

CHAPTER IX.

How we followed the same course that we had taken with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba ; how we landed at Chanpoton and how an attack was made on us, and what else happened.

AS soon as we were all on board we kept on the old course, the same that was followed by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, and in eight days we reached the neighbourhood of the town of Chanpoton which was the place where the Indians of that province had defeated us, as I have already related in a former chapter. As the tide runs out very far in the bay, we anchored our ships a league from the shore and then making use of all the boats we disembarked half the soldiers close to the houses of the town.

The Indians of the town and others from the neighbourhood at once assembled, as they had done on the other occasion when they killed over fifty-six of our soldiers and wounded all the rest, as I have already related, and for that reason they were now very proud and haughty, and they were well armed in their own manner with bows, arrows, and lances, some of them as long as our lances and some of them shorter, and shields and *macanas* and two-handed swords and slings and stones, and they wore cotton armour and carried trumpets and drums, and many of them had their faces painted black and others red and white. They were drawn up in array and awaited us on the shore, ready to fall on us as we landed. As we had already gained experience from our former expedition, we had brought with us in the boat some falconets and were well supplied with crossbows and guns.

As we approached the shore they began to shoot arrows and hurl lances at us with all their might, and although we did them much damage with our falconets, such a hail storm of arrows fell on us before we could land that half of us were wounded. As soon as all the soldiers got on shore

we checked their ardour with our good sword play and with our crossbows, and although they still shot at us as at targets, we all wore cotton armour, yet they kept up the fight against us for a good while until we drove them back into some swamps near to the town. In this fight seven soldiers were killed, among them Juan de Quiteria, a man of importance, and our Captain Juan de Grijalva received three arrow wounds, and had two of his teeth broken, and more than sixty of us were wounded.¹

When we saw that all the enemy had taken to flight we entered the town and attended to the wounded and buried the dead. We could not find a single person in the town, nor could we find those who had retreated into the swamp for they had all disappeared. In that skirmish we captured three Indians one of whom was a chief, and the Captain sent them off to summon the cacique of the town, giving them clearly to understand through the interpreters Julianillo and Melchorejo that they were pardoned for what they had done, and he gave them some green beads to hand to the cacique as a sign of peace, and they went off and never returned again. So we believed that the Indians, Julianillo and Melchorejo had not repeated to the prisoners what they had been told to say to them but had said something quite different.

At that town we stayed for three days.

I remember that this fight took place in some fields where there were many locusts, and while we were fighting they jumped up and came flying in our faces, and as the Indian archers were pouring a hail storm of arrows on us we sometimes mistook the arrows for locusts and did not shield ourselves from them and so got wounded ; at other times we thought that they were arrows coming towards

¹ The author of the *Itinerario* and the Letter from the Municipality of Vera Cruz to Charles V make this fight take place at Campeche and say one Spaniard was killed.

us, when they were only flying locusts and it greatly hampered our fighting. I must leave this and go on to tell how we embarked and kept on our course.

CHAPTER X.

How we went on our way and entered a large and broad river to which we then gave the name of the Boca de Términos.

KEEPING on our course we reached what seemed to be the mouth of a very rapid river, very broad and open, but it was not a river as we at first thought it to be, but it was a very good harbour.

Because there was land on both sides of us and the water was so wide that it looked like a strait, the pilot Alamínos said that here the Island ended and the mainland began, and that was the reason why we called it the Boca de Términos,¹ and so it is named on the charts.

The Captain Juan de Grijalva went ashore with all the other Captains already mentioned and many soldiers. We spent three days taking soundings at the mouth of the strait and exploring up and down the bay until we came to the end of it, and found out that there was no island, but that we were in a bay which formed a very good harbour. On shore we found some houses built of masonry, used as oratories of their Idols, and many Idols of pottery, wood and stone, which were the images of their gods, and some of them were figures of women

¹ It is not quite clear by which opening the vessels entered the Laguna de Términos. Orozco y Berra (*Hist. Antigua*, vol. iv, page 31) says at the Puerto Escondido—it seems more likely to have been at the Puerto Real. Had they entered by the west entrance or Puerto Principal they must have attracted the attention of the people of Xicolango, then a considerable town and a Mexican outpost. (See *Relacion de Melchor de Alfaro Santa Cruz in Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos, Relaciones de Yucatan*, vol. ii. Madrid, 1898).