



## BOOK VI.

### THE STAY IN MEXICO.

#### CHAPTER LXXXIX.

How the Great Montezuma came to our quarters with many Caciques accompanying him, and the conversation that he had with our Captain.



WHEN the Great Montezuma had dined and he knew that some time had passed since our Captain and all of us had done the same, he came in the greatest state to our quarters with a numerous company of chieftains, all of them his kinsmen. When Cortés was told that he was approaching he came out to the middle of the Hall to receive him, and Montezuma took him by the hand, and they brought some seats, made according to their usage and very richly decorated and embroidered with gold in many designs, and Montezuma asked our Captain to be seated, and both of them sat down each on his chair. Then Montezuma began a very good speech, saying that he was greatly rejoiced to have in his house and his kingdom such valiant gentlemen as were Cortés and all of us. That two years ago he had received news of another Captain who came to

Chanpoton, and likewise last year they had brought him news of another Captain who came with four ships, and that each time he had wished to see them, and now that he had us with him he was at our service, and would give us of all that he possessed ; that it must indeed be true that we were those of whom his ancestors in years long past had spoken, saying that men would come from where the sun rose to rule over these lands, and that we must be those men, as we had fought so valiantly in the affairs at Potonchan and Tabasco and against the Tlaxcalans ; for they had brought him pictures of the battles true to life.

Cortés answered him through our interpreters who always accompanied him, especially Doña Marina, and said to him that he and all of us did not know how to repay him the great favours we received from him every day. It was true that we came from where the sun rose, and were the vassals and servants of a great Prince called the Emperor Don Carlos, who held beneath his sway many and great princes, and that the Emperor having heard of him and what a great prince he was, had sent us to these parts to see him, and to beg them to become Christians, the same as our Emperor and all of us, so that his soul and those of all his vassals might be saved. Later on he would further explain how and in what manner this should be done, and how we worship one only true God, and who He is, and many other good things which he should listen to, such as he had already told to his ambassadors Tendile, and Pitalpitoque and Quintalbor when we were on the sand dunes. When this conference was over, the Great Montezuma had already at hand some very rich golden jewels, of many patterns, which he gave to our Captain, and in the same manner to each one of our Captains he gave trifles of gold, and three loads of mantles of rich feather work, and to the soldiers also he gave to each one

two loads of mantles, and he did it cheerfully and in every way he seemed to be a great Prince. When these things had been distributed, he asked Cortés if we were all brethren and vassals of our great Emperor, and Cortés replied yes, we were brothers in affection and friendship, and persons of great distinction, and servants of our great King and Prince. Further polite speeches passed between Montezuma and Cortés, and as this was the first time he had come to visit us, and so as not to be wearisome, they ceased talking. Montezuma had ordered his stewards that, according to our own use and customs in all things, we should be provided with maize and [grinding] stones, and women to make bread, and fowls and fruit, and much fodder for the horses. Then Montezuma took leave of our Captain and all of us with the greatest courtesy, and we went out with him as far as the street. Cortés ordered us not to go far from our quarters for the present, until we knew better what was expedient. I will stop here and go on to tell what happened later.

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## CHAPTER XC.

How on the following day our Captain Cortés went to see the Great Montezuma, and about a certain conversation that took place.

THE next day Cortés decided to go to Montezuma's palace, and he first sent to find out what he intended doing and to let him know that we were coming. He took with him four captains, namely Pedro de Alvarado Juan Velásquez de Leon, Diego de Ordás, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, and five of us soldiers also went with him.

When Montezuma knew of our coming he advanced to the middle of the hall to receive us, accompanied by many of his nephews, for no other chiefs were permitted to

enter or hold communication with Montezuma where he then was, unless it were on important business. Cortés and he paid the greatest reverence to each other and then they took one another by the hand and Montezuma made him sit down on his couch<sup>1</sup> on his right hand, and he also bade all of us to be seated on seats which he ordered to be brought.

Then Cortés began to make an explanation through our interpreters Doña Marina and Aguilar, and said that he and all of us were rested, and that in coming to see and converse with such a great Prince as he was, we had completed the journey and fulfilled the command which our great King and Prince had laid on us. But what he chiefly came to say on behalf of our Lord God had already been brought to his [Montezuma's] knowledge through his ambassadors, Tendile, Pitalpitoque and Quintalbor, at the time when he did us the favour to send the golden sun and moon to the sand dunes; for we told them then that we were Christians and worshipped one true and only God, named Jesus Christ, who suffered death and passion to save us, and we told them that a cross (when they asked us why we worshipped it) was a sign of the other Cross on which our Lord God was crucified for our salvation, and that the death and passion which He suffered was for the salvation of the whole human race, which was lost, and that this our God rose on the third day and is now in heaven, and it is He who made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the sands, and created all the things there are in the world, and He sends the rain and the dew, and nothing happens in the world without His holy will. That we believe in Him and worship Him, but that those whom they look upon as gods are not so, but are devils, which are evil things, and if their looks are bad their deeds are worse, and they could

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**Estrado.**



see that they were evil and of little worth, for where we had set up crosses such as those his ambassadors had seen, they dared not appear before them, through fear of them, and that as time went on they would notice this.

The favour he now begged of him was his attention to the words that he now wished to tell him; then he explained to him very clearly about the creation of the world, and how we are all brothers, sons of one father and one mother who were called Adam and Eve, and how such a brother as our great Emperor, grieving for the perdition of so many souls, such as those which their idols were leading to Hell, where they burn in living flames, had sent us, so that after what he [Montezuma] had now heard he would put a stop to it and they would no longer adore these Idols or sacrifice Indian men and women to them, for we were all brethren, nor should they commit sodomy or thefts. He also told them that, in course of time, our Lord and King would send some men who among us lead very holy lives, much better than we do, who will explain to them all about it, for at present we merely came to give them due warning, and so he prayed him to do what he was asked and carry it into effect.

As Montezuma appeared to wish to reply, Cortés broke off his argument, and to all of us who were with him he said: "with this we have done our duty considering it is the first attempt."

Montezuma replied—"Señor Malinche, I have understood your words and arguments very well before now, from what you said to my servants at the sand dunes, this about three Gods and the Cross, and all those things that you have preached in the towns through which you have come. We have not made any answer to it because here throughout all time we have worshipped our own gods, and thought they were good, as no doubt yours are, so do not trouble to speak to us any more about them at present. **Regarding the creation of the world, we have held the same**

belief for ages past, and for this reason we take it for certain that you are those whom our ancestors predicted would come from the direction of the sunrise. As for your great King, I feel that I am indebted to him, and I will give him of what I possess, for as I have already said, two years ago I heard of the Captains who came in ships from the direction in which you came, and they said that they were the servants of this your great King, and I wish to know if you are all one and the same.

Cortés replied, Yes, that we were all brethren and servants of our Emperor, and that those men came to examine the way and the seas and the ports so as to know them well in order that we might follow as we had done. Montezuma was referring to the expeditions of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and of Grijalva, when we first came on voyages of discovery, and he said that ever since that time he had wished to capture some of those men who had come so as to keep them in his kingdoms and cities and to do them honour, and his gods had now fulfilled his desires, for now that we were in his home, which we might call our own, we should rejoice and take our rest for there we should be well treated. And if he had on other occasions sent to say that we should not enter his city, it was not of his free will, but because his vassals were afraid, for they said that we shot out flashes of lightning, and killed many Indians with our horses, and that we were angry Teules, and other childish stories, and now that he had seen our persons and knew we were of flesh and bone, and had sound sense, and that we were very valiant, for these reasons he held us in much higher regard than he did from their reports, and he would share his possessions with us. Then Cortés and all of us answered that we thanked him sincerely for such signal good will, and Montezuma said, laughing, for he was very merry in his princely way of speaking: "Malinche, I know very

well that these people of Tlaxcala with whom you are such good friends have told you that I am a sort of God or Teul, and that everything in my houses is made of gold and silver and precious stones, I know well enough that you are wise and did not believe it but took it as a joke. Behold now, Señor Malinche, my body is of flesh and bone like yours, my houses and palaces of stone and wood and lime ; that I am a great king and inherit the riches of my ancestors is true, but not all the nonsense and lies that they have told you about me, although of course you treated it as a joke, as I did your thunder and lightning.”

Cortés answered him, also laughing, and said that opponents and enemies always say evil things, without truth in them, of those whom they hate, and that he well knew that he could not hope to find another Prince more magnificent in these countries, and that not without reason had he been so vaunted to our Emperor.

While this conversation was going on, Montezuma secretly sent a great Cacique, one of his nephews who was in his company, to order his stewards to bring certain pieces of gold, which it seems must have been put apart to give to Cortés, and ten loads of fine cloth, which he apportioned, the gold and mantles between Cortés and the four captains, and to each of us soldiers he gave two golden necklaces, each necklace being worth ten pesos, and two loads of mantles. The gold that he then gave us was worth in all more than a thousand pesos and he gave it all cheerfully and with the air of a great and valiant prince. As it was now past midday, so as not to appear importunate, Cortés said to him : “ Señor Montezuma, you always have the habit of heaping load upon load in every day conferring favours on us, and it is already your dinner time.” Montezuma replied that he thanked us for coming to see him, and then we took our leave with the greatest courtesy and we went to our lodgings.

And as we went along we spoke of the good manners and breeding which he showed in everything, and that we should show him in all ways the greatest respect, doffing our quilted caps when we passed before him, and this we always did, but let us leave this subject here, and pass on.

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## CHAPTER XCI.

Of the manner and appearance of the Great Montezuma and what a great Prince he was.

THE Great Montezuma was about forty years old, of good height and well proportioned, slender, and spare of flesh, not very swarthy, but of the natural colour and shade of an Indian. He did not wear his hair long, but so as just to cover his ears, his scanty black beard was well shaped and thin. His face was somewhat long, but cheerful, and he had good eyes and showed in his appearance and manner both tenderness and, when necessary, gravity. He was very neat and clean and bathed once every day in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup> He had many women as mistresses, daughters of Chieftains, and he had two great Cacicas as his legitimate wives, and when he had intercourse with them it was so secretly that no one knew anything about it, except some of his servants. He was free from unnatural offences. The clothes that he wore one day, he did not put on again until four days later. He had over two hundred chieftains in his guard, in other rooms close to his own, not that all were meant to converse with him, but only one or another, and when they went to speak to him they were obliged to take off their rich mantles and put on others of little worth, but they had

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<sup>1</sup> Blotted out in the original: "about the hour of (Ave Maria) evening prayer."—G. G.

to be clean, and they had to enter barefoot with their eyes lowered to the ground, and not to look up in his face. And they made him three obeisances, and said: "Lord, my Lord, my Great Lord," before they came up to him, and then they made their report and with a few words he dismissed them, and on taking leave they did not turn their backs, but kept their faces toward him with their eyes to the ground, and they did not turn their backs until they left the room. I noticed another thing, that when other great chiefs came from distant lands about disputes or business, when they reached the apartments of the Great Montezuma, they had to come barefoot and with poor mantles, and they might not enter directly into the Palace, but had to loiter about a little on one side of the Palace door, for to enter hurriedly was considered to be disrespectful.

For each meal, over thirty different dishes were prepared by his cooks according to their ways and usage, and they placed small pottery brasiers beneath the dishes so that they should not get cold. They prepared more than three hundred plates of the food that Montezuma was going to eat, and more than a thousand for the guard. When he was going to eat, Montezuma would sometimes go out with his chiefs and stewards, and they would point out to him which dish was best, and of what birds and other things it was composed, and as they advised him, so he would eat, but it was not often that he would go out to see the food, and then merely as a pastime.

I have heard it said that they were wont to cook for him the flesh of young boys, but as he had such a variety of dishes, made of so many things, we could not succeed in seeing if they were of human flesh or of other things, for they daily cooked fowls, turkeys, pheasants, native partridges, quail, tame and wild ducks, venison, wild boar, reed birds, pigeons, hares and rabbits, and many sorts of birds and

other things which are bred in this country, and they are so numerous that I cannot finish naming them in a hurry ; so we had no insight into it, but I know for certain that after our Captain censured the sacrifice of human beings, and the eating of their flesh, he ordered that such food should not be prepared for him thenceforth.

Let us cease speaking of this and return to the way things were served to him at meal times. It was in this way : if it was cold they made up a large fire of live coals of a firewood made from the bark of trees which did not give off any smoke, and the scent of the bark from which the fire was made was very fragrant, and so that it should not give off more heat than he required, they placed in front of it a sort of screen adorned with figures of idols worked in gold. He was seated on a low stool, soft and richly worked, and the table, which was also low, was made in the same style as the seats, and on it they placed the table cloths of white cloth and some rather long napkins of the same material. Four very beautiful cleanly women brought water for his hands in a sort of deep basin which they call "xicales,"<sup>1</sup> and they held others like plates below to catch the water, and they brought him towels. And two other women brought him tortilla bread, and as soon as he began to eat they placed before him a sort of wooden screen painted over with gold, so that no one should watch him eating. Then the four women stood aside, and four great chieftains who were old men came and stood beside them, and with these Montezuma now and then conversed, and asked them questions, and as a great favour he would give to each of these elders a dish of what to him tasted best. They say that these elders were his near relations, and were his counsellors and judges of law suits, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Gourds.

dishes and food which Montezuma gave them they ate standing up with much reverence and without looking at his face. He was served on Cholula earthenware either red or black. While he was at his meal the men of his guard who were in the rooms near to that of Montezuma, never dreamed of making any noise or speaking aloud. They brought him fruit of all the different kinds that the land produced, but he ate very little of it. From time to time they brought him, in cup-shaped vessels of pure gold, a certain drink made from cacao which they said he took when he was going to visit his wives, and at the time he took no heed of it, but what I did see was that they brought over fifty great jugs of good cacao frothed up, and he drank of that, and the women served this drink to him with great reverence.

Sometimes at meal-times there were present some very ugly humpbacks, very small of stature and their bodies almost broken in half, who are their jesters, and other Indians, who must have been buffoons, who told him witty sayings, and others who sang and danced, for Montezuma was fond of pleasure and song, and to these he ordered to be given what was left of the food and the jugs of cacao. Then the same four women removed the table cloths, and with much ceremony they brought water for his hands. And Montezuma talked with those four old chieftains about things that interested him, and they took leave of him with the great reverence in which they held him, and he remained to repose.

As soon as the Great Montezuma had dined, all the men of the Guard had their meal and as many more of the other house servants, and it seems to me that they brought out over a thousand dishes of the food of which I have spoken, and then over two thousand jugs of cacao all frothed up, as they make it in Mexico, and a limitless quantity of fruit, so that with his women and female

servants and bread makers and cacao makers his expenses must have been very great.

Let us cease talking about the expenses and the food for his household and let us speak of the Stewards and the Treasurers and the stores and pantries and of those who had charge of the houses where the maize was stored. I say that there would be so much to write about, each thing by itself, that I should not know where to begin, but we stood astonished at the excellent arrangements and the great abundance of provisions that he had in all, but I must add what I had forgotten, for it is as well to go back and relate it, and that is, that while Montezuma was at table eating as I have described, there were waiting on him two other graceful women to bring him tortillas, kneaded with eggs and other sustaining ingredients, and these tortillas were very white, and they were brought on plates covered with clean napkins, and they also brought him another kind of bread, like long balls kneaded with other kinds of sustaining food, and "pan pachol" for so they call it in this country, which is a sort of wafer. There were also placed on the table three tubes much painted and gilded, which held *liquidambar* mixed with certain herbs which they call *tabaco*, and when he had finished eating, after they had danced before him and sung and the table was removed, he inhaled the smoke from one of those tubes, but he took very little of it and with that he fell asleep.

Let us cease speaking about the service of his table and go back to our story. I remember that at that time his steward was a great Cacique to whom we gave the name of Tápia, and he kept the accounts of all the revenue that was brought to Montezuma, in his books which were made of paper which they call *Amal*, and he had a great house full of these books. Now we must leave the books and the accounts for it is outside our story, and say how Monte-



zuma had two houses full of every sort of arms, many of them richly adorned with gold and precious stones. There were shields great and small, and a sort of broad-swords, and others like two-handed swords set with stone knives which cut much better than our swords, and lances longer than ours are, with a fathom of blade with many knives set in it, which even when they are driven into a buckler or shield do not come out, in fact they cut like razors so that they can shave their heads with them. There were very good bows and arrows and double-pointed lances and others with one point, as well as their throwing sticks, and many slings and round stones shaped by hand, and some sort of artful shields which are so made that they can be rolled up, so as not to be in the way when they are not fighting, and when they are needed for fighting they let them fall down, and they cover the body from top to toe. There was also much quilted cotton armour, richly ornamented on the outside with many coloured feathers, used as devices and distinguishing marks, and there were casques or helmets made of wood and bone, also highly decorated with feathers on the outside, and there were other arms of other makes which, so as to avoid prolixity, I will not describe, and there were artizans who were skilled in such things and worked at them, and stewards who had charge of the arms.

