While from the steps of the lofty Cue they forbade our advance, we had so many enemies both on one side and the other that although our cannon [shots] carried off ten or fifteen of them and we slew many others by sword-thrusts and charges, so many men attacked us that we were not able to ascend the lofty Cue. However with great unanimity we persisted in the attack, and without taking the towers (for they were already destroyed) we made our way to the summit.

Here Cortés showed himself very much of a man, as he always was. Oh ! what a fight and what a fierce battle it was that took place ; it was a memorable thing to see us all streaming with blood, and covered with wounds and others slain. It pleased our Lord that we reached the place where we used to keep the image of Our Lady, and we did not find it, and it appears, as we came to know,

that the great Montezuma paid devotion to Her, and ordered it [the image] to be preserved in safety.

We set fire to their Idols and a good part of the chamber with the Idols Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca was burned. On that occasion the Tlaxcalans helped us very greatly. After this was accomplished, while some of us were fighting and others kindling the fire, as I have related, oh! to see the priests who were stationed on this great Cue, and the three or four thousand Indians, all men of importance. While we descended, oh! how they made us tumble down six or even ten steps at a time! And so much more there is to tell of the other squadrons posted on the battlements and recesses of the great Cue discharging so many darts and arrows that we could face neither one group of squadrons nor the other. We resolved to return, with much toil and risk to ourselves, to our quarters, our castles being destroyed, all of us wounded and sixteen slain, with the Indians constantly pressing on us and other squadrons on our flanks.

However clearly I may tell all this, I can never [fully] explain it to any one who did not see us. So far, I have not spoken of what the Mexican squadrons did who kept on attacking our quarters while we were marching outside, and the great obstinacy and tenacity they displayed in forcing their way in.

In this battle, we captured two of the chief priests, whom Cortés ordered us to convey with great care.

Many times I have seen among the Mexicans and Tlaxcalans, paintings of this battle, and the ascent that we made of the great Cue, as they look upon it as a very heroic deed. And although in the pictures that they have made of it, they depict all of us as badly wounded and streaming with blood and many of us dead they considered it a great feat, this setting fire to the Cue, when so many warriors were guarding it both on the battle-

ments and recesses, and many more Indians were below on the ground and the Courts were full of them and there were many more on the sides ; and with our towers destroyed, how was it possible to scale it?

Let us stop talking about it and I will relate how with great labour we returned to our quarters and if many men were then following us, as many more were in our quarters, for they had already demolished some walls so as to gain an entry, but on our arrival they desisted. Nevertheless, during all the rest of the day they never ceased to discharge darts, stones and arrows, and during the night yells and stones and darts.

Let us leave the great obstinacy and persistency they were always without cessation displaying against our quarters, as I have related, and let me say how that night was passed in dressing wounds and in burying the dead, in preparations for going out to fight the following day, in strengthening and adding parapets to the walls they had pulled down, and to other breaches they had made, and in consulting how and in what way we could fight without suffering such great damage and death, and throughout the discussion we found no remedy at all.

Then I also wish to speak of the maledictions that the followers of Narvaez hurled at Cortés, and the words that they used, cursing him and the country and even Diego Velásquez who had sent them there when they were peacefully settled in their homes in the Island of Cuba, and they were crazy and out of their minds.

Let us go back to our story. It was decided to sue for peace so that we could leave Mexico, and as soon as it was dawn many more squadrons of Mexicans arrived and very effectually surrounded our quarters on all sides, and if they had discharged many stones and arrows before, they came much thicker and with louder howls and whistles on this day, and other squadrons endeavoured to force an entrance

in other parts, and cannon and muskets availed nothing, although we did them damage enough.

When Cortés saw all this, he decided that the great Montezuma should speak to them from the roof and tell them that the war must cease, and that we wished to leave his city. When they went to give this message from Cortés to the great Montezuma, it is reported that he said with great grief, "What more does Malinche want from me? I neither wish to live nor to listen to him, to such a pass has my fate brought me because of him." And he did not wish to come, and it is even reported that he said he neither wished to see nor hear him, nor listen to his false words, promises or lies. Then the Padre de la Merced and Cristóbal de Olid went and spoke to him with much reverence and in very affectionate terms, and Montezuma said, "I believe that I shall not obtain any result towards ending this war, for they have already raised up another Lord and have made up their minds not to let you leave this place alive, therefore I believe that all of you will have to die."

Let us return to the great attacks they made on us; Montezuma was placed by a battlement of the roof with many of us soldiers guarding him, and he began to speak to them [his people], with very affectionate expressions [telling them] to desist from the war, and that we would leave Mexico. Many of the Mexican Chieftains and Captains knew him well and at once ordered their people to be silent and not to discharge darts, stones or arrows, and four of them reached a spot where Montezuma could speak to them, and they to him, and with tears they said to him: "Oh! Señor, and our great Lord, how all your misfortune and injury and that of your children and relations afflicts us, we make known to you that we have already raised one of your kinsmen to be our Lord," and

there he stated his name, that he was called Cuitlahuac,¹ the Lord of Ixtapalapa, (for it was not Guatemoc, he who was Lord soon after,) and moreover they said that the war must be carried through, and that they had vowed to their Idols not to relax it until we were all dead, and that they prayed every day to their Huichilobos and Texcatepuca to guard him free and safe from our power, and that should it end as they desired, they would not fail to hold him in higher regard as their Lord than they did before, and they begged him to forgive them. They had hardly finished this speech when suddenly such a shower of stones and darts was discharged that (our men who were shielding him having neglected their duty [to shield him] for a moment, because they saw how the attack ceased while he spoke to them) he was hit by three stones, one on the head, another on the arm and another on the leg, and although they begged him to have the wounds dressed and to take food, and spoke kind words to him about it, he would not. Indeed, when we least expected it, they came to say that he was dead. Cortés wept for him, and all of us Captains and soldiers, and there was no man among us who knew him and was intimate with him, who did not bemoan him as though he were our father, and it is not to be wondered at, considering how good he was. It was stated that he had reigned for seventeen years and that he was the best king there had ever been in Mexico, and that he had conquered in person, in three wars which he had carried on in the countries he had subjugated. Let us continue.

¹ Coadlabaca in the text.

CHAPTER CXXVII.

When Montezuma was dead Cortés decided to tell the news to his Captains and chieftains who were making war on us, and what else took place about it.

I HAVE already told about the sorrow that we all of us felt about it when we saw that Montezuma was dead. We even thought badly of the Fraile de la Merced because he had not persuaded him to become a Christian, and he gave as an excuse that he did not think that he would die of those wounds, but that he ought to have ordered them to give him something to stupefy him. At the end of much discussion Cortés ordered a priest and a chief from among the prisoners to go and tell the Cacique whom they had chosen for Lord, who was named Cuitlahuac¹, and his Captains, that the great Montezuma was dead, and they had seen him die, and about the manner of his death and the wounds his own people had inflicted on him, and they should say how grieved we all were about it, and that they should bury him as the great king that he was, and they should raise the cousin of Montezuma who was with us, to be king, for the inheritance was his, or one of his (Montezuma's) other sons, and that he whom they had raised to be king was not so by right, and they should negotiate a peace so that we could leave Mexico; and if they did not do so, now that Montezuma was dead, whom we held in respect and for that reason had not destroyed their city, we should sally out to make war on them and burn all their houses and do them much damage. So as to convince them that Montezuma was dead, he ordered six Mexicans who were high chieftains, and the priests whom we held as prisoners, to carry him out

on their shoulders and to hand him [the body] over to the Mexican Captains, and to tell them what Montezuma had commanded at the time of his death, for those who carried him out on their backs were present at his death ; and they told Cuitlahuac the whole truth, how his own people killed him with blows from three stones.

