

and others figures of serpents and there were many deer's antlers.

We thought there must be a town close by, and as it was such a safe port we considered that it would be a good place for a settlement, but we found out that it was altogether uninhabited, and that the oratories were merely those belonging to traders and hunters who put into the port when passing in their canoes and made sacrifices there. We had much deer and rabbit hunting and with the help of a lurcher we killed ten deer and many rabbits. At last when we had finished our soundings and explorations we made ready to go on board ship, but the lurcher got left behind. The sailors call this place the Puerto de Términos.

As soon as we were all on board we kept our course close along the shore until we arrived at a river which they call the Rio de Tabasco, which we named Rio de Grijalva.

CHAPTER XI.

How we arrived at the Rio de Tabasco which we named the River Grijalva, and what happened to us there.

MAKING our way along the coast towards the west, by day, but not daring to sail during the night for fear of shoals and reefs, at the end of three days we came in sight of the mouth of a very broad river, and we went near in shore with the ships, as it looked like a good port. As we came nearer in we saw the water breaking over the bar at the mouth of the river, so we got out boats, and by sounding we found out that the two larger vessels could not enter the river, so it was agreed that they should anchor outside in the sea, and that all the soldiers should go up the river in the other two vessels which drew less water and in the boats.

This we did because we saw many Indians in canoes along the banks of the river armed with bows and arrows and other weapons, after the manner of the people of Chanpoton, and we knew that there must be a large town in the neighbourhood.

As we had coasted along we had already seen nets set in the sea for catching fish, and had gone in the boat which was towed astern of the flagship and had taken fish out of two of them.

This river was called the Rio de Tabasco because the chief of the town called himself Tabasco, and as we discovered it on this voyage and Juan de Grijalva was its discoverer, we named it the Rio de Grijalva and so it is marked on the charts.

To go back to my story, when we arrived within half a league of the town we could hear the sound of chopping wood for the Indians were making barriers and stockades and getting ready to give us battle. When we were aware of this, so as to make certain, we disembarked half a league from the town on a point of land where some palm trees were growing. When the Indians saw us there a fleet of fifty canoes approached us full of warriors clad in cotton armour and carrying bows and arrows, lances and shields, drums and plumes of feathers. Many other canoes full of warriors were lying in the creeks, and they kept a little way off as though they did not dare to approach as did the first fleet. When we perceived their intentions we were on the point of firing at them with guns and crossbows, but it pleased God that we agreed to call out to them, and through Julianillo and Melchorejo, who spoke their language very well, we told them that they need have no fear, that we wished to talk to them, for we had things to tell them which when they understood them they would be glad that we had come to their country and their homes,

Moreover, we wished to give them some of the things we had brought with us. As they understood what was said to them, four of the canoes came near with about thirty Indians in them, and we showed them strings of green beads and small mirrors and blue cut glass beads,¹ and as soon as they saw them they assumed a more friendly manner, for they thought that they were *chalchihuites*² which they value greatly.

Then through Julianillo and Melchorejo as interpreters, the Captain told them that we came from a distant country and were the vassals of a great Emperor named Don Carlos, who had many great lords and chiefs as his vassals, and that they ought to acknowledge him as their lord, and it would be to their advantage to do so, and that in return for the beads they might bring us some food and poultry.

Two of the Indians answered us, one of them was a chief and the other was a Papa, that is, a sort of priest who has care of their Idols, for as I have said before, in New Spain they are called Papas. They replied that they would bring the food which we asked for, and would barter their things for ours; but as for the rest, they already had a chief, that we were only just now arrived and knew nothing about them, and yet we wanted to give them a chief. Let us beware not to make war on them as we had done at Potonchan,³ for they had more than three *jiquipiles* of warriors from all the provinces around in readiness (every *jiquipil* numbers eight thousand men) and they said that they were well aware that only a few days earlier we had killed and wounded more than two hundred men at Potonchan³ but that they were not

¹ Literally, blue diamonds.

² Chalchihuitli is Jadeite, which was treasured as a precious stone by the Indians.

³ Chanpoton.

weaklings such as those, and for this reason they had come to talk to us and find out what we wanted, and that whatever we should tell them they would go and report to the chiefs of many towns who had assembled to decide on peace or war.

Then our Captain embraced the Indians as a sign of peace, and gave them some strings of beads and told them to go and bring back an answer as soon as possible, but he said that although we did not wish to anger them, that if they did not return we should have to force our way into their town.

These messengers whom we sent spoke to the Caciques and Papas, who also have a voice in their affairs, and they decided that it was better to keep the peace and supply us with food, and that between them and the neighbouring towns they would soon seek a present of gold to give us and secure our friendship, so that what had happened to the people of Potonchan¹ would not happen to them.

From what I saw and learnt afterwards, it is the custom in these provinces, and in other countries in New Spain to give presents when making peace, and this will be clearly seen later on.

The following day more than thirty Indians with their chief came to the promontory under the palm trees where we were camped and brought roasted fish and fowls, and zapote fruit and maize bread, and brasiers with live coals and incense, and they fumigated us all. Then they spread on the ground some mats, which here they call *petates*, and over them a cloth, and they presented some golden jewels, some were diadems, and others were in the shape of ducks, like those in Castille, and other jewels like lizards and three necklaces of hollow beads, and other articles of gold but not of much value, for they were not

¹ Chanpoton,

worth more than two hundred dollars. They also brought some cloaks and skirts, such as they wear, and said that we must accept these things in good part as they had no more gold to give us, but that further on, in the direction of the sunset, there was plenty of gold, and they said "Colua, Colua, Méjico, Méjico," but we did not know what this Colua or Méjico could be. Although the present that they brought us was not worth much, we were satisfied, because we thus knew for certain that they possessed gold. As soon as they had given their present they said that we should at once set out on our way and the Captain, Juan de Grijalva, thanked them for their gift and gave them a present of beads. It was decided that we should go on board at once, for the two ships were in much danger should a northerly gale blow for it would put them on a lee shore, and moreover we wanted to get nearer to where we were told there was gold.

CHAPTER XII.

How we followed along the coast towards the setting sun, and arrived at a river called the Rio de Banderas, and what happened there.

WE returned on board and set our course along the coast and in two days came in sight of a town called Ayagualulco, and many of the Indians from that town marched along the shore with shields made of the shells of turtle, which sparkled as the sun shone on them, and some of our soldiers contended that they were made of low grade gold.

The Indians who carried them as they marched along the sandy beach, knowing that they were at a safe distance,

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