Let us leave this and proceed to the Aviary, and I am forced to abstain from enumerating every kind of bird that was there and its peculiarity, for there was everything from the Royal Eagle and other smaller eagles, and many other birds of great size, down to tiny birds of many-coloured plumage, also the birds from which they take the rich plumage which they use in their green feather work. The birds which have these feathers are about the size of the magpies in Spain, they are called in this country

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*Quezales*, and there are other birds which have feathers of five colours—green, red, white, yellow and blue; I don't remember what they are called; then there were parrots of many different colours, and there are so many of them that I forget their names, not to mention the beautifully marked ducks and other larger ones like them. From all these birds they plucked the feathers when the time was right to do so, and the feathers grew again. All the birds that I have spoken about breed in these houses, and in the setting season certain Indian men and women who look after the birds, place the eggs under them and clean the nests and feed them, so that each kind of bird has its proper food. In this house that I have spoken of there is a great tank of fresh water and in it there are other sorts of birds with long stilted legs, with body, wings and tail all red; I don't know their names, but in the Island of Cuba they are called *Ypiris*, and there are others something like them, and there are also in that tank many other kinds of birds which always live in the water.

Let us leave this and go on to another great house, where they keep many Idols, and they say that they are their fierce gods, and with them many kinds of carnivorous beasts of prey, tigers and two kinds of lions, and animals something like wolves which in this country they call jackals and foxes, and other smaller carnivorous animals, and all these carnivores they feed with flesh, and the greater number of them breed in the house. They give them as food deer and fowls, dogs and other things which they are used to hunt, and I have heard it said that they feed them on the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed. It is in this way: you have already heard me say that when they sacrifice a wretched Indian they saw open the chest with stone knives and hasten to tear out the palpitating heart and blood, and offer it to their Idols in whose name the sacrifice is made. Then they cut off

the thighs, arms and head and eat the former at feasts and banquets, and the head they hang up on some beams, and the body of the man sacrificed is not eaten but given to these fierce animals. They also have in that cursed house many vipers and poisonous snakes which carry on their tails things that sound like bells. These are the worst vipers of all, and they keep them in jars and great pottery vessels with many feathers, and there they lay their eggs and rear their young, and they give them to eat the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed, and the flesh of dogs which they are in the habit of breeding. We even knew for certain that when they drove us out of Mexico and killed over eight hundred of our soldiers that they fed those fierce animals and snakes for many days on their bodies, as I will relate at the proper time and season. And those snakes and wild beasts were dedicated to those savage Idols, so that they might keep them company.

Let me speak now of the infernal noise when the lions and tigers roared and the jackals and the foxes howled and the serpents hissed, it was horrible to listen to and it seemed like a hell. Let us go on and speak of the skilled workmen he [Montezuma] employed in every craft that was practised among them. We will begin with lapidaries and workers in gold and silver and all the hollow work, which even the great goldsmiths in Spain were forced to admire, and of these there were a great number of the best in a town named Atzacotalco,<sup>1</sup> a league from Mexico. Then for working precious stones and chalchihuites, which are like emeralds, there were other great artists. Let us go on to the great craftsmen in feather work, and painters and sculptors who were most refined; from what we see of their work to-day we can form a

judgment of what they did then, for there are three Indians to-day in the City of Mexico named Marcos de Aquino, Juan de la Cruz and El Crespillo, so skilful in their work as sculptors and painters, that had they lived in the days of the ancient and famous Apelles, or of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, in our times, they would be placed in the same company. Let us go on to the Indian women who did the weaving and the washing, who made such an immense quantity of fine fabrics with wonderful feather work designs; the greater part of it was brought daily from some towns of the province on the north coast near Vera Cruz called Cotaxtla, close by San Juan de Ulua, where we disembarked when we came with Cortés.

In the house of the Great Montezuma himself, all the daughters of chieftains whom he had as mistresses always wore beautiful things, and there were many daughters of Mexican citizens who lived in retirement and wished to appear to be like nuns, who also did weaving but it was wholly of feather work. These nuns had their houses near the great Cue of Huichilobos and out of devotion to it, or to another idol, that of a woman who was said to be their mediatrix in the matter of marriage, their fathers placed them in that religious retirement until they married, and they were [only] taken out thence to be married.

Let us go on and tell about the great number of dancers kept by the Great Montezuma for his amusement, and others who used stilts on their feet, and others who flew when they danced up in the air, and others like Merry-Andrews, and I may say that there was a district full of these people who had no other occupation. Let us go on and speak of the workmen that he had as stone cutters, masons and carpenters, all of whom attended to the work of his houses, I say that he had as many as he wished for. We must not forget the gardens of flowers and sweet-scented trees, and the many kinds that there

were of them, and the arrangement of them and the walks, and the ponds and tanks of fresh water where the water entered at one end and flowed out at the other ; and the baths which he had there, and the variety of small birds that nested in the branches, and the medicinal and useful herbs that were in the gardens. It was a wonder to see, and to take care of it there were many gardeners. Everything was made in masonry and well cemented, baths and walks and closets, and apartments like summer houses where they danced and sang. There was as much to be seen in these gardens as there was everywhere else, and we could not tire of witnessing his great power. Thus as a consequence of so many crafts being practised among them, a large number of skilled Indians were employed.

As I am almost tired of writing about this subject and my interested readers will be even more so, I will stop talking about it and tell how our Cortés in company with many of our captains and soldiers went to see Tlaltelolco,<sup>1</sup> which is the great market place of Mexico, and how we ascended the great Cue where stand the Idols Tezcatepuca and Huichilobos. This was the first time that our Captain went out to see the City, and I will relate what else happened.

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## CHAPTER XCII.

How our Captain went out to see the City of Mexico and Tlaltelolco, which is the great market place and the great Cue of Huichilobos, and what else happened.

AS we had already been four days in Mexico and neither the Captain nor any of us had left our lodgings except to go to the houses and gardens, Cortés said to us that it would be well to go to the great Plaza and see the great

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<sup>1</sup> Tutelulco in the text.

Temple of Huichilobos, and that he wished to consult the Great Montezuma and have his approval. For this purpose he sent Jerónimo de Aguilar and the Doña Marina as messengers, and with them went our Captain's small page named Orteguilla, who already understood something of the language. When Montezuma knew his wishes he sent to say that we were welcome to go; on the other hand, as he was afraid that we might do some dishonour to his Idols, he determined to go with us himself with many of his chieftains. He came out from his Palace in his rich litter, but when half the distance had been traversed and he was near some oratories, he stepped out of the litter, for he thought it a great affront to his idols to go to their house and temple in that manner. Some of the great chieftains supported him with their arms, and the tribal lords went in front of him carrying two staves like sceptres held on high, which was the sign that the Great Montezuma was coming. (When he went in his litter he carried a wand half of gold and half of wood, which was held up like a wand of justice). So he went on and ascended the great Cue accompanied by many priests, and he began to burn incense and perform other ceremonies to Huichilobos.

Let us leave Montezuma, who had gone ahead as I have said, and return to Cortés and our captains and soldiers, who according to our custom both night and day were armed, and as Montezuma was used to see us so armed when we went to visit him, he did not look upon it as anything new. I say this because our Captain and all those who had horses went to Tlaltelolco on horseback, and nearly all of us soldiers were fully equipped, and many Caciques whom Montezuma had sent for that purpose went in our company. When we arrived at the great market place, called Tlaltelolco, we were astounded at the number of people and the quantity of merchandise

that it contained, and at the good order and control that was maintained, for we had never seen such a thing before. The chieftains who accompanied us acted as guides. Each kind of merchandise was kept by itself and had its fixed place marked out. Let us begin with the dealers in gold, silver, and precious stones, feathers, mantles, and embroidered goods. Then there were other wares consisting of Indian slaves both men and women; and I say that they bring as many of them to that great market for sale as the Portuguese bring negroes from Guinea; and they brought them along tied to long poles, with collars round their necks so that they could not escape, and others they left free. Next there were other traders who sold great pieces of cloth and cotton, and articles of twisted thread, and there were *cacahuateros* who sold cacao. In this way one could see every sort of merchandise that is to be found in the whole of New Spain, placed in arrangement in the same manner as they do in my own country, which is Medina del Campo, where they hold the fairs, where each line of booths has its particular kind of merchandise, and so it is in this great market. There were those who sold cloths of henequen and ropes and the *cotaras*<sup>1</sup> with which they are shod, which are made from the same plant, and sweet cooked roots, and other tubers which they get from this plant, all were kept in one part of the market in the place assigned to them. In another part there were skins of tigers and lions, of otters and jackals, deer and other animals and badgers and mountain cats, some tanned and others untanned, and other classes of merchandise.

Let us go on and speak of those who sold beans and sage and other vegetables and herbs in another part, and to those who sold fowls, cocks with wattles, rabbits, hares,

deer, mallards, young dogs and other things of that sort in their part of the market, and let us also mention the fruiterers, and the women who sold cooked food, dough and tripe in their own part of the market; then every sort of pottery made in a thousand different forms from great water jars to little jugs, these also had a place to themselves; then those who sold honey and honey paste and other dainties like nut paste, and those who sold lumber, boards, cradles, beams, blocks and benches, each article by itself, and the vendors of *ocote*<sup>1</sup> firewood, and other things of a similar nature. I must furthermore mention, asking your pardon, that they also sold many canoes full of human excrement, and these were kept in the creeks near the market, and this they use to make salt or for tanning skins, for without it they say that they cannot be well prepared. I know well that some gentlemen laugh at this, but I say that it is so, and I may add that on all the roads it is a usual thing to have places made of reeds or straw or grass, so that they may be screened from the passers by, into these they retire when they wish to purge their bowels so that even that filth should not be lost. But why do I waste so many words in recounting what they sell in that great market, for I shall never finish if I tell it all in detail. Paper, which in this country is called *Amal*, and reeds scented with *liquidambar*, and full of tobacco, and yellow ointments and things of that sort are sold by themselves, and much cochineal is sold under the arcades which are in that great market place, and there are many vendors of herbs and other sorts of trades. There are also buildings where three magistrates sit in judgment, and there are executive officers like *Alguacils* who inspect the merchandise. I am forgetting those who sell salt, and those who make the stone knives, and how they split them

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<sup>1</sup> Pitch-pine for torches



off the stone itself ; and the fisherwomen and others who sell some small cakes made from a sort of ooze which they get out of the great lake, which curdles, and from this they make a bread having a flavour something like cheese. There are for sale axes of brass and copper and tin, and gourds and gaily painted jars made of wood. I could wish that I had finished telling of all the things which are sold there, but they are so numerous and of such different quality and the great market place with its surrounding arcades was so crowded with people, that one would not have been able to see and inquire about it all in two days.

Then we went to the great Cue, and when we were already approaching its great courts, before leaving the market place itself, there were many more merchants, who, as I was told, brought gold for sale in grains, just as it is taken from the mines. The gold is placed in thin quills of the geese of the country, white quills, so that the gold can be seen through, and according to the length and thickness of the quills they arrange their accounts with one another, how much so many mantles or so many gourds full of cacao were worth, or how many slaves, or whatever other thing they were exchanging.

Now let us leave the great market place, and not look at it again, and arrive at the great courts and walls where the great Cue stands. Before reaching the great Cue there is a great enclosure of courts, it seems to me larger than the plaza of Salamanca, with two walls of masonry surrounding it and the court itself all paved with very smooth great white flagstones. And where there were not these stones it was cemented and burnished and all very clean, so that one could not find any dust or a straw in the whole place.

When we arrived near the great Cue and before we had ascended a single step of it, the Great Montezuma sent

down from above, where he was making his sacrifices, six priests and two chieftains to accompany our Captain. On ascending the steps, which are one hundred and fourteen in number, they attempted to take him by the arms so as to help him to ascend, (thinking that he would get tired,) as they were accustomed to assist their lord Montezuma, but Cortés would not allow them to come near him. When we got to the top of the great Cue, on a small plaza which has been made on the top where there was a space like a platform with some large stones placed on it, on which they put the poor Indians for sacrifice, there was a bulky image like a dragon and other evil figures and much blood shed that very day.

When we arrived there Montezuma came out of an oratory where his cursed idols were, at the summit of the great Cue, and two priests came with him, and after paying great reverence to Cortés and to all of us he said: "You must be tired, Señor Malinche, from ascending this our great Cue," and Cortés replied through our interpreters who were with us that he and his companions were never tired by anything. Then Montezuma took him by the hand and told him to look at his great city and all the other cities that were standing in the water, and the many other towns on the land round the lake, and that if he had not seen the great market place well, that from where they were they could see it better.

So we stood looking about us, for that huge and cursed temple stood so high that from it one could see over everything very well, and we saw the three causeways which led into Mexico, that is the causeway of Iztapalapa by which we had entered four days before, and that of Tacuba, along which later on we fled on the night of our great defeat, when Cuitlahuac<sup>1</sup> the new prince drove us

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<sup>1</sup> Cuedlabaca in the text.

out of the city, as I shall tell later on, and that of Tepeaquilla,<sup>1</sup> and we saw the fresh water that comes from Chapultepec which supplies the city, and we saw the bridges on the three causeways which were built at certain distances apart through which the water of the lake flowed in and out from one side to the other, and we beheld on that great lake a great multitude of canoes, some coming with supplies of food and others returning loaded with cargoes of merchandise; and we saw that from every house of that great city and of all the other cities that were built in the water it was impossible to pass from house to house, except by drawbridges which were made of wood or in canoes; and we saw in those cities Cues and oratories like towers and fortresses and all gleaming white, and it was a wonderful thing to behold; then the houses with flat roofs, and on the causeways other small towers and oratories which were like fortresses.

After having examined and considered all that we had seen we turned to look at the great market place and the crowds of people that were in it, some buying and others selling, so that the murmur and hum of their voices and words that they used could be heard more than a league off. Some of the soldiers among us who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, and all over Italy, and in Rome, said that so large a market place and so full of people, and so well regulated and arranged, they had never beheld before.

Let us leave this, and return to our Captain, who said to Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, who has often been mentioned by me, and who happened to be near by him: "It seems to me, Señor Padre, that it would be a good thing to throw out a feeler to Montezuma, as to whether he would allow us to build our church here"; and the Padre replied that

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<sup>1</sup> Guadalupe.

it would be a good thing if it were successful, but it seemed to him that it was not quite a suitable time to speak about it, for Montezuma did not appear to be inclined to do such a thing.

Then our Cortés said to Montezuma through the interpreter Doña Marina: "Your Highness is indeed a very great prince and worthy of even greater things. We are rejoiced to see your cities, and as we are here in your temple, what I now beg as a favour is that you will show us your gods and Teules. Montezuma replied that he must first speak with his high priests, and when he had spoken to them he said that we might enter into a small tower and apartment, a sort of hall, where there were two altars, with very richly carved boardings on the top of the roof. On each altar were two figures, like giants with very tall bodies and very fat, and the first which stood on the right hand they said was the figure of Huichilobos their god of War; it had a very broad face and monstrous and terrible eyes, and the whole of his body was covered with precious stones, and gold and pearls, and with seed pearls stuck on with a paste that they make in this country out of a sort of root, and all the body and head was covered with it, and the body was girdled by great snakes made of gold and precious stones, and in one hand he held a bow and in the other some arrows. And another small idol that stood by him, they said was his page, and he held a short lance and a shield richly decorated with gold and stones. Huichilobos had round his neck some Indians' faces and other things like hearts of Indians, the former made of gold and the latter of silver, with many precious blue stones.

There were some braziers with incense which they call copal, and in them they were burning the hearts of the three Indians whom they had sacrificed that day, and they had made the sacrifice with smoke and copal. All the walls

of the oratory were so splashed and encrusted with blood that they were black, the floor was the same and the whole place stank vilely. Then we saw on the other side on the left hand there stood the other great image the same height as Huichilobos, and it had a face like a bear and eyes that shone, made of their mirrors which they call *Tezcat*, and the body plastered with precious stones like that of Huichilobos, for they say that the two are brothers; and this Tezcatepuca was the god of Hell and had charge of the souls of the Mexicans, and his body was girt with figures like little devils with snakes' tails. The walls were so clotted with blood and the soil so bathed with it that in the slaughter houses in Spain there is not such another stench.

They had offered to this Idol five hearts from that day's sacrifices. In the highest part of the Cue there was a recess of which the woodwork was very richly worked, and in it was another image half man and half lizard, with precious stones all over it, and half the body was covered with a mantle. They say that the body of this figure is full of all the seeds that there are in the world, and they say that it is the god of seed time and harvest, but I do not remember its name, and everything was covered with blood, both walls and altar, and the stench was such that we could hardly wait the moment to get out of it.

They had an exceedingly large drum there, and when they beat it the sound of it was so dismal and like, so to say, an instrument of the infernal regions, that one could hear it a distance of two leagues, and they said that the skins it was covered with were those of great snakes. In that small place there were many diabolical things to be seen, bugles and trumpets and knives, and many hearts of Indians that they had burned in fumigating their idols, and everything was so clotted with blood, and there was

so much of it, that I curse the whole of it, and as it stank like a slaughter house we hastened to clear out of such a bad stench and worse sight. Our Captain said to Montezuma through our interpreter, half laughing: "Señor Montezuma, I do not understand how such a great Prince and wise man as you are has not come to the conclusion, in your mind, that these idols of yours are not gods, but evil things that are called devils, and so that you may know it and all your priests may see it clearly, do me the favour to approve of my placing a cross here on the top of this tower, and that in one part of these oratories where your Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca stand we may divide off a space where we can set up an image of Our Lady (an image which Montezuma had already seen) and you will see by the fear in which these Idols hold it that they are deceiving you."

Montezuma replied half angrily, (and the two priests who were with him showed great annoyance,) and said: "Señor Malinche, if I had known that you would have said such defamatory things I would not have shown you my gods, we consider them to be very good, for they give us health and rains and good seed times and seasons and as many victories as we desire, and we are obliged to worship them and make sacrifices, and I pray you not to say another word to their dishonour."

When our Captain heard that and noted the angry looks he did not refer again to the subject, but said with a cheerful manner: "It is time for your Excellency and for us to return," and Montezuma replied that it was well, but that he had to pray and offer certain sacrifices on account of the great *tatacul*, that is to say sin, which he had committed in allowing us to ascend his great Cue, and being the cause of our being permitted to see his gods, and of our dishonouring them by speaking evil of them, so that before he left he must pray and worship.

Then Cortés said “ I ask your pardon if it be so,” and then we went down the steps, and as they numbered one hundred and fourteen, and as some of our soldiers were suffering from tumours and abscesses, their legs were tired by the descent.

I will leave off talking about the oratory, and I will give my impresions of its surroundings, and if I do not describe it as accurately as I should do, do not wonder at it, for at that time I had other things to think about, regarding what we had on hand, that is to say my soldier's duties and what my Captain ordered me to do, and not about telling stories. To go back to the facts, it seems to me that the circuit of the great Cue was equal to [that of] six large sites,<sup>1</sup> such as they measure in this country, and from below up to where a small tower stood, where they kept their idols, it narrowed, and in the middle of the lofty Cue up to its highest point, there were five hollows like barbicans, but open, without screens, and as there are many Cues painted on the banners of the conquerors, and on one which I possess, any one who has seen them can infer what they looked like from outside, better that I myself saw and understood it. There was a report that at the time they began to build that great Cue, all the inhabitants of that mighty city had placed as offerings in the foundations, gold and silver and pearls and precious stones, and had bathed them with the blood of the many Indian prisoners of war who were sacrificed, and had placed there every sort and kind of seed that the land produces, so that their Idols should give them victories and riches, and large crops. Some of my inquisitive readers will ask, how could we come to know that into the foundations of that great Cue they cast gold and silver and precious chalhuites and seeds, and watered them with the human

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<sup>1</sup> Solares. Solar is a town lot for house building.

blood of the Indians whom they sacrificed, when it was more than a thousand years ago that they built and made it? The answer I give to this is that after we took that great and strong city, and the sites were apportioned, it was then proposed that in [the place of] that great *Cue* we should build a church to our patron and guide Señor Santiago, and a great part of the site of the great temple of Huichilobos was occupied by the site of the holy church, and when they opened the foundations in order to strengthen them, they found much gold and silver and chalchihuites and pearls and seed pearls and other stones. And a settler in Mexico who occupied another part of the same site found the same things, and the officers of His Majesty's treasury demanded them saying that they belonged by right to His Majesty, and there was a lawsuit about it. I do not remember what happened except that they sought information from the Caciques and Chieftains of Mexico, and from Guatémoc, who was then alive, and they said that it was true that all the inhabitants of Mexico at that time cast into the foundations those jewels and all the rest of the things, and that so it was noted in their books and pictures of ancient things, and from this cause those riches were preserved for the building of the holy church of Santiago.

Let us leave this and speak of the great and splendid Courts which were in front of the [temple of] Huichilobos, where now stands [the church of] Señor Santiago, which was called Tlaltelolco, for so they were accustomed to call it.

I have already said that there were two walls of masonry [which had to be passed] before entering, and that the court was paved with white stones, like flagstones, carefully whitewashed and burnished and clean, and it was as large and as broad as the plaza of Salamanca. A little way



apart from the great Cue there was another small tower which was also an Idol house, or a true hell, for it had at the opening of one gate a most terrible mouth such as they depict, saying that such there are in hell. The mouth was open with great fangs to devour souls, and here too were some groups of devils and bodies of serpents close to the door, and a little way off was a place of sacrifice all blood-stained and black with smoke, and encrusted with blood, and there were many great ollas and cántaros and tinajas<sup>1</sup> of water inside the house, for it was here that they cooked the flesh of the unfortunate Indians who were sacrificed, which was eaten by the priests. There were also near the place of sacrifice many large knives and chopping blocks, such as those on which they cut up meat in the slaughter houses. Then behind that cursed house, some distance away from it, were some great piles of firewood, and not far from them a large tank of water which rises and falls, the water coming through a tube from the covered channel which enters the city from Chapultepec. I always called that house "the Infernal Regions."

Let us go on beyond the court to another Cue where the great Mexican princes were buried, where also there were many Idols, and all was full of blood and smoke, and it had other doorways with hellish figures, and then near that Cue was another full of skulls and large bones arranged in perfect order, which one could look at but could not count, for there were too many of them. The skulls were by themselves and the bones in separate piles. In that place there were other Idols, and in every house or Cue or oratory that I have mentioned there were priests with long robes of black cloth and long hoods like those of the Dominicans, and slightly resembling those of the Canons. The hair

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<sup>1</sup> Names of various large pottery vessels for holding water and cooking.

of these priests was very long and so matted that it could not be separated or disentangled, and most of them had their ears scarified, and their hair was clotted with blood. Let us go on ; there were other Cues, a little way from where the skulls were, which contained other Idols and places of sacrifice [decorated] with other evil paintings. And they said that those idols were intercessors in the marriages of men. I do not want to delay any longer telling about idols, but will only add that all round that great court there were many houses, not lofty, used and occupied by the priests and other Indians who had charge of the Idols. On one side of the great Cue there was another much larger pond or tank of very clear water dedicated solely to the service of Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca, and the water entered that pond through covered pipes which came from Chapultepec. Near to this were other large buildings such as a sort of nunnery where many of the daughters of the inhabitants of Mexico were sheltered like nuns up to the time they were married, and there stood two Idols with the figures of women, which were the intercessors in the marriages of women, and women made sacrifices to them and held festivals so that they should give them good husbands.

I have spent a long time talking about this great Cue of Tlaltelolco and its Courts, but I say that it was the greatest temple in the whole of Mexico although there were many others, very splendid. Four or five parishes or districts possessed, between them, an oratory with its Idols, and as they were very numerous I have not kept count of them all. I will go on and say that the great oratory that they had in Cholula was higher than that of Mexico, for it had one hundred and twenty steps, and according to what they say they held the Idol of Cholula to be good, and they went to it on pilgrimages from all parts of New Spain to obtain absolution, and for this reason they built for it such

a splendid Cue; but it is of another form from that of Mexico although the courts are the same, very large with a double wall. I may add that the Cue in the City of Texcoco was very lofty, having one hundred and seventeen steps, and the Courts were broad and fine, shaped in a different form from the others. It is a laughable matter that every province had its Idols and those of one province or city were of no use to the others, thus they had an infinite number of Idols and they made sacrifices to them all.

After our Captain and all of us were tired of walking about and seeing such a diversity of Idols and their sacrifices, we returned to our quarters, all the time accompanied by many Caciques and chieftains whom Montezuma sent with us. I will stop here and go on to say what more we did.

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### CHAPTER XCIII.

How we made our Church and altar in our quarters and placed a Cross outside the chamber, and what else happened, and how we found the hall and treasure chamber of Montezuma's father, and how we decided to seize Montezuma.

WHEN our Captain and the Friar of the Order of Mercy saw that Montezuma was not willing that we should set up a cross on the Temple of Huichilobos nor build a church there, and because, ever since we entered this city of Mexico, when Mass was said, we had to place an altar on tables and then to dismantle it again, it was decided that we should ask Montezuma's stewards for masons so that we could make a church in our quarters.

The stewards said that they would tell Montezuma of our wishes, and our Captain also sent to tell him so by Doña Marina and Aguilar and his page Orteguilla, who

already understood something of the language, and Montezuma gave his permission and ordered us to be supplied with all the material we needed. In two days we had our church finished and the holy cross set up in front of our apartments, and Mass was said there every day until the wine gave out. As Cortés and some of the other Captains and the Friar had been ill during the war in Tlaxcala, they made the wine that we had for Mass go too fast, but after it was all finished we [still] went to the church daily and prayed on our knees before the altar and images, for one reason, because we were obliged to do so as Christians and it was a good habit, and for another reason, in order that Montezuma and all his Captains should observe it, and should witness our adoration and see us on our knees before the Cross, especially when we intoned the Ave Maria, so that it might incline them towards it.

When we were all assembled in those chambers, as it was our habit to inquire into and want to know everything, while we were looking for the best and most convenient site to place the altar, two of our soldiers, one of whom was a carpenter, named Alonzo Yañes, noticed on one of the walls marks showing that there had been a door there, and that it had been closed up and carefully plastered over and burnished. Now as there was a rumour and we had heard the story that Montezuma kept the treasure of his father Axayaca in that building, it was suspected that it might be in this chamber which had been closed up and cemented only a few days before. Yañes spoke about it to Juan Velásquez de Leon and Francisco de Lugo, who were Captains and relations of mine, and Alonzo Yañes had attached himself to their company as a servant, and those Captains told the story to Cortés, and the door was secretly opened. When it was open Cortés and some of his Captains went in first, and they saw such a

number of jewels and slabs and plates of gold and chalchihuites and other great riches, that they were quite carried away and did not know what to say about such wealth. The news soon spread among all the other Captains and soldiers, and very secretly we went in to see it. When I saw it I marvelled, and as at that time I was a youth and had never seen such riches as those in my life before, I took it for certain that there could not be another such store of wealth in the whole world. It was decided by all our captains and soldiers, that we should not dream of touching a particle of it, but that the stones should immediately be put back in the doorway and it should be sealed up and cemented just as we found it, and that it should not be spoken about, lest it should reach Montezuma's ears, until times should alter.

Let us leave this about the riches, and say that as we had such valiant captains and soldiers of good counsel and judgment, (and first of all we all believed for certain that our Lord Jesus Christ held His Divine hand over all our affairs,) four of our captains took Cortés aside in the church, with a dozen soldiers in whom he trusted and confided, and I was one of them, and we asked him to look at the net and trap in which we found ourselves, and to consider the great strength of that city, and observe the causeways and bridges, and to think over the words of warning that we had been given in all the towns we had passed through, that Montezuma had been advised by his Huichilobos to allow us to enter into the city, and when we were there, to kill us. That he [Cortés] should remember that the hearts of the men are very changeable, especially those of Indians, and he should not repose trust in the good will and affection that Montezuma was showing us, for at some time or other, when the wish occurred to him, he would order us to be attacked, and by the stoppage of our supplies of food or of water, or by the raising of

any of the bridges, we should be rendered helpless. Then, considering the great multitude of Indian warriors that Montezuma had as his guard, what should we be able to do either in offence or defence? and as all the houses were built in the water, how could our friends the Tlaxcalans enter and come to our aid? He should think over all this that we had said, and if we wished to safeguard our lives, that we should at once, without further delay, seize Montezuma and should not wait until next day to do it. He should also remember that all the gold that Montezuma had given us and all that we had seen in the treasury of his father Axayaca, and all the food which we ate, all would be turned to arsenic poison in our bodies, for we could neither sleep by night nor day nor rest ourselves while these thoughts were in our minds, and that if any of our soldiers should give him other advice short of this, they would be senseless beasts who were dazed by the gold, incapable of looking death in the face.

When Cortés heard this he replied: "Don't you imagine, gentlemen, that I am asleep, or that I am free from the same anxiety, you must have felt that it is so with me; but what possibility is there of our doing a deed of such great daring as to seize such a great prince in his own palace, surrounded as he is by his own guards and warriors, by what scheme or artifice can we carry it out, so that he should not call on his warriors to attack us at once?" Our Captains replied, (that is Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás, Gonzalo de Sandoval and Pedro de Alvarado,) that with smooth speeches he should be got out of his halls and brought to our quarters, and should be told that he must remain a prisoner, and if he made a disturbance or cried out, that he would pay for it with his life; that if Cortés did not want to do this at once, he should give them permission to do it, as they were ready

for the work, for, between the two great dangers in which we found ourselves, it was better and more to the purpose to seize Montezuma than to wait until he attacked us ; for if he began the attack, what chance should we have? Some of us soldiers also told Cortés that it seemed to us that Montezuma's stewards, who were employed in providing us with food, were insolent and did not bring it courteously as during the first days. Also two of our Allies the Tlaxcalan Indians said secretly to Jerónimo de Aguilar, our interpreter, that the Mexicans had not appeared to be well disposed towards us during the last two days. So we stayed a good hour discussing the question whether or not we should take Montezuma prisoner, and how it was to be done, and to our Captain this last advice seemed opportune, that in any case we should take him prisoner, and we left it until the next day. All that night we were praying to God that our plan might tend to His Holy service.

The next morning after these consultations, there arrived, very secretly, two Tlaxcalan Indians with letters from Villa Rica and what they contained was the news that Juan de Escalante, who had remained there as Chief Alguacil, and six of our soldiers had been killed in a battle against the Mexicans, that his horse had also been slain, and many Totonacs who were in his company. Moreover, all the towns of the Sierra and Cempoala and its subject towns were in revolt, and refused to bring food or serve in the fort. They [the Spaniards] did not know what to do, for as formerly they had been taken to be Teules, that now after this disaster, both the Totonacs and Mexicans were like wild animals, and they could hold them to nothing, and did not know what steps to take.

When we heard this news, God knows what sorrow affected us all, for this was the first disaster we had suffered in New Spain. The interested reader may see

how evil fortune came rolling on us. No one who had seen us enter into that city with such a solemn and triumphant reception, and had seen us in possession of riches which Montezuma gave every day both to our Captain and to us, and had seen the house that I have described full of gold, and how the people took us for Teules, that is for Idols, and that we were conquerors in all our battles, would have thought that now such a great disaster could have befallen us, namely that they no longer attributed to us our former repute, but looked upon us as men liable to be conquered, and that we should have to feel their growing insolence towards us.

As the upshot of much argument it was agreed that, by one means or another, we should seize Montezuma that very day, or we would all die in the attempt.

So that my readers may see how Juan de Escalante fought this battle and was killed in it, he and six soldiers and a horse and the Totonac allies whom he took with him, I wish here to describe it before coming to the seizure of Montezuma, so as not to leave anything behind, for it is necessary that it should be clearly understood.

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#### CHAPTER XCIV.

How the Mexican Captains fought a battle against Juan de Escalante, and killed him and a horse and six soldiers and many of our Totonac allies.

IT was in this way ; you may remember my having said in the chapter that treats of the subject, that when we were camped at a town called Quiahuitztlan, that there came together many allied towns which were friendly with the people of Cempoala, and our Captain persuaded them to agree not to pay any more tribute to Montezuma, and there were more than thirty towns which rebelled against



him. It was then that we captured Montezuma's tax gatherers, as I have already related in the chapter that treats of that subject. When we left Cempoala to come to Mexico there remained in Villa Rica, as Captain and Chief Alguacil of New Spain, one Juan de Escalante, who was a man of high standing, and a friend of Cortés, who ordered him to render to these friendly towns all the assistance they might need.

It appears that the great Montezuma kept many garrisons and companies of warriors in all the frontier provinces, there was one at Soconusco to guard the frontier of Guatemala and Chiapas, another at Coatzacoalcos, and another on the frontier of Michoacan,<sup>1</sup> and another on the frontier of Panuco, between Tuxpan and the town which we called Almeria, on the north coast. And it appears that this garrison near to Tuxpan, demanded tribute of Indian men and women, and supplies of provisions for their people from certain towns in the neighbourhood, which towns were allied to Cempoala and did service to Juan de Escalante and to the settlers who were stationed at Villa Rica and were engaged in building the fort. When the Mexicans demanded tribute and service from these towns they replied that they would not give it, for Malinche had ordered them not to do so, and the great Montezuma had approved. Then the Mexican Captains replied that if they did not pay tribute that they would come and destroy their towns and carry them off captive, and that their Lord Montezuma had recently given them those orders.

When our Totonac allies heard those threats they came to Juan de Escalante and complained loudly that the Mexicans were coming to rob them and devastate their country. On hearing this, Escalante sent messengers to

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<sup>1</sup> Mechucan in the text.

the Mexicans telling them not to annoy or rob those towns, for their Lord Montezuma approved of our all being great friends, and that if they did so he would come against them and attack them. The Mexicans took no notice of that reply or of the threat, but said that we should find them in the field. Juan de Escalante who was a very competent man and prompt in his actions, summoned all our allies from the towns in the Sierra to come with their arms, that is bows, arrows, lances and shields, and he also called together the most active and healthy of his soldiers, (for I have already said that nearly all the settlers who had remained in Villa Rica were invalids and sailors,) and with two cannon and a little powder, three crossbows, two muskets, and forty soldiers and over two thousand Totonac Indians, he went in search of the Mexican garrison, who were already out robbing a town of our allies. They met in the fields at dawn of day, and as the Mexicans doubled in number our Totonac allies, and as the latter were always in terror of them on account of their former wars, at the first attack of the Mexicans with arrows, darts, stones and war cries, they took to their heels and left Juan de Escalante to fight the Mexicans alone, in such a manner that he and his poor soldiers barely reached a town called Almeria, which they set on fire and burned the houses. There he rested a little for he was badly wounded.

In those skirmishes and attacks, the Mexicans carried off alive a soldier named Argüello, a native of Leon, a man with a very large head and black curly beard, and he was very sturdy in appearance and a man of great strength. Juan de Escalante and six of his soldiers were very badly wounded and one horse was killed. They returned to Villa Rica and within three days Escalante and the six soldiers were dead.

It was in this way that what we call "the affair at Almeria"

happened, and not as the historian Gomara has written it, for he says in his history that Pedro de Ircio went to settle at Panuco with certain soldiers. I do not know how, owing to a misunderstanding, so eloquent an historian could make such a statement. All the soldiers that Cortés had with him in Mexico did not number four hundred, and most of them had been wounded in the battles at Tlaxcala and Tabasco and we had not sufficient men to keep a good watch, much less for sending to settle at Panuco. Moreover he says that Pedro de Ircio went as their captain, when he was not a captain and not even an officer at that time, and they did not employ him nor take any notice of him, and he remained with us in Mexico. The same historian also says many other things about the imprisonment of Montezuma. I do not understand his writing, and stare at it when he writes such things in his history, for there must be conquistadores alive who were there at the time, who when they read it will tell him, that this did not take place in such a manner. In this other matter he says what he likes, so let us leave him there and return to our story.

The Mexican Captains after the battle with Escalante that I have spoken about, sent the news of it to Montezuma, and even sent and presented to him the head of Argüello, who it seems died of his wounds on the road, for they had carried him off alive. We heard that when they showed the head, which was large and strong looking and had a large curly beard, to Montezuma, he was terrified and feared to look at it, and ordered that it should not be taken as an offering to any temple in Mexico, but to some other Idol in another town. Montezuma asked his Captains how it was that having such thousands of warriors with them, they had not conquered such a small number of Teules, and they replied that their darts and arrows and hard fighting availed them nothing, and they could not drive their enemy

to flight because a great *Tequeçiguata*<sup>1</sup> of Castile marched before them, and this Lady frightened the Mexicans and said words to encourage the Teules. Then Montezuma thought that great Lady must be Saint Mary who we had told him was our protector, and whose image, with her precious Son in her arms, we had given to him some time before. However, I did not see this myself, for I was in Mexico, but certain conquistadores who were present say so, and pray God that it was so, and certainly all the soldiers who were with Cortés believed it and so it is true, and the divine pity of Our Lady the Virgin Mary was ever with us, for which I give her many thanks. I will leave off here and go on to narrate what happened about the seizure of the Great Montezuma.

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## CHAPTER XCV.

Of the Seizure of Montezuma and what was done about it.

AS we had determined the day before to seize Montezuma, we were praying to God all that night that it would turn out in a manner redounding to His Holy service, and the next morning the way it should be done was settled.

Cortés took with him five captains who were Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Francisco de Lugo and Alonzo de Ávila, and he took me and our interpreters Doña Marina and Aguilar, and he told us all to keep on the alert, and the horsemen to have their horses saddled and bridled. As for our arms I need not call them to mind, for by day or night we always went armed and with our sandals on our

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<sup>1</sup> Tequeçihuata in the text.

feet, for at that time such was our footgear, and Montezuma had always seen us armed in that way when we went to speak to him. I mention this because although Cortés and those who went with him to seize Montezuma were all armed, Montezuma did not take it as anything new, nor was he disturbed at all.

When we were all ready, our Captain sent to tell Montezuma that we were coming to his Palace, for this had always been our custom, and so that he should not be alarmed by our arriving suddenly.

Montezuma understood more or less that Cortés was coming because he was annoyed about the Almeria affair, and he was afraid of him, but sent word for him to come and that he would be welcome.

When Cortés entered, after having made his usual salutations, he said to him through our interpreters "Señor Montezuma, I am very much astonished that you, who are such a valiant Prince, after having declared that you are our friend, should order your Captains, whom you have stationed on the coast near to Tuxpan, to take arms against my Spaniards, and that they should dare to rob the towns which are in the keeping and under the protection of our King and master and to demand of them Indian men and women for sacrifice, and should kill a Spaniard, one of my brothers, and a horse." (He did not wish to speak of the Captain nor of the six soldiers who died as soon as they arrived at Villa Rica, for Montezuma did not know about it, nor did the Indian Captains who had attacked them), and Cortés went on to say "being such a friend of yours I ordered my Captains to do all that was possible to help and serve you, and you have done exactly the contrary to us. Also in the affair at Cholula your Captains and a large force of warriors had received your own commands to kill us. I forgave it at the time out of my great regard

for you, and now again your vassals and Captains have become insolent, and hold secret consultations stating that you wish us to be killed. I do not wish to begin a war on this account nor to destroy this city, I am willing to forgive it all, if silently and without raising any disturbance you will come with us to our quarters, where you will be as well served and attended to as though you were in your own house, but if you cry out or make any disturbance you will immediately be killed by these my Captains, whom I brought solely for this purpose." When Montezuma heard this he was terrified and dumfounded, and replied that he had never ordered his people to take arms against us, and that he would at once send to summon his Captains so that the truth should be known, and he would chastise them, and at that very moment he took from his arm and wrist the sign and seal of Huichilobos, which was only done when he gave an important and weighty command which was to be carried out at once. With regard to being taken prisoner and leaving his Palace against his will, he said that he was not the person to whom such an order could be given, and that it was not his wish to go. Cortés replied to him with very good arguments and Montezuma answered him with even better, showing that he ought not to leave his house. In this way more than half an hour was spent over talk, and when Juan Velásquez de Leon and the other Captains saw that they were wasting time over it and could not longer await the moment when they should remove him from his house and hold him a prisoner, they spoke to Cortés somewhat angrily and said, "what is the good of your making so many words, let us either take him prisoner, or stab him, tell him once more that if he cries out or makes an uproar we will kill him, for it is better at once to save our lives or to lose them," and as Juan Velásquez said this

with a loud and rather terrifying voice, for such was his way of speaking, Montezuma, who saw that our Captains were angered, asked Doña Marina what they were saying in such loud tones. As Doña Marina was very clever, she said, "Señor Montezuma, what I counsel you, is to go at once to their quarters without any disturbance at all, for I know that they will pay you much honour as a great Prince such as you are, otherwise you will remain here a dead man, but in their quarters you will learn the truth." Then Montezuma said to Cortés "Señor Malinche, if this is what you desire, I have a son and two legitimate daughters, take them as hostages, and do not put this affront on me, what will my chieftains say if they see me taken off as a prisoner?" Cortés replied to him that he must come with them himself, and there was no alternative. At the end of much more discussion that took place, Montezuma said that he would go willingly, and then Cortés and our Captains bestowed many caresses on him and told him that they begged him not to be annoyed, and to tell his captains and the men of his guard that he was going of his own free will, because he had spoken to his Idol Huichilobos and the priests who attended him, and that it was beneficial for his health and the safety of his life that he should be with us. His rich litter, in which he was used to go out with all the Captains who accompanied him was promptly brought, and he went to our quarters where we placed guards and watchmen over him.

All the attentions and amusements which it was possible for him to have, both Cortés and all of us did our best to afford him, and he was not put under any personal restraint, and soon all the principal Mexican Chieftains, and his nephews came to talk with him, and to learn the reason of his seizure, and whether he wished them to attack us. Montezuma answered them, that he was

delighted to be here some days with us of his own free will and not by force, and that when he wished for anything he would tell them so, and that they must not excite themselves nor the City, nor were they to take it to heart, for what had happened about his being there was agreeable to his Huichilobos, and certain priests who knew had told him so, for they had spoken to the Idol about it. In this way which I have now related the capture of the Great Montezuma was effected.

There, where he remained, he had his service and his women and his baths in which he bathed himself, and twenty great chiefs always stayed in his company holding their ancient offices, as well as his councillors and captains, and he stayed there a prisoner without showing any anger at it, and Ambassadors from distant lands came there with their suites, and brought him his tribute, and he carried on his important business. I call to mind that when Great Caciques from distant lands came before him about boundaries or towns, or other business of that sort, however great a chief he might be, he took off his rich mantle and put on one of hennequen of little worth, and he had to come barefoot, and when he came to the apartments he did not pass straight in, but on one side, and when he came before the Great Montezuma he cast his eyes down to the ground, and before approaching him he made three bows and said "Lord, my Lord, my great Lord," and then he brought the suit or other difficulty about which he desired to consult him, drawn and painted on hennequen cloths, and with some very thin and delicate sticks he pointed out the origin of the suit. Two old men who were Great Caciques stood near Montezuma, and when they thoroughly understood the pleas, those judges told Montezuma the rights of the case, and with a few words he settled it, and gave judgment as to whom the lands or towns should belong. The litigants retired without making any reply



and without turning their backs and with three obeisances they retired to the hall, and as soon as they left the presence of Montezuma they put on their rich garments and took walks through Mexico.

I will not say anything more at present about this imprisonment, and will relate how the messengers whom Montezuma sent with his sign and seal to summon the Captains who had killed our soldiers, brought them before him as prisoners, and what he said to them I do not know, but he sent them on to Cortés, so that he might do justice to them, and their confession was taken when Montezuma was not present and they confessed that what I have already stated was true, that their Prince had ordered them to wage war and to extract tribute, and that if any Teules should appear in defence of the towns, they too should be attacked or killed. When Cortés heard this confession he sent to inform Montezuma how it implicated him in the affair, and Montezuma made all the excuses he could, and our captain sent him word that he believed it [the confession] himself, but that although he [Montezuma] deserved punishment in conformity with the ordinances of our King, to the effect that any person causing others, whether guilty or innocent, to be killed, shall die for it, yet he was so fond of him and wished him so well, that even if that crime lay at his door, he, Cortés, would pay the penalty with his own life sooner than allow Montezuma's to pass away. With all this that he [Cortés] sent to tell him, he [Montezuma] felt anxious, and without any further discussion Cortés sentenced those captains to death and to be burned in front of Montezuma's palace. This sentence was promptly carried out, and, so that there could be no obstruction while they were being burned, Cortés ordered shackles to be put on Montezuma himself, and when this was done Montezuma roared [with rage], and if before this he was scared, he was then much more

so. After the burning was over our Cortés with five of our captains went to Montezuma's apartment and Cortés himself took off the fetters, and he spoke such loving words to him that his anger soon passed off, for our Cortés told him that he not only regarded him as a brother, but much more, and that, as he was already Lord and King of so many towns and provinces, if it were possible he would make him Lord of many more countries as time went on, such as he had not been able to subdue, and which did not now obey him, and he told him that if he now wished to go to his Palace, that he would give him leave to go. Cortés told him this through our interpreters and while Cortés was saying it the tears apparently sprang to Montezuma's eyes. He answered with great courtesy, that he thanked him for it, (but he well knew that Cortés's speech was mere words,) and that now at present it was better for him to stay there a prisoner, for there was danger, as his chieftains were numerous, and his nephews and relations came every day to him to say that it would be a good thing to attack us and free him from prison, that as soon as they saw him outside they might drive him to it [to attack us]. He did not wish to see revolutions in his city, but if he did not comply with their wishes possibly they would want to set up another Prince in his place, and so he was putting those thoughts out of their heads by saying that Huichilobos had sent him word that he should remain a prisoner. (From what we understood, and there is no doubt about it, Cortés had told Aguilar to tell Montezuma secretly, that although Malinche wished to release him from his imprisonment, that the rest of our captains and soldiers would not agree to it.) When he heard this reply, Cortés threw his arms round him and embraced him and said, "It is not in vain Señor Montezuma that I care for you as I care for myself." Then Montezuma asked Cortés that a Spanish page named Orteguilla who already knew

something of his language might attend on him, and this was very advantageous both for Montezuma and for us, for through this page Montezuma asked and learned many things about Spain, and we learned what his captains said to him, and in truth this page was so serviceable that Montezuma got to like him very much.

Let us cease talking about how Montezuma became fairly contented with the great flattery and attention he received and the conversation that he had with us, and whenever we passed before him, even if it was Cortés himself, we doffed our mailed caps or helmets, for we always went armed, and he treated us all with politeness and distinction. Now I will give the names of those of Montezuma's captains who were punished by being burned, the principal one was Quetzalpopoca,<sup>1</sup> and the others were named, one of them Coate, and the other Quiavit, and I forget the name of the third, and it is not much use remembering their names. I may say that when the news of this punishment spread about throughout the provinces of New Spain, they were terrified, and the towns of the Coast, where they had killed our soldiers, returned again and rendered good service to the settlers who remained in Villa Rica. My interested readers who peruse these pages must have some respect for the great deeds we did in those days, first of all in destroying our ships, then in daring to enter so strong a city after receiving so many warnings that they would kill us when once they had us inside, then to have such great temerity as to seize Montezuma who was the King of the country in his own city and within his own palace, where he had such a numerous guard of warriors, then to dare to burn his captains in front of his palaces, and to place Montezuma himself in irons while the punishment was being carried out.

Now that I am old, I often pause to think over the heroic deeds we did in those days and I think I see them passing again before my eyes, and I say that our deeds were not done of ourselves, but were all guided by God, for what men have there been in the world who, numbering four hundred soldiers, (we did not even reach that number) would have dared to enter into such a strong city as Mexico, which is larger than Venice, and is distant from our own Castile more than fifteen hundred leagues, and take prisoner so great a Prince, and punish his Captains before his eyes! There is indeed much to ponder over but not in the dry-as-dust way in which I tell it.

I will go on and relate how Cortés at once despatched another captain to be stationed at Villa Rica in place of Juan de Escalante who was killed.

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## CHAPTER XCVI.

How our Cortés sent a gentleman named Alonzo de Grado as his lieutenant and captain to Villa Rica, in place of the Chief Alguacil Juan de Escalante, and how he gave the office of Chief Alguacil to Gonzalo de Sandoval, who from this time on was Alguacil Mayor, and what happened about it I will go on to tell.

AFTER justice had been done on Quetzalpopoca and his captains and the Great Montezuma had been tamed, our Captain decided to send to Villa Rica, as his lieutenant, a soldier named Alonzo de Grado, for he was a very prudent man of good address and presence, and a musician and a great writer.

This Alonzo de Grado was one of those who were always in opposition to our Cortés about going to Mexico, and wished us to go back to Villa Rica. And when at the time of the Tlaxcala affair there were certain meetings of

the discontented, as I have already stated in the Chapter which treats of the subject, it was always Alonzo de Grado who agitated. Had he been as good a man of war as he was a man of good manners, it would have been to his advantage. I say this because when Cortés gave him this appointment, as he was not a bold man, he was facetious in his remarks, and said to him, "Here, Señor Alonzo de Grado, you have your wish fulfilled for you are going now to Villa Rica as you have wished, and you will take charge of the fortress, and take care that you don't go out on any expeditions and get killed as Juan de Escalante did." And when he was saying this to him Cortés winked his eye, so that we soldiers who were standing round might see it, and we knew why he said this, for it was well known of Alonzo de Grado that he would not go on such an expedition even if he were ordered to do so with threats. When his orders and instructions as to what he was to do had been given him, Alonzo de Grado begged Cortés to do him the favour to give him the wand of Alguacil Mayor, as Juan de Escalante who had been killed by the Indians had held it. Cortés replied that he had already given it to Gonzalo de Sandoval, but that for him, in time to come there would not be wanting some other office even more honourable, and he bade him God speed, and charged him to look well after the settlers and to do them honour, and to see that he should cause no annoyance to our Indian Allies, and should take nothing from them by force and that he should at once send him two thick chains which he had ordered the two blacksmiths who remained in the town to make from the ironwork and anchors of the vessels that had been destroyed, and he told him to get on quickly with the fortress and finish putting in the woodwork and tiling the roof.

When Alonzo de Grado arrived at the town he gave himself great importance towards the settlers, and wished

to make them do him service as a great Lord, and to the allied towns which numbered more than thirty, he sent to demand jewels of gold and pretty Indian women and he paid no attention at all to the fortress. How he spent his time was in feeding well and in gambling, and what was worse than all this, he secretly called together his friends, and even some who were not his friends and suggested that if Diego Velásquez or any of his captains should come from Cuba to that country, that they should join him and give up the land to him. All this news was at once sent in haste by letter to Cortés in Mexico, and when he heard of it he was angry with himself for having sent Alonzo de Grado, knowing as he did his evil disposition and peevish temper, and as he always had it in his thoughts that Diego Velásquez, the Governor of Cuba, by some means or other, would get to know that we had sent our attorneys to His Majesty, we should in no case turn to him for assistance, for there was danger that he might send a fleet and some captains against us. So it seemed to Cortés advisable to send some man whom he could trust to the port and town, and he sent Gonzalo de Sandoval who had been Chief Alguacil since the death of Juan de Escalante, and he took in his company Pedro de Ircio, who according to the Historian Gomara had gone to form a settlement at Panuco. So Pedro de Ircio went to the town and Gonzalo de Sandoval took a great liking to him, for Pedro de Ircio had been a servant in the house of the Conde de Ureña and of Don Pedro Giron and he was always telling stories about what happened to them. As Gonzalo de Sandoval was always kindly and had no guile in him, and Pedro de Ircio told those stories to please him, he took such a liking to him, that he promoted him until he became a Captain, and if now at the present time Pedro de Ircio, instead of thanks, has spoken words that should have remained unsaid, for which Gonzalo de Sandoval would have re-

proved him severely, the Holy Office should punish him for it.

Let us stop talking about outsiders, and return to Gonzalo de Sandoval, who when he arrived at Villa Rica sent Alonzo de Grado as a prisoner to Mexico under a guard of Indians, for so Cortés had told him to do. All the settlers became much attached to Gonzalo de Sandoval, for to those who remained there as invalids, he provided all the comforts that were possible, and showed them much kindness, and to the allied towns he dealt out even justice and assisted them in every way that he was able, and he began to set up the woodwork in the fort and to roof it and do everything else that it falls to the duty of a good Captain to accomplish, and it was very fortunate for Cortés and all of us that he did so, as will be seen later on at the proper time and occasion.

Let us leave Sandoval at the Villa Rica and return to Alonzo de Grado who arrived a prisoner in Mexico, and wished to go and speak to Cortés, but he [Cortés] would not allow him to be brought before him but ordered him to be imprisoned in some wooden stocks which had just been newly made. (I remember that the wood of those stocks had a scent of onions or garlic), and he remained a prisoner for two days.

As Alonzo de Grado was very plausible and a man of many expedients, he made many promises to Cortés that he would be his humble servant and loyal to him in all things, and gave so many indications of his desire to serve him that at length he convinced him, and he gained his release. From that time on I noticed that he was always favoured by Cortés, not that he gave him any command in war, but such things as suited him, and as time went on he gave him the office of auditor, which Alonzo de Ávila had held, for at that time he sent Alonzo as procurator to the Island of Santo Domingo, as I shall

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tell later on, in its proper place. I must not forget to say that when Cortés sent Gonzalo de Sandoval to Villa Rica as his lieutenant, and Captain and Alguacil Mayor, he had ordered him, as soon as he arrived, to send two blacksmiths, with all their apparatus of bellows and tools and much iron from the ships which we had destroyed, and the two great iron chains which were already made, and he told him to send also sails and tackle, and pitch and tow and a mariner's compass, and everything else that was needed to build two sloops to sail on the lake of Mexico. These things Sandoval sent at once following in every particular the orders he had received.

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## CHAPTER XCVII.

How, when the great Montezuma was a prisoner, Cortés and all of us soldiers always entertained him and cheered him up, and even gave him permission to go hunting, and this was given in order to find out what his intentions were.

As our captain was careful in all things, and seeing that Montezuma was a prisoner, and fearing that he might become depressed at being shut in and confined, he endeavoured every day, after prayers (for we then had no wine for Mass) to go and pay court to him, and he went accompanied by four Captains, usually by Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás, and with much reverence they asked Montezuma how he was, and that he should issue his orders and they would all be carried out, so that he should not be weary of his confinement. He answered that on the contrary, being a prisoner rested him, and this was because our gods gave us power to confine him or his Huichilobos permitted it, and in one conversation after another they gave him to



understand more fully the things about our holy faith, and the great power of the Emperor our Lord.

Then sometimes Montezuma and Cortés would play at Totoloque, which is the name they give to a game played with some very smooth small pellets made of gold for this game, and they toss these pellets to some distance as well as some little slabs which were also made of gold, and in five strokes [tries] they gained or lost certain pieces of gold or rich jewels that they staked. I remember that Pedro de Alvarado was keeping the score for Cortés, and one of his nephews, a great cacique, was marking for Montezuma, and Pedro de Alvarado always marked one point more than Cortés gained, and when Montezuma saw it he said courteously and laughingly that he did not like Tonatio (for so they called Pedro de Alvarado) to keep the score for Cortés, because he made so much *yxoxol* in what he marked, which in their language means to say that he cheated, in that he always marked one point too many. Cortés and all of us soldiers who were on guard at the time, could not restrain our laughter at what the great Montezuma said. It may now be asked why we laughed at that expression, and it was because Pedro de Alvarado, although he was so handsome and well mannered, had a mania for excessive talking, and as we knew his temperament, we all laughed so much. To return to the game, if Cortés won, he gave the jewels to those nephews and favourites of Montezuma who attended on him, and if Montezuma won he divided them among us soldiers on guard, and in addition to what he gave us from the game, he never omitted giving us every day presents of gold and cloth, both to us and to the captain of the Guard who, at that time, was Juan Velásquez de Leon, who showed himself in every way to be the friend and servant of Montezuma.

I also remember that at one time there was on guard

a soldier named somebody de Trujillo, a very tall man, in good health and very strong, and he was a seaman, and when it was his turn for the night's watch, he was so inconsiderate that—speaking with all respect for the gentlemen who read this—he acted indecently, and Montezuma heard him, and as he was the valiant King of this country, he considered it a proof of bad manners and disrespect that such a thing should be done in a place where he could hear it regardless of his presence. And he asked his page, Orteguilla, who that ill-conditioned and dirty person was, and the page replied that he was a man who was accustomed to travel on the sea and who knew nothing of courtesy and good breeding, and he also gave him information about the quality of all of us soldiers who were there, which was a gentleman and which not, and in continuation told him many things that Montezuma wished to know. To return to the soldier, Trujillo ; as soon as it was day Montezuma sent to summon him, and asked him why he was so behaved that he had no consideration for his presence, and did not pay him that respect that was due to him, that he begged him never to do such a thing again, then he ordered him to be given a jewel of gold weighing five pesos. Trujillo paid no attention to what was said to him and the next night did the same again purposely, thinking that Montezuma might give him something else, but Montezuma had Juan Velásquez, Captain of the Guard, informed of it, and the Captain immediately removed Trujillo so that he should not again stand guard and they reprimanded him with rough words. It also happened that another soldier named Pedro López, a great crossbowman, a man in good health but who was not easily understood, was placed as sentinel over Montezuma, and on the question whether it was time to change the watch during the night, he had words with an officer and said, “Oh! curse this dog, I am sick to death of keeping

constant guard over him." Montezuma heard the expression, and weighed it in his mind, and when Cortés came to pay his court to him, he heard of it, and was so angry about it, that he had Pedro López, good soldier as he was, flogged in our quarters, and from that time on all the soldiers who came on guard, went through their watch in silence and good manners. However it was not necessary to give orders to many of us who stood guard over him about the civility that we ought to show to this great cacique; he knew each one of us and even knew our names and our characters and he was so kind that to all of us he gave jewels and to some mantles, and handsome Indian women. As I was a young man in those days, whenever I was on guard, or passed in front of him, I doffed my headpiece with the greatest respect, and the page Orteguilla had told him that I had been on two expeditions to discover New Spain before the time of Cortés, so I asked Orteguilla to beg Montezuma to do me the favour of giving me a very pretty Indian woman, and when Montezuma heard this he told them to call me, and he said to me: "Bernal Díaz del Castillo, they tell me that you have quantities of cloth and gold, and I will order them to give you to-day a pretty maid. Treat her very well for she is the daughter of a chieftain, and they will also give you gold and mantles," and I answered him with much reverence, that I kissed his hands for his great favour, and might God our Lord prosper him, and it seems that he asked the page what I had replied to him, and he told him; and Montezuma said to him, "Bernal Díaz seems to me to be a gentleman," for as I have said, he knew all our names, and he told them to give me three small slabs of gold and two loads of mantles.

Let us stop talking of this and tell how of a morning after saying his prayers and making sacrifices to his idols, he took his breakfast, which was a small matter, for he ate

no meat, only chili peppers,<sup>1</sup> then he was occupied for an hour in hearing suits from many parts brought by Caciques who came to him from distant lands. I have already stated in the chapter that tells about it, the manner in which they came in to do their business and the reverence that they showed to Montezuma, and that at such times he always had in his company twenty elderly men who were his judges to decide cases, and as this has been already noted I will not repeat it. It was then that we found out that from among the many women whom he had as his mistresses, he gave wives to his Captains and to very favourite chieftains, and he even gave some of them to our soldiers, and the one he gave to me was a lady from among them, and her bearing clearly showed it, and she was called Doña Francisca. So Montezuma passed his life, sometimes laughing and sometimes thinking about his imprisonment.

I wish to state here, although it has nothing to do with our story, as some inquisitive persons have asked me just why the soldier mentioned by me, who called Montezuma a dog, and even that not in his presence, was flogged by order of Cortés, (there being so few of us soldiers), so that the Indians should hear about it. I say so [again], that at that time all of us and even Cortés himself, when we appeared before the great Montezuma, paid respect to him by always doffing our headpieces and besides being King of New Spain, his person and his rank entitled him to it, and he was so kind and well mannered that he did honour to us all. In addition to all this, one may well remember that our lives were at stake, and at a word to his vassals, they would have removed him from his prison and made war on us. Observing his bearing and royal generosity, and seeing that he always had with him

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<sup>1</sup> Ají.

many chieftains in his company, and the many other chieftains who came from distant lands, who paid great court to him, and the great number of persons to whom he daily gave food and drink, neither more nor less than when he was not in confinement, taking all this into consideration, Cortés was [naturally] very angry when he heard that such a word had been used about him ; and being irritated at it, he at once ordered the punishment as I have said, and it was well deserved.

Let us go on and tell how at that moment there arrived from Villa Rica Indians carrying the thick chains which Cortés had ordered the blacksmiths to make, and they also brought all the things necessary for the sloops that I have spoken about, and when they had all arrived, Montezuma was told of it, and I will leave off here and go on to relate what happened about it.

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## CHAPTER XCVIII.

How Cortés ordered two sloops to be built, of considerable burden and fast sailers, for use on the lake, and how the great Montezuma asked Cortés to give him permission to go and pray at his temples, and what Cortés answered, and how he gave him permission.

AS all the materials for building the two sloops had arrived, Cortés at once went to tell the great Montezuma that he wished to build two small ships so as to take pleasure trips on the lake and asked him to send his carpenters to cut the wood, together with our experts in boat-building, who were named Martin López and Andrés Nuñez. As the oak timber was distant about four leagues, it was soon brought and shaped, and as there were many Indian carpenters, the boats were soon built and caulked and tarred, and their rigging was set up and their sails cut to the right size and measurement, and an awning provided

for each one, and they turned out to be as good and fast as though they had taken a month to set up the models, for Martin López was a past master of the art, and it was he who afterwards built the thirteen sloops to aid in capturing Mexico, as I shall relate further on ; he was also a good soldier in war time.

Let us leave this and say that Montezuma told Cortés that he wished to go to his temples and make sacrifices, and pay the devotion to his gods that it was his duty to do, so that his Captains and chieftains might observe it, especially certain nephews of his, who came every day to tell him that they wished to free him and to attack us, and he answered them, that it pleased him to be with us, so they should think it was as he had told them, that his God Huichilobos had commanded him to stay with us, as he had made them believe before. Cortés replied that as to this permission he asked for, he should beware not to do anything for which he might lose his life, and so as to prevent any disorders, or commands to his Captains or priests either to release him, or attack us, he would send Captains and soldiers [with him] who would immediately stab him to death, should any change be noticed in his bearing. He might go and welcome, but must not sacrifice any human beings, for that was a great offence against the true God, that was to the God we were preaching to him about, and there stood our altars and the image of Our Lady, before whom he could pray. Montezuma said that he would not sacrifice a single human being, and he set off in his rich litter in great state with many great Caciques in his company as was his custom, and they carried his insignia in front of him in the form of a sort of staff or rod, which was the sign that his royal person was going that way (just as they do [now] to the Viceroy of New Spain). There went with him as a guard four of our Captains, namely, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Pedro de

Alvarado, Alonzo de Ávila and Francisco de Lugo and one hundred and fifty soldiers, and the Padre de la Merced also went with us to stop the sacrifice if he should offer human beings. So we went to the Cue of Huichilobos and when we came near to that cursed temple, he [Montezuma] ordered them to take him from his litter and he was carried on the shoulders of his nephews and of other Caciques until he arrived at the temple ; as I have already stated, as he went through the streets all the chieftains cast down their eyes and never looked at his face. When we arrived at the foot of the steps leading to the oratory there were many priests waiting to help him with their arms in the ascent.

There had already been sacrificed the night before four Indians, and in spite of what our Captain said and the dissuasions of the Padre de la Merced, he paid no heed but persisted in killing men and boys to accomplish his sacrifice, and we could do nothing at that time only pretend not to notice it, for Mexico and the other great cities were very ready to rebel under the nephews of Montezuma, as I shall explain further on. When he [Montezuma] had completed his sacrifices, and he did not tarry much in making them, we returned with him to our quarters, and he was very cheerful, and gave presents of golden jewels to us soldiers who had accompanied him.

Let us leave this here, and I will relate what next happened.

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## CHAPTER XCIX.

How we launched the two sloops, and how the Great Montezuma said that he wished to go hunting, and went in the sloops to a rocky Island<sup>1</sup> where there were many deer and much other game, for no one went hunting there under pain of very severe punishment.

WHEN the two sloops were finished building and had been launched, and the masts and rigging had been set up and adorned with the Royal and Imperial banners, and the sailors had been got ready to navigate them, they went out in them both rowing and sailing, and they sailed very well. When Montezuma heard of it, he said to Cortés that he wished to go hunting on a rocky Island standing in the lake which was preserved so that no one dared to hunt there, however great a chief he might be, under pain of death. Cortés replied that he was very welcome to go, but he must remember what he had told him on the former occasion when he went to visit his Idols, that to raise any disturbances was more than his life was worth ; [moreover] he could go in the sloops, as it was better sailing in them than in the canoes and pirogues however large they might be. Montezuma said that he would be delighted to sail in the sloop that was the swiftest, and he took with him many lords and chieftains, and advised his huntsmen to follow in canoes and pirogues. A son of Montezuma and many Caciques went in the other sloop. Then Cortés ordered Velásquez de Leon who was captain of the Guard and Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid, Alonzo de Ávila with two hundred soldiers, to accompany Montezuma, and to remember the great responsibility he was placing on them in looking after him, and as all those Captains whom I have named were very alert, they took on board all the soldiers I have spoken about, and four

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<sup>1</sup> The *Peñon de Tepepolco* or *del Marques*.



bronze cannon and all the powder that we possessed, and our gunners, named Mesa and Arvenga, and they put up a highly decorated awning as a protection from the weather, and Montezuma and his chieftains went under it. As at that time there was a strong breeze blowing, and the sailors were delighted to please and content Montezuma, they worked the sails so well that they went flying along, and the canoes which held his huntsmen and chieftains were left far behind in spite of the large number of rowers they carried. Montezuma was charmed, and said that it was a great art this of combining sails and oars together. So he arrived at the Peñol, which was not very far off, and he [Montezuma] killed all the game he wanted, deer and hares and rabbits, and returned very contented to the city. When we arrived near Mexico, Pedro de Alvarado and Juan Velásquez de Leon and the other Captains ordered the cannon to be discharged, and this delighted Montezuma, and as we saw him so frank and kind, we treated him with the respect in which the Kings of these countries are held, and he behaved in the same manner to us. If I were to relate the traits and qualities that he showed as a great Prince, and the reverence and service that all the Lords of New Spain paid to him, I should never come to an end. There was not a thing that he ordered to be brought that was not immediately there, even if it were flying. I say this because one day three of our Captains and some of us soldiers were in Montezuma's presence, when by chance a hawk swooped down through the halls which were like corridors, after a quail, for near the houses and palaces where Montezuma was confined, there were some tame pigeons and quails kept for breeding purposes by the Indian steward (whose duty it was to keep the rooms swept) so as to give himself importance.

When our Captains saw the hawk swoop and carry off

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its quarry, one of them, named Francisco de Sauzedo, the elegant, who had been house steward to the Admiral of Castile, called out, "Oh! what a beautiful hawk! and how well he struck and how well he flew," and most of the soldiers answered that it was capital and that there were hereabouts many good birds for hawking, and Montezuma was watching what we said, and he asked his page Orteguilla about our conversation, and he replied that those Captains were saying that the hawk which came in hunting was a very good one, and that if we had some like it we would show him how it would come to hand, and that in the open, when it was flown at any bird, although it might be rather a large one, it would kill it. Then Montezuma said: "Then I will send now to have that same hawk caught, and we will see if you can tame it and hunt with it." All of us who were present doffed our head-pieces and thanked him for his kindness, and he at once sent to summon his fowlers, and told them to bring him that same hawk, and they were so skilful in its capture, that by the time of Ave Maria they brought that very hawk and gave it to Francisco de Sauzedo, and he showed it the lure, but as other things soon happened to us more important than the chase, I will stop talking about it now, but I have told the story because he was such a great Prince, that not only did he take tribute from nearly all parts of New Spain, and lord it over so many lands, and make himself fully obeyed, but even when he was a prisoner his vassals trembled before him, and they even captured for him the birds that fly in the air. Let us waive this and say how by degrees adverse fortune turned its wheel.

At that time it had been agreed between the nephews and relations of the great Montezuma and other Caciques and throughout all the country that we should be attacked

and Montezuma released, and that some of them should proclaim themselves as Kings of Mexico, as I will go on to relate.

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## CHAPTER C.

How the nephews of the great Montezuma went about assembling the other Lords and persuading them to come to Mexico and free the great Montezuma from his imprisonment and drive us out of the City and kill us.

AS Cacamatzin, lord of the City of Texcoco, which after Mexico is the largest and most important city that there is in New Spain, knew that his uncle, Montezuma, had been imprisoned for many days, and that we were taking the upper hand in every way that was possible, and also got to know that we had opened the chamber where the great treasure of his grandfather Axayaca was kept, but had not taken anything from it, he determined, before we could take possession of the treasure, to call together all the Lords of Texcoco, who were his vassals, and the lord of Coyoacan, who was his cousin and Montezuma's nephew, and the lord of Tacuba, and the lord of Iztapalapa, and another great Cacique who was lord of Matalcingo, who was very nearly related to Montezuma and of whom it was even said that he was the rightful heir to the kingdom and lordship of Mexico, and who was a chieftain known among the Indians for his personal bravery. While he [Cacamatzin] continued to negotiate with these and other Mexican chieftains that on a given day they should come with all their forces and attack us, it seems that the Cacique whom I have said was known for his personal bravery (whose name I do not know), said that if he [Cacamatzin] would assure to him the Kingship of Mexico, to which he was the rightful heir, that he and all his relations, and the people of the province called Matalcingo,

would be the first to take up arms and turn us out of Mexico, or not leave any one of us alive. It appears that Cacamatzin replied that the Chieftainship of Mexico belonged to him and that he himself must be King, for he was the nephew of Montezuma; and that if he [the Lord of Matalçingo] did not wish to come, that they would make war on us without his help or that of his people, for it seems that Cacamatzin had got ready all the Lords and towns already named by me, and had already arranged the day on which they were to fall on Mexico, and that the chieftains of his faction who were then in the city would facilitate their entry.

While these negotiations were going on, Montezuma knew all about them from his powerful relation [the lord of Matalçingo] who would not come to an agreement with Cacamatzin, and to be more sure of it, Montezuma sent to summon all the Caciques and chieftains of that City [Texcoco], and they told him how Cacamatzin was going about persuading them all with words and gifts to join him in an attack on us, and to free his uncle. As Montezuma was prudent and did not wish to see his city rise up in arms or riots, he told Cortés what was happening. Our Captain and all of us soldiers knew a good deal about this disturbance, but not so fully as Montezuma now detailed it. The advice that Cortés now gave him was that he should give us his Mexican followers and we would fall on Texcoco and capture or destroy that city and its neighbourhood. As that advice did not suit Montezuma, Cortés sent to tell Cacamatzin that he should cease his preparations for war, which would be the means of his destruction, for he wished to have him as a friend, and that all that he could do for him personally he would do, and many other compliments. Now Cacamatzin was a young man who found many others, who shared his opinions, ready to support him in the war, so he sent to tell Cortés,

that he understood his flatteries and did not want to hear any more of them, but that when he saw him coming then he would say to him whatever he liked. Cortés again sent to tell him that he should beware not to do an ill turn to our King and Lord, for he would pay for it with his person, and lose his life for it. He replied that he knew no King and wished he had never known Cortés, who, for all his fair words, had imprisoned his uncle.

When he [Cacamatzin] sent this answer, our Captain implored Montezuma, as he was such a great Prince, and had among his Captains in Texcoco both great Caciques and kinsmen who were not friendly with Cacamatzin, who was very haughty and much disliked, and as Montezuma had with him there in Mexico a brother of this same Cacamatzin, a youth of a good disposition, who had fled from his own brother to escape being killed by him, (for after Cacamatzin he was the heir to the kingdom of Texcoco,) [our captain implored Montezuma] to concert measures with his people in Texcoco to seize Cacamatzin, or to send secretly to summon him to come [to Mexico,] and if he did come, to lay hands on him and keep him in his power until he had quieted down. Moreover as this (other) nephew was in his house and was subject to him, he should presently promote him to be the Lord and should take the chieftainship from Cacamatzin, who was doing him an injury and going about stirring up all the cities and Caciques of the land to make him Lord over his [Montezuma's] city and kingdom.

Montezuma said that he would at once send to summon him, but he did not think he would come, and that if he did not come he would make arrangements with his Captains and relations to seize him.

Cortés thanked him heartily for this, and even said: "Señor Montezuma, you may indeed believe me that if you wish to go to your Palace, you are free to do so,

for since I understand that you are well disposed towards me, I am so devoted to you, that were I not in such a [difficult] position, I would not even insist upon accompanying you when you proceed to your palace with all your nobility. If I have failed to carry out such a plan, it is on account of my Captains who went to seize you, for they are not willing that I should set you free, and also because you say that you prefer to stay in confinement so as to avoid the disturbances through which your nephews would attempt to obtain power over this City of yours, and deprive you of your rule."

Montezuma answered that he thanked him, and as he began to understand Cortés' flattering speeches and saw that he made them, not with any intention of setting him free, but only to test his good will, and also because his page Orteguilla had told him that it was our captains who had advised Cortés to take him prisoner, and he must not believe that Cortés would set him free without their consent, Montezuma added that it was as well for him to remain a prisoner until he could see whither the treachery of his nephews would lead. Moreover he would immediately send messengers to Cacamatzin, begging him to appear before him, as he wished to speak to him about friendship between him and us, and would send to tell him, that as for his imprisonment he need not trouble himself about it, that had he desired to free himself many opportunities for doing so had offered, and that Malinche had twice told him to return to his palace, but he did not wish to do so, but to fulfil the commands of his Gods that he should remain a prisoner. Indeed if he did not so remain, he would soon be a dead man, and the priests who ministered to the Idols had known this for many days, and for this reason it would be advisable to be on good terms with Malinche and his brothers. Montezuma sent the same message to the Captains of Texcoco, telling

them that he was sending to summon his nephew to make friends, adding that they should beware how that youth turned their brains so that they would take up arms against us.

Let us leave this talk, which Cacamatzin thoroughly understood, for he took counsel with his chiefs as to what should be done. Cacamatzin then began to bluster and say that he would kill us all within four days, and that his uncle was a chicken not to attack us when he advised him to do so, when we were coming down the mountain towards Chalco, where he had the troops all posted and everything ready, that [instead of doing so] he personally received us in his city as though he knew that we had come to confer some benefit on him, and had given us all the gold that had been brought to him as tribute. Moreover we had broken into and opened the house where the treasure of his grandfather Axayaca was stored, and added to all this we had taken Montezuma prisoner, and were already telling him that he must get rid of the Idols of the great Huichilobos, as we wished to set up our own in their places. So that things should not come to a worse pass, and so as to punish such deeds and affronts, he [Cacamatzin] prayed his chieftains to give him their help, for all that he had told them they had seen with their own eyes, even how we had burnt Montezuma's own Captains, and nothing more could be endured, and they ought all to unite as one man and make war on us.

Cacamatzin promised them there and then, that if the Lordship of Mexico should fall to him, he would make them great chieftains, and he also gave them many golden jewels, and told them that he had already made arrangements with his cousins, the lords of Coyoacan and Iztapalapa and Tacuba and other relations, to help him, and there were other chieftains in Mexico itself who would assist him and let him into the city at whatever hour he might

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choose. He said that some of them might go along the causeway and all the rest could go across the lake in their pirogues and small canoes, and they would enter the city without meeting opponents to defend it, for his uncle was a prisoner, and they need have no fear of us, for they knew that only a few days ago, in the affair of Almeria, his uncle's Captains had killed many Teules and a horse, and they had seen the head of the Teul and the body of the horse; that they could kill us all in an hour and could have feasts and stuff themselves with our bodies.

When this speech was finished, they say that the Captains looked at one another, waiting for those who usually spoke first in councils of war, and that four or five of these Captains replied to him, how was it possible for them to go without the permission of their great prince Montezuma, and wage war in his very house and city? that they should first send to let him know about it, and if he consented, they would accompany Cacamatzin with the greatest good will; but otherwise they did not wish to turn traitors. It seems that Cacamatzin was angered with the Captains and ordered three of those who gave that reply to be imprisoned. As there were present at that meeting and council others, who were his relations, who were longing for a riot, they said that they would aid him to the death. So he decided to send to his uncle the great Montezuma to say that he ought to be ashamed of sending him word to come and make friends with those who had done him such harm and dishonour in holding him a prisoner, that such a thing was only possible because we were wizards and had stolen away all his great strength and bravery with our witchcraft, and that our gods and this great lady from Castile, whom we said was our Counsellor, had given us the great power to do what we had done. And in this which he said last he was not in error, for it was certainly the great mercy of God and his



blessed Mother that helped us. To return to our story, the gist of his message was, that he would come in spite of us and of his uncle to speak to us and to kill us.

When the great Montezuma heard that insolent reply, he was greatly angered, and at once sent to summon six of his most trusted captains. And he gave them his seal, and he also gave them some golden jewels, and ordered them to go to Texcoco, and secretly to show that seal to certain Captains and relations of his, who were on bad terms with Cacamatzin on account of his haughtiness, and so to manage that they should make prisoners of Cacamatzin and those who were in his confidence, and bring them before him at once. When those Captains had departed, and it was understood in Texcoco what it was that Montezuma had ordered, as Cacamatzin was greatly disliked, he was taken prisoner in his own palace while he was discussing the subject of the war with his confederates, and they brought five of them as prisoners in his company.

As that city stands close to the lake, they got ready a great pirogue with awnings, and they placed Cacamatzin and the other prisoners in it and with a great crew of rowers they brought them to Mexico. When they had disembarked, they placed Cacamatzin in a richly adorned litter fit for a king such as he was, and with the greatest show of respect they brought him before Montezuma.

It seems that in his interview with Montezuma, he was even more insolent than he had been before, and Montezuma knew of the plots he had made to raise himself to the lordship of Mexico, about which he learnt further complete details from the other prisoners who had been brought to him. If Montezuma was angry with his nephew before, he was now doubly so, and he promptly sent him to our Captain to be held as a prisoner, and the other prisoners he ordered to be set free.

Cortés went at once to the palace to Montezuma's

chamber to thank him for so great a favour and the order was given that the youth<sup>1</sup> who was in Montezuma's company, who was also his nephew and the brother of Cacamatzin, should be raised to the Kingship of Texcoco.

I have already said that he had come here to seek the protection of his uncle when his brother wished to kill him, and that he was the next heir to the kingdom of Texcoco. So as to make the appointment with all solemnity and with the consent of all the city, Montezuma summoned before him the principal chieftains of the whole province and after fully discussing the matter, they elected him as King and Lord of that great city, and he was named Don Carlos.

After all this was over, when the Caciques and Kinglets, nephews of the great Montezuma, namely the Lord of Coyoacan, and the Lord of Iztapalapa, and he of Tacuba saw and heard of the imprisonment of Cacamatzin, and learnt that the great Montezuma knew that they had joined in the conspiracy to deprive him of his kingdom and give it to Cacamatzin, they were frightened and did not come to pay their court to Montezuma as they were used to do. So with the consent of Cortés, who clamoured and persuaded him to order them to be seized, within eight days they were all in prison and attached to the great chain, and our Captain and all of us felt not a little relieved.

The reader who is interested may see what lives we were leading, for every day they were planning to kill us and eat our flesh, if the great mercy of God which always followed us had not come to our rescue, and but for that good Montezuma who always gave a favourable turn to our affairs. Just think what a great Prince he was who, although imprisoned, was so faithfully obeyed, that all was once more made peaceful, and those chieftains were prisoners.

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<sup>1</sup> Cuicuitzcatzin.

Our Cortés and the other Captains and the Friar of the Order of Mercy were always paying court to him, and giving him pleasure in every way that was possible, and they joked with him, not in any way disrespectfully, and I may add that neither Cortés nor any of our Captains ever seated themselves until Montezuma sent for his rich chairs and told them to sit down, and in such things he was so considerate that we all had a great affection for him, for he was truly a great Prince in everything that we saw him do.

To go back to our story; sometimes they explained to him the matters touching our holy faith, especially the Friar, through the page Orteguilla, and apparently some of the good words entered his heart, for he listened to them with more attention than before. They also made him understand about the great power of our Lord the Emperor, and how many great princes from distant lands became his vassals and obeyed his commands, and they told him many other things that he was interested to hear. At other times, as I have said before, Cortés played Totoloque with him. And in such ways we were always paying him court, and he, as he was in no way niggardly, gave us every day jewels of gold and mantles.

I will now stop talking of this, and will go on with my story.

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## CHAPTER CI.

How the great Montezuma and many Caciques and chieftains of the territory gave their fealty to His Majesty, and what else happened about it.

WHEN Captain Cortés saw that those kinglets named by me were prisoners, and that all the cities were at peace, he said to Montezuma that, before we had entered Mexico, he [Montezuma] had twice sent to say that he wished to pay

tribute to His Majesty, and that as he now understood about the great power of our Lord and King, to whom many lands pay tribute and taxes and many great kings are subject, it would be well for him and all his vassals to give him their fealty, for such is the custom, first to give fealty and then to give tribute and taxes. Montezuma replied that he would gather his vassals together, and talk to them about it. And within ten days nearly all the Caciques of that territory assembled together, but that Cacique who was most nearly related to Montezuma did not come. I have already said that he was reported to be very valiant, and in his bearing and body and limbs and in his face he clearly showed it. He was somewhat blustering, and at that time he was staying at one of his towns named Tula.

It was rumoured that the kingdom of Mexico would come to this Cacique on the death of Montezuma, and when they sent to summon him he replied that he did not wish to come, nor to pay taxes, for he was not able to keep himself with the income from his provinces. Montezuma was very angry at this reply, and at once sent some Captains to take him prisoner, but as he was a great Lord, and had many relations, he was warned of this and withdrew to his province where they were not then able to catch him.

I must leave him now and state how, in the discussion that Montezuma held with the Caciques of all the territory whom he had called together, after he had made a speech without Cortés or any of us, excepting Orteguilla the page, being present, it was reported that he had told them to consider how for many years past they had known for certain, through the traditions of their ancestors which they had noted down in their books of records, that men would come from the direction of the sunrise to rule these lands, and that then the lordship and kingdom of the

Mexicans would come to an end. Now he believed, from what his Gods had told him, that we were these men, and the priests had consulted Huichilobos about it and offered up sacrifices, but their Gods would no longer answer them as they had been accustomed to do.

All that Huichilobos would give them to understand was, that what he had told them before he now again gave as his reply, and they were not to ask him again, so that they took it to mean that they should give their fealty to the King of Spain whose vassals these Teules say that they are :—

“ As for the present it does not imply anything, and as in time to come we shall see whether we receive another and better reply from our Gods, so we will act according to the time. For the present, what I order and beg you all to do with good will is to give and contribute some sign of vassalage, and I will soon tell you what is most suitable, and as just now I am importuned about it by Malinche, I beg that no one will refuse it. During the eighteen years that I have been your Prince, you have always been very loyal to me, and I have enriched you and have broadened your lands, and have given you power and wealth, and if at this present time our Gods permit me to be held captive here, it would not have happened, unless, as I have told you many times, my great Huichilobos had commanded it.”