When they beheld him thus dead, we saw that they were in floods of tears and we clearly heard the shrieks and cries of distress that they gave for him, but for all this, the fierce assault they made on us with darts, stones and arrows never ceased, and then they came on us again with greater force and fury, and said to us: "Now for certain you will pay for the death of our King and Lord, and the dishonour to our Idols ; and as for the peace you sent to beg for, come out here and we will settle how and in what way it is to be made," and they said many things about this and other matters that I cannot now remember and I will leave them unreported, and [they said] that they had already chosen a good king, and he would not be so faint-hearted as to be deceived with false speeches like their good Montezuma, and as for the burial, we need not trouble about that, but about our own lives, for in two days there would not be one of us left ;—so much for the messages we had sent them. With these words [they fell on us] with loud yells and whistles and showers of stones, darts and arrows, while other squadrons were still attempting to set fire to our quarters in many places.

When Cortés and all of us observed this, we agreed that next day we would all of us sally out from our camp and attack in another direction, where there were many houses on dry land, and we would do all the damage we were able and go towards the causeway, and that all the horsemen should break through the squadrons and spear them with their lances or drive them into the water, even though they [the enemy] should kill the horses. This was decided

on in order to find out if by chance, with the damage and slaughter that we should inflict on them, they would abandon their attack and arrange some sort of peace, so that we could go free without more deaths and damage. Although the next day we all bore ourselves very manfully and killed many of the enemy and burned a matter of twenty houses and almost reached dry land, it was all of no use, because of the great damage and deaths and wounds they inflicted on us, and we could not hold a single bridge, for they were all of them half broken down. Many Mexicans charged down on us, and they had set up walls and barricades in places which they thought could be reached by the horses, so that if we had met with many difficulties up to this time, we found much greater ones ahead of us.

Let us leave it here, and go back to say that we determined to get out of Mexico.

It was on a Thursday that we made this expedition and sally with the horsemen, and I remember that Sandoval was there, and Lares the good horseman and Gonzalo Domínguez, Juan Velásquez de Leon and Francisco de Morla and other good horsemen from among our company, and from the company of Narvaez other good horsemen went, but they were frightened and timid as they had never been in wars against the Indians.

CHAPTER CXXVIII.

How we determined to flee from Mexico and what was done about it.

NOW we saw our forces diminishing every day and those of the Mexicans increasing, and many of our men were dead and all the rest wounded, and although we fought like brave men we could not drive back nor even get free

from the many squadrons which attacked us both by day and night, and the powder was giving out, and the same was happening with the food and water, and the great Montezuma being dead, they were unwilling to grant the peace and truce which we had sent to demand of them. In fact we were staring death in the face, and the bridges had been raised. It was [therefore] decided by Cortés and all of us captains and soldiers that we should set out during the night, when we could see that the squadrons of warriors were most off their guard. In order to put them all the more off their guard, that very afternoon we sent to tell them, through one of their priests whom we held prisoner and who was a man of great importance among them and through some other prisoners, that they should let us go in peace within eight days and we would give up to them all the gold; and this [was done] to put them off their guard so that we might get out that night.

In addition to this, there was with us a soldier named Botello, apparently an honest man and a Latin scholar, who had been in Rome, and it was said that he was a magician; others said that he had a familiar spirit, and some called him an Astrologer. This Botello had said four days before, that he found out by his casting of lots or Astrology, that if on that following night we did not leave Mexico, and if we waited there any longer, not one of us would get out alive; and he had even said on other occasions that Cortés would have to suffer many hardships and would be deprived of his position and honour, and would afterwards become a great and magnificent Lord, with great property, and he said many other things. Let us leave Botello, whom I will speak about again later on, and I will relate how the order was given to make a bridge of very strong beams and planks, so that we could carry it with us and place it where the bridges were broken. Four hundred Tlaxcalan Indians and one hundred and fifty

soldiers were told off to carry this bridge and place it in position and guard the passage until the army and all the baggage had crossed. Two hundred Tlaxcalan Indians and fifty soldiers were told off to carry the cannon, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, Diego de Ordás, Francisco de Sauzedo, Francisco de Lugo and a company of one hundred young and active soldiers were selected to go in the van to do the fighting. It was agreed that Cortés himself, Alonzo de Ávila, Cristóbal de Olid, and other Captains should go in the middle and support the party that most needed help in fighting. Pedro de Alvarado and Juan Velásquez de Leon were with the rearguard, and placed in the middle between them [and the preceding section] were two captains and the soldiers of Narvaez, and three hundred Tlaxcalans, and thirty soldiers were told off to take charge of the prisoners and of Doña Marina and Doña Luisa ; by the time this arrangement was made, it was already night.

In order to bring out the gold and divide it up and carry it, Cortés ordered his steward named Cristóbal de Guzman and other soldiers who were his servants to bring out all the gold and jewels and silver, and he gave them many Tlaxcalan Indians for the purpose, and they placed it in the Hall. Then Cortés told the King's officers named Alonzo Dávila and Gonzalo Mejía to take charge of the gold belonging to His Majesty, and he gave them seven wounded and lame horses and one mare, and many friendly Tlaxcalans, more than eighty in number, and they loaded them with parcels of it, as much as they could carry, for it was put up into very broad ingots, as I have already said in the chapter that treats of it, and much gold still remained in the Hall piled up in heaps. Then Cortés called his secretary and the others who were King's Notaries, and said : " Bear witness for me that I can do no more with this gold. We have here in this apartment and Hall over seven hundred thousand pesos in gold, and, as

you have seen, it cannot be weighed nor placed in safety. I now give it up to any of the soldiers who care to take it, otherwise it will be lost among these dogs [of Mexicans].”

When they heard this, many of the soldiers of Narvaez and some of our people loaded themselves with it. I declare that I had no other desire but the desire to save my life, but I did not fail to carry off from some small boxes that were there, four chalchihuites, which are stones very highly prized among the Indians, and I quickly placed them in my bosom under my armour, and, later on, the price of them served me well in healing my wounds and getting me food.

After we had learnt the plans that Cortés had made about the way in which we were to escape that night and get to the bridges, as it was somewhat dark and cloudy and rainy, we began before midnight to bring along the bridge and the baggage, and the horses and mare began their march, and the Tlaxcalans who were laden with the gold. Then the bridge was quickly put in place, and Cortés and the others whom he took with him in the first [detachment], and many of the horsemen, crossed over it. While this was happening, the voices, trumpets, cries and whistles of the Mexicans began to sound and they called out in their language to the people of Tlaltelolco, “Come out at once with your canoes for the Teules are leaving ; cut them off so that not one of them may be left alive.” When I least expected it, we saw so many squadrons of warriors bearing down on us, and the lake so crowded with canoes that we could not defend ourselves. Many of our soldiers had already crossed [the bridge] and while we were in this position, a great multitude of Mexicans charged down on us [with the intention of] removing the bridge and wounding and killing our men who were unable to assist each other ; and as misfortune is perverse at such times,

one mischance followed another, and as it was raining, two of the horses slipped and fell into the lake. When I and others of Cortés' Company saw that, we got safely to the other side of the bridge, and so many warriors charged on us, that despite all our good fighting, no further use could be made of the bridge, so that the passage or water opening was soon filled up with dead horses, Indian men and women, servants, baggage and boxes.

Fearing that they would not fail to kill us, we thrust ourselves ahead along the causeway, and we met many squadrons armed with long lances waiting for us, and they used abusive words to us, and among them they cried "Oh! villains, are you still alive?" and with the cuts and thrusts we gave them, we got through, although they then wounded six of those who were going along [with me]. Then if there was some sort of plan such as we had agreed upon it was an accursed one; for Cortés and the captains and soldiers who passed first on horseback, so as to save themselves and reach dry land and make sure of their lives, spurred on along the causeway, and they did not fail to attain their object, and the horses with the gold and the Tlaxcalans also got out in safety. I assert that if we had waited, (the horsemen and the soldiers, one for the other,) at the bridges, we should all have been put an end to, and not one of us would have been left alive; the reason was this, that as we went along the causeway, charging the Mexican squadrons, on one side of us was water and on the other azoteas,¹ and the lake was full of canoes so that we could do nothing. Moreover the muskets and crossbows were all left behind at the bridge, and as it was night time, what could we do beyond what we accomplished? which was to charge and give some sword-thrusts to those who tried to lay

¹ The flat roofs of the houses.

hands on us, and to march and get on ahead so as to get off the causeway.

Had it been in the day-time, it would have been far worse, and we who escaped did so only by the Grace of God. To one who saw the hosts of warriors who fell on us that night and the canoes [full] of them coming along to carry off our soldiers, it was terrifying. So we went ahead along the causeway in order to get to the town of Tacuba where Cortés was already stationed with all the Captains. Gonzalo de Sandoval, Cristóbal de Olid and others of those horsemen who had gone on ahead were crying out: "Señor Capitan, let us halt, for they say that we are fleeing and leaving them to die at the bridges; let us go back and help them, if any of them survive"; but not one of them came out or escaped. Cortés' reply was that it was a miracle that any of us escaped. However, he promptly went back with the horsemen and the soldiers who were unwounded, but they did not march far, for Pedro de Alvarado soon met them, badly wounded, holding a spear in his hand, and on foot, for they [the enemy] had already killed his sorrel mare, and he brought with him four soldiers as badly wounded as he was himself, and eight Tlaxcalans, all of them with blood flowing from many wounds.

While Cortés was on the causeway with the rest of the captains, we repaired to the courtyard in Tacuba. Many squadrons had already arrived from Mexico, shouting out orders to Tacuba and to the other town named Azcapotzalco, and they began to hurl darts, stones and arrows [and attack] with their long lances. We made some charges and both attacked [them] and defended ourselves.

Let us go back to Pedro de Alvarado. When Cortés and the other Captains met him in that way, and saw that no more soldiers were coming [along the causeway,] tears sprang to his eyes. Pedro de Alvarado said that Juan Velásquez de Leon lay dead with many other gentlemen

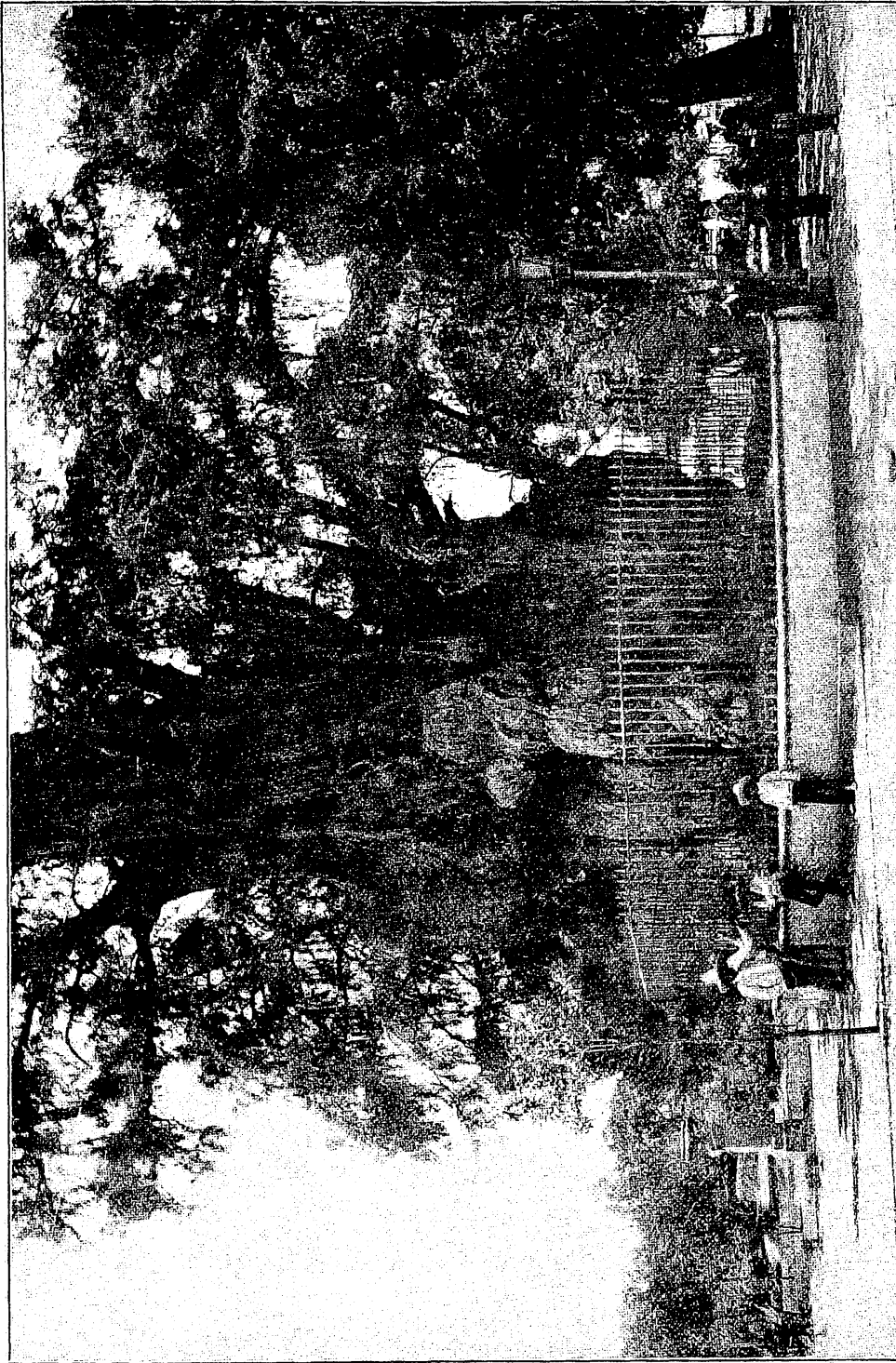


Photo by A. P. Mandslay

THE TREE OF THE NOCHE TRISTE AT POPOTLA.

Tradition says that Cortes rested under this tree and watched the remnant of his followers pass by after their escape from the city.

both of our own company and that of Narvaez, and that more than eighty of them were at the bridge; that he and the four soldiers whom he brought with him, after their horses had been killed, crossed the bridge in great peril, over the dead bodies, horses and boxes with which that passage at the bridge was [choked]. Moreover he said that all the bridges and causeways were crowded with warriors. At the bridge of sorrow, which they afterwards called "Alvarados' leap," I assert that at the time not a single soldier stopped to see if he leaped much or little, for we could hardly save our own lives, as we were in great danger of death on account of the multitude of Mexicans charging down on us. All that Gomara says on this matter is nonsense, for as to his wishing to leap and hold himself up with his lance, the water was very deep and he could not have touched the ground with it, and, in addition to this, the bridge and the opening was very wide and high. He would not have been able to save himself had he been ever so much more active, neither on his lance nor in any other way (and one can clearly see that now), for the water was so deep at that time, and the walls were so high where the beams of the bridge were [placed] and the opening was so wide. I never heard of this leap of Alvarado until after Mexico was captured, and it was in some satirical verses¹ made by a certain Gonzalo de Ocampo, which, as they were somewhat nasty, I will not fully quote here, except that he says, "Thou shouldst remember the leap that thou tookest from the bridge"; but I will not dwell on this subject.

Let us go on and I will relate how, when we were waiting in Tabuca, many Mexican warriors came together from all those towns and they killed three of our soldiers, so we agreed to get out of that town as quickly as we

¹ Nibelos in the text, probably for *libelos*.

could, and five Tlaxcalan Indians, who found out a way towards Tlaxcala without following the [main] road, guided us with great precaution until we reached some small houses placed on a hill, and near to them a Cue or Oratory [built] like a fort, where we halted.

I wish to go back to state that as we marched along we were followed by the Mexicans who hurled arrows and darts at us and stones from their slings, and the way in which they surrounded us and continually attacked us, was terrifying, as I have already said many times and am tired of repeating it, but my readers must not consider me prolix, because every time or at every short interval that they pressed on us and wounded us and attacked us fiercely, I feel bound to turn aside and speak of the squadrons which followed us and killed many of us.

Let us give up calling so much to mind, and relate how we defended ourselves in that Cue and fortress, where we lodged and attended to the wounded and made many fires, but as for anything to eat, there was no thought of it. At that Cue or Oratory, after the great city of Mexico was captured, we built a church, which is called "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios," and is very much visited, and many of the inhabitants and ladies from Mexico now go there on pilgrimages and to hold *novenas*.¹

Let us leave this and say that it was pitiable to see our wounds being dressed and bound up with cotton cloths, and as they were chilled and swollen they were [very] painful. However what was more to be wept over was [the loss of] the gentlemen and brave soldiers who were missing, namely, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Francisco de Sauzedo, Francisco de Morla, Lares the good horseman and many others of us followers of Cortés. I name these few only because it would be a long

¹ *Novenas*: religious exercises extending over nine days.

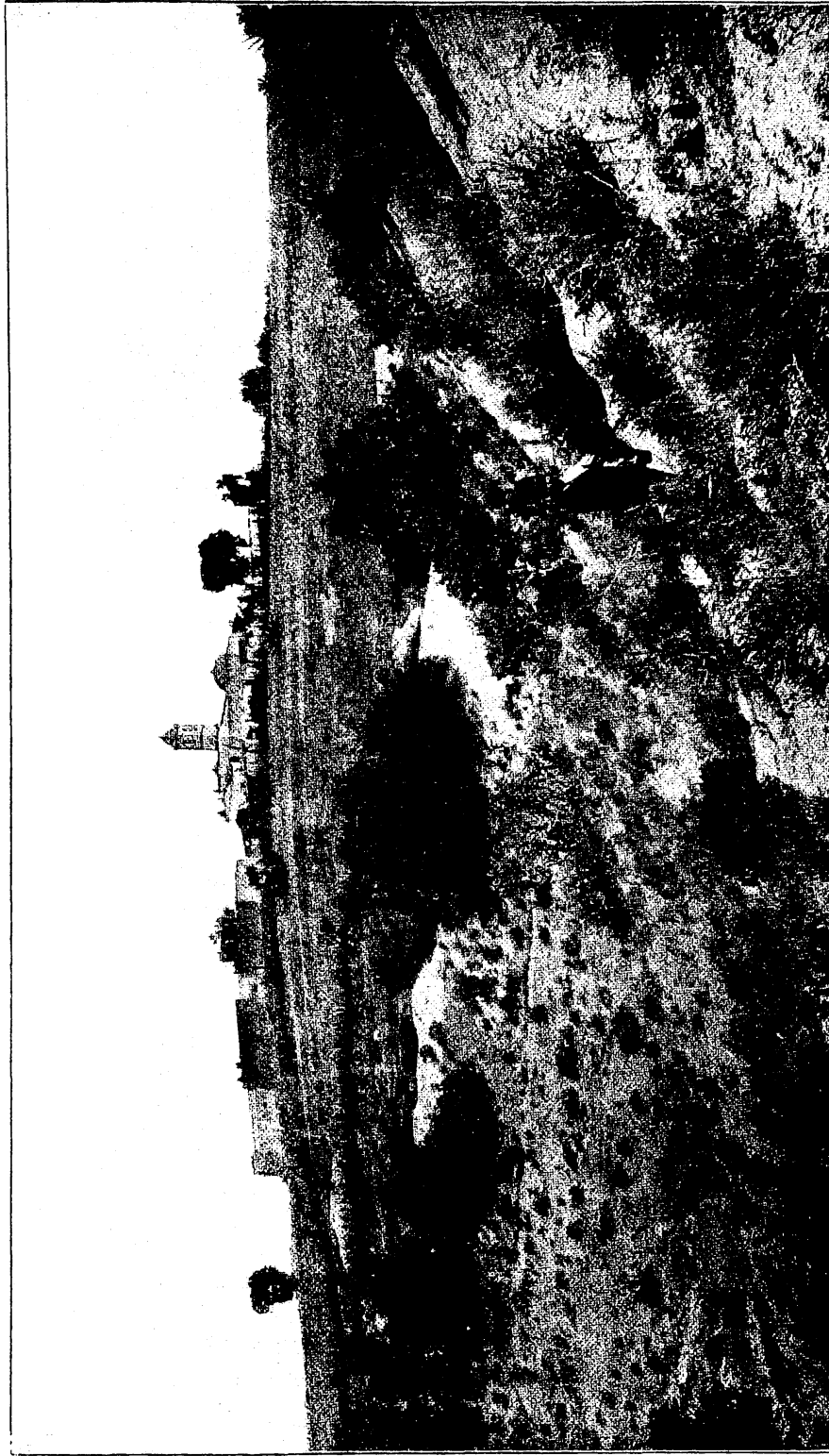


Photo by C. E. White.

THE CHURCH OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LOS REMEDIOS,

Built on the site of the Teocalli where the Spaniards halted after the Noche Triste.

business to write the names of the great number of our companions who were missing. Of the followers of Narvaez, the greater number were left at the bridges weighed down with gold.

I will speak now of Botello the Astrologer: his astrology availed him nothing, for he too died there with his horse, and I will go on to say that after we got into safety, there were found in the box of this Botello some papers like a book, with symbols, lines, remarks and signs, and it was said in them: "Am I to die here in this sad war in the power of these dogs of Indians?" and it said among other lines and symbols further on, "Thou wilt not die"; and it went on to say in other symbols, lines, and remarks, "Shall I die?" and the other line replied, "Thou shalt not die." It said in another place, "Will they also kill my horse?" and it said further on, "Yes, they will kill it." In a similar manner these papers, which were like a small book, contained further ciphered [notes] like fortune telling, one sentence answering the other. There was also found in the box a thing like the genitals of a man, half a span long, made of leather, in appearance neither more nor less than a man's genitals, and it had inside some flock wool from a shearer.

Let us go on to say how there were left dead at the bridges the sons and daughters of Montezuma as well the prisoners we were bringing with us, also Cacamatzin the Lord of Texcoco and other kings of provinces. Let us stop relating all these hardships and say how we were thinking of what we had in front of us, for we were all wounded, and only twenty-three horses escaped; then of the cannon and artillery and powder, we saved nothing; the crossbows were few in number and we promptly mended their cords and made arrows, but the worst of all was that we did not know what we should find the disposition of our friends the Tlaxcalans would be towards

us. In addition to this, always surrounded by Mexicans who fell on us with yells, darts and arrows and slings, we determined to get out of that place at midnight with the Tlaxcalans in front as guides, taking every precaution. We marched with the wounded in the middle and the lame [supported] with staffs, and some, who were very bad and could not walk, on the croups of the horses that were lame and were not fit for fighting. Those horsemen who were not wounded went in front or were divided some on one side, some on the other, and [marching] in this manner all of us who were most free from wounds kept our faces towards the enemy. The wounded Tlaxcalans went in the body of our squadron and the rest of them who were [sufficiently] sound faced [the enemy] in company with us. The Mexicans were always harassing us with loud cries, yells and whistles, shouting out, "You are going where not one of you will be left alive," and we did not understand why they said so, but it will be seen later on. But I have forgotten to write down how happy we were to see Doña Marina still alive, and Doña Luisa the daughter of Xicotenga, whose escape at the bridges was due to some Tlaxcalans, and also a woman named Maria de Estrada, who was the only Spanish woman in Mexico. Those who escaped and got away first from the bridges were some sons of Xicotenga, the brothers of Doña Luisa. Most of our servants who had been given to us in Tlaxcala and in the city of Mexico itself were left behind dead.

Let me go on to say how on that day we reached some farms and huts belonging to a large town named Cuautitlan,¹ a town that after the capture of Mexico belonged to Alonso de Ávila, and although they yelled and shouted at us and hurled stones, darts and arrows, we bore up against it all. Thence we went through some farms and hamlets with the Mexicans always in pursuit of us, and as many of them

¹ Gualtitan in the text.

had got together, they endeavoured to kill us and began to surround us, and hurled many stones with their slings and javelins and arrows, and with their broadswords they killed two of our soldiers in a bad pass, and they also killed a horse and wounded many of our men, and we also with cut and thrust killed some of them, and the horsemen did the same. We slept in those houses and we ate the horse they had killed, and the next day very early in the morning we began our march, with the same and even greater precautions than we observed before, half of the horsemen always going ahead. On a plain a little more than a league further on, (when we began to think that we could march in safety,) our scouts, who were on the look out, returned to say that the fields were full of Mexican warriors waiting for us. When we heard this we were indeed alarmed but not so as to be faint-hearted or to fail to meet them and fight to the death. There we halted for a short time and orders were given how the horsemen were to charge and return at a hand gallop, and were not to stop to spear [the enemy] but to keep their lances aimed at their faces until they broke up their squadrons; and that all the soldiers, in the thrusts they gave, should pass [their swords] through the bodies [of their opponents], and that we should act in such a way as to avenge thoroughly the deaths and wounds of our companions, so that if God willed it we should escape with our lives.

After commending ourselves to God and the Holy Mary, full of courage, and calling on the name of Señor Santiago, as soon as we saw that the enemy began to surround us, and that the horsemen, keeping in parties of five, broke through their ranks, we all of us [charged] at the same time.

Oh! what a sight it was to see this fearful and destructive battle, how we moved all mixed up with them foot to foot, and the cuts and thrusts we gave them, and with what fury the dogs fought, and what wounds and

deaths they inflicted on us with their lances and macanas and two-handed swords. Then, as the ground was level [to see] how the horsemen speared them as they chose, charging and returning, and although both they and their horses were wounded, they never stopped fighting like very brave men. As for all of us who had no horses, it seemed as if we all put on double strength, for although we were wounded and again received other wounds, we did not trouble to bind them up so as not to halt to do so, for there was not time, but with great spirit we closed with the enemy so as to give them sword thrusts. I wish to tell about Cortés and Cristóbal de Olid, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Gonzalo Domínguez and a Juan de Salamanca who although badly wounded rode on one side and the other, breaking through the squadrons ; and about the words that Cortés said to those who were in the thick of the enemy, that the cuts and thrusts that we gave should be [aimed at] distinguished chieftains, for they all of them bore great golden plumes and rich arms and devices. Then to see how the valiant and spirited Sandoval encouraged us and cried : “ Now, gentlemen, this is the day when we are bound to be victorious ; have trust in God and we shall come out of this alive for some good purpose.” I must diverge to say that they killed and wounded a great number of our soldiers, but let us leave that and return to Cortés and Cristóbal de Olid and Sandoval and Gonzalo Domínguez and the other horsemen whom I do not name here, and Juan de Salamanca. All of us soldiers greatly inspired Cortés to fight, and our Lord Jesus Christ and Our Lady the Virgin Santa Maria encouraged us, and the Señor Santiago certainly aided us. It pleased God that Cortés and the Captains whom I have already named who went in his Company reached the place where the Captain General of the Mexicans was marching with his banner displayed, and with rich golden

armour and great gold and silver plumes. When Cortés saw him with many other Mexican Chieftains all wearing great plumes, he said to Gonzalo de Sandoval and Cristóbal de Olid and Gonzalo Domínguez and the other Captains: "Now, Señores, let us break through them and leave none of them unwounded"; and commending themselves to God, Cortés, Cristóbal de Olid, Sandoval, Alonzo de Ávila, and the other horsemen charged, and Cortés struck his horse against the Mexican Captain, which made him drop his banner, and the rest of our Captains succeeded in breaking through the squadron which consisted of many Indians following the Captain who carried the banner, who nevertheless had not fallen at the shock that Cortés had given him, and it was Juan de Salamanca, who rode with Cortés on a good piebald mare, who gave him a lance thrust and took from him the rich plume that he wore, and afterwards gave it to Cortés, saying, that as it was he who first met him and made him lower his banner and deprived his followers of the courage to fight, that the plume belonged to him (Cortés). However, three years afterwards, the King gave it to Salamanca as his coat of arms, and his descendants bear it on their tabards.

Let us go back to the battle. It pleased Our Lord that when that Captain who carried the Mexican banner was dead, (and many others were killed there,) their attack slackened, and all the horsemen followed them and we felt neither hunger nor thirst, and it seemed as though we had neither suffered nor passed through any evil or hardship, as we followed up our victory killing and wounding. Then our friends the Tlaxcalans were very lions, and with their swords and broadswords which they there captured [from the enemy] behaved very well and valiantly.¹ When the horsemen returned from following up the victory we all

¹ Blotted out in the original: "Maravillas" (did wonders).—G.G.

gave many thanks to God for having escaped from such a great multitude of people, for there had never been seen or found throughout the Indies such a great number of warriors together in any battle that was fought, for there was present there the flower of Mexico and Texcoco and all the towns around the lake, and others in the neighbourhood, and the people of Otumba and Tepetexcoco and Saltocan, who all came in the belief that this time not a trace of us would be left. Then what rich armour they wore, with so much gold and plumes and devices, and nearly all of them were captains and chieftains. Near the spot where this hard-fought and celebrated battle took place, and where one can say God spared our lives, there stands a town named Otumba. The Mexicans and Tlaxcalans have this battle very well painted and portrayed in carvings, as well as the many other battles that we fought with the Mexicans up to the time when we captured Mexico.

Interested readers who read this will notice that I wish here to call to mind, that when we went to the assistance of Pedro de Alvarado in Mexico, we numbered in all more than thirteen hundred soldiers, counting the horsemen who numbered ninety-seven, and eighty crossbowmen and as many more musketeers, and there were more than two thousand Tlaxcalans, and we brought in with us many cannon, and our entry into Mexico was on the day of Señor San Juan de Junio¹ in the year fifteen hundred and twenty, and our escape was on the tenth of the month of July of the same year, and this celebrated battle of Otumba on the fourteenth of the month of July.

Let me say, now that we have already escaped from our perils which I have already described, that I wish to give another account of how many of us they killed both in

¹ Midsummer Day, 24th June.

Mexico as well as on the bridges and causeways, and all the encounters including this one at Otumba, and those who were killed on the road. I assert that within a matter of five days over eight hundred and sixty soldiers were killed and sacrificed, as well as seventy-two who were killed in a town named Tustepec, together with five Spanish women (those who were killed at Tustepec belonged to the company of Narvaez), and over a thousand¹ Tlaxcalans were slain. I also wish to state how at that time they killed Juan de Alcántara the elder, with three other settlers from Villa Rica who had come [to Tlaxcala] for the share of the gold which fell to their lot, about which I have made a statement in the chapter that treats of the subject, so they lost the gold as well as their lives; and if we come to consider it, we all of us usually had bad luck about the share of gold that was given to us. If many more of the followers of Narvaez than those of Cortés died at the bridges, it was because they went forth laden with gold, and owing to its weight they could neither escape nor swim.

Let us stop talking about these matters and how we already went along very cheerfully, eating some gourds that they call *Ayotes*, and we marched along, eating as we went, towards Tlaxcala. The Mexican squadrons did not dare to assemble and sally out from the small towns, although they still shouted at us in places where we could not master them, and hurled many stones at us from slings and javelins and arrows, until we went to some other farms and a small town where there was a good Cue and strong house where we defended ourselves that night and dressed our wounds and got some rest. Although squadrons of Mexicans still followed us they did not dare to come up to us, and those who did come were as though they said "There you go out of our country."

5 0 ★ ¹ Blotted out in the original: "and five hundred."—G. G.

From that small town and house where we slept, the hills over against Tlaxcala could be seen, and when we saw them we were as delighted as though they had been our own homes. But how could we know for certain that they were loyal to us or what their disposition was, or what had happened to those who were settled at Villa Rica, whether they were alive or dead? Cortés said to us, that although we were few in number, and there were only four hundred and forty of us left with twenty horses and twelve cross-bowmen and seven musketeers, and we had no powder and were all wounded, lame and maimed, we could see very clearly how our Lord Jesus Christ had been pleased to spare our lives, and for that we should always give Him great thanks and honour. Moreover, we had come again to be reduced to the number and strength of the soldiers who accompanied him the first time we entered Mexico, [namely] four hundred soldiers. He begged us not to give annoyance to the people in Tlaxcala, and not to take anything from them, and this he explained to the followers of Narvaez, for they were not used to obey their Captains in the wars as we were. Moreover, he said he trusted in God that we should find them [the Tlaxcalans] true and very loyal, and that if it were otherwise, which God forbend, we must turn aside the blows [of fate?] with stout hearts and strong arms, and for this we must be well prepared.

With our scouts ahead of us, we reached a spring on the hillside where there were some walls and defences [made in] past times, and our friends the Tlaxcalans said that this was the boundary between them and the Mexicans, and, in welcome tranquillity after the misery we had gone through, we halted to wash and to eat. Then we soon resumed our march and went to a Tlaxcalan town named Hueyotlipan¹ where they received us and gave us to eat,

¹ Gualipar in the text.

but not much, unless we paid them with some small pieces of gold and chalchihuites which some of us carried with us ; they gave us nothing without payment. There we remained one day resting and curing our wounds and we also attended to the horses. Then as soon as they heard the news at the Capital of Tlaxcala, Mase Escasi and Xicotenga the elder, and Chichimecatecle and many other Caciques and Chieftains and nearly all the inhabitants of Huexotzingo promptly came to us. When they reached the town where we were [camped] they came to embrace Cortés and all of us captains and soldiers, some of them weeping, especially Mase Escasi, Xicotenga, and Chichimecatecle, and Tapaneca, and they said to Cortés: "Oh! Malinche, Malinche! How grieved we are at your misfortunes and those of all your brothers, and at the number of our own people who have been killed with yours. We have told you so many times not to put trust in the Mexican people, for one day or the other they were sure to attack you, but you would not believe us. Now it has come to pass, and no more can be done at present than to tend you and give you to eat ; rest yourselves for you are at home, and we will soon go to our town where we will find you quarters. Do not think, Malinche, that it is a small thing you have done to escape with your lives from that impregnable city and its bridges, and I tell you that if we formerly looked upon you as very brave, we now think you much more valiant ; and although many Indian women in our towns will bewail the deaths of their sons, husbands, brothers and kinsmen, do not trouble yourself about that. Much do you owe to your Gods who have brought you here and delivered you from such a multitude of warriors who were awaiting you at Otumba. For four days I had known that they were waiting for you to slay you. I wanted to go in search of you with thirty thousand of our own warriors, but I could not start

because they were not assembled and men were out collecting them."

Cortés and all our Captains and soldiers embraced them and told them that we thanked them, and Cortés gave to all the chieftains golden jewels and [precious] stones, and as every soldier had escaped with as much as he could [carry] some of us gave [presents] to our acquaintances from what we possessed. Then what rejoicing and happiness they showed when they saw that Doña Luisa and Doña Marina were saved, and what weeping and sorrow for the other Indians who did not come but were left behind dead. Especially did Mase Escasi weep for his daughter Doña Elvira and the death of Juan Velásquez de Leon to whom he had given her.

In this way we went to the Capital of Tlaxcala with all the Caciques, and Cortés lodged in the houses of Mase Escasi, and Xicotenga gave his quarters to Pedro de Alvarado, and there we tended our wounds and began to recover our strength, but, nevertheless, four soldiers died of their wounds and some other soldiers failed to recover.

I will leave off here, and relate what else happened to us.

CHAPTER CXXIX.

How we went to the Capital and largest town in Tlaxcala, and what happened to us there.

WE stayed one day in the small town of Hueyotlipan and the Caciques of Tlaxcala whom I have named made us those overtures which are worthy of remembrance and of reward as they were made at such a critical time; and after we had gone to the Capital town of Tlaxcala, and they had assigned us quarters as I have said, it seems that Cortés asked for the gold which had been sent there,

which amounted to forty thousand dollars, which gold was the share of the settlers who remained in Villa Rica. Mase Escasi and Xicotenga the elder and one of our soldiers who had remained ill in Tlaxcala and had not been in the affair at Mexico when we were defeated, said that Juan de Alcántara and two other settlers had come from Villa Rica and had carried off all the gold, for they brought letters from Cortés to say that it was to be given to them, and this letter the soldier had produced and left in the possession of Mase Escasi when the gold was given to him. When they were asked how and at what time the gold was taken, and when it was understood from a count of days that it was at the time when the Mexicans were fighting us, we at once realised that they must have killed the Spaniards on the road and have seized their gold. And Cortés was very much troubled about it.¹ We were also uneasy at not knowing about the people at Villa Rica, lest some disaster had happened to them, so Cortés at once wrote to them and sent the letter by three Tlaxcalans, and told them about the great dangers to which we had been exposed in Mexico, and how and in what way we had escaped with our lives, but he did not tell them how many of us were missing, and he admonished them always to be on the alert and to keep a good look out, and [said] that if there were any soldiers among them sound in health, they should be sent to him, and that they should keep a good guard over Narvaez, and [he asked them] whether they had any powder or crossbows, because he wished to return and scour the neighbourhood of Mexico. He also wrote to the officer named Caballero whom he had left there as Captain of the Sea, that he should keep watch that neither Narvaez nor any of the ships should leave for

¹ Blotted out in the original : “because he intended to send to the Island of Jamaica for horses and powder and crossbows.”—G. G.

Cuba, and if he considered the two ships belonging to Narvaez which were in the harbour to be unfit for sea that he should destroy them and send their crews to him with all the arms they possessed.

The messengers went and returned post haste, and brought letters to say that there had been no warfare, and that as neither Juan Alcántara nor the other two settlers whom they had sent for the gold had returned, they must have been killed on the road, that they knew all about the war the Mexicans had made on us, for the fat Cacique of Cempoala had told them about it. The Admiral of the sea named Caballero also wrote and said he would do what Cortés ordered him, that one of the ships was in good condition and he would destroy the other, and would send the men, but there were very few sailors, for they had sickened and died; that he was writing his reply to the letter at once, and would soon despatch the succour they were sending from Villa Rica, numbering seven in all, including four sailors who came from the town. Their Captain was a soldier named Lencero (who owned the Inn which is now called Lencero's), and when they arrived at Tlaxcala, as they arrived thin and ill, we often for our own diversion and to make fun of them spoke of "Lencero's Help," for of the seven that came five had liver complaint and were covered with boils and the other two were swelled out with great bellies.

Let us leave the jokes and I will tell what happened to us there in Tlaxcala with Xicotenga the younger and his ill will,—he who had been Captain of all Tlaxcala when they were fighting us, often mentioned by me in the chapter that treats of that subject. The truth is that when it became known in that City that we were fleeing from Mexico, and that the Mexicans had killed a great number of soldiers, both our own men and the Tlaxcalan Indians who had left Tlaxcala in our company, and that we were

coming for aid and shelter to that province, Xicotenga the younger went about appealing to all his friends and relations and to others who he thought were on his side, and said to them that on the night or day when they might be best prepared for it they should kill us and make friends with the Lord of Mexico, who by that time had been elected King, who was named Cuitlahuac,¹ and that in addition to this they should rob us of the cloaks and cloth which we had left in Tlaxcala to be taken care of, and the gold that we were now bringing from Mexico, and they would all become rich with the spoil.

This came to the ears of the elder Xicotenga, his father, who quarrelled with him and told him that no such thought should have entered his head, that it was disgraceful, and that if Mase Escasi and Chichimecatecle and the other lords of Tlaxcala should come to hear of it they would possibly slay him and those who were in league with him ; but much as his father rebuked him he paid no heed nor did it stop him from talking about and working at his evil purpose. This reached the ears of Chichimecatecle, who was the mortal enemy of Xicotenga the younger, and he told it to Mase Escasi and they determined to enter into consultation and agreement about it, and they called together Xicotenga the elder and the chiefs of Huexotzingo, and ordered Xicotenga the younger to be brought prisoner before them. Then Mase Escasi made a speech to them all and asked if they could remember or had heard it said that during the last hundred years there had ever been throughout Tlaxcala such prosperity and riches as there had been since the Teules had arrived in their country, or if in any of their provinces they had ever been so well provided for. For they possessed much cotton cloth and gold and they ate salt, and that wherever the

Coadlavaca in the text.

Tlaxcalans went with the Teules, honour was paid to them out of respect to the Teules, and although many of them had now been killed in Mexico, they should bear in mind what their ancestors had said to them many years ago, that from where the sun rises there would come men who would rule over them. Why then was Xicotenga now going about with these treasons and infamies, scheming to make war on us and kill us? It was evilly done, and there was no excuse to be made for the knavery and mischief which he always had hidden in his breast, and now at the very moment when he saw us coming back defeated, when he ought to help us to recover ourselves, so as to turn again upon his enemies the towns of Mexico, he wished to carry out this treachery.

To these words that Mase Escasi and his father Xicotenga the elder said to him, Xicotenga the younger replied, that what he had said about making peace with the Mexicans was a very wise decision, and he said other things that they could not tolerate. Then Mase Escasi and Chichimecatecle and the old man, his father, blind as he was, arose and took Xicotenga the younger by the collar and by his mantle and tore it and roughly pushing him and with reproachful words they cast him down the steps, with his mantle all torn, and had it not been for his father they would have slain him. The others who had been in his confidence were made prisoners. As we were all taking refuge there, and it was not the time to punish him, Cortés said nothing more about it.

I have called this to mind so that it may be seen how loyal and good were these people of Tlaxcala, and how much we are indebted to them, and especially to the good Xicotenga the elder, who is said to have ordered his son to be killed when he knew of his plots and treason.

Let us leave this, and I will relate how we remained twenty-two days in that town curing our wounds and

recovering. Then Cortés determined that we should go to the province of Tepeaca which was near by, for there and in another town close to Tepeaca named Cachula they had slain many of our soldiers and those of Narvaez who had come to Mexico. When Cortés told this to our Captains, and they were preparing the soldiers of Narvaez to go to the war, for these men were not accustomed to fighting, and having escaped from the defeat at Mexico and at the bridges, and from the battle of Otumba, could hardly await the time for returning to the Island of Cuba, to their Indians, and their gold mines, they cursed Cortés and his conquests. Especially was this the case with Andrés de Duero, the partner of Cortés, for interested readers will have already understood, as I have twice described it in former chapters, how and in what way the partnership was formed. They cursed the gold which he [Cortés] had given to Duero and to the other Captains, all of which had been lost at the bridges, and as they had seen the fierce attacks the enemy made on us, they were very well content to have escaped with their lives. So they agreed to tell Cortés that they did not want to go to Tepeaca nor to any fighting, but wished to go back to their homes, and that they had already lost enough by leaving Cuba. Cortés talked the matter over with them very quietly and kindly, thinking to persuade them to go with us on the expedition to Tepeaca, but for all his speeches and reproaches they would not go. When they saw that words had no effect on Cortés, they drew up a formal requisition before a King's Notary demanding that he should go at once to Villa Rica and abandon the war, giving as a reason that we had neither horses nor muskets, crossbows nor powder, nor thread with which to make [crossbow] strings, nor stores, that we were all wounded, and out of all our company and the soldiers of Narvaez there only survived four hundred and forty, and that the Mexicans would hold

the strongholds, sierras and passes against us, and that if we delayed any longer the ships would be eaten by worms¹, and many other things were stated in this petition.

When they had presented the requisition and read it to Cortés he replied to the many words it contained with far more numerous contradictions, besides most of us who had come over with Cortés, told him not to give permission to any of the followers of Narvaez nor to any one else to return to Cuba, but that we should all endeavour to serve God and the King, for that was the right thing to do and not to return to Cuba.

After Cortés had given his answer to the requisition, the men who were pressing their demands upon him saw that many of us, who stood firmly by Cortés, would put a stop to the importunity with which they expressed their demands merely by insisting that it would be neither to the service of God nor His Majesty to desert their captain during war time. At the end of much discussion they gave their obedience so far as to go with us on any expeditions that might be undertaken, but it was on condition that Cortés promised that when an opportunity should occur he would allow them to return to the Island of Cuba, but not even with this did they leave off murmuring against him and his conquest, which had cost them so dearly in leaving their homes and their ease, and coming to intrude where even their lives were not safe. Moreover they said that if we entered on another war with the forces of Mexico, which sooner or later would be unavoidable, they believed and considered it certain that we could not hold our own against them in battle, as they had seen in the affair of Mexico and the bridges, and in the famous battle of Otumba. Moreover they said that

¹ Worms : In the text the word is "broma," which is the shipworm, *Teredo navalis*.

our Cortés only aimed to keep the command and always be a lord, and we bore with him, and were his servants, because we had nothing to lose but our lives, and they said many other tactless things, but we none of us took any notice considering the circumstances in which they spoke. But not many months passed before Cortés refused them leave to return to their homes and the Island of Cuba which I will relate at the proper time and place.

Let us omit repetitions and speak of what the historian Gomara says, although I am very tired of pointing out the nonsense which he says was given him as information, for things did not happen as he writes. So as not to be detained at every chapter by going over it all again and calling to mind how and in what way it happened, I have avoided writing about (his errors), but in this matter of the requisition which he says was presented to Cortés, he does not say who those were who made it, whether they were our people or the followers of Narvaez, and it seems to me that he does this to exalt Cortés and to debase us, who stood by him. Let it be known that the true "conquistadores" when we saw this written, knew for certain that gold and other gifts must have been given to Gomara in order that he should write in this way, for in all the battles and encounters it was we who supported Cortés, and now this chronicler humbles us by what he says. Gomara also states that Cortés, in his reply to this same requisition said, so as to encourage and animate us, that he would send to summon Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás, one of whom he said was settling at Panuco with three hundred soldiers, and the other was making a settlement at Coatzacoalcos with as many more soldiers. There is no truth in what he says, for as soon as we set out for Mexico to the assistance of Alvarado, the arrangements which had been made for Juan Velásquez to go to Panuco, and for Diego de Ordás to Coatzacoalcos were cancelled, as I have

extensively explained in a former chapter where I have told all about it. Those two Captains went to Mexico with us to succour Pedro de Alvarado, and in the rout Juan Velásquez de Leon was left dead at the bridge, and Diego de Ordás came out of it with three severe wounds that were given him in Mexico, and I have already related how and when it happened. If therefore the Chronicler Gomara's success in telling the truth about what happened were as excellent as the style in which he writes, it would be a very good thing. Moreover I notice that he says concerning the battle of Otumba, that if it had not been for Cortés himself we should all have been defeated, and that he alone won the battle by making (as he did) the charge against the Chieftain who carried the standard and emblem of Mexico. I have already said and will repeat it again that Cortés deserves all honour as a valiant Captain, but above all we must give thanks to God who in His great Mercy always helped us and supported Cortés by giving him such brave and valiant Captains and brave soldiers as he had with him ; for we gave him his mettle and broke up the squadrons and supported him, so that with our help and that of our Captains he might fight in the way that we fought, as I have already related in the chapters which treat of the subject.

For all the Captains whom I have named always kept in company with Cortés, and I will here name them again, they were Cristóbal de Olid, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Francisco de Morla, Luis Marin, Francisco de Lugo, Gonzalo Domínguez and other good and valiant soldiers who did not own horses, for originally sixteen horses and mares were all that came from the Island of Cuba with Cortés, and they no longer existed.

And as to what Gomara says in his history, that it was Cortés himself alone who won the battle of Otumba, why did he not relate the heroic deeds that we his captains and

valiant soldiers performed in that battle? For these reasons we have obtained the certainty that, so as to induce him to praise Cortés alone, they must have greased his palms, for he makes no mention of us; if not, let inquiry be made about that very valiant soldier named Cristóbal de Olea, how many times he came to the assistance of Cortés and saved his life up to the time of our return to Mexico, when he and many other soldiers lost their lives at the bridge in order to save that of Cortés. I had forgotten the other occasion when he saved Cortés' life in the affair at Zochimilco and he himself was badly wounded, and that my statement may be clearly understood, I will add that there was both a Cristóbal de Olea and a Cristóbal de Olid.

Then as to what the historian says about the blow that Cortés gave the Mexican captain with his horse, which made him drop the banner; it is true enough, but I have already said it was Juan de Salamanca, a native of the town of Ontiveros (who, after Mexico was conquered, became chief Alcalde of Coatzacoalcos), who gave him the lance thrust that slew him, and took from him the rich plumes and the standard that he was carrying, and presented it to Cortés, and some time afterwards His Majesty granted it to Salamanca as his coat of arms.

I have called this to mind here, not to avoid praising our Captain Hernando Cortés and holding him in the highest esteem, for he deserves all honour and glory for all the battles and conquests until we gained this New Spain, such as we are used to bestow on the most famous Captains in Spain, and such triumphs as the Romans accorded to Pompey and Julius Cæsar and the Scipios, and our Cortés is more worthy of praise than these Romans. This same historian Gomara also says that Cortés secretly ordered Xicotenga the younger to be killed in Tlaxcala for the treachery that he was plotting in order to kill us, as I

have already related, but it did not happen as he says it did, for when he ordered him to be hanged it was in a town near to Texcoco as I shall relate further on. This historian also says that so many thousands of Indians opposed us in our expeditions; there is neither calculation nor sense in the great numbers that he gives; he also speaks of the cities and towns and villages where there were so many thousands of houses, when there was not the fifth part of them; and if one were to add up all that he puts in his history it would come to more millions of men than the universe contains; he does not mind whether he says eight thousand or eighty thousand, and he then brags, thinking that his history will be very pleasing to those who hear it, and does not relate what really took place. Let the interested reader observe the distance between the truth in this tale of mine and the falsehood¹ by comparing events word by word, and let him ignore eloquence and ornate language which is evidently pleasanter than my coarse [manner], but the truth as it is written can support even my bad wording and [lack of] polished eloquence.

Let us leave this recounting and remembering of evident mistakes, and enough of the stories he has written, although they have given occasion for Dr. Illescas and Pablo Jovio to follow his words, for I am more bound to tell the truth about all that happened than to flatter. Let us go back to our story, and I will relate how we decided to go to Tepeaca, and what happened on the expedition.

¹ Blotted out in the original: "of his history."





BOOK IX.

THE HALT AT TEPEACA.

CHAPTER CXXX.

How we went to the province of Tepeaca, and what we did there, and other things that happened.



S Cortés had asked the Caciques of Tlaxcala (whose names have already been given) for five thousand warriors, in order to overrun and chastise the towns where Spaniards had been killed, namely Tepeaca and Quecholac¹ and Tecamachalco, distant from Tlaxcala six or seven leagues, they got ready four thousand Indians, with the greatest willingness; for if we had a great desire to go to those towns, Mase Escasi and Xicotenga the elder had a still stronger desire to supply them [the Indian auxiliaries], because they [the people of Tepeaca, etc.] had come to rob some of their farms, and they were willing to send men against them. The explanation was as follows:—When the Mexicans turned us out of Mexico (in the way I have described in former chapters which give an account of it), and knew that we had taken shelter

Cachula in the text.