



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 Tatuán¹ which in their language means the chief. Doña Marina who understood the language well, pointed him out. Then the Indians paid many marks

¹ Tlatoan.

of respect to Cortés, according to their usage, and bade him welcome, and said that their lord, a servant of the great Montezuma, had sent them to ask what kind of men we were and of what we were in search, and added that if we were in need of anything for ourselves or the ships, that we should tell them and they would supply it. Our Cortés thanked them through the two interpreters, Aguilar and Doña Marina, and ordered food and wine to be given them and some blue beads, and after they had drunk he told them that we came to see them and to trade with them and that our arrival in their country should cause them no uneasiness but be looked on by them as fortunate. The messengers returned on shore well content, and the next day, which was Good Friday, we disembarked with the horses and guns, on some sand hills which rise to a considerable height, for there was no level land, nothing but sand dunes; and the artilleryman Mesa placed the guns in position to the best of his judgment. Then we set up an altar where mass was said and we made huts and shelters for Cortés and the captains, and three hundred of the soldiers brought wood and made huts for themselves and we placed the horses where they would be safe and in this way was Good Friday passed.

The next day, Saturday, Easter Eve, many Indians arrived sent by a chief who was a governor under Montezuma, named Pitalpitoque¹ (whom we afterwards called Ovandillo), and they brought axes and dressed wood for the huts of the captain Cortés and the other ranchos near to it, and covered them with large cloths on account of the strength of the sun, for as it was in Lent the heat was very great—and they brought fowls and maize cakes and plums, which were then in season, and I think that they brought

¹ Pitalpitoque = Cuitlalpitoc, who had been sent as an ambassador to meet Grijalva. See *Orozco y Berra*, pp. 44 and 132, vol. iv.

some gold jewels, and they presented all these things to Cortés; and said that the next day a governor would come and would bring more food. Cortés thanked them heartily and ordered them to be given certain articles in exchange with which they went away well content. The next day, Easter Sunday, the governor whom they spoke of arrived. His name was Tendile,¹ a man of affairs, and he brought with him Pitalpitoque who was also a man of importance amongst the natives and there followed them many Indians with presents of fowls and vegetables. Tendile ordered these people to stand aside on a hillock and with much humility he made three obeisances to Cortés according to their custom,² and then to all the soldiers who were standing around. Cortés bade them welcome through our interpreters and embraced them and asked them to wait, as he wished presently to speak to them. Meanwhile he ordered an altar to be made as well as it could be done in the time, and Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, who was a fine singer, chanted Mass, and Padre Juan Diaz³ assisted, and the two governors and the other chiefs who were with them looked on. When Mass was over, Cortés and some of our captains and the two Indian officers of the great Montezuma dined together. When the tables had been cleared away—Cortés went aside with the two Caciques and our two interpreters and explained to them that we were Christians and vassals of the greatest lord on earth, called the Emperor Don Carlos, who had many great princes as his vassals and servants, and that it was at his orders that we had come to this country, because for many years he had heard rumours

¹ Teuhtilli, Governor of Cuetlaxtla (Cotaxtla of modern maps).

² Blotted out in the original—"and they brought much incense on live coals in pottery brasiers."—G. G.

³ Blotted out in the original—"and other soldiers who helped him."—G. G.

about the country and the great prince who ruled it. That he wished to be friends with this prince and to tell him many things in the name of the Emperor which things, when he knew and understood them, would please him greatly. Moreover he wished to trade with their prince and his Indians in good friendship, and he wanted to know where this prince would wish that they should meet so that they might confer together. Tendile replied somewhat proudly, and said—"You have only just now arrived and you already ask to speak with our prince; accept now this present which we give you in his name, and afterwards you will tell me what you think fitting." With that he took out a *petaca*—which is a sort of chest, many articles of gold beautifully and richly worked and ordered ten loads of white cloth made of cotton and feathers to be brought, wonderful things to see, and there were other things which I do not remember, besides quantities of food consisting of fowls of the country,¹ fruit and baked fish. Cortés received it all with smiles in a gracious manner and gave in return, beads of twisted glass and other small beads from Spain, and he begged them to send to their towns to ask the people to come and trade with us as he had brought many beads to exchange for gold, and they replied that they would do as he asked. As we afterwards found out, these two men, Tendile and Pitalpitoque, were the governors of the provinces named Cotustan, Tustepeque,² Guazpaltepeque and Tatalteco, and of some other townships lately conquered. Cortés then ordered his servants to bring an arm-chair, richly carved and inlaid and some *margaritas*,³ stones with many [intricate] designs in them, and a string

¹ Turkeys, Huajolotes (Mex.).

² Cotaxtla, Tuxtepec.

³ Piedras margaritas, possibly margajita; probably mossagate or lapis lazuli.

of twisted glass beads¹ packed in cotton scented with musk and a crimson cap with a golden medal engraved with a figure of St. George on horseback, lance in hand, slaying the dragon, and he told Tendile that he should send the chair to his prince Montezuma (for we already knew that he was so called) so that he could be seated in it when he, Cortés, came to see and speak with him, and that he should place the cap on his head, and that the stones and all the other things were presents from our lord the King, as a sign of his friendship, for he was aware that Montezuma was a great prince, and Cortés asked that a day and a place might be named where he could go to see Montezuma. Tendile received the present and said that his lord Montezuma was such a great prince that it would please him to know our great King and that he would carry the present to him at once and bring back a reply.

It appears that Tendile brought with him some clever painters such as they had in Mexico and ordered them to make pictures true to nature of the face and body of Cortés and all his captains, and of the soldiers, ships, sails and horses, and of Doña Marina and Aguilar, even of the two greyhounds, and the cannon and cannon balls, and all of the army we had brought with us, and he carried the pictures to his master. Cortés ordered our gunners to load the lombards with a great charge of powder so that they should make a great noise when they were fired off, and he told Pedro de Alvarado that he and all the horsemen should get ready so that these servants of Montezuma might see them gallop and told them to attach little bells to the horses' breastplates. Cortés also mounted his horse and said—"It would be well if we could gallop on these sand dunes but they will observe that even when

¹ Diamantes torcidos.

on foot we get stuck in the sand—let us go out to the beach when the tide is low and gallop two and two ;”—and to Pedro de Alvarado whose sorrel coloured mare was a great galloper, and very handy, he gave charge of all the horsemen.

All this was carried out in the presence of the two ambassadors, and so that they should see the cannon fired, Cortés made as though he wished again to speak to them and a number of other chieftains, and the lombards were fired off, and as it was quite still at that moment, the stones went flying through the forest resounding with a great din, and the two governors and all the other Indians were frightened by things so new to them, and ordered the painters to record them so that Montezuma might see. It happened that one of the soldiers had a helmet half gilt but somewhat rusty and this Tendile noticed, for he was the more forward of the two ambassadors, and said that he wished to see it as it was like one that they possessed which had been left to them by their ancestors of the race from which they had sprung, and that it had been placed on the head of their god—Huichilobos,¹ and that their prince Montezuma would like to see this helmet. So it was given to him, and Cortés said to them that as he wished to know whether the gold of this country was the same as that we find in our rivers, they could return the helmet filled with grains of gold so that he could send it to our great Emperor. After this, Tendile bade farewell to Cortés and to all of us and after many expressions of regard from Cortés he took leave of him and said that he would return with a reply without delay. After Tendile had departed we found out that besides being an Indian employed in matters of great importance, Tendile was the most active of the servants whom his master, Montezuma, had in

¹ Huitzilopochtli.

his employ, and he went with all haste and narrated everything to his prince, and showed him the pictures which had been painted and the present which Cortés had sent. When the great Montezuma gazed on it he was struck with admiration and received it on his part with satisfaction. When he examined the helmet and that which was on his Huichilobos, he felt convinced that we belonged to the race which, as his forefathers had foretold would come to rule over that land. It is here that the historian Gomara relates many things which were not told to him correctly.

I will leave off here, and then go on to say what else happened.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

How Tendile went to report to his Prince Montezuma and to carry the present, and what we did in our camp.

WHEN Tendile departed with the present which the Captain Cortés gave him for his prince Montezuma, the other governor, Pitalpitoque, stayed in our camp and occupied some huts a little distance from ours, and they brought Indian women there to make maize bread, and brought fowls and fruit and fish, and supplied Cortés and the captains who fed with him. As for us soldiers, if we did not hunt for shell fish on the beach, or go out fishing, we did not get anything.

About that time, many Indians came from the towns already mentioned by me over which these two servants of Montezuma were governors, and some of them brought gold and jewels of little value, and fowls to exchange with us for our goods, which consisted of green beads and clear glass beads and other articles, and with this we managed to supply ourselves with food. Almost all the soldiers had brought things for barter, as we learnt in Grijalva's time

that it was a good thing to bring beads—and in this manner six or seven days passed by.

Then one morning, Tendile arrived with more than one hundred laden Indians, accompanied by a great Mexican Cacique, who in his face, features and appearance bore a strong likeness to our Captain Cortés and the great Montezuma had sent him purposely, for it is said that when Tendile brought the portrait of Cortés all the chiefs who were in Montezuma's company said that a great chief named Quintalbor looked exactly like Cortés and that was the name of the Cacique who now arrived with Tendile; and as he was so like Cortés we called them in camp "our Cortés" and "the other Cortés." To go back to my story, when these people arrived and came before our Captain they first of all kissed the earth¹ and then fumigated him and all the soldiers who were standing around him, with incense which they brought in brasiers of pottery. Cortés received them affectionately and seated them near himself, and that chief who came with the present (who I have already said was named Quintalbor) had been appointed spokesman together with Tendile. After welcoming us to the country and after many courteous speeches had passed he ordered the presents which he had brought to be displayed, and they were placed on mats which they call petates over which were spread cotton cloths.² The first article presented was a wheel like a sun, as big as a cart-wheel, with many sorts of pictures on it, the whole of fine gold, and a wonderful thing to behold, which those who afterwards weighed it said was worth more than ten thousand dollars. Then another wheel was presented of greater size made of silver of great brilliancy in

¹ On seeing Don Hernando Cortés they made the usual obeisance, placing the forefinger (*dedo mayor*) of the right hand on the ground and raising it to the mouth. (*Orozco y Berra*, vol. iv, p. 127.)

² See Appendix A. Montezuma's gifts to Cortés.

imitation of the moon with other figures shown on it, and this was of great value as it was very heavy—and the chief brought back the helmet full of fine grains of gold, just as they are got out of the mines, and this was worth three thousand dollars. This gold in the helmet was worth more to us than if it had contained \$20,000, because it showed us that there were good mines there. Then were brought twenty golden ducks, beautifully worked and very natural looking, and some [ornaments] like dogs, of the kind they keep, and many articles of gold worked in the shape of tigers and lions and monkeys, and ten collars beautifully worked and other necklaces; and twelve arrows and a bow with its string, and two rods like staffs of justice, five palms long, all in beautiful hollow work of fine gold. Then there were presented crests of gold and plumes of rich green feathers, and others of silver, and fans of the same materials, and deer copied in hollow gold and many other things that I cannot remember for it all happened so many years ago. And then over thirty loads of beautiful cotton cloth were brought worked with many patterns and decorated with many coloured feathers, and so many other things were there that it is useless my trying to describe them for I know not how to do it. When all these things had been presented, this great Cacique Quintalbor and Tendile asked Cortés to accept this present with the same willingness with which his prince had sent it, and divide it among the *teules*¹ and men who accompanied him. Cortés received the present with delight and then the ambassadors told Cortés that they wished to repeat what their prince, Montezuma, had sent them to say. First of all they told him that he was pleased that such valiant men, as he had heard that we

¹ *Teules*, "for so they call the Idols which they worship." See p. 172.

were, should come to his country, for he knew all about what we had done at Tabasco, and that he would much like to see our great emperor who was such a mighty prince and whose fame was spread over so many lands, and that he would send him a present of precious stones ; and that meanwhile we should stay in that port ; that if he could assist us in any way he would do so with the greatest pleasure ; but as to the interview, they should not worry about it ; that there was no need for it and they (the ambassadors) