



## BOOK II.

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### THE EXPEDITION UNDER HERNANDO CORTÉS. THE VOYAGE.

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#### CHAPTER XVII.

How Diego Velásquez sent to Spain to petition His Majesty to grant him a commission, to trade with, and conquer the country, and to settle and apportion the land as soon as peace was established.



ALTHOUGH it may seem to the reader that in relating what I now call to mind, I am wandering far away from my story, nevertheless it seems to me proper that, before I begin to tell about the valiant and energetic Captain Cortés, certain things should be mentioned, both for reasons which will be apparent later on, and because when two or three events happen at the same time, one cannot relate them together, but only that one which falls into its place in the story.

The fact is that when the captain, Pedro de Alvarado arrived at Santiago de Cuba with the gold from the lands which we had discovered, as I have already related, Diego Velásquez was in fear lest, before he could make his report to His Majesty, some court favourite should rob

him of his reward, and ask it from His Majesty for himself. For this reason he sent to Spain his chaplain, named Benito Martínez, a man well skilled in business, with the evidence and letters for Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, and Archbishop of Rosano, for such are his titles, and to the Licentiate, Luis Zapata, and to the Secretary, Lope de Conchillos, who at that time looked after the Affairs of the Indies. Diego Velásquez was the very humble servant of them all, especially of the Bishop, and he gave them Indian townships in the Island of Cuba, so that their inhabitants might extract gold from the mines for them, and for this reason they were ready to do much for Diego Velásquez.

At this time His Majesty was away in Flanders. Velásquez also sent to these gentlemen, just now mentioned by me, some of the jewels of gold which we had obtained by barter. Now everything that was done by the Royal Council of the Indies was done by the orders of these gentlemen, and that which Diego Velásquez wished to have arranged was, that he should be given authority to trade with, conquer and settle all this land which he had recently discovered, and any that he might thereafter discover. He said in his reports and letters that he had spent many thousands of gold dollars in the discovery. So the Chaplain, Benito Martínez, went to Spain and succeeded in obtaining all that he asked for, and even more, for he brought back a decree appointing Diego Velásquez, Adelantado of the Island of Cuba. Although what I have here stated was already settled, the despatches did not arrive before the valiant Cortés had already sailed with a fresh fleet. I must leave this matter here, both the despatches of which Benito Martínez was the bearer, and the fleet of the captain Cortés, and state that while writing this story I have seen the chronicles written by the historian, Francisco

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Lopes de Gómara, and those of the Doctor Yllescas and of Jovio, in which they treat of the conquest of New Spain. I feel bound to declare that, wherever it appears to contradict the others, my story represents events clearly and truly, and runs very differently from what the historians I have named have written.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

Concerning some errors and other things written by the Historians Gómara and Yllescas about affairs in New Spain.

WHILE I was writing this story, I saw by chance, what had been written by Gómara, Yllescas and Jovio, about the conquest of Mexico and New Spain, and when I had read their accounts and saw and appreciated their polished style, and thought how rudely and lamely my story was told, I stopped writing it, seeing that such good histories already existed. Being in this perplexed state of mind, I began to look into the arguments and discourses which are told in these books, and I saw that from beginning to end they did not tell correctly what took place in New Spain. When they begin to write about the great cities, and the great number of the inhabitants, they are as ready to write eighty thousand as eight thousand. Then about the great slaughter which they say we committed:—As we were only four hundred and fifty soldiers who marched to that war, we had enough to do to defend ourselves from being killed or defeated and carried off; and even had the Indians been craven cowards, we could not have committed all the slaughter attributed to us, more particularly as the Indians were very bold warriors who had cotton armour which shielded their bodies, and were armed with bows, arrows, shields, long lances, and two-handed stone-edged swords, which cut better than our swords did,

Nevertheless, the historians say that we made as great a slaughter and committed as great cruelties as did Alaric, that bravest of kings, and the haughty warrior Attila, on the battlefields of Catalonia. To go back to my story, they say that we destroyed and burnt many cities and temples, that is their *Cues*, and in saying this, they seem to think that they are giving pleasure to those who read their histories, and they do not understand when they write, that the conquerors themselves, and the inquisitive readers, who know what really took place, could tell them clearly that if they write other histories in the way they have written that of New Spain, such history will be worthless. The amusing part of it is, that they exalt some captains, and belittle others, and they speak of some, who were not even present at the conquest, as though they were there, and they make many other statements of equal value, but there are so many matters about which they are ignorant, that I cannot note them all. But there is one thing that they say worse than all and that is that Cortés sent secret orders to scuttle the ships, on the contrary, it was on the distinct advice of most of the other soldiers and my own, that he sent to have the ships sunk without any concealment whatever, and it was done so that the sailors who were in them might help to keep watch and make war. Indeed, in all they write, they speak with prejudice, so why should I go on dipping my pen to mention each item separately, it is merely wasting ink and paper, moreover I should say it badly, for I have got no style.

Let us leave this discussion and get back to my theme. After having carefully examined all that I have said as to the nonsense that has been written about the affairs of New Spain, I continued writing my own story, for it is the truest politeness and the most courteous style to tell the truth in what one writes, and knowing this, I made up my mind to carry out my plan, with such embellishments

and discourses as will be seen further on, so that the conquest of New Spain may be brought to light and may be clearly seen in the way it ought to be seen.

I wish to return to my story pen in hand as a good pilot carries his lead in hand at sea, looking out for shoals ahead, when he knows that they will be met with, so will I do in speaking of the errors of the historians, but I shall not mention them all, for if one had to follow them item by item, the trouble of discarding the rubbish would be greater than that of gathering in the harvest.

I say that upon this story of mine the historians may build up and give as much praise as pleases them to the valiant captain Cortés and to the sturdy Conquistadores. It was a great enterprise that was accomplished by our hands, and what historians may write about it, we, who were eye witnesses will certify when it is true, as we now certify to the errors, and as so much daring and zeal has been shown in writing falsely and with prejudice, we appreciate how holy and blessed is the truth, and that all that is said against it is cursed.

Moreover it appears that Gómara<sup>1</sup> was inspired to write with such laudation of Cortés, for we look upon it as certain that his palms were greased, for he dedicated his history to the present Marquis, the son of Cortés, insisting on his right so to dedicate and recommend it before our lord the King, and the members of the Royal Council of the Indies ought to have had the mistakes erased that are written down in his books.

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<sup>1</sup> Alonzo Remón Edition adds :—“ Not only did Gómara write down so many mistakes and things that are not true, but he misled many writers and historians who since his time have written about the affairs of New Spain, such as the Doctor Yllescas and Pablo Jovio who copy his very words.”

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## CHAPTER XIX.

How we came again with another fleet to the newly discovered lands with the valiant and energetic Don Hernando Cortés (who was afterwards Marqués del Valle) as captain of the fleet, and the attempts that were made to prevent his going in command.

AFTER the return of the Captain Juan de Grijalva to Cuba, when the Governor Diego Velásquez understood how rich were these newly discovered lands, he ordered another fleet, much larger than the former one to be sent off, and he had already collected in the Port of Santiago, where he resided, ten ships, four of them were those in which we had returned with Juan de Grijalva, which had at once been careened, and the other six had been got together from other ports in the Island. He had them furnished with provisions, consisting of Cassava bread and salt pork, for at that time there were neither sheep nor cattle in the Island of Cuba, as it had been only recently settled. These provisions were only to last until we arrived at Havana, for it was at that port that we were to take in our stores, as was afterwards done.

I must cease talking of this and tell about the disputes which arose over the choice of a captain for the expedition. There were many debates and much opposition, for some gentleman said that Vasco Porcallo, a near relation of the Conde de Feria, should be captain, but Diego Velásquez feared that he would rise against him with the fleet, for he was very daring; others said that Agustin Bermudez or Antonio Velásquez Borrejo, or Bernadino Velásquez, kinsman of Diego Velásquez should go in command.

Most of us soldiers who were there said that we should prefer to go again under Juan de Grijalva, for he was a good captain, and there was no fault to be found either with his person or his capacity for command.

While things were going on in the way I have related,

two great favourites of Diego Velásquez named Andrés de Duero, the Governor's Secretary, and Amador de Lares, His Majesty's accountant, secretly formed a partnership with a gentleman named Hernando Cortés, a native of Medellín, who held a grant of Indians in the Island. A short while before, Cortés had married a lady named Catalina Juarez la Marçayda; this lady was sister of a certain Juan Juarez who after the conquest of New Spain was a settler at Mexico. As far as I know, and from what others say, it was a love match. On this matter of the marriage other persons who saw it have had much to say, and for that reason I will not touch any more on this delicate subject.

I will go on to tell about this partnership, it came about in this manner:—These two great favourites of Velásquez agreed that they would get him to appoint Cortés Captain General of the whole fleet, and that they would divide between the three of them, the spoil of gold, silver and jewels which might fall to Cortés' share. For secretly Diego Velásquez was sending to trade and not to form a settlement, as was apparent afterwards from the instructions given about it, although it was announced and published that the expedition was for the purpose of founding a settlement.

When this arrangement had been made, Duero and the accountant went to work in such a way with Diego Velásquez, and addressed such honied words to him, praising Cortés highly, as the very man for the position of Captain, as in addition to being energetic he knew how to command and ensure respect, and as one who would be faithful in everything entrusted to him, both in regard to the fleet and in everything else, (pointing out too, that he was his godson, for Velásquez was his sponsor when Cortés married Doña Catalina Juarez), that they persuaded him to choose Cortés as Captain General.

Andrés de Duero, the Governor's Secretary, drew up the documents in very good ink<sup>1</sup> as the proverb says, in the way Cortés wished with very ample powers.

When the appointment was made public, some persons were pleased and others annoyed.

One Sunday when Diego Velásquez went to Mass,—and as he was Governor he was accompanied by the most distinguished persons in the town,—he placed Hernando Cortés on his right hand so as to pay him honour. A buffoon, called the mad Cervantes, ran in front of Diego Velásquez, making grimaces and cracking jokes and he cried out—

“The parade of my friend Diego, Diego,  
 “Who then is this captain of your choice?  
 “He comes from Medellin in Estramadura  
 “A very valiant captain indeed  
 “Have a care lest he run off with the fleet  
 “For all judge him a man to take care of his own.”

And he cried out other nonsense, all of it somewhat malicious. And as he would go on shouting in this way, Andrés de Duero who was walking near Diego Velasquez, gave the buffoon a cuff and said “Silence thou crazy drunkard, and don't be such a rogue, for we are well aware that these malicious sayings, passed off as wit, are not made up by thee,” and still the madman ran on, notwithstanding the cuffs, saying, “Viva, Viva, the parade of my friend Diego and his daring Captain Cortés, I swear friend Diego that so as not to see thee weeping over the bad bargain thou hast made this day, I wish to go with Cortés to these rich lands.” There is no doubt that some kinsman of the Governor had given gold pieces to the buffoon to utter these malicious sayings, passing them off as witty. However, this all came true, and it is said that madmen do sometimes hit the mark in their speeches.

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<sup>1</sup> De muy buena tinta = most efficiently.



Truly Hernando Cortés was chosen to exalt our holy faith and to serve his Majesty, as I will tell later on.

Before going any further I wish to say that the valiant and energetic Hernando Cortés was a gentleman by birth (hijo-d'algo) by four lines of descent. The first through the Cortéses, for so his father Martin Cortés was named, the second through the Pizarros, the third through the Monroys and the fourth through the Altamiranos. Although he was such a valiant, energetic and daring captain, I will not from now on, call him by any of these epithets of valiant, or energetic, nor will I speak of him as Marqués del Valle, but simply as Hernando Cortés. For the name Cortés alone was held in as high respect throughout the Indies as well as in Spain, as was the name of Alexander in Macedonia, and those of Julius Caesar and Pompey and Scipio among the Romans, and Hannibal among the Carthaginians, or in our own Castille the name of Gonzalo Hernández, the Great Captain. And the valiant Cortés himself was better pleased not to be called by lofty titles but simply by his name, and so I will call him for the future. And now I must cease talking of this, and relate in the next chapter what he undertook and accomplished about the preparation of his fleet.

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## CHAPTER XX.

How Cortés prepared and continued the arrangements necessary for the dispatch of the fleet.

AS soon as Hernando Cortés had been appointed General in the way I have related, he began to search for all sorts of arms, guns, powder and crossbows and every kind of warlike stores which he could get together, and all sorts of articles to be used for barter, and other things necessary for the expedition.

Moreover he began to adorn himself and be more careful of his appearance than before, and he wore a plume of feathers with a medal, and a gold chain, and a velvet cloak trimmed with knots of gold, in fact he looked like a gallant and courageous Captain. However, he had no money to defray the expenses I have spoken about, for at that time he was very poor and much in debt, although he had a good *encomienda* of Indians who were getting him a return from his gold mines, but he spent all of it on his person and on finery for his wife whom he had recently married, and on entertaining some guests who had come to visit him. For he was affable in his manner and a good talker, and he had twice been chosen *Alcalde*<sup>1</sup> of the town of Santiago Baracoa where he had settled, and in that country it is esteemed a great honour to be chosen as *Alcalde*.

When some merchant friends of his named Jaime Tria, Jerónimo Tria and Pedro de Jerez saw that he had obtained this command as Captain General, they lent him four thousand gold dollars in coin and gave him merchandise worth another four thousand dollars secured on his Indians and estates. Then he ordered two standards and banners to be made, worked in gold with the royal arms and a cross on each side with a legend which said, "Comrades, let us follow the sign of the holy Cross with true faith, and through it we shall conquer." And he ordered a proclamation to be made with the sound of drums and trumpets in the name of His Majesty and by Diego Velásquez in the King's name, and in his own as Captain General, to the effect that whatsoever person might wish to go in his company to the newly discovered lands to conquer them and to settle there, should receive his share of the gold, silver and riches which might be gained

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<sup>1</sup> Alcalde = Mayor.

and an *encomienda* of Indians after the country had been pacified, and that to do these things Diego Velásquez held authority from His Majesty.

Although he put in the proclamation this about the authority of Our Lord the King, the Chaplain, Benito Martínez, had not yet arrived from Spain with the Commission which Diego Velásquez had sent him to obtain, as I have already mentioned in a former chapter.

When this news was known throughout Cuba, and Cortés had written to all his friends in the different towns begging them to get ready to come with him on this expedition, some of them sold their farms so as to buy arms and horses, others began to prepare cassava bread and to salt pork for stores, and to make quilted cotton armour, and they got ready what was necessary as well as they could.

We assembled at Santiago de Cuba, whence we set out with the fleet more than three hundred and fifty soldiers in number. From the house of Velásquez there came Diego de Ordás, the chief Mayordomo, whom Velásquez himself sent with orders to keep his eyes open and see that no plots were hatched in the fleet, for he was always distrustful of Cortés although he concealed his fears. There came also Francisco de Morla and an Escobar, whom we called The Page, and a Heredia, and Juan Ruano and Pedro Escudero, and Martín Ramos de Lares, and many others who were friends and followers of Diego Velásquez; and I place myself last on the list for I also came from the house of Diego Velásquez, for he was my kinsman.

I have put down here the names of these soldiers from memory, later on, at the proper time and place I will record all those who went in the fleet whose names I can call to mind, and say from what part of Spain they came.

Cortés worked hard to get his fleet under way and hastened on his preparations, for already envy and malice had taken possession of the relations of Diego Velásquez who were affronted because their kinsman neither trusted them nor took any notice of them and because he had given charge and command to Cortés, knowing that he had looked upon him as a great enemy only a short time before, on account of his marriage, already mentioned by me; so they went about grumbling at their kinsman Diego Velásquez and at Cortés, and by every means in their power they worked on Diego Velásquez to induce him to revoke the commission.

Now Cortés was advised of all this, and for that reason never left the Governor's side, and always showed himself to be his zealous servant, and kept on telling him that, God willing, he was going to make him a very illustrious and wealthy gentleman in a very short time. Moreover Andrés de Duero was always advising Cortés to hasten the embarkation of himself and his soldiers, for Diego Velásquez was already changing his mind owing to the importunity of his family.

When Cortés knew this he sent orders to his wife that all provisions of food which he wished to take and any other gifts (such as women usually give to their husbands when starting on such an expedition) should be sent at once and placed on board ship.

He had already had a proclamation made that on that day by nightfall all ships, Captains, pilots and soldiers should be on board and no one should remain on shore. When Cortés had seen all his company embarked he went to take leave of Diego Velásquez, accompanied by his great friends and many other gentlemen, and all the most distinguished citizens of that town.

After many demonstrations and embraces of Cortés by the Governor, and of the Governor by Cortés, he took his

leave. The next day very early after having heard Mass we went to our ships, and Diego Velásquez himself accompanied us, and again they embraced with many fair speeches one to the other until we set sail.

A few days later, in fine weather, we reached the Port of Trinidad where we brought up in the harbour and went ashore, and nearly all the citizens of that town came out to meet us ; and entertained us well.

Here in this story will be seen all the opposition which Cortés met with, and how what happened differed entirely from the account given by Gómara in his history.

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NOTE.—This account differs very considerably from that given by Las Casas (Lib. III, cap. cxv). It appears that Diego Velásquez had already determined to take the command from Cortés, “at once on the very night that he became aware of what was going on, as soon as Diego Velásquez was in bed, and all those who belonged to [him,] Cortés, had left the Palace, he went in the profound silence of the night in the utmost haste to awaken the rest of his friends telling them that it was advisable to embark at once. Taking with him a company sufficient to defend his person, he immediately went off to the slaughter house and, although it troubled the contractor who had to supply the whole town with meat, he took it all away without leaving a single cow, pig, or sheep, and had it carried to the ships, exclaiming, but not out loud, for it might perhaps have cost him his life, that they could lay the blame on him [Cortés] for not supplying meat to the town. Then Cortés took off a small golden chain that he wore round his neck and gave it to the contractor or butcher, *and this Cortés told me himself.*

“Cortés at once went on board ship with all the people that he could arouse without noise. Many of the people who had agreed to go with him and who really went were already on board.

“When he was gone either the butcher or others who knew of his departure advised Diego Velásquez that Cortés was gone and was already on board ship. Diego Velásquez got up and mounted his horse, and all the people of the city, in a state of astonishment, accompanied him to the landing place by the sea at daybreak. When Cortés saw him he ordered a boat to be got ready with cannon, guns, muskets and crossbows, and all the necessary arms, and accompanied by the men he could trust best, with his magistrate’s wand [in his hand] he came within crossbow shot of the land and

there stopped. Diego Velásquez said to him 'How is it, compadre,<sup>1</sup> that you are going off like this? Is this the right way to take leave of me?' Cortés replied 'Señor, may your Excellency pardon me, but these things and the like are done before they are thought about, I am at your Excellency's orders.' Diego Velásquez had nothing to say when he saw his infidelity and shamelessness. Cortés ordered the boat's head to be turned and went back to the ships, and ordered the sails to be hoisted in all haste [and] on the 18th Nov. 1518 [he set out] with very little food for the ships were not yet fully laden."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

What Cortés did when he arrived at the town of Trinidad and concerning the soldiers who there joined him to go in his company, and other things that happened.

THE leading inhabitants of that town soon provided quarters for Cortés and all of us among their neighbours. Cortés was lodged in the house of Captain Juan de Grijalva, and he ordered his standard and the Royal pennant to be set up in front of his quarters and issued a proclamation as he had done in Santiago, and ordered search to be made for all sorts of arms, and food and other necessaries to be purchased.

From that town there came to join us five brothers, namely Pedro de Alvarado and Jorge de Alvarado, and Gonzalo and Gómez, and Juan de Alvarado the elder, who was a bastard. The Captain Pedro de Alvarado has often been mentioned by me already. There also joined us from this town Alonzo de Ávila, who went as a Captain in Grijalva's expedition, and Juan de Escalante and Pedro Sanchez Farfan, and Gonzalo Mejía who later on became treasurer in Mexico, and a certain Baena and Juanes of Fuenterrabia, and Lares, the good horseman, so called because there was another Lares, and Cristóbal de Olid, the Valiant, who was Maestro de Campo during the

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<sup>1</sup> *Compadre* = friend, crony.

Mexican wars, and Ortis the Musician, and Gaspar Sanchez, nephew of the treasurer of Cuba, and Diego de Pineda or Pinedo, and Alonzo Rodríguez, who owned some rich gold mines, and Bartolomé García and other gentlemen whose names I do not remember, all persons of quality.

From Trinidad Cortés wrote to the town of Santispíritus which was eighteen leagues distant, informing all the inhabitants that he was setting out on this expedition in His Majesty's service, adding fair words and inducements to attract many persons of quality who had settled in that town, among them Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero cousin of the Count of Medellín, and Gonzalo de Sandoval who became later on, in Mexico, *Alguazil Mayor*,<sup>1</sup> and for eight months was Governor of New Spain and Juan Velásquez de Leon came, a kinsman of Diego Velásquez, and Rodrigo Reogel, and Gonzalo López de Jimena, and his brother, and Juan Sedeño also came. This Juan Sedeño was a settler in the town, I mention this because we had two others of the name Juan Sedeño in the fleet. All these distinguished persons whom I have named came from the town of Santispíritus to Trinidad where Cortés was staying, and when he heard that they were coming he went out to meet them with all the soldiers of his company and received them with great cordiality and they treated him with the highest respect.

All these settlers whom I have named possessed farms near the town where they made Cassava bread and kept herds of swine, and each one endeavoured to contribute as much food as he could.

We continued to enlist soldiers and to buy horses, which at that time were both scarce and costly, and as that gentleman already mentioned by me, Alonzo Hernández

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Constable.

Puertocarrero, neither possessed a horse nor the wherewithal to buy one, Hernando Cortés bought him a gray mare, and paid for it with some of the golden knots off the velvet cloak which as I have said he had had made at Santiago de Cuba.

At that very time a ship arrived in port from Havana, which a certain Juan Sedeño, a settler at Havana, was taking, freighted with Cassava bread and salt pork to sell at some gold mines near Santiago de Cuba.

Juan Sedeño landed and went to pay his respects to Cortés, and after a long conversation Cortés bought the ship and the pork and bread on credit, and it all came with us. So we already had eleven ships and thank God all was going well with us.

Meanwhile Diego Velásquez had sent letters and commands for the fleet to be detained and Cortés to be sent to him as a prisoner.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

How the Governor Diego Velásquez sent two of his servants post haste to the town of Trinidad with orders and authority to cancel the appointment of Cortés, detain the fleet, arrest Cortés and send him as a prisoner to Santiago.

I MUST go back a little from our story, to say that after we had set out from Santiago de Cuba with all the ships, in the way I have already related, so many things were said to Diego Velásquez against Cortés, that he was forced to change his mind, for they told him that Cortés was already in rebellion, and that he left the port by stealth, and that he had been heard to say that although Diego Velásquez and his relations might regret it, he intended to be Captain and that was the reason why he had embarked



all his soldiers by night, so that if any attempt were made to detain him by force he might set sail; they also said that Andrés de Duero, the Secretary, and the Accountant Amador de Lares had deceived Diego Velásquez on account of arrangements made between them and Cortés. Those who took the leading part in persuading Diego Velásquez to revoke the authority he had given to Cortés were some members of the Velásquez family and an old man named Juan Millan whom some called the astrologer; but others said he had a touch of madness because he acted without reflection, and this old man kept repeating to Diego Velásquez "Take care, Sir, for Cortés will take vengeance on you for putting him in prison,<sup>1</sup> and as he is sly and determined he will ruin you if you do not prevent it at once."

And Velásquez listened to these speeches, and was always haunted by suspicions, so without delay he sent two messengers whom he trusted, with orders and instructions to Francisco Verdugo, the Chief Alcalde of Trinidad, who was his brother-in-law, and wrote letters to other friends and relations, to the effect that on no account should the fleet be allowed to sail, and he said in his orders that Cortés should be detained or taken prisoner as he was no longer its captain, for he had revoked his commission and given it to Vasco Porcallo. The messengers also carried letters to Diego de Ordás and Francisco de Morla and other dependents of his begging them not to allow the fleet to sail.

When Cortés heard of this, he spoke to Ordás and Francisco Verdugo and to all the soldiers and settlers at Trinidad, whom he thought would be against him and in favour of the instructions, and he made such speeches and

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to an earlier incident in the relations between Cortés and Diego Velásquez.

promises to them that he brought them over to his side. Diego Ordás himself spoke at once to Francisco Verdugo, the Alcalde Mayor advising him to have nothing to do with the affair but to hush it up, and bade him note that up to that time they had seen no change in Cortés, on the contrary that he showed himself to be a faithful servant of the Governor, and that if Velásquez wished to impute any evil to him in order to deprive him of the command of the fleet, it was as well to remember that Cortés had many men of quality among his friends, who were unfriendly to Velásquez because he had not given them good grants of Indians. In addition to this, that Cortés had a large body of soldiers with him and was very powerful and might sow strife in the town, and perhaps the soldiers might sack the town and plunder it, and do even worse damage.

So the matter was quietly dropped and one of the messengers who brought the letters and instructions, named Pedro Lazo de la Vega joined our company, and by the other messenger Cortés sent a letter to Diego Velásquez written in a very friendly manner, saying that he was amazed at His Honour having come to such a decision, that his desire was to serve God and his Majesty, and to obey him as His Majesty's representative, and that he prayed him not to pay any more attention to what was said by the gentlemen of his family, nor to change his mind on account of the speeches of such an old lunatic as Juan Millan. He also wrote to all his friends and especially to his partners Duero and the Treasurer.

When these letters had been written Cortés ordered all the soldiers to polish up their arms, and he ordered the blacksmiths in the town to make head pieces, and the cross bowmen to overhaul their stores and make arrows, and he also sent for the two blacksmiths and persuaded them to accompany us, which they did. We were ten days

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in that town. Here I will leave off and go on to tell how we embarked for Havana.

However, I wish first to point out to my readers how different this is from the story of Francisco Gómara who says that Diego Velásquez sent to Ordás telling him to invite Cortés to dinner on board a ship, and then to carry him off as a prisoner to Santiago, and makes other statements calculated to mislead in his history, but, so as not to become prolix, I will leave them to the judgment of interested readers.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

How the Captain Hernando Cortés with all the soldiers sailed along the south coast to the port of Havana,<sup>1</sup> and how another ship was sent along the north coast to the same port, and what else took place.

WHEN Cortés saw that there was nothing more to be done at the town of Trinidad he summoned all the soldiers who had assembled there to go with him

(Pedro) de Alvarado that he should go by land to Havana<sup>2</sup> to pick up some soldiers who lived on farms along the road, and I went in his company. Cortés also sent a gentleman named Juan de Escalante, a great friend of his, in a ship along the north coast, and he sent all the horses by land. When

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<sup>1</sup> This was on the south coast, not the present port of Havana on the north coast, which must have been about thirty miles distant. Cortés and his fleet sailed along the south coast of Cuba, and the "San Sebastian" and the vessel commanded by Juan de Escalante were the only vessels on the north side of the Island.

<sup>2</sup> The Alonzo Remón edition says "he summoned all the gentlemen and soldiers who had assembled there to go with him either to embark on the ships which were in port on the south coast, or if they preferred it to go by land to Havana with Pedro de Alvarado who was going to pick up some soldiers who lived on farms along the road."

all this had been done Cortés went on board the flagship to set sail with all the fleet for Havana.

It appears that the ships of the Convoy did not see the flagship in which Cortés had embarked, for it was night time and they went on to the port [of Havana]. We also arrived by land at the town of Havana with Pedro de Alvarado, and the ship in which Juan de Escalante had come along the north coast had already arrived, and all the horses which had been sent by land, but Cortés did not appear, and no one knew where he was delayed. Five days passed without news of his ship and we began to wonder whether he had been lost on the *Jardines*, ten or twelve miles from Havana near the Isle of Pines where there are many shallows. We all agreed that three of the smaller vessels should go in search of Cortés, and in preparing the vessels and in debates whether this or the other man—Pedro or Sancho—should go, two more days went by and Cortés did not appear. Then parties began to be formed, and we all played the game of “Who shall be Captain until Cortés comes?” And the man who took the lead in this was Diego de Ordás, as the chief Mayordomo of Velásquez, who had been sent by the Governor merely to look after the fleet and see that there should be no mutiny.

Let us leave this subject and return to Cortés who, as I have already said, had embarked on the largest ship of the fleet, and in the neighbourhood of the Isle of Pines, or near the *Jardines*, where there are many shallows, the ship ran aground and remained there hard and fast and could not be floated.

Cortés ordered all the cargo which could be removed to be taken ashore in the boat, for there was land near by where it could be stored, and when it was seen that the ship was floating and could be moved, she was taken into deeper water and was laden again with the cargo which

had been taken ashore, sail was then set and the voyage continued to the port of Havana.

When Cortés arrived nearly all of us gentlemen and soldiers who were awaiting him were delighted at his coming, all except some who had hoped to be Captains, for the game of choosing captains came to an end.

As soon as we had lodged Cortés in the house of Pedro Barba, who was the lieutenant of Diego Velásquez in that town, he ordered the standards to be brought out and placed in front of the buildings in which he was lodged and ordered proclamation to be made, as he had done before.

From the Havana there came the Hidalgo Francisco Montejo very often mentioned by me, who after the conquest of Mexico was appointed Governor and Adelantado of Yucatan, and there also came Diego de Soto of Toro who was Mayordomo to Cortés in Mexico, and a certain Angulo y Garcicaro, and Sebastian Rodríguez and a Pacheco and a somebody Gutierrez, and a Rójas (not Rójas el Rico) and a youth named Santa Clara, and two brothers called the Martínez del Freginal, and a Juan de Najara (I don't mean the deaf one who played Pelota<sup>1</sup> in Mexico), all persons of quality, not counting other soldiers whose names I cannot remember.

When Cortés beheld all these Hidalgos collected together he was greatly pleased. He sent a ship to the Cape of Guaniguanico, to an Indian town there, where they made Cassava bread and kept many pigs, to have her laden with salt pork, for the farm belonged to the Governor Diego Velásquez,<sup>2</sup> and he sent Diego de Ordás

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<sup>1</sup> A ball game.

<sup>2</sup> In a conversation with Las Casas in the year 1542, Cortés, speaking of this expedition, laughingly remarked, "A mi fé, anduve por alli como un gentil corsario." "By my faith I went about there like an excellent robber." (Las Casas, *Hist. de Indias*, Lib. III, cap. cxvi).

who was the chief Mayordomo of the property of Velásquez in command of the ship, as he wished to get him out of the way, for he knew that Diego de Ordás did not show himself to be very well disposed towards him at the time when his ship went ashore near the Isle of Pines and the question arose as to who should be chosen captain. So in order to avoid disputes with him he sent Diego de Ordás off with orders that after freighting the ship with supplies of food, he should remain at the port of Guaniguanico until he was joined by the other ship which was going along the north coast, and then that the two should sail together for Cozumel, but that [in case of any change of plans] he would send Indians in canoes to advise him what was to be done.

I must not forget to say that Francisco de Montejo and all the other settlers at Havana sent on board great stores of Cassava bread and salt pork, for other provisions were not to be had.

Cortés now ordered all the artillery, which consisted of ten brass guns and some falconets, to be brought out of the ships, and gave them in charge of an artilleryman named Mesa, and of a levantine named Arbenga, and a certain Juan Catalan, with orders to have them thoroughly cleaned and tested, and to see that the balls and powder were in readiness, and he gave them wine and vinegar with which to clean them. He gave the gunners as a companion a certain Bartolomé de Usagre. He also ordered that the crossbows with their cords, nuts, and other necessaries should be overhauled, and that they should be tested at a target, so as to see how far each of them would carry.

As in the country round Havana there is much cotton, we made well padded armour for ourselves, which is most necessary when fighting Indians, on account of the great use they make of darts, arrows and lances, and stones which fall on one like hail.

It was here in Havana that Cortés began to organize a household and to be treated as a Lord. The first Marshal of the household,<sup>1</sup> whom he appointed was a certain Guzman who soon afterwards died or was killed by the Indians (this was not Cristóbal de Guzman, the Mayordomo of Cortés who took Guatemoc<sup>2</sup> prisoner during the war in Mexico) and he had as *camarero*<sup>3</sup> Rodrigo Ranguel, and for Mayordomo, Juan de Cáceres who became a rich man after the conquest of Mexico.

When all this was settled we got ready to embark and the horses were divided among all the ships, and mangers were made for them and a store of maize and hay put on board. I will now call to mind all the mares and horses that were shipped:—

The Captain Cortés:—A vicious dark chestnut horse, which died as soon as we arrived at San Juan de Ulúa.

Pedro de Alvarado and Hernando López de Ávila:—a very good sorrel mare, good both for sport and as a charger. When we arrived at New Spain Pedro de Alvarado bought the other half share in the mare or took it by force.

Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero:—a grey mare, a very good charger which Cortés bought for him with his gold buttons.

Juan Velásquez de Leon:—A very powerful gray mare which we called “La Rabona,”<sup>4</sup> very handy and a good charger.

Cristóval de Olid:—a dark chestnut horse, fairly good.

Francisco de Montejo and Alonzo de Ávila:—a parched sorrel horse, no use for warfare.

<sup>1</sup> Maestresala = the chief waiter in a nobleman's household.

<sup>2</sup> Guatemuz in the original.

<sup>3</sup> *Camarero* = chamberlain.

<sup>4</sup> La Rabona = the bob-tailed.

Francisco de Morla :—a dark chestnut horse, very fast and very easily handled.

Juan de Escalante :—a light chestnut horse with three white stockings, not much good.

Diego de Ordás, a gray mare, barren, tolerably good, but not fast.

Gonzalo Domínguez :—a wonderfully good horseman ; a very good dark chestnut horse, a grand galloper.

Pedro González de Trujillo :—a good chestnut horse, all chestnut, a very good goer.

Moron, a settler at Bayamo :—a dappled horse with stockings on the forefeet, very handy.

Baena : a settler at Trinidad :—a dappled horse almost black, no good for anything.

Lares, a very good horseman :—an excellent horse of rather light chestnut colour, a very good goer.

Ortiz the musician and Bartolomé García, who once owned gold mines :—a very good dark horse called "El Arriero,"<sup>1</sup> this was one of the best horses carried in the fleet.

Juan Sedeño, a settler at Havana :—a chestnut mare which foaled on board ship.

This Juan Sedeño passed for the richest soldier in the fleet, for he came in his own ship with the mare, and a negro and a store of cassava bread and salt pork, and at that time horses and negroes were worth their weight in gold, and that is the reason why more horses were not taken, for there were none to be bought. I will leave off here and tell what next happened to us, when we were just about to embark.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

How Diego Velásquez sent a servant named Gaspar de Garnica with orders and instructions that in any case Cortés should be arrested and the fleet taken from him, and what was done about it.

To make my story clear, I must go back and relate that when Diego Velásquez knew for certain that his lieutenant and brother-in-law Francisco Verdugo who was stationed at the town of Trinidad not only refused to compel Cortés to leave the fleet, but, together with Diego de Ordás, had helped him to get away, they say that he was so angry that he roared with rage and told his secretary Andrés de Duero and the Treasurer Amador de Lares that they had deceived him by the agreement they had made, and that Cortés was mutinous. He made up his mind to send a servant with letters and orders to Pedro Barba, his lieutenant at Havana, and wrote very graciously to all his friends who were settlers in that town, and to Diego de Ordás and to Juan Velásquez de Leon who were his friends and kinsmen praying them neither for good nor ill to let the fleet get away, and to seize Cortés at once and send him under a strong guard to Santiago de Cuba.

On the arrival of Garnica (that was the name of the man who brought the letters and orders to Havana) it was known at once what he had brought with him, for by the same messenger Cortés was advised of what Velásquez was doing. It happened in this way:—it appears that a friar of the Order of Mercy, who gave himself out to be a follower of Velásquez, was in the Governor's company at the time, and he wrote a letter to another friar of his order named Bartolomé del Olmedo, who was with us, and in that letter, written by the friar, Cortés was informed by his two associates, Andrés de Duero and the treasurer of all that had happened.

To go back to my story :—As Cortés had sent away Diego de Ordás in a ship to collect stores, there was no one to oppose him except Juan Velásquez de Leon, and as soon as Cortés spoke to him he brought him over to his side,—all the more easily because Juan Velásquez was put out with his kinsman for not giving him a good grant of Indians.

Not one of the others to whom Diego Velásquez had written favoured his proposal, indeed one and all declared for Cortés, the lieutenant Pedro Barba above all. In addition to this the Alvarados, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, Cristóval de Olid, Juan de Escalante, Andrés de Monjaraz, and his brother Gregorio de Monjaraz and all of us would have given our lives for Cortés. So that if in the Town of Trinidad the orders of Velásquez were slighted, in the town of Havana they were absolutely ignored.

By this same Garnica, the lieutenant Pedro Barba wrote to Diego Velásquez that he did not dare to seize Cortés as he was too strongly supported by soldiers, and he was afraid lest Cortés should sack and plunder the town and carry off all the settlers along with him ; that from all that he had gathered Cortés was the Governor's faithful servant and would not dare to be anything else. Cortés also wrote to Velásquez in the agreeable and complimentary terms which he knew so well how to use, and told him that he should set sail next day and that he remained his humble servant.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

How Cortés set sail with all his company of Gentlemen and soldiers for the Island of Cozumel and what happened there.

THERE was to be no parade of the forces until we arrived at Cozumel. Cortés ordered the horses to be taken on board ship, and he directed Pedro de Alvarado to go along the North coast in a good ship named the *San Sebastian*, and he told the pilot who was in charge to wait for him at Cape San Antonio as all the ships would meet there and go in company to Cozumel. He also sent a messenger to Diego de Ordás, who had gone along the North Coast to collect supplies of food with orders to do the same and await his coming.

On the 10th February 1519, after hearing Mass, they set sail along the south coast with nine ships and the company of gentlemen and soldiers whom I have mentioned, so that with the two ships absent on the north coast there were eleven ships in all, including that which carried Pedro de Alvarado with seventy soldiers and I travelled in his company.

The Pilot named Camacho who was in charge of our ship paid no attention to the orders of Cortés and went his own way and we arrived at Cozumel two days before Cortés and anchored in the port which I have often mentioned when telling about Grijalva's expedition.

Cortés had not yet arrived, being delayed by the ship commanded by Francisco de Morla having lost her rudder in bad weather, however she was supplied with another rudder by one of the ships of the fleet,<sup>1</sup> and all then came on in company.

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<sup>1</sup> Blotted out in the original MS. "They turned back looking for the rudder in the sea and they found it and put it in its place, so that they were soon able to navigate the ship."—G. G.

To go back to Pedro de Alvarado. As soon as we arrived in port we went on shore with all the soldiers to the town of Cozumel, but we found no Indians there as they had all fled. So we were ordered to go on to another town about a league distant, and there also the natives had fled and taken to the bush, but they could not carry off their property and left behind their poultry and other things and Pedro de Alvarado ordered forty of the fowls to be taken. In an Idol house there were some altar ornaments made of old cloths and some little chests containing diadems, Idols, beads and pendants of gold of poor quality, and here we captured two Indians and an Indian woman, and we returned to the town where we had disembarked.

While we were there Cortés arrived with all the fleet, and after taking up his lodging the first thing he did was to order the pilot Camacho to be put in irons for not having waited for him at sea as he had been ordered to do. When he saw the town without any people in it, and heard that Pedro de Alvarado had gone to the other town and had taken fowls and cloths and other things of small value from the Idols, and some gold which was half copper, he showed that he was very angry both at that and at the pilot not having waited for him, and he reprimanded Pedro de Alvarado severely, and told him that we should never pacify the country in that way by robbing the natives of their property, and he sent for the two Indians and the woman whom we had captured, and through Melchorejo, (Julianillo his companion was dead) the man we had brought from Cape Catoche who understood the language well, he spoke to them telling them to go and summon the Caciques and Indians of their town, and he told them not to be afraid, and he ordered the gold and the cloths and all the rest to be given back to them, and for the fowls (which had already been eaten)

he ordered them to be given beads and little bells, and in addition he gave to each Indian a Spanish shirt. So they went off to summon the lord of the town, and the next day the Cacique and all his people arrived, women and children and all the inhabitants of the town, and they went about among us as though they had been used to us all their lives, and Cortés ordered us not to annoy them in any way. Here in this Island Cortés began to rule energetically, and Our Lord so favoured him that whatever he put his hand to it turned out well for him, especially in pacifying the people and towns of these lands, as we shall see further on.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

How Cortés reviewed all his army and what else happened to us.

WHEN we had been in Cozumel three days Cortés ordered a muster of his forces so as to see how many of us there were, and he found that we numbered five hundred and eight, not counting the shipmasters, pilots and sailors, who numbered about one hundred. There were sixteen horses and mares all fit to be used for sport or as chargers.

There were eleven ships both great and small, and one a sort of launch which a certain Gines Nortes brought laden with supplies.

There were thirty two cross bowmen and thirteen musketeers;—*escopeteros*, as they were then called and <sup>1</sup> brass guns, and four falconets, and much powder and ball. About the number of cross bowmen my memory

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<sup>1</sup> Blotted out in the original MS. is the word "ten."—G. G.

does not serve me very well, but it is not material to my story.

After the review Cortés ordered Mesa surnamed “the gunner” and Bartolomé de Usagre and Arbenga and a certain Catalan who were all artillerymen, to keep their guns clean and in good order, and the ammunition ready for use. He appointed Francisco de Orozco, who had been a soldier in Italy to be captain of the Artillery. He likewise ordered two crossbowmen named Juan Benítez and Pedro del Guzman the crossbowman, who were masters of the art of repairing crossbows, to see that every crossbow had two or three [spare] nuts and cords and fore cords and to be careful to keep them stored and to have smoothing tools and *inguijuela*<sup>1</sup> and [to see] that the men should practice at a target. He also ordered all the horses to be kept in good condition.

I don't know why I should expend so much ink in telling about these preparations of arms and the rest of it, for in truth Cortés was most vigilant about everything.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

How Cortés came to know that the Indians of Cape Catoche held two Spaniards in captivity, and what he did about it.

AS Cortés was most diligent in all matters, he sent for me and a Biscayan named Martin Ramos, and asked us what we thought about those words which the Indians of Campeche had used when we went there with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, when they cried out “Castilan, Castilan” as I have already stated in the chapter which treats of that expedition. We again related to Cortés all that we had seen and heard about the matter, and he said

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<sup>1</sup> Probably some technical term now obsolete.

that he also had often thought about it, and that perhaps there might be some Spaniards living in the country, and added "It seems to me that it would be well to ask these Caciques of Cozumel if they know anything about them." So through Melchorejo, the man from Cape Catoche, who already understood a little Spanish and knew the language of Cozumel very well, all the chiefs were questioned, and every one of them said that they had known of certain Spaniards and gave descriptions of them, and said that some Caciques, who lived about two days' journey inland, kept them as slaves, and that here in Cozumel were some Indian traders who spoke to them only a few days ago. We were all delighted at this news, and Cortés told the Caciques that they must go at once and summon the Spaniards, taking with them letters, (which in the Indian language they call *amales*) and he gave shirts to the Caciques and Indians who went with the letters and spoke reassuringly to them, and told them that when they returned he would give them some more beads. The Cacique advised Cortés to send a ransom to the owners who held these men as slaves, so that they should be allowed to come, and Cortés did so, and gave to the messengers all manner of beads. Then he ordered the two smallest vessels to be got ready (one of them was little larger than a launch) and twenty men with guns and crossbows, under the command of Diego de Ordás, and he sent them off to the coast near Cape Catoche where the larger vessel was to wait for eight days while the smaller vessel should go backwards and forwards and bring news of what was being done, for the land of Cape Catoche was only four leagues distant, and the one country could be seen from the other.

In the letter Cortés said:—"Gentlemen and brothers, here in Cozumel I have learnt that you are captives in the hands of a Cacique, and I pray you that you come here to Cozumel at once, and for this purpose I have sent a ship

with soldiers, in case you have need of them, and a ransom to be paid to those Indians with whom you are living. The ship will wait eight days for you. Come in all haste, and you will be welcomed and protected. I am here at this Island with five hundred soldiers and eleven ships, in which I go on, please God, to a town called Tabasco or Potonchan.”

The two vessels were soon despatched with the two Indian traders from Cozumel who carried the letters, and they crossed the strait in three hours and the messengers with the letters and ransom were landed. In two days the letters were delivered to a Spaniard named Jerónimo de Aguilar, for that we found to be his name, and so I shall call him in future. When he had read the letter and received the ransom of beads which we had sent to him he was delighted, and carried the ransom to the Cacique his master, and begged leave to depart, and the Cacique at once gave him leave to go wherever he pleased. Aguilar set out for the place, five leagues distant, where his companion Gonzalo Guerrero was living, but when he read the letter to him he answered, “ Brother Aguilar, I am married and have three children and the Indians look on me as a Cacique and captain in wartime,—You go and God be with you, but I have my face tattooed and my ears pierced, what would the Spaniards say should they see me in this guise? and look how handsome these boys of mine are, for God’s sake give me those green beads you have brought and I will give the beads to them and say that my brothers have sent them from my own country.” And the Indian wife of Gonzalo spoke to Aguilar in her own tongue very angrily and said to him, “ What is this slave coming here for talking to my husband,—go off with you, and don’t trouble us with any more words.”

Then Aguilar reminded Gonzalo that he was a Christian and said that he should not imperil his soul for the sake of



an Indian woman, and as for his wife and children he could take them with him if he did not wish to desert them. But by no words or admonishments could he be persuaded to come. It appears that Gonzalo Guerrero was a sailor and a native of Palos.

When Jerónimo de Aguilar saw that Gonzalo would not accompany him he went at once, with the two Indian messengers, to the place where the ship had been awaiting his coming, but when he arrived he saw no ship for she had already departed. The eight days during which Ordás had been ordered to await and one day more had already expired, and seeing that Aguilar had not arrived Ordás returned to Cozumel without bringing any news about that for which he had come.

When Aguilar saw that there was no ship there he became very sad, and returned to his master and to the town where he usually lived.

Now I will leave this and say that when Cortés saw Ordás return without success or any news of the Spaniards or Indian messengers he was very angry, and said haughtily to Ordás that he thought that he would have done better than to return without the Spaniards or any news of them, for it was quite clear that they were prisoners in that country.

At that moment it happened that some sailors called the Peñates,<sup>1</sup> natives of Gibrleon,<sup>2</sup> had stolen some pieces of salt pork from a soldier named Berrio and would not return them, so Berrio complained to Cortés and the sailors were put on oath, and they perjured themselves, but in the enquiry the fact of the theft was proved, and that the pork had been divided among seven sailors, and Cortés ordered four of them to be flogged, in spite of the appeals of some of the Captains.

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<sup>1</sup> Peñates = rock men.

<sup>2</sup> Gibraltar.

Here I must leave both this matter of the sailors and that of Aguilar, and keep the story of our journey up to date and tell how many Indians both the natives of the towns near Cape Catoche and those from other parts of Yucatan came on pilgrimages to the Island of Cozumel, for it appeared that there were some very hideous idols kept in a certain oratory on Cozumel to which it was the custom of the people of the land to offer sacrifices at that season. One morning the courtyard of the oratory where the Idols were kept was crowded with Indians, and many of them both men and women were burning a resin like our incense. As this was a new sight to us we stood round watching it with attention, and presently an old Indian with a long cloak, who was the priest of the Idols (and I have already said that the priests in New Spain are called *Papas*) went up on the top of the oratory and began to preach to the people. Cortés and all of us were wondering what would be the result of that black sermon. Cortés asked Melchorejo, who understood the language well, what the old Indian was saying, for he was informed that he was preaching evil things, and he sent for the Cacique and all the principal chiefs and the priest himself, and, as well as he could through the aid of our interpreter, he told them that if we were to be brothers they must cast those most evil Idols out of their temple, for they were not gods at all but very evil things which led them astray and could lead their souls to hell. Then he spoke to them about good and holy things, and told them to set up in the place of their Idols an image of Our Lady which he gave them, and a cross, which would always aid them and bring good harvests and would save their souls, and he told them in a very excellent way other things about our holy faith.

The Priest and the Caciques answered that their forefathers had worshipped those Idols because they were good, and that they did not dare to do otherwise, and that

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if we cast out their Idols we would see how much harm it would do us, for we should be lost at sea. Then Cortés ordered us to break the Idols to pieces and roll them down the steps,<sup>1</sup> and this we did; then he ordered lime to be brought, of which there was a good store in the town, and Indian masons, and he set up a very fair altar on which we placed the figure of Our Lady; and he ordered two of our party named Alonzo Yáñez and Álvaro López who were carpenters and joiners to make a cross of some rough timber which was there, and it was placed in a small chapel near the altar and the priest named Juan Díaz said mass there, and the Cacique and the heathen priest and all the Indians stood watching us with attention.

The Caciques in this Island of Cozumel are called Calachiones as I have already said when telling about our doings at Potonchan. Now I will leave off here, and will go on to tell how we embarked on board ship.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

How Cortés allotted the ships and appointed captains to go in them, and gave instructions to the pilots and arranged lantern signals for the night time, and what else happened to us.

CORTÉS himself took command of the flagship, Pedro de Alvarado and his brothers took charge of the *San Sebastian*, a very good ship, and the commands of the other ships were given to Alonso Hernández Puertocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, who had a good ship, Cristóval de Olid, Diego de Ordás, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Juan de Escalante,

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<sup>1</sup> In the "Itinerary of Grijalva" a temple or oratory of the Idols is thus described:—"It was eighteen steps (of a stairway) in height and the base was solid, and the measurement round it was one hundred and eighty feet. On the top of this was a small tower the height of two men one above the other and inside were certain figures and bones and *Cenis* which are the Idols which they worship."

Francisco de Morla, the Page Escobar, and the smallest vessel of all, a launch, was commanded by Gines Nortés. Each ship had its pilot; Anton de Alaminos was Pilot in Chief, and instructions were given about the course to be steered and other matters, and about the lantern signals for the night time.

Cortés took leave of the Caciques and priests and confided to their care the Image of Our Lady and told them to reverence the cross and keep it clean and wreathed with flowers and they would see what advantage they would gain by so doing, and the Indians replied that they would do so, and they brought four fowls and two jars of honey and they embraced him.

We embarked and set sail on a day in the Month of March 1519, and went on our way in fair weather. At ten o'clock that same morning loud shouts were given from one of the ships, which tried to lay to, and fired a shot so that all the vessels of the fleet might hear it, and when Cortés heard this he at once checked the flagship and seeing the ship commanded by Juan de Escalante bearing away and returning towards Cozumel, he cried out to the other ships which were near him "What is the matter? What is the matter?" And a soldier named Luis de Zaragoza answered that Juan de Escalante's ship with all the Cassava bread on board was sinking, and Cortés cried, "Pray God that we suffer no such disaster," and he ordered the Pilot Alaminos to make signal to all the other ships to return to Cozumel. So this same day we returned to the port whence we had sailed, and sent the Cassava bread on shore, and we found the image of Our Lady and the Cross well cared for with incense burning in front of it, and this pleased us greatly. The Cacique and priests came to speak to Cortés and asked why we had returned, and he replied, because one of the ships was leaking and we wished to caulk her, and he asked them to

come in their canoes and help the ships boats to bring the Cassava bread on shore, and this they did.

We were four days repairing the ship. Now I will stop writing about this, and will relate how the Spaniard named Aguilar who was a prisoner among the Indians heard of our return, and what else happened.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

How the Spaniard named Jerónimo de Aguilar, who was a prisoner among the Indians, heard that we had returned to Cozumel and came to us, and what else took place.

WHEN the Spaniard who was a prisoner among the Indians, knew for certain that we had returned to Cozumel with the ships, he was very joyful and gave thanks to God, and he came in all haste with the two Indians who had carried the letters and ransom, and embarked in a canoe, and as he was able to pay well with the green beads we had sent him, he soon hired a canoe and six Indian rowers, and they rowed so fast that, meeting no head wind, in a very short time they crossed the strait between the two shores, which is a distance of about four leagues.

When they arrived on the coast of Cozumel and were disembarking, some soldiers who had gone out hunting (for there were wild pigs on the island) told Cortés that a large canoe, which had come from the direction of Cape Catoche, had arrived near the town. Cortés sent Andrés de Tápia and two other soldiers to go and see, for it was a new thing for Indians to come fearlessly in large canoes into our neighbourhood. So they set out, and as soon as the Indians who came in the canoe which Aguilar had hired caught sight of the Spaniards, they were frightened and wished to get back into the canoe and flee away. Aguilar told them in their own language not to be afraid,

that these men were his brothers. When Andrés de Tápia saw that they were only Indians (for Aguilar looked neither more nor less than an Indian), he at once sent word to Cortés by a Spaniard that they were Cozumel Indians who had come in the canoe. As soon as the men had landed, the Spaniard in words badly articulated and worse pronounced, cried *Dios y Santa Maria de Sevilla*, and Tápia went at once to embrace him. The other soldier who had accompanied Tápia when he saw what had happened, promptly ran to Cortés to beg a reward for the good news, for it was a Spaniard who had come in the canoe, and we were all delighted when we heard it.

Tápia soon brought the Spaniard to Cortés, but before he arrived where Cortés was standing, several Spaniards asked Tápia where the Spaniard was? although he was walking by his side, for they could not distinguish him from an Indian as he was naturally brown and he had his hair shorn like an Indian slave, and carried a paddle on his shoulder, he was shod with one old sandal and the other was tied to his belt, he had on a ragged old cloak, and a worse loin cloth with which he covered his nakedness, and he had tied up, in a bundle in his cloak, a Book of Hours, old and worn. When Cortés saw him in this state, he too was deceived like the other soldiers, and asked Tápia "Where is the Spaniard?" On hearing this, the Spaniard squatted down on his haunches as the Indians do and said "I am he." Cortés at once ordered him to be given a shirt and doublet and drawers and a cape and sandals, for he had no other clothes, and asked him about himself and what his name was and when he came to this country. The man replied, pronouncing with difficulty, that he was called Jerónimo de Aguilar, a native of Ecija, and that he had taken holy orders, that eight years had passed since he and fifteen other men and two women left Darien for the Island of Santo Domingo, where he had

some disputes and a law-suit with a certain Enciso y Valdívia, and he said that they were carrying ten thousand gold dollars and the legal documents of the case, and that the ship in which they sailed, struck on the *Alacranes* so that she could not be floated, and that he and his companions and the two women got into the ship's boat, thinking to reach the Island of Cuba or Jamaica, but that the currents were very strong and carried them to this land, and that the Calachiones of that district had divided them among themselves, and that many of his companions had been sacrificed to the Idols, and that others had died of disease, and the women had died of overwork only a short time before, for they had been made to grind corn ; that the Indians had intended him for a sacrifice, but that one night he escaped and fled to the Cacique with whom since then he had been living (I don't remember the name that he gave) and that none were left of all his party except himself and a certain Gonzalo Guerrero, whom he had gone to summon, but he would not come.

When Cortés heard all this, he gave thanks to God, and said that he would have him well looked after and rewarded. He questioned Aguilar about the country and the towns, but Aguilar replied that having been a slave, he knew only about hewing wood and drawing water and digging in the fields, that he had only once travelled as far as four leagues from home when he was sent with a load, but, as it was heavier than he could carry, he fell ill, but that he understood that there were very many towns. When questioned about Gonzalo Guerrero, he said that he was married and had three sons, and that his face was tattooed and his ears and lower lip were pierced, that he was a seaman and a native of Palos, and that the Indians considered him to be very valiant ; that when a little more than a year ago a captain and three vessels arrived at Cape Catoche, (it seems probable that this was when we

came with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba) it was at the suggestion of Guerrero that the Indians attacked them, and that he was there himself in the company of the Cacique of the large town, whom I have spoken about when describing the expedition of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba. When Cortés heard this he exclaimed "I wish I had him in my hands for it will never do to leave him here."

When the Caciques of Cozumel found out that Aguilar could speak their language, they gave him to eat of their best, and Aguilar advised them always to respect and revere the holy image of Our Lady and the Cross, for they would find that it would benefit them greatly.

On the advice of Aguilar the Caciques asked Cortés to give them a letter of recommendation, so that if any other Spaniards came to that port they would treat the Indians well and do them no harm, and this letter was given to them. After bidding the people good-bye with many caresses and promises we set sail for the Rio de Grijalva.

This is the true story of Aguilar, and not the other which the historian Gómara has written; however, I am not surprised that what he says is news to me. Now I must go on with my story.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

How we again embarked and made sail for the Rio de Grijalva, and what happened to us on the voyage.

ON the 4th March 1519, with the good fortune to carry such a useful and faithful interpreter along with us, Cortés gave orders for us to embark in the same order as we

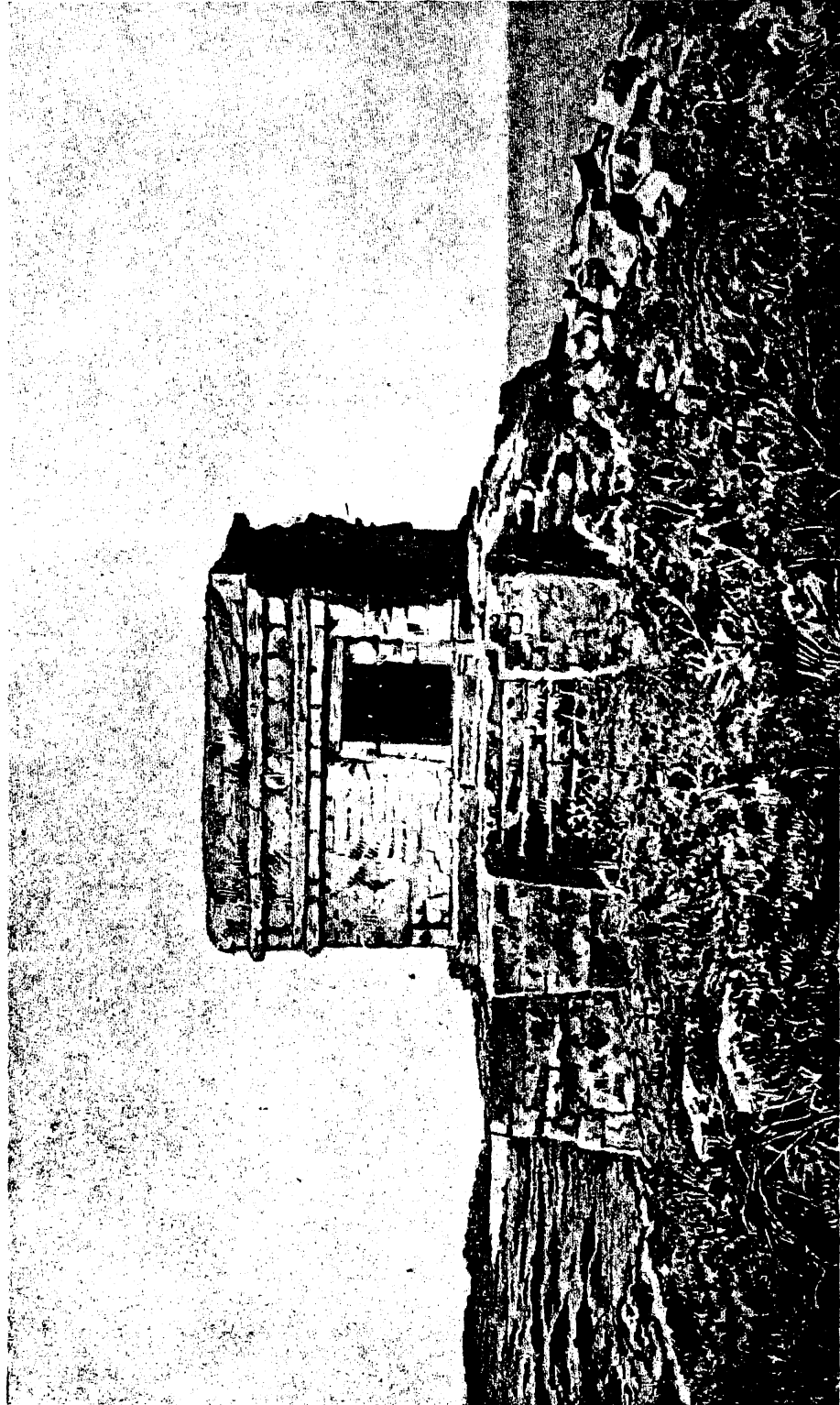
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had followed before we ran back to Cozumel, under the same instructions and with the same lantern signals by night.

We sailed along in good weather, until at nightfall a head wind struck us so fiercely that the ships were dispersed and there was great danger of being driven ashore. Thank God, by midnight the weather moderated, and as soon as dawn broke the ships got together again, excepting the vessel under the command of Juan Velásquez de Leon. We went on our way and up to midday had seen nothing of the missing vessel which distressed us all as we feared she had been lost on a shoal. When the whole day had passed and she did not appear Cortés told the pilot Alaminos that it was no good going on any further without news of the missing ship, so the pilot made signal for all the vessels to lay to, and wait to see if by chance the storm had driven her into some bay whence she could not get out again against a head wind. However, when she still failed to appear, the pilot said to Cortés, "Sir, I feel certain that she put into a sort of port or bay which we have already passed, and that a head wind keeps her there, for the pilot on board of her is Juan Álvarez el Manquillo who was with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and again with Grijalva and he knows that port." So it was agreed that the whole fleet should go back and search for the missing ship, and we found her at anchor in the bay of which the pilot had spoken, which was a great relief to us all. We stayed in that bay for a day and we lowered two boats and the pilot and a Captain called Francisco de Lugo went on shore and found farms and maize plantations, and some places where the Indians made salt, and there were four *Cues* which are the houses of their Idols, and there were many Idols in them, nearly all of them figures of tall





TEMPLE ON THE ISLA DE LAS MUGERES.

*Drawn by Miss Annie Hunter from a photograph by W. H. Holmes and a drawing by F. Catherwood.*

*Reproduced for the Hakluyt Society by Donald Macbeth, 1908.*

Plate 10.

To face page 105.

women so that we called that place the *Punta de las Mugerres*.<sup>1</sup>

I remember that Aguilar said that the town where he was held in slavery was near these farms and that he had come there with a load, and his master had taken him there, and that he fell ill on account of the weight of the load, and he said that the town where Gonzalo Guerrero lived was not far off, and that there was some gold in all the towns, but it did not amount to much; that if we liked he would guide us to the towns, and advised us to go there. Cortés replied, laughing, that we were not after such small game, but to serve God and the King.

Soon afterwards Cortés ordered a Captain named Escobar to go in the vessel under his command, which was a fast sailer and drew little water, to the Boca de Términos and to examine the place thoroughly and find out if it would be a good port for a settlement, and if game were plentiful there as he had been told it was. That after he had examined the place he should put up some sign and break down some trees at the mouth of the harbour, or that he should write a letter and place it where we could see it from either side of the harbour, so that we should know that he had gone in there; or that, after examining the port he should beat up to windward and await the fleet at sea. This order was given on the

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<sup>1</sup> Punta de las Mugerres = the cape of the women. The Island which forms the bay is still called Isla de las Mugerres. Bernal Díaz says nothing about this locality in his description of the two earlier voyages, but the author of the *Itinerario* says that Grijalva observed it, after leaving Cozumel:—"We made sail and went towards the Island of Yucatan along the North Coast, and as we coasted along we came to a beautiful tower on a point, which is said to be inhabited by women who live without men. One might believe them to be a race of Amazons." As Grijalva could not possibly have had any information on the subject, it seems to show that the *Itinerario* was written at a later date than is usually assigned to it, and gave this explanation to account for the name given to the locality by Cortés.

advice of the pilot, so that when we arrived at the Boca de Términos with the fleet we should not be delayed by going into port.

So Escobar left us and went to the Puerto de Términos and did all that he was told to do, and he found the lurcher which had been left there in Grijalva's time, and she was fat and sleek. Escobar said that when the lurcher saw the ship come into port she wagged her tail and showed other signs of delight, and came at once to the soldiers and went with them on board the ship.

After carrying out his orders Escobar put to sea again and awaited the fleet, and it appears that with the south wind that was blowing he was not able to lay to but was driven out to sea.

To go back to our fleet ; we remained at the Punta de las Mugerres until the next day when we put to sea with a good breeze off the land and went on until we arrived at the Boca de Términos, but, as we did not meet Escobar, Cortés ordered a boat to be lowered, and with ten cross-bowmen went to look for him in the Boca de Términos, or to see if there was any signal or letter. They soon found trees that had been cut down, and a letter in which Escobar said that the harbour was a good one, that the land was fertile, and that there was an abundance of game, and he told about the lurcher. However, the pilot Alaminos told Cortés that we had better keep on our course, for with the wind from the south Escobar must have been driven out to sea, but that he would not be far off as he would lie close to the wind. But Cortés was anxious lest some accident had befallen him, so he ordered the sheets to be slacked away and we soon came up to Escobar who made his report to Cortés and told him why he could not await his coming.

While this was taking place we arrived near Potonchan

[Chanpoton] and Cortés ordered the Pilot to drop anchor in the bay, but the Pilot replied that it was a bad port, for the tide ran out so far that the ships had to be brought up more than two leagues from the shore. Cortés had a mind to give the Indians a lesson on account of the defeat they had inflicted on Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and Grijalva, and many of us soldiers who had been in those battles begged him to go in, and not to leave without giving the Indians a good chastisement, even if it did detain us two or three days. But the Pilot Alaminos and the other pilots contended that if we should go in it might, with a head wind, be eight days before we could get out again; that we had a fair wind now for Tabasco and could get there in two days. So we passed on and after three days sail arrived at the Rio de Grijalva called in the Indian language the Tabasco River, and what happened to us there and the attack that was made on us I will go on to relate.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

How we arrived at the Rio de Grijalva, which in the language of the Indians is called Tabasco, of the attack the Indians made on us, and what else happened to us with them.

ON the 12th March, 1519, we arrived with all the fleet at the Rio de Grijalva, which is also called Tabasco, and as we already knew from our experience with Grijalva that vessels of large size could not enter into the river, the larger vessels were anchored out at sea, and from the smaller vessels and boats all the soldiers were landed at the Cape of the Palms (as they were in Grijalva's time) which was about half a league distant from the town of

Tabasco.<sup>1</sup> The river, the river banks and the mangrove thickets were swarming with Indians, at which those of us who had not been here in Grijalva's time were much astonished.

In addition to this there were assembled in the town more than twelve thousand warriors<sup>2</sup> all prepared to make war on us, for at this time the town was of considerable importance and other large towns were subject to it and they had all made preparation for war and were well supplied with the arms which they are accustomed to use.

The reason for this was that the people of Potonchan<sup>3</sup> and Lázaro and the other towns in that neighbourhood had looked upon the people of Tabasco as cowards, and had told them so to their faces, because they had given

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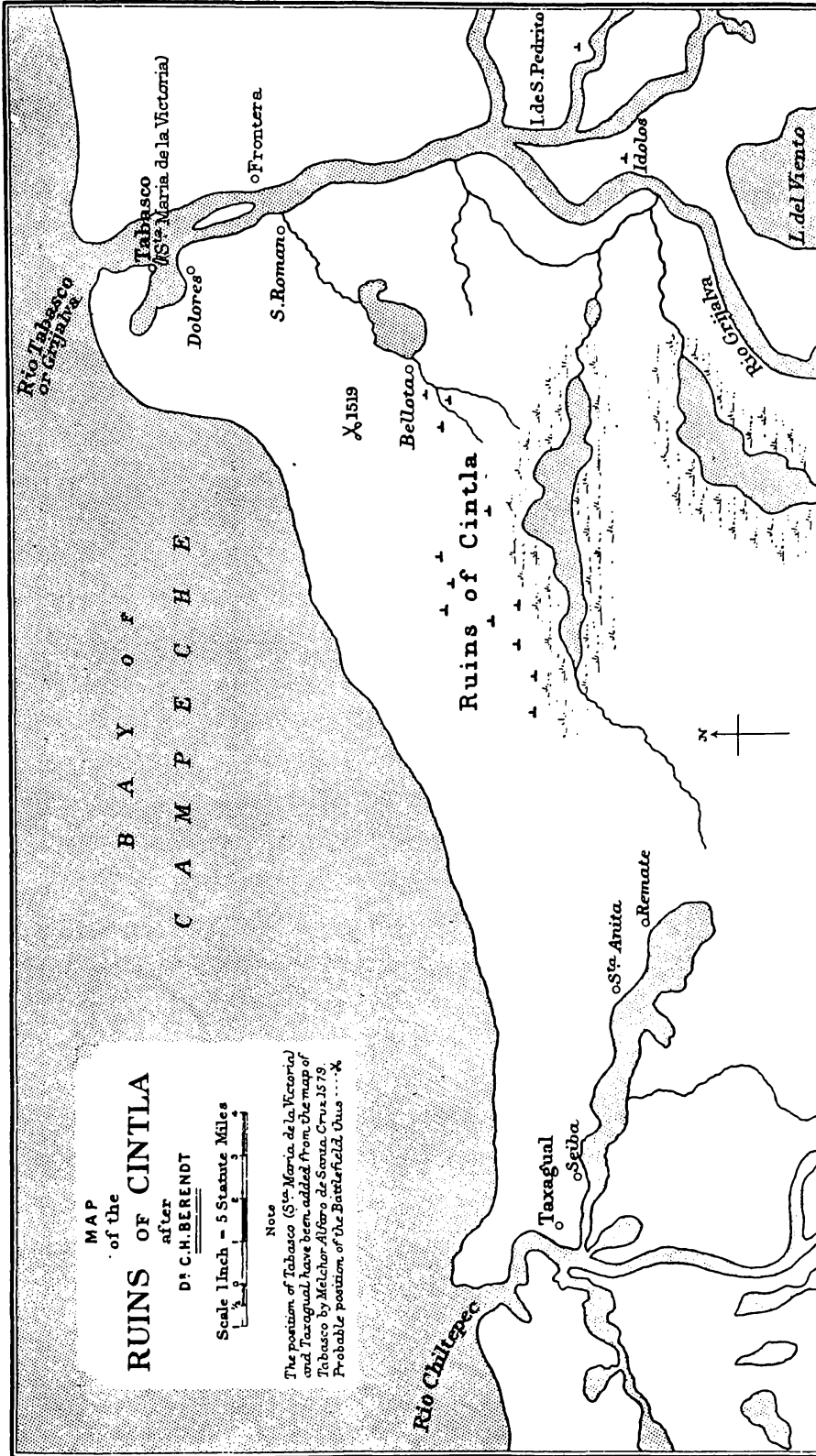
<sup>1</sup> The large town which the author here calls Tabasco appears originally to have been called Potonchan; it was renamed by the Spaniards Santa Maria de la Victoria; it was later on called Tabasco, and it soon fell into ruin and disappeared altogether, its place as a port being taken by Frontera on the other side of the river. In the *Relacion de la Villa de Santa Maria de la Victoria*, 1579 (*Relaciones de Yucatan*, vol. ii, p. 341), we find: "This river and port is at 18° 30' (N. Lat.), where this town was established about a league from the mouth of the river on a *placel*\* of water which is formed on the north side, and on a branch of the river which leads to a town called Taxagual, of fifteen households (*vecinos*) more or less, which is three leagues from this town and one league away from the river. The land of this town [Santa Maria] is sterile because it is built on sand and swamps. This branch of the river turns to the south-west, and into it enter swamps and lagoons, and it has many deep places (*bajos*). The barques and frigates anchor in this branch of the river when they come to this town to load or unload at the foot of the Cross which is at the end of the street and the mound on which it stands." See also Note to Chapter III. In the *American Antiquarian* for September, 1896, Dr. Daniel Brinton published an article on "The Battle and the Ruins of Cintla," taken principally from notes made by the late Dr. C. H. Berendt, who visited and surveyed the ruins in March and April, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Blotted out in the original: "twenty eight thousand."

<sup>3</sup> Chanpoton.

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\* "Sobre un placel de Agua que se hace de la parte del Norte" = on a sandbank which has formed to the north of the water (?).



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Grijalva the gold jewels which I have spoken about in an earlier chapter, and they said that they were too faint hearted to attack us although they had more towns and more warriors than the people of Potonchan and Lázaro. This they said to annoy them and added that they in their towns had attacked us and killed fifty six of us. So on account of these taunts which had been uttered, the people of Tabasco had determined to take up arms.

When Cortés saw them drawn up ready for war he told Aguilar the interpreter, who spoke the language of Tabasco well,<sup>1</sup> to ask the Indians who passed near us, in a large canoe and who looked like chiefs, what they were so much disturbed about, and to tell them that we had not come to do them any harm, but were willing to give them some of the things we had brought with us and to treat them like brothers, and we prayed them not to begin a war as they would regret it, and much else was said to them about keeping the peace. However, the more Aguilar talked to them the more violent they became, and they said that they would kill us all if we entered their town, and that it was fortified all round with fences and barricades of large trunks of trees.

Aguilar spoke to them again and asked them to keep the peace, and allow us to take water and barter our goods with them for food, and permit us to tell the Calachones<sup>2</sup> things which would be to their advantage and to the service of God our Lord, but they still persisted in saying that if we advanced beyond the palm trees they would kill us.

When Cortés saw the state of affairs he ordered the

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<sup>1</sup> These people were Tzendals, a branch of the Maya stock, and Aguilar, who spoke Maya, could understand and speak to them.

<sup>2</sup> Calachiones?

boats and small vessels to be got ready and ordered three cannon to be placed in each boat and divided the crossbowmen and musketeers among the boats. We remembered that when we were here with Grijalva we had found a narrow path which ran across some streams from the palm grove to the town, and Cortés ordered three soldiers to find out in the night if that path ran right up to the houses, and not to delay in bringing the news, and these men found out that it did lead there. After making a thorough examination of our surroundings the rest of the day was spent in arranging how and in what order we were to go in the boats.

The next morning we had our arms in readiness and after hearing mass Cortés ordered the Captain Alonzo de Avila and a hundred soldiers among whom were ten crossbowmen, to go by the little path which led to the town, and, as soon as he heard the guns fired, to attack the town on one side while he attacked it on the other. Cortés himself and all the other Captains and soldiers went in the boats and light draft vessels up the river. When the Indian warriors who were on the banks and among the mangroves saw that we were really on the move, they came after us with a great many canoes with intent to prevent our going ashore at the landing place, and the whole river bank appeared to be covered with Indian warriors carrying all the different arms which they use, and blowing trumpets and shells and sounding drums. When Cortés saw how matters stood he ordered us to wait a little and not to fire any shots from guns or crossbows or cannon, for as he wished to be justified in all that he might do he made another appeal to the Indians through the interpreter Aguilar, in the presence of the King's Notary, Diego de Godoy, asking the Indians to allow us to land and take water and speak to them about God and about His Majesty, and adding that should

they make war on us, that if in defending ourselves some should be killed and others hurt, theirs would be the fault and the burden and it would not lie with us, but they went on threatening that if we landed they would kill us.

Then they boldly began to let fly arrows at us, and made signals with their drums, and like valiant men they surrounded us with their canoes, and they all attacked us with such a shower of arrows that they kept us in the water in some parts up to our waists. As there was much mud and swamp at that place we could not easily get clear of it, and so many Indians fell on us, that what with some hurling their lances with all their might and others shooting arrows at us, we could not reach the land as soon as we wished.

While Cortés was fighting he lost a shoe in the mud and could not find it again, and he got on shore with one foot bare. Presently someone picked the shoe out of the mud and he put it on again.

While this was happening to Cortés, all of us Captains as well as soldiers, with the cry of "Santiago," fell upon the Indians and forced them to retreat, but they did not fall back far, as they sheltered themselves behind great barriers and stockades formed of thick logs until we pulled them apart and got to one of the small gateways of the town. There we attacked them again, and we pushed them along through a street to where other defences had been erected, and there they turned on us and met us face to face and fought most valiantly, making the greatest efforts, shouting and whistling and crying out "al calacheoni", "al calacheoni", which in their language meant an order to kill or capture our Captain. While we were thus surrounded by them Alonzo de Ávila and his soldiers came up.

As I have already said they came from the Palm grove by land and could not arrive sooner on account of the swamps and creeks. Their delay was really unavoidable,

just as we also had been delayed over the summons of the Indians to surrender, and in breaking openings in the barricades, so as to enable us to attack them. Now we all joined together to drive the enemy out of their strongholds, and we compelled them to retreat, but like brave warriors they kept on shooting showers of arrows and fire-hardened darts, and never turned their backs on us until [we gained] a great court with chambers and large halls, and three Idol houses, where they had already carried all the goods they possessed. Cortés then ordered us to halt, and not to follow on and overtake the enemy in their flight.

There and then Cortés took possession of that land for His Majesty, performing the act in His Majesty's name. It was done in this way ; he drew his sword and as a sign of possession he made three cuts in a huge tree called a *Ceiba*, which stood in the court of that great square, and cried that if any person should raise objection, that he would defend the right with the sword and shield which he held in his hands.

All of us soldiers who were present when this happened cried out that he did right in taking possession of the land in His Majesty's name, and that we would aid him should any person say otherwise. This act was done in the presence of the Royal Notary. The partizans of Diego Velásquez chose to grumble at this act of taking possession.<sup>1</sup>

I call to mind that in that hard fought attack which the Indians made on us, they wounded fourteen soldiers, and

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<sup>1</sup> This was the first overt act showing the intention of Cortés to free himself from the control of Velásquez and place himself directly under the protection of his sovereign, a policy which was consummated a few weeks later on the sands at Vera Cruz. Had Cortés intended to continue his subservience to Diego Velásquez, his name would have been used in the formal act of taking possession as it had been used in the proclamations made by Cortés in Cuba.

they gave me an arrow wound in the thigh, but it was only a slight wound ; and we found eighteen Indians dead in the water where we disembarked.

We slept there [in the great square] that night with guards and sentinels on the alert. I will stop here and go on to tell what more happened.

NOTE.—The Carta de Vera Cruz says that the Indians then sent a deputation and a small present to Cortés, but still insisted that the Spaniards should leave the country. Cortés demanded food for his men, and the Indians promised to send it. Cortés then waited for two days, and as no Indians with food made their appearance he sent out the foraging expeditions described in the following Chapter.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

How Cortés ordered two of his Captains each with a hundred soldiers to go and examine the country further inland, and what happened to us.

THE next morning Cortés ordered Pedro de Alvarado to set out in command of a hundred soldiers, fifteen of them with guns and crossbows, to examine the country inland for a distance of two leagues, and to take Melchorejo the interpreter from Cape Catoche in his company. When Melchorejo was looked for he could not be found as he had run off with the people of Tabasco, and it appears that the day before he had left the Spanish clothes that had been given to him hung up in the palm grove, and had fled by night in a canoe. Cortés was much annoyed at his flight, fearing that he would tell things to his fellow countrymen to our disadvantage,—well, let him go as a bit of bad luck, and let us get back to our story. Cortés also sent the Captain Francisco de Lugo, in another direction, with a hundred soldiers, twelve of them musketeers and crossbowmen, with instructions not to go beyond two leagues and to return to the camp to sleep.

I

When Francisco de Lugo and his company had marched about a league from camp he came on a great host of Indian archers carrying lances and shields, drums and standards and they made straight for our company of soldiers and surrounded them on all sides. They were so numerous and shot their arrows so deftly that it was impossible to withstand them, and they hurled their fire-hardened darts and cast stones from their slings in such numbers that they fell like hail, and they attacked our men with their two-handed knife-like swords.<sup>1</sup> Stoutly as Francisco de Lugo and his soldiers fought, they could not ward off the enemy, and when this was clear to them, while still keeping a good formation, they began to retreat towards the camp. A certain Indian, a swift and daring runner, had been sent off to the camp to beg Cortés to come to their assistance, meanwhile Francisco de Lugo by careful management of his musketeers and crossbowmen, some loading while others fired, and by occasional charges was able to hold his own against all the squadrons attacking him.

Let us leave him in the dangerous situation I have described and return to Captain Pedro de Alvarado, who after marching about a league came on a creek which was very difficult to cross, and it pleased God our Lord so to lead him that he should return by another road in the direction where Francisco de Lugo was fighting. When he heard the reports of the muskets and the great din of drums and trumpets, and the shouts and whistles of the Indians, he knew that there must be a battle going on, so with the greatest haste but in good order he ran towards the cries and shots and found Captain Francisco de Lugo and his men fighting with their faces to the enemy, and five of the enemy lying dead. As soon as he joined forces

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<sup>1</sup> Macanas or Maquahuitls—edged with flint or obsidian.

with Francisco de Lugo they turned on the Indians and drove them back, but they were not able to put them to flight, and the Indians followed our men right up to the camp.

In like manner other companies of warriors had attacked us where Cortés was guarding the wounded, but we soon drove them off with our guns, which laid many of them low, and with our good sword play.

When Cortés heard of Francisco de Lugo's peril from the Cuban Indian who came to beg for help, we promptly went to his assistance, and we met the two captains with their companies about half a league from the camp. Two soldiers of Francisco de Lugo's company were killed and eight wounded, and three of Pedro de Alvarado's company were wounded. When we arrived in camp we buried the dead and tended the wounded, and stationed sentinels and kept a strict watch.

In those skirmishes we killed fifteen Indians and captured three, one of whom seemed to be a chief, and through Aguilar, our interpreter, we asked them why they were so mad as to attack us, and that they could see that we should kill them if they attacked us again. Then one of these Indians was sent with some beads to give to the Caciques to bring them to peace, and that messenger told us that the Indian Melchorejo whom we had brought from Cape Catoche, went to the chiefs the night before and counselled them to fight us day and night and said that they would conquer us as we were few in number; so it turned out that we had brought an enemy with us instead of a help.

This Indian whom we despatched with the message went off and never returned. From the other two Indian prisoners Aguilar the interpreter learnt for certain that by the next day the Caciques from all the neighbouring towns of the province would have assembled with all their forces



ready to make war on us, and that they would come and surround our camp, for that was Melchorejo's advice to them.

I must leave off here, and will go on to tell what we did in the matter.

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

How Cortés told us all to get ready by the next day to go in search of the Indian host, and ordered the horses to be brought from the ships, and what happened in the battle which we fought.

AS soon as Cortés knew for certain that the Indians intended to make war on us, he ordered all the horses to be landed from the ships without delay, and the cross-bowmen and musketeers and all of us soldiers, even those who were wounded, to have our arms ready for use.

When the horses were brought on shore they were very stiff and afraid to move, for they had been many days on board ship, but the next day they moved quite freely.

At that time it happened that six or seven soldiers, young men and otherwise in good health, suffered from pains in their loins, so that they could not stand on their feet and had to be carried on men's backs. We did not know what this sickness came from, some say that they fell ill on account of the [quilted] cotton armour which they never took off, but wore day and night, and because in Cuba they had lived daintily and were not used to hard work, so in the heat they fell ill. Cortés ordered them not to remain on land but to be taken at once on board ship.

The best horses and riders were chosen to form the cavalry, and the horses had little bells attached to their breastplates. The men were ordered not to stop to spear those who were down, but to aim their lances at the faces of the enemy.

Thirteen gentlemen were chosen to go on horseback with Cortés in command of them, and I here record their names:—Cortés, Cristóval de Olíd, Pedro de Alvarado, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Montejo, and Alonzo de Ávila to whom was given the horse belonging to Ortiz the musician and Bartolomé García, for neither of these men were good horsemen, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Francisco de Morla, and Lares the good horseman (I call him so because there was another Lares), Gonzalo Domínguez, an excellent horseman, Moron of Bayamo, and Pedro González of Trujillo. Cortés selected all these gentlemen and went himself as their captain.

Cortés ordered Mesa the artilleryman to have his guns ready, and he placed Diego de Ordás in command of us foot soldiers and he also had command of the musketeers and bowmen, for he was no horseman.

Very early the next day which was the day of Nuestra Señora de Marzo<sup>1</sup> after hearing mass, which was said by Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, we formed in order under our standard bearer, who at that time was Antonio de Villaroel the husband of Isabel de Ojeda, who afterwards changed his name to Antonio Serrano de Cardona, and marched to some large savannas where Francisco de Lugo and Pedro de Alvarado had been attacked, about a league distant from the camp we had left; and that savanna and township was called Cintla, and was subject to Tabasco.

Cortés [and the horsemen] were separated a short distance from us on account of some swamps which could not be crossed by the horses, and as we were marching along in the way I have said, we came on the whole force of Indian warriors who were on the way to attack us in our

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<sup>1</sup> Lady-day, 25th March.

camp. It was near the town of Cintla that we met them on an open plain. So it happened that those warriors were looking for us with the intention of attacking us, and we were looking for them for the very same purpose. I must leave off here, and will go on to tell what happened in the battle, and one may well call it a battle, as will be seen further on.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

How all the Caciques of Tabasco and its dependencies attacked us, and what came of it.

I HAVE already said how we were marching along when we met all the forces of the enemy which were moving in search of us, and all the men wore great feather crests and they carried drums and trumpets, and their faces were coloured black and white, and they were armed with large bows and arrows, lances and shields and swords shaped like our two-handed swords, and many slings and stones and fire-hardened javelins, and all wore quilted cotton armour. As they approached us their squadrons were so numerous that they covered the whole plain, and they rushed on us like mad dogs completely surrounding us, and they let fly such a cloud of arrows, javelins and stones that on the first assault they wounded over seventy of us, and fighting hand to hand they did us great damage with their lances, and one soldier<sup>1</sup> fell dead at once from an arrow wound in the ear, and they kept on shooting and wounding us.<sup>2</sup> With our muskets and crossbows and with

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<sup>1</sup> Alonzo Remón Edition says "a soldier named Saldaña."

<sup>2</sup> Carta de Vera Cruz says that only twenty were wounded in all, and that no one died of their wounds. Gomara says seventy were wounded.

good sword play we did not fail as stout fighters, and when they came to feel the edge of our swords little by little they fell back, but it was only so as to shoot at us in greater safety. Mesa, our artilleryman, killed many of them with his cannon, for they were formed in great squadrons and they did not open out so that he could fire at them as he pleased, but with all the hurts and wounds which we gave them, we could not drive them off. I said to Diego de Ordás "it seems to me that we ought to close up and charge them," for in truth they suffered greatly from the strokes and thrusts of our swords, and that was why they fell away from us, both from fear of these swords, and the better to shoot their arrows and hurl their javelins and the hail of stones. Ordás replied that it was not good advice, for there were three hundred Indians to every one of us, and that we could not hold out against such a multitude,—so there we stood enduring their attack. However, we did agree to get as near as we could to them, as I had advised Ordás, so as to give them a bad time with our swordsmanship, and they suffered so much from it that they retreated towards a swamp.

During all this time Cortés and his horsemen failed to appear, although we greatly longed for him, and we feared that by chance some disaster had befallen him.

I remember that when we fired shots the Indians gave great shouts and whistles and threw dust and rubbish into the air so that we should not see the damage done to them, and they sounded their trumpets and drums and shouted and whistled and cried "Alala! alala!"

Just at this time we caught sight of our horsemen, and as the great Indian host was crazed with its attack on us, it did not at once perceive them coming up behind their backs, and as the plain was level ground and the horsemen were good riders, and many of the horses were very handy and fine gallopers, they came quickly on the

enemy and speared them as they chose. As soon as we saw the horsemen we fell on the Indians with such energy that with us attacking on one side and the horsemen on the other, they soon turned tail. The Indians thought that the horse and its rider was all one animal, for they had never seen horses up to this time.

The savannas and fields were crowded with Indians running to take refuge in the thick woods near by.

After we had defeated the enemy Cortés told us that he had not been able to come to us sooner as there was a swamp in the way, and he had to fight his way through another force of warriors before he could reach us, and three horsemen and five horses had been wounded.

As soon as the horsemen had dismounted under some trees and houses, we returned thanks to God for giving us so complete a victory.

As it was Lady day we gave to the town which was afterwards founded here the name of Santa Maria de la Victoria, on account of this great victory being won on Our Lady's day. This was the first battle that we fought under Cortés in New Spain.

After this we bound up the hurts of the wounded with cloths, for we had nothing else, and we doctored the horses by searing their wounds with the fat from the body of a dead Indian which we cut up to get out the fat, and we went to look at the dead lying on the plain and there were more than eight hundred of them, the greater number killed by thrusts, the others by the cannon, muskets and crossbows, and many were stretched on the ground half dead. Where the horsemen had passed, numbers of them lay dead or groaning from their wounds. The battle lasted over an hour, and the Indians fought all the time like brave warriors, until the horsemen came up.

We took five prisoners, two of them Captains. As it was late and we had had enough of fighting, and we had

not eaten anything, we returned to our camp. Then we buried the two soldiers who had been killed, one by a wound in the ear, and the other by a wound in the throat, and we seared the wounds of the others and of the horses with the fat of the Indian, and after posting sentinels and guards, we had supper and rested.

It is on this occasion that Francisco López de Gomara says that Francisco de Morla set out on a dapple gray horse before Cortés and the other horsemen arrived, and that the sainted apostles Señor Santiago and Señor San Pedro appeared. I say that all our doings and our victories are at the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in this battle there were so many Indians to every one of us that they could have blinded us with the dust they raised but for the pity of God who always helped us. It may be that as Gomara says the Glorious Apostles Señor Santiago and Señor San Pedro came to our aid and that I, being a sinner was not worthy to behold them. What I saw was Francisco de Morla, on a chestnut horse, who came up at the same time as Cortés, and it seems to me that now as I write I can see again with these sinful eyes all that battle in the very way that it took place, and although I am a poor sinner and not worthy to see either of those glorious apostles, there were there in our company over four hundred soldiers and Cortés himself and many other gentlemen, and it would have been talked about, and evidence would have been taken, and a church would have been built when the town was founded, and the town would have been named Santiago de la Victoria, or San Pedro de la Victoria instead of Santa Maria de la Victoria. If it was as Gomara says we must have all been very bad Christians, when our Lord God sent his holy Apostle to us, not to recognise the great favour that he was showing to us, and not daily to have venerated that church. I wish to God it were as the historian Gomara says, but, until I read

his history, one never heard about it among the conquistadores who were there at the time.

I will leave off here and go on to tell what else happened to us.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

How Cortés sent to summon all the Caciques of those provinces and what was done about it.

I HAVE already said that we captured five Indians during the battle of whom two were captains. When Aguilar spoke to these men he found out from what they said that they were fit persons to be sent as messengers, and he advised Cortés to free them, so that they might go and talk to the Caciques of the town and any others they might see. These two messengers were given green and blue beads, and Aguilar spoke many pleasant and flattering words to them, telling them that they had nothing to fear as we wished to treat them like brothers, that it was their own fault that they had made war on us, and that now they had better collect together all the Caciques of the different towns as we wished to talk to them, and he gave them much other advice in a gentle way so as to gain their good will. The messengers went off willingly and spoke to the Caciques and chief men, and told them all we wished them to know about our desire for peace.

When our envoys had been listened to, it was settled among them that fifteen Indian slaves, all with stained faces and ragged cloaks and loin cloths, should at once be sent to us with fowls and baked fish and maize cakes. When these men came before Cortés he received them graciously, but Aguilar the interpreter asked them rather angrily why they had come with their faces in that state, that it looked more as though they came to fight than to treat for peace; and he told them to go back to the

Caciques and inform them, that if they wished for peace in the way we offered it, chieftains should come and treat for it, as was always the custom, and that they should not send slaves. But even these painted faced slaves were treated with consideration by us and blue beads were sent by them in sign of peace, and to soothe their feelings.

The next day thirty Indian Chieftains, clad in good cloaks, came to visit us and brought fowls, fish, fruit and maize cakes, and asked leave from Cortés to burn and bury the bodies of the dead who had fallen in the recent battles, so that they should not smell badly or be eaten by lions and tigers. Permission was at once given them and they hastened to bring many people to bury and burn the bodies according to their customs.

Cortés learnt from the Caciques that over eight hundred men were missing, not counting those who had been carried off wounded.<sup>1</sup>

They said that they could not tarry with us either to discuss the matter or make peace, for on the morrow the chieftains and leaders of all the towns would have assembled, and that then they would agree about a peace.

As Cortés was very sagacious about everything, he said, laughing, to us soldiers who happened to be in his company, "Do you know, gentlemen, that it seems to me that the Indians are terrified at the horses and may think that they and the cannon alone make war on them. I have thought of something which will confirm this belief, and that is to bring the mare belonging to Juan Sedeño, which foaled the other day on board ship, and tie her up where I am now standing and also to bring the stallion of Ortiz the musician, which is very excitable, near enough to scent the mare, and when he has scented her to lead

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<sup>1</sup> The Carta de Vera Cruz says the Indians were 40,000 in number and that they lost 220 killed.



each of them off separately so that the Caciques who are coming shall not hear the horse neighing as they approach, not until they are standing before me and are talking to me." We did just as Cortés ordered and brought the horse and mare, and the horse soon detected the scent of her in Cortés's quarters. In addition to this Cortés ordered the largest cannon that we possessed to be loaded with a large ball and a good charge of powder.

About mid-day forty Indians arrived, all of them Caciques of good bearing, wearing rich mantles such as are used by them. They saluted Cortés and all of us, and brought incense and fumigated all of us who were present, and they asked pardon for their past behaviour, and said that henceforth they would be friendly.

Cortés, through Aguilar the Interpreter, answered them in a rather grave manner, as though he were angry, that they well knew how many times he had asked them to maintain peace, that the fault was theirs, and that now they deserved to be put to death, they and all the people of their towns, but that as we were the vassals of a great King and Lord named the Emperor Don Carlos, who had sent us to these countries, and ordered us to help and favour those who would enter his royal service, that if they were now as well disposed as they said they were, that we would take this course, but that if they were not, some of those *Tepustles* would jump out and kill them (they call iron *Tepustle* in their language) for some of the *Tepustles* were still angry because they had made war on us. At this moment the order was secretly given to put a match to the cannon which had been loaded, and it went off with such a thunderclap as was wanted, and the ball went buzzing over the hills, and as it was mid-day and very still it made a great noise, and the Caciques were terrified on hearing it. As they had never seen anything like it they believed what Cortés had told them was true.

Then Cortés told them, through Aguilar, not to be afraid for he had given orders that no harm should be done to them.

Just then the horse that had scented the mare was brought and tied up not far distant from where Cortés was talking to the Caciques, and, as the mare had been tied up at the place where Cortés and the Indians were talking, the horse began to paw the ground and neigh and become wild with excitement, looking all the time towards the Indians and the place whence the scent of the mare had reached him, and the Caciques thought that he was roaring at them and they were terrified. When Cortés observed their state of mind, he rose from his seat and went to the horse and told two orderlies to lead it far away, and said to the Indians that he had told the horse not to be angry as they were friendly and wished to make peace.

While this was going on there arrived more than thirty Indian carriers, whom the natives call *Tamenes*, who brought a meal of fowls and fish and fruits and other food, and it appears that they had lagged behind and could not reach us at the same time as the Caciques.

Cortés had a long conversation with these chieftains and Caciques and they told him that they would all come on the next day and would bring a present and would discuss other matters, and then they went away quite contented.

And there I will leave them until the next day.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

How all the Caciques and Calachonis from the Rio de Grijalva came and brought a present, and what took place about it.

EARLY the next morning, the 15th March, 1519,<sup>1</sup> many Caciques and chiefs of Tabasco and the neighbouring towns arrived and paid great respect to us all, and they brought a present of gold, consisting of four diadems and some gold lizards, and two [ornaments] like little dogs, and earrings, and five ducks, and two masks<sup>2</sup> with Indian faces, and two gold soles for sandals, and some other things of little value. I do not remember how much the things were worth; and they brought cloth, such as they make and wear, which was quilted stuff. My readers will have heard from those who know that province that there is nothing of much value in it.

This present, however, was worth nothing in comparison with the twenty women that were given us, among them one very excellent woman called Doña Marina, for so she was named when she became a Christian. I will leave off talking about her and the other women who were brought to us, and will tell how Cortés received this present with pleasure and went aside with all the Caciques, and with Aguilar, the interpreter, to hold converse, and he told them that he gave them thanks for what they had brought with them, but there was one thing that he must ask of them, namely, that they should re-occupy the town with all their people, women and children, and he wished to see it re-peopled within two days, for he would recognize that as a sign of true peace. The Caciques

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<sup>1</sup> This is evidently an error, as Bernal Díaz has already stated that the Battle of Cintla was fought on Lady day, the 25th March.

<sup>2</sup> In the text "dos figuras de Caras de Indios."

sent at once to summon all the inhabitants with their women and children and within two days they were again settled in the town.

One other thing Cortés asked of the chiefs and that was to give up their idols and sacrifices, and this they said they would do, and, through Aguilar, Cortés told them as well as he was able about matters concerning our holy faith, how we were Christians and worshipped one true and only God, and he showed them an image of Our Lady with her precious Son in her arms and explained to them that we paid the greatest reverence to it as it was the image of the Mother of our Lord God who was in heaven. The Caciques replied that they liked the look of the great *Teleciguata* (for in their language great ladies are called *Teleciguatas*) and [begged] that she might be given them to keep in their town, and Cortés said that the image should be given to them and ordered them to make a well-constructed altar, and this they did at once.

The next morning, Cortés ordered two of our carpenters, named Alonzo Yañez and Alvaro López, to make a very tall cross.

When all this had been settled Cortés asked the Caciques what was their reason for attacking us three times when we had asked them to keep the peace ; the chief replied that he had already asked pardon for their acts and had been forgiven, that the Cacique of Chanpoton, his brother, had advised it, and that he feared to be accused of cowardice, for he had already been reproached and dishonoured for not having attacked the other captain who had come with four ships, (he must have meant Juan de Grijalva) and he also said that the Indian whom we had brought as an Interpreter, who escaped in the night, had advised them to attack us both by day and night.

Cortés then ordered this man to be brought before him without fail, but they replied that when he saw that the

battle was going against them, he had taken to flight, and they knew not where he was although search had been made for him ; but we came to know that they had offered him as a sacrifice because his counsel had cost them so dear.

Cortés also asked them where they procured their gold and jewels, and they replied, from the direction of the setting sun, and said "Culua" and "Mexico," and as we did not know what Mexico and Culua meant we paid little attention to it.

Then we brought another interpreter named Francisco, whom we had captured during Grijalva's expedition, who has already been mentioned by me, but he understood nothing of the Tabasco language only that of Culua<sup>1</sup> which is the Mexican tongue. By means of signs he told Cortés that Culua was far ahead, and he repeated "Mexico" which we did not understand.

So the talk ceased until the next day when the sacred image of Our Lady and the Cross were set up on the altar and we all paid reverence to them, and Padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo said mass and all the Caciques and chiefs were present and we gave the name of Santa Maria de la Victoria to the town, and by this name the town of Tabasco is now called. The same friar, with Aguilar as interpreter, preached many good things about our holy faith to the twenty Indian women who had been given us, telling them not to believe in the Idols which they had been wont to trust in, for they were evil things and not gods, and that they should offer no more sacrifices to them for they would lead them astray, but that they should worship our Lord Jesus Christ, and immediately afterwards they were baptized. One Indian lady who was given to us here was christened Doña Marina, and she was truly a great chief-

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<sup>1</sup> The word in the text is Cuba, but clearly it must be intended for Culua, as is shown in the context.

tainness and the daughter of great Caciques and the mistress of vassals, and this her appearance clearly showed. Later on I will relate why it was and in what manner she was brought here.

I do not clearly remember the names of all the other women, and it is not worth while to name any of them ; however, they were the first women to become Christians in New Spain.

Cortés allotted one of them to each of his captains and Doña Marina, as she was good looking and intelligent and without embarrassment, he gave to Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero, who I have already said was a distinguished gentleman, and cousin of the Count of Medellin. When Puertocarrero went to Spain, Doña Marina lived with Cortés, and bore him a son named Don Martin Cortés.

We remained five days in this town, to look after the wounded and those who were suffering from pain in the loins, from which they all recovered. Furthermore, Cortés drew the Caciques to him by kindly converse, and told them how our master the Emperor, whose vassals we were, had under his orders many great lords, and that it would be well for them also to render him obedience, and that then, whatever they might be in need of, whether it was our protection or any other necessity, if they would make it known to him, no matter where he might be, he would come to their assistance.

The Caciques all thanked him for this, and thereupon all declared themselves the vassals of our great Emperor. These were the first vassals to render submission to His Majesty in New Spain.

Cortés then ordered the Caciques to come with their women and children early the next day, which was Palm Sunday, to the altar, to pay homage to the holy image of Our Lady and to the Cross, and at the same time Cortés ordered them to send six Indian carpenters to accompany

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our carpenters to the town of Cintla where our Lord God was pleased to give us victory in the battle which I have described, there to cut a cross on a great tree called a Ceiba which grew there, and they did it so that it might last a long time, for as the bark is renewed the cross will show there for ever. When this was done he ordered the Indians to get ready all the canoes that they owned to help us to embark, for we wished to set sail on that holy day because the pilots had come to tell Cortés that the ships ran a great risk from a *Norther* which is a dangerous gale.

The next day, early in the morning, all the Caciques and chiefs came in their canoes with all their women and children and stood in the court where we had placed the church and cross, and many branches of trees had already been cut ready to be carried in the procession. Then the Caciques beheld us all, Cortés, as well as the captains, and every one of us marching together with the greatest reverence in a devout procession, and the Padre de la Merced and the priest, Juan Diaz, clad in their vestments, said mass, and we paid reverence to and kissed the Holy Cross, while the Caciques and Indians stood looking on at us.

When our solemn festival was over the chiefs approached and offered Cortés ten fowls, and baked fish and vegetables, and we took leave of them, and Cortés again commended to their care the Holy image and the sacred crosses and told them always to keep the place clean and well swept and to deck the cross with garlands and to reverence it, and then they would enjoy good health and bountiful harvests.

It was growing late when we got on board ship and the next day, Monday, we set sail in the morning and with a fair wind laid our course for San Juan de Ulúa, keeping close in shore all the time

As we sailed along in the fine weather, we soldiers who knew the coast would say to Cortés, "Señor, over there is La Rambla, which the Indians call Ayagualulco," and soon afterwards we arrived off Tonalá which we called San Antonio, and we pointed it out to him. Further on we showed him the great river of Coatzacoalcos, and he saw the lofty snow capped mountains, and then the Sierra of San Martin, and further on we pointed out the split rock, which is a great rock standing out in the sea with a mark on the top of it which gives it the appearance of a seat. Again further on we showed him the Rio de Alvarado, which Pedro de Alvarado entered when we were with Grijalva, and then we came in sight of the Rio de Banderas, where we had gained in barter the sixteen thousand dollars, then we showed him the Isla Blanca, and told him where lay the Isla Verde, and close in shore we saw the Isla de Sacrificios where we found the altars and the Indian victims in Grijalva's time ; and at last our good fortune brought us to San Juan de Ulúa soon after midday on Holy Thursday.

I remember that a gentleman, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero came up to Cortés and said : "It seems to me, sir, that these gentlemen who have been twice before to this country are saying to you :—

Cata Francia, Montesinos.	Behold France, Montesinos.
Cata Paris la ciudad.	Look at Paris, the city.
Cata las aguas de Duero	See the waters of the Duero
Do van a dar en la Mar.	Flowing to the sea.

I say that you are looking on rich lands, may you know how to govern them well!"

Cortés knew well the purpose for which these words were said, and answered : "Let God give us the good fortune in fighting which He gave to the Paladin Roldan, and with Your Honour and the other gentlemen for leaders, I shall know well how to manage it."



Let us leave off here, for this is what took place and Cortés did not go into the Río de Alvarado, as Gomara says he did.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

Showing that Doña Marina was a *Cacica* and the daughter of persons of high rank, and was the mistress of towns and vassals, and how it happened that she was taken to Tabasco.

BEFORE telling about the great Montezuma and his famous City of Mexico and the Mexicans, I wish to give some account of Doña Marina, who from her childhood had been the mistress and *Cacica* of towns and vassals. It happened in this way :

Her father and mother were chiefs and *Caciques* of a town called Paynala, which had other towns subject to it, and stood about eight leagues from the town of Coatzacoalcos. Her father died while she was still a little child, and her mother married another *Cacique*, a young man, and bore him a son. It seems that the father and mother had a great affection for this son and it was agreed between them that he should succeed to their honours when their days were done. So that there should be no impediment to this, they gave the little girl, Doña Marina, to some Indians from Xicalango<sup>1</sup> and this they did by night so as to escape observation, and they then spread the report that she had died, and as it happened at this time that a child of one of their Indian slaves died they gave out that it was their daughter and the heiress who was dead.

The Indians of Xicalango gave the child to the people of Tabasco, and the Tabasco people gave her to Cortés. I myself knew her mother, and the old woman's son and

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<sup>1</sup> Xicalango, on the southern side of the Laguna de Términos, was an outlying stronghold of the Aztec Empire. (See *Relacion de Melchor de Sta. Cruz.*)

her half-brother, when he was already grown up and ruled the town jointly with his mother, for the second husband of the old lady was dead. When they became Christians, the old lady was called Marta and the son Lázaro. I knew all this very well because in the year 1523 after the conquest of Mexico and the other provinces, when Cristóval de Olid revolted in Honduras, and Cortés was on his way there, he passed through Coatzacoalcos and I and the greater number of the settlers of that town accompanied him on that expedition as I shall relate in the proper time and place. As Doña Marina proved herself such an excellent woman and good interpreter throughout the wars in New Spain, Tlascala and Mexico (as I shall show later on) Cortés always took her with him, and during that expedition she was married to a gentleman named Juan Jaramillo at the town of Orizaba, before certain witnesses, one of whom was named Aranda, a settler in Tabasco and this man told [me] about the marriage (not in the way the historian Gomara relates it).

Doña Marina was a person of the greatest importance and was obeyed without question by the Indians throughout New Spain.

When Cortés was in the town of Coatzacoalcos he sent to summon to his presence all the Caciques of that province in order to make them a speech about our holy religion, and about their good treatment, and among the Caciques who assembled was the mother of Doña Marina and her half-brother, Lázaro.

Some time before this Doña Marina had told me that she belonged to that province and that she was the mistress of vassals, and Cortés also knew it well, as did Aguilar, the interpreter. In such a manner it was that mother, daughter and son came together, and it was easy enough to see that she was the daughter from the strong likeness she bore to her mother.

These relations were in great fear of Doña Marina, for they thought that she had sent for them to put them to death, and they were weeping.

When Doña Marina saw them in tears, she consoled them and told them to have no fear, that when they had given her over to the men from Xicalango, they knew not what they were doing, and she forgave them for doing it, and she gave them many jewels of gold, and raiment, and told them to return to their town, and said that God had been very gracious to her in freeing her from the worship of idols and making her a Christian, and letting her bear a son to her lord and master Cortés and in marrying her to such a gentleman as Juan Jaramillo, who was now her husband. That she would rather serve her husband and Cortés than anything else in the world, and would not exchange her place to be Cacica of all the provinces in New Spain.

All this which I have repeated here I know for certain (and I swear to it.)<sup>1</sup>

This seems to me very much like what took place between Joseph and his brethren in Egypt when they came into his power over the matter of the wheat. It is what actually happened and not the story which was told to Gomara, who also says other things which I will leave unnoticed.

To go back to my subject: Doña Marina knew the language of Coatzacoalcos, which is that common to Mexico, and she knew the language of Tabasco, as did also Jerónimo de Aguilar, who spoke the language of Yucatan and Tabasco, which is one and the same. So that these two could understand one another clearly, and Aguilar translated into Castilian for Cortés.

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<sup>1</sup> The words in brackets are blotted out in the original MS.  
—G. G.

This was the great beginning of our conquests and thus, thanks be to God, things prospered with us. I have made a point of explaining this matter, because without the help of Doña Marina we could not have understood the language of New Spain and Mexico.

Here I will leave off, and go on later to tell how we disembarked in the Port of San Juan de Ulúa.





## BOOK III.

### THE MARCH INLAND.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How we arrived with all the ships at San Juan de Ulúa, and what happened there.



ON Holy Thursday, the anniversary of the Last Supper of Our Lord, in the year 1519, we arrived with all the fleet at the Port of San Juan de Ulúa, and as the Pilot Alaminos knew the place well from having come there with Juan de Grijalva he at once ordered the vessels to drop anchor where they would be safe from the northerly gales. The flagship hoisted her royal standards and pennants, and within half an hour of anchoring, two large canoes (which in those parts are called piraguas) came out to us, full of Mexican Indians. Seeing the big ship with the standards flying they knew that it was there they must go to speak with the captain; so they went direct to the flagship and going on board asked who was the Tatuan<sup>1</sup> which in their language means the chief. Doña Marina who understood the language well, pointed him out. Then the Indians paid many marks

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<sup>1</sup> Tlatoan.