When they heard these arguments, all of them gave as an answer that they would do as he had ordered them, and they said it with many tears and sighs, and Montezuma more tearful than any of them. Then he sent a chieftain to say that on the following day they would give their fealty and vassalage to His Majesty. This was on the <sup>1</sup> day of the <sup>1</sup> month, in the year 1519.

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<sup>1</sup> Blank spaces left in the original,

Montezuma returned after this to talk about the matter with his Caciques, and in the presence of Cortés and our Captains and many of our soldiers, and of Pedro Hernández, Cortés's secretary, they gave their fealty to His Majesty, and they showed much emotion in doing so, and Montezuma could not keep back his tears. He was so dear to us and we were so much affected at seeing him weep, that our own eyes were softened and one soldier wept as much as Montezuma, such was the affection we had for him. I will leave off here, and say that Cortés and the Fraile de la Merced, who was very wise, were constantly in Montezuma's palace, trying to amuse him and to persuade him to give up his Idols.

Now I will go on.

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#### NOTE ON CHAPTERS CII. AND CIII.

The description given by Bernal Díaz in Chapters CII. and CIII. of the expeditions sent in search of mines differs considerably from that given by Cortés in his second letter to the Emperor.

Cortés says that there were several expeditions. Bernal Díaz mentions only two—one under Gonzalo de Umbria, the other under Pizarro, neither of whom Cortés mentions by name.

Bernal Díaz quotes Montezuma as saying that gold was brought from a province named Zacatula, which is on the south coast ten or twelve days' journey from the city, and that the gold was collected in gourds in which the earth was washed, and Bernal Díaz himself gives Zacatula as the name of the town visited by Gonzalo de Umbria. The only Zacatula shown on the maps is situated on the Rio de las Balsas in the State of Guerrero. Placer gold-mining is still carried on in this neighbourhood, and Montezuma may have mentioned the place as a source of gold supply. However, there is no proof that Gonzalo de Umbria visited the Rio de las Balsas, for Cortés says nothing about an expedition in that direction, and mentions only expeditions to Cuzula (Sosola?), Tamazulapa, Malinaltepec, Tenis (Tanetze), and Tuxtepec, all places in the north-western part of the present State of Oaxaca, and he confirms this later on in the same



## Tertia Ferdinãdi Cortesii

tesii Sac. Caesar. et Cath. Maiesta.

IN NOVA MARIS OCEANI HYSANIA GENERALIS præfecti præclara Narratio, In qua Celebris Ciuitatis Temixtitan expugnatio, aliarumque Prouintiarum, quæ defecerant recuperatio continetur, In quarum expugnatione, recuperationeque Præfectus, una cum Hispanis Victorias æterna memoria dignas consequutus est, præterea In ea Mare del Sur Cortesium detexisse recitet, quod nos Australe Indicum Pelagus putamus, & alias innumeras Prouintias Aurifodinis, Unionibus, Variisque Gemmarum generibus refertas, Et postremo illis innotuisse in eis quoque Aromata contineri, Per Doctorem Petrum Sanorgnanum Foroiulensem Reuen. in Christophori dñi Io. de Reuelles Episcopi Viënsis Secretarium Ex Hispano ydiomate In Latinum Versa,

CHARLES V.

(From *Praeclara Ferdinãdi Cortesii Noua Maris Oceani Hyspania Narratio*. MDXXIII.)





letter when he mentions Coastoaca (Coixtlahuaca) and Tamazula (either Tamazola or Tamazulapa), which are in the same neighbourhood, as places visited during these expeditions.

The only slight corroboration of an expedition to Zacatula is the casual mention by Bernal Díaz of Matalzingo, which is near Toluca, and would be on the way to Zacatula, but the frequent repetition of the same names in different localities prevents much reliance being placed on it.

No definite information is given as to the routes by which the expeditions travelled.

The expedition under Pizarro probably travelled by way of Tehuacan or Orizaba to Manantepéc on the upper waters of the Papaloapan River, where they would be within a short distance both of Tuxtepec and the land of the Chinantecs, and although Cortés is not very clear on the matter, there is no reason to suppose that all three places were not visited by members of the same expedition.

With regard to the expedition under Diego de Ordás in search of a good harbour, Cortés gives the additional information that the party went first to Vera Cruz and then marched all along the coast to Coatzacoalcos, examining in canoes the bays and the mouths of the rivers that were crossed.

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## CHAPTER CII.

How our Cortés endeavoured to find out about the Gold Mines, what was their value, and in what rivers they were found, and what harbours there were for ships between Panuco and Tabasco, especially about the great river at Coatzacoalcos, and what happened about it.

WHEN Cortés and the other Captains were with Montezuma paying him court, among other things that he said through our interpreters Doña Marina and Jerónimo de Aguilar and Orteguilla, he asked Montezuma where the mines were, and in which rivers, and how and by what means they collected the gold which they brought him in grains, for he wished to send two of our soldiers who were expert miners to see it. Montezuma replied that there were three

places, but they usually brought most of the gold from a province named Zacatula, which is on the south coast ten or twelve days' journey from that city (Mexico). The gold was collected in *xicales*<sup>1</sup> by washing away the earth, so that after the earth was washed away some grains of gold remained. At the present time they also brought it to him from another province called Tustepec near where we disembarked on the north coast where it was gathered from two rivers. Near that province there were other good mines in a land that was not subject to him, named the land of the Chinantecs and Zapotecs, who did not obey his rule. If Cortés wished to send his soldiers he would give them Chieftains to go with them. Cortés thanked him for it, and at once despatched a pilot named Gonzalo de Umbria, with two other soldiers who were miners to the mines of Zacatula. This Gonzalo de Umbria was the man whose feet Cortés had ordered to be cut off when he hanged Pedro Escudero and Juan Cermeño<sup>2</sup> and flogged the Peñates for their attempt to carry off a ship at San Juan de Ulua, as I have written down more at length in the chapter which deals with the incident.

Let us stop talking about the past and say how they set out with Umbria, a limit of forty days being allowed them in which to go and return.

To examine the mines on the north coast Cortés sent a captain named Pizarro, a young man about twenty years old, whom he treated as a relation. At that time there was no mention of Peru, nor were the Pizarros talked about in these lands. Pizarro set out with four oldiers, and he also was given forty days in which to go and return, for the distance was about eighty leagues from Mexico, and four Mexican chieftains accompanied him.

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<sup>1</sup> gourds

<sup>2</sup> See note on page 207, vol. i.

After, as I have said, they had set off to inspect the mines, let me go back to say how the great Montezuma gave our Captain a hennequen cloth, on which were painted and marked very true to nature, all the rivers and bays on the Northern coast from Panuco to Tabasco, that is for a matter of one hundred and forty leagues, and the river of Coatzacoalcos was marked on it. As we already knew all the harbours and bays marked on the cloth which Montezuma gave to Cortés, from the time we came on the voyage of discovery with Grijalva, except the river of Coatzacoalcos, which they said was very strong and deep, Cortés determined to send and see what it was like, and to take soundings of the harbour and the entrance. One of our captains named Diego de Ordás, a very prudent and valiant man, who has often been mentioned by me, said to our Captain that he would like to go and see that river, and what sort of country there was there, and what the people were like, and asked for Indian Chieftains to go with him, and Cortés had refused, because he was a man of good counsel and he wished to keep him in his company. However, so as not to displease him, he [now] granted him leave to go. Montezuma told Ordás that his authority did not extend over Coatzacoalcos, that the people there were very bold, and that he should take care what he was about, and if anything happened to him, they must not blame him [Montezuma] for it; that before arriving at that province he would come on the garrison of warriors he kept on the border, and that if he [Ordás] had need of them he might take them with him, and he [Montezuma] paid him many compliments besides. Cortés and Diego de Ordás gave him their thanks, and Ordás set out with two soldiers and some chieftains whom Montezuma sent with him.

This is where the historian Francisco Lopez Gomara says that Juan Velásquez with one hundred soldiers went to form a settlement at Coatzacoalcos, and that Pedro de

Ircio went to settle at Panuco. As I am already tired of noting the things in which this historian goes outside of what really happened, I will stop speaking of it, and will relate what each of the Captains sent by Cortés, accomplished, and will report how each returned with samples of gold.

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### CHAPTER CIII.

How the Captains returned whom our Cortés had sent to examine the mines, and take soundings of the harbour and river of Coatzacoalcos.

THE first to return to the City of Mexico and to give an account of what Cortés had sent him to do was Gonzalo de Umbria and his companions, who brought a matter of three hundred pesos in grains which the Indians of a town named Zacatula had extracted before their eyes. According to Umbria's description, the Caciques of that province took many Indians to the rivers, and in vessels like small troughs they washed the earth and collected the gold. The gold came from two rivers, and they said that if good miners went and washed the earth as they did in the Island of Santo Domingo or the Island of Cuba, that these would prove to be rich mines. Umbria also brought with him two chieftains sent by the province, and they brought a present of gold made into jewels worth about two hundred pesos, and gave and offered themselves as servants of His Majesty, and Cortés was as pleased with this gold as though it were thirty thousand pesos, for he now knew for certain that there were good mines, and he showed much affection to the chieftains who brought the present and ordered them to be given some green beads from Castile, and after friendly speeches they returned to their country well contented.

Umbria said that not far from Mexico there were large towns occupied by cultured people, and it seems that they must have been the towns belonging to that relation of Montezuma, and there was another province named Matalzingo. From what we saw and inferred, Umbria and his companions came back enriched with plenty of gold and well provided for, and it was for this purpose that Cortés had sent him, so as to make a friend of him, on account of what had happened in the past, which I have already spoken about.

Let us leave this man who came back with a good profit, and turn to Captain Diego de Ordás who went to see the river of Coatzacoalcos, which is one hundred and twenty leagues distant from Mexico. He said that he passed through very large towns which he named, where all the people paid respect to him, and that on the road near to Coatzacoalcos he came on Montezuma's garrisons on the frontier, and all the neighbourhood complained of them, on account of the robberies they committed, and because they carried off their women and demanded other tribute. Ordás and the Mexican Chieftains who were with him reprimanded Montezuma's Captains who had charge of these troops and threatened that if they committed any more robberies that they would tell their Lord Montezuma, and he would send for them and punish them as he had punished Quetsalpopoca and his companions for robbing the towns of our friends, and at these speeches they were frightened. Then Ordás continued his journey to Coatzacoalcos, and he took only one Mexican chieftain with him. As soon as the Cacique of that province who was named Tochel knew that he was coming, he sent his chieftains to receive him and showed him much good will, for all the people of that province had heard stories and reports of us and knew about us from the time when we came on the voyage of discovery with Juan de Grijalva, as I have written at length in a former

chapter which treats of the subject. Let us go on to say that as soon as the Caciques of Coatzacoalcos understood what the object of Ordás was, they supplied him with many large canoes, and the Cacique Tochel himself and many other chieftains took soundings at the mouth of the river, and they found the depth to be three full fathoms in the shallowest place without counting the ebb.<sup>1</sup> A little further up the river there is room for large ships to navigate, and the higher up they went the deeper it became, and near a town which at that time was inhabited by Indians, there was room for carracks. When Ordás had taken the soundings, he went with the Caciques to the town, and they gave him some jewels of gold and a very beautiful Indian woman, and they offered themselves as servants of His Majesty, and they complained of Montezuma and of his garrison of warriors, and said that a short time before they had fought a battle with them near a small town, and that the people of that province had killed many of the Mexicans, and for that reason they now call the place where that battle was fought, Cuylonemiquis, which in their language means "where they killed the Mexican profligates."<sup>2</sup>

Ordás thanked them heartily for the honour he had received, and gave them some Spanish beads which he had brought for that purpose. Then he returned to Mexico and was joyfully received by Cortés and all of us, and he said there was good land for cattle and farming, and the port was convenient for the islands of Cuba and Santo Domingo, and Jamaica, but it was far from Mexico, and there were great swamps there. For this reason we never had much confidence in this harbour for landing goods and trading with Mexico.

Let us leave Ordás and speak of Captain Pizarro and

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<sup>1</sup> Sin la de Cayda, *i.e.*, at low water.

<sup>2</sup> "Putos."

his companions who went in the direction of Tustepec to look for gold and examine the mines. Pizarro returned to make his report to Cortés accompanied by one soldier only, and he brought with him over one thousand pesos in grains of gold taken from the mines, and said that in the province of Tustepec and Malinaltepec and other neighbouring districts, he went to the rivers accompanied by many people who were sent with him, and they gathered a third part of the gold that he had brought, and they went high up in the hills to another province, that of the Chinantecs, and that when they reached their land, many Indians came out to meet them with arms, which were lances, much better than those we had, and bows and arrows and shields, and they said that not a single Mexican should enter their country, for they would kill them, but that the Teules should pass in and be welcome; so they went on, and the Mexicans were left behind and did not go any further. As soon as the Caciques of Chinanta understood what they had come for, they got together a large number of their people to wash for gold, and they took them to some rivers where they collected the rest of the gold which he had brought in twisted grains, and the miners said those were the most lasting mines as the gold was formed there. Captain Pizarro also brought two Caciques from that country who came to offer themselves as vassals to His Majesty, and to secure our friendship they even brought a present of gold. One and all of those chieftains said many evil things of the Mexicans, who were so greatly hated in those provinces for the robberies they committed that they [the Chinantecs] could not bear the sight of them or the mention of their names.

Cortés received Pizarro and the chieftains whom he brought with cordiality, and he accepted the present which they gave him, (as it was so many years ago I cannot

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remember its value,) and with agreeable speeches he promised to be a friend to the Chinantecas and to assist them. Then he told them to go back to their country, and, so that they should not be molested by the Mexicans on the road, he ordered two Mexican Chieftains to conduct them back to their country and not to leave them until they had seen them in safety; so they went away well contented.

To return to our story; Cortés, asked about the other soldiers whom Pizarro had taken in his company, namely, Barrientos and Heredia the elder and Escalona the younger, and Cervantes the Jester, and Pizarro replied that as that seemed to be a very good country and rich in mines, and the towns through which he passed were very peaceful, he ordered them to make a large farm of cacao and maize, and other farms besides for cotton, and told them to collect there many of the birds of the country, and that from that place they should go and examine all the rivers and see what mines there were. Although Cortés said nothing at the time, he was not pleased at his relation for having exceeded his instructions, and we heard that privately he scolded him well about it, and said that he was a poor character to wish to be employed about such things as breeding birds and planting cacao,<sup>1</sup> and he at once sent another soldier named Alonzo Luis to summon the rest whom Pizarro had left behind. Alonzo Luis carried a peremptory order for them to return at once, and what those soldiers did I will relate further on in its proper time and place.

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<sup>1</sup> Cortés does not fail to take great credit to himself in regard to the formation of these plantations when writing his second letter to the Emperor.

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## CHAPTER CIV.

How Cortés told the great Montezuma that he should order all his Caciques throughout the land to pay tribute to His Majesty, for it was generally known that they possessed gold, and what was done about it.

As Captain Diego de Ordás and the other soldiers already named by me, arrived with samples of gold and the report that all the land was rich, Cortés, by the advice of Ordás and the other Captains and soldiers, decided to speak to, and demand of Montezuma, that all the Caciques and towns of the land should pay tribute to His Majesty, and that he himself as the greatest Chieftain, should also contribute from his treasure. Montezuma replied that he would send to all his towns to ask for gold, but that many of them did not possess any, only some jewels of little worth which had come to them from their ancestors. He at once despatched chieftains to the places where there were mines and ordered each town to give so many ingots of fine gold, of the same size and thickness as others that they were used to pay as tribute, and the messengers carried with them as samples two small ingots. From other parts they only brought small jewels of little worth.

He also sent to the province whose Cacique and Lord was that near kinsman of his who did not wish to obey him, who has already been mentioned by me. This province was distant from Mexico about twelve leagues, and the reply the messengers brought back was to the effect that he neither wished to give any gold nor to obey Montezuma, that he also was Lord of Mexico and that the dominion belonged to him as much as to Montezuma himself, who was sending to ask him to pay tribute.

When Montezuma heard this he was so enraged that he immediately sent his seal and sign by some faithful

captains with orders to bring him as a prisoner. When this kinsman was brought into Montezuma's presence he spoke to him very disrespectfully and without any fear, and very valiantly, and they say that he had intervals of madness, for he was as though thunderstruck. Cortés came to know all about this, and he sent to beg Montezuma as a favour, to give this man to him as he wished to place a guard over him, for he had been told that Montezuma had ordered him to be killed. When the Cacique was brought before him Cortés spoke to him in a most amiable manner and told him not to act like a madman against his prince, and wished to set him free. However, when Montezuma heard this he said that he should not be set free but should be attached to the great chain like the other Kinglets already named by me.

Let us go back to say that within twenty days all the chieftains whom Montezuma had sent to collect the tribute of gold, as I have already mentioned, came back again. And as they arrived Montezuma sent to summon Cortés and our captains and certain soldiers whom he knew, who belonged to his guard, and said these formal words, or others of like meaning :—

“I wish you to know, Señor Mauncne and Señores Captains and soldiers, that I am indebted to your great King, and I bear him good will both for being such a great Prince and for having sent to such distant lands to make inquiries about me ; and the thought that most impresses me is that he must be the one who is to rule over us, as our ancestors have told us, and as even our gods have given us to understand in the answers we have received from them. Take this gold which has been collected ; on account of haste no more has been brought. That which I have got ready for the Emperor is the whole of the Treasure which I have received from my father, which is in your possession and in your apartments.

“I know well enough that as soon as you came here you opened the chamber and beheld it all, and that you sealed it up again as it was before. When you send it to him, tell him in your papers and letters, ‘This is sent to you by your true vassal Montezuma.’ I will also give you some very valuable stones which you will send to him in my name ; they are Chalchihuites, and are not to be given to any one else but only to him, your Great Prince. Each stone is worth two loads of gold. I also wish to send him three blow guns with their bags and pellet moulds for they have such good jewelwork on them that he will be pleased to see them, and I also wish to give him of what I possess although it is but little, for all the rest of the gold and jewels that I possessed I have given you from time to time.”

When Cortés and all of us heard this we stood amazed at the great goodness and liberality of the Great Montezuma, and with much reverence we all doffed our helmets, and returned him our thanks, and with words of the greatest affection Cortés promised him that he would write to His Majesty of the magnificence and liberality of this gift of gold which he gave us in his own royal name. After some more polite conversation Montezuma at once sent his Mayordomos to hand over all the treasure and gold and wealth that was in that plastered chamber, and in looking it over and taking off all the embroidery with which it was set, we were occupied for three days, and to assist us in undoing it and taking it to pieces, there came Montezuma’s goldsmiths from the town named Azcapotzalco,<sup>1</sup> and I say that there was so much, that after it was taken to pieces there were three heaps of gold, and they weighed more than six hundred thousand pesos, as I shall tell further on, without the silver and many other rich

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<sup>1</sup> Escapuçalco in the text.

things, and not counting in this the ingots and slabs of gold, and the gold in grains from the mines. We began to melt it down with the help of the Indian goldsmiths, who were, as I have said, natives of Azcapotzalco and they made broad bars of it, each bar measuring three fingers of the hand across. When it was already melted and made into bars, they brought another present separately which the Grand Montezuma had said that he would give, and it was a wonderful thing to behold the wealth of gold and the richness of the other jewels that were brought, for some of the Chalchihuites were so fine that among these Caciques they were worth a vast quantity of gold. The three blow guns with their pellet moulds, and their coverings of jewels and pearls, and pictures in feathers of little birds covered with pearlshell and other birds, all were of great value. I will not speak of the plumes and feathers and other rich things for I shall never finish calling them to mind.

Let me say that all the gold I have spoken about was marked with an iron stamp, which had been made by order of Cortés and the King's Officers, who had been appointed by Cortés with the consent of all of us and in the name of His Majesty until he should give other instructions. At that time these were Gonzalo Mejía, who was treasurer, and Alonzo Dávila who was accountant, and the stamp was the royal arms like those on a real<sup>1</sup> and the size of a testoon.<sup>2</sup> The mark was not put on the rich jewels which it did not seem to us should be taken to pieces.

For weighing all these bars of gold and silver, and the jewels which were not taken to pieces, we had neither marked weights nor scales, and it seemed to Cortés and to

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<sup>1</sup> Real, a small silver coin.

<sup>2</sup> "Toston de a quatro," a half peso = four reals.

these same officers of His Majesty's treasury that it would be as well to make some iron weights, some as much as an arroba,<sup>1</sup> others of half an arroba, two pounds, one pound and half a pound, and of four ounces, and so many ounces, and this not that it would turn out very exact, but within half an ounce more or less in each lot that was weighed.

After the weight was taken the officers of the King said that there was of gold, both that which was cast in bars as well as grains from the mines, and in ingots and jewels, more than six hundred thousand pesos, and this was without counting the silver and many other jewels which were not yet valued.

Some soldiers said that there was more. As there was now nothing more to do than to take out the royal fifth, and to give to each captain and soldier his share, and to set aside the shares of those who remained at the port of Villa Rica, it seems that Cortés endeavoured not to have it divided up so soon, but to wait until there was more gold, and there were good weights, and proper accounts of how it turned out. But most of us captains and soldiers said that it should be divided up at once, for we had seen that at the time when the pieces were given out of the Treasury of Montezuma, there was much more gold in the heaps, and that a third part of it was missing, which they had taken and hidden both on behalf of Cortés, as well as of the Captains and the Fraile de la Merced, and it went on diminishing. In consequence of much argument what was left was weighed out, and they found over 600,000 pesos without the jewels and slabs, and next day they were to distribute the shares, and I will tell how it was divided, and the greater part remained with Captain Cortés and other persons, and what was done about it I will go on to relate.

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<sup>1</sup> An arroba=25 lbs.

## CHAPTER CV.

How the gold which we had obtained was divided, both that which was given by the Great Montezuma, as well as that which had been collected from the towns, and what happened to a soldier about it.

FIRST of all the royal fifth was taken out, then Cortés said that they should take out for him another fifth, the same as for His Majesty, for we had promised it to him at the sand dunes when we elected him Captain General and Chief Justice, as I have already related in the chapter that treats of that matter. After that, he said that he had been put to certain expenses in the Island of Cuba and that what he had spent on the expedition should be taken from the heap, and in addition to this that there should be taken from the same heap the expenses incurred by Diego Velásquez in the ships which we had destroyed, and we all agreed to it, and beside this the expenses of the procurators who were sent to Spain. Then there were the shares of those who remained in Villa Rica, and there were seventy of them, and for his horse that had died, and for the mare which had belonged to Juan Sedeño which the Tlaxcalans had killed with a sword cut; then for the Fraile de la Merced, and the priest Juan Díaz and the Captains and for those who had brought horses, double shares, and for musketeers and crossbowmen the same, and other trickeries, so that very little was left to each as a share, and it was so little that many of the soldiers did not want to take it, and Cortés was left with it all. At that time we could do nothing but hold our tongues, for to ask for justice in the matter was useless. There were other soldiers who took their shares at the rate of one hundred pesos and clamoured for the rest, and to content them Cortés secretly gave to one and

the other, apparently bestowing favours so as to satisfy them, and with the smooth speeches that he made to them they put up with it. Let us turn to the shares which remained for those who were in Villa Rica which he ordered to be sent to Tlaxcala to be taken care of there, and as it was badly divided, so it ended [badly], as I shall relate at the proper time.

At that time many of our Captains ordered very large golden chains to be made by the Great Montezuma's goldsmiths, who I have already said had a large town of their own called Azcapotzalco, half a league from Mexico. Cortés, too, ordered many jewels made, and a great service of plate. Some of our soldiers had their hands so full, that many ingots of gold, marked and unmarked, and jewels of a great diversity of patterns were openly in circulation. Heavy gaming was always going on with some playing cards which were made from drum skins by Pedro Valenciano and were as well made and painted as the originals. So this was the condition we were in, but let us stop talking of the gold and of the bad way it was divided, and worse way in which it was spent, and say what happened to a soldier named something de Cárdenas. It seems that this soldier had been a pilot and seaman, and was a native of Triana or of that county, and the poor fellow had a wife and family at home, and as happens to many of us he was destined to remain poor, so he came to seek for a livelihood with the intention of returning to his wife and children. As he had seen so much wealth of gold in slabs and in grains from the mines, and in ingots and bars, and when it was divided up he found that they only gave him a hundred pesos, he fell ill at the thought of it through sadness. When one of his friends saw him day by day so depressed and ill, he went to see him and asked him why he was like that and sighed so much from time to time. The Pilot Cárdenas, that is the man who

was ill, answered him: "Curse it all, have I no right to be ill, seeing that Cortés has carried off all the gold, and like a king takes a fifth, and has charged for his horse that died, and for the ships of Diego Velásquez, and for many other underhand claims, and that my wife and children die of hunger. I might have helped them when the procurators went with our letters, but we gave them all the gold and silver which we had acquired up to that time." Then his friend said to him, "How much gold had you got to send them?" and Cárdenas replied, "If Cortés would give me my share of what is due to me, my wife and children could live on it and even have to spare, but see what tricks he played us, making us sign that we would be doing a service to His Majesty by giving up our shares, and then taking out of the gold over six thousand pesos for his father Martin Cortés, besides what he hid away, while I and other poor men have been fighting by night and by day, as you have seen in the late wars in Tabasco and Tlaxcala, and in those at Cingapacinga and Cholula, and we are now in the greatest danger, looking death in the face every day should there be a rebellion in this city, in order that Cortés may carry off all the gold and take his fifth like a King."

And he said other things about it, and that we ought not to allow him to take that fifth, nor did we want so many kings, we only wanted His Majesty. His companion replied and said to him: "This anxiety is killing you, and now you can see that everything that is brought in by Montezuma and the Caciques is absorbed, by this one under his chin, by that in his pocket, and by another under his arm, and that all goes whither Cortés and his captains choose, they carry off everything even to the food. Get rid of such thoughts as these and pray God that we do not lose our lives in this city." Then the conversation ended, but it reached the ears of Cortés, and as they told him that



many of the soldiers were discontented over their share of the gold and the way the heaps had been robbed, he determined to make a speech to them all with honeyed words, and he said that all he owned was for us, and he did not want the fifth but only the share that came to him as Captain General, and that if any one had need of anything he would give it to him, and that the gold we had collected was but a breath of air, that we should observe what great cities there were there and rich mines, and that we should be lords of them all and very prosperous and rich, and he used other arguments very well expressed which he knew well how to employ. In addition to this he secretly gave to some of the soldiers jewels of gold and to others he made great promises, and he ordered that the food brought by Montezuma's stewards should be divided among all the soldiers so that he and all of them should share alike. In addition to this he called Cárdenas apart and flattered him with words and promised to send him back to Spain to his wife and children in the first ship that should sail, and he gave him three hundred dollars, and this contented him. I will stop here and will relate in its proper place what happened to Cárdenas when he went to Spain, and how he was very hostile to Cortés in the affairs that were brought before His Majesty.

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## CHAPTER CVI.

How Juan Velásquez de Leon and the Treasurer, Gonzalo Mejía, had words about the gold that was missing from the heaps before it was melted down, and what Cortés did about it.

AS all men in general covet gold, and the more they have the more they want, it happened that as many known pieces of gold were missing from the heaps already mentioned by me, and at the same time Juan Velásquez de

Leon employed Indians of Azcapotzalco, (who were all of them goldsmiths to the Great Montezuma,) to make him large gold chains and pieces of plate for his table service, Gonzalo Mejía, who was treasurer, told him privately to deliver them to him as they had not paid the fifth and were known to belong to the treasure that Montezuma had presented. Juan Velásquez de Leon who was a great favourite with Cortés replied that he was not going to give up anything, and that he had not taken anything from what had been collected, nor from any one else, only what Cortés had given him before the bars were cast. Gonzalo Mejía answered him that what Cortés had hidden and taken from his companions was more than enough, and that, as treasurer, he demanded much gold which had not paid the royal fifth. From words to words they lost control of themselves and drew their swords, and if we had not quickly separated them, both of them would there have ended their lives, for they were men of much merit and brave fighters, and they came out of it wounded, each with two wounds. When Cortés heard of it, he ordered them to be put in prison, and each one to be attached to a heavy chain, and it appears from what many soldiers reported that Cortés said privately to Juan Velásquez de Leon that, as he was a great friend of his, he should remain a prisoner for two days tied to this same chain, and that he would release Gonzalo Mejía as he was treasurer. Cortés did this to prove to all the captains and soldiers that he would do justice and that although Juan Velásquez was hand and glove with him, he would keep him prisoner. Many other things happened with regard to Gonzalo Mejía, who told Cortés that he had taken on the sly much of the gold that was missing, and that all the soldiers were complaining of it to him as the treasurer, and they wanted to know why he did not demand restitution from the Captain; but because it is all a very long story I will omit it, and I will go on

now to tell how Juan Velásquez de Leon was imprisoned in a hall near to Montezuma's chamber, and attached to a heavy chain. Juan Velásquez was a man of great stature and very strong, and when he moved about the hall he dragged the chain after him and it made a great noise, and Montezuma heard it and asked of his page Orteguilla who it was that Cortés held a prisoner in chains; the page replied that it was Juan Velásquez who had formerly been the guard over his person, (for at that time he was no longer Captain of the Guard but Cristóbal de Olid), and Montezuma asked what was the reason of his imprisonment, and the page told him that it was on account of some gold that was missing.

That same day Cortés went to pay his court to Montezuma, and after the usual civilities and some conversation had passed, Montezuma asked Cortés, why he made a prisoner of Juan Velásquez, seeing that he was such a good and valiant captain; for, as I have said before, Montezuma knew us all and even our characters. Cortés answered half laughingly, that Juan Velásquez was touched, which means mad, because they had not given him much gold, and he wished to go to Montezuma's towns and cities and demand it from the Caciques, and so as to prevent him killing any one he had put him in prison.

Montezuma replied that he begged Cortés to release him and send him to look for more gold, and said that he would give him some of his own. Cortés pretended that it went against the grain with him to release him, but at last he said that to please Montezuma it should be done, and he sentenced him to be banished from the camp and to go to a town named Cholula with some of Montezuma's messengers to seek for gold. First of all Juan Velásquez and Gonzalo de Mejía were reconciled. I noticed that he [Juan Velásquez] returned from his banishment within six days, and brought more gold with him, and that from that

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time on Gonzalo Mejía and Cortés were not very good friends. I have called all this to mind although it is outside my story, so that one may see that Cortés, under colour of doing justice, so that we should fear him, was full of craftiness, and I will leave off here.

## CHAPTER CVII.

How the Great Montezuma told Cortés that he wished to give him one of his daughters in marriage, and what Cortés answered. Nevertheless he took her and they served and honoured her as was becoming to the daughter of such a Prince.

I HAVE many times said that Cortés and all of us always endeavoured to please and serve Montezuma and to pay him court. One day Montezuma said, "Look here, Malinche, I love you so much that I want to give you one of my daughters, who is very beautiful, so that you can marry her and treat her as your legitimate wife"; Cortés doffed his cap in thanks, and said that it was a great favour that Montezuma was conferring on him, but that he was already married and had a wife, and that among us we were not permitted to have more than one wife, he would however keep her [Montezuma's daughter] in the rank to which the daughter of so great a prince was entitled, but that first of all he desired her to become a Christian, as other ladies, the daughters of Chieftains, already were; and to this Montezuma consented.

The Great Montezuma always showed his accustomed good will to us, but from one day to the other he never ceased his sacrifices at which human beings were killed, and Cortés tried to dissuade him from this but met with no success. So Cortés took counsel with his captains as to what should be done in the matter, for he did not dare to put an end to it for fear of a rising in the City and of the

priests who were in charge of Huichilobos. The advice that the captains and soldiers gave about this was, that he should pretend that he wished to go and throw down the Idols from the lofty temples of Huichilobos, and that if we saw that they intended to defend them, and were going to rise in revolt, that we should then demand permission to set up an altar inside the Great Cue, and place a Crucifix there and an image of Our Lady. When this was settled Cortés went to the Palace where Montezuma was imprisoned and took seven captains and soldiers with him, and said to Montezuma: "Señor, I have often asked you not to sacrifice any more human beings to your gods who are deceiving you, and you will not cease doing it, I wish you to know that all my companions and these captains who are with me have come to beg you to give them leave to remove the gods from your temple and put our Lady Santa Maria and a Cross in their place, and, if you will not give them leave now, they will go and remove them, and I would not like them to kill any priests."

When Montezuma heard those words and saw that the Captains were rather angry, he said, "Oh! Malinche, how can you wish to destroy the city entirely! for our gods are very angry with us, and I do not know that they will stop even at your lives, what I pray you to do for the present is to be patient, and I will send to summon all the priests and I will see their reply." When Cortés heard this he made a sign that he wished to speak quite privately to Montezuma without the presence of the captains whom he had brought in his company, so he ordered them to go out and leave him alone. When they had left the hall he said to Montezuma, that in order to prevent this affair from becoming known and causing a disturbance and becoming an offence to the priests on account of their Idols being overturned, that he would arrange with these Captains to the effect that they should do nothing of the sort, provided

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

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

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## CHAPTER CVIII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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





## BOOK VII.

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### THE EXPEDITION UNDER PÁNFILO DE NARVAEZ.

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#### CHAPTER CIX.

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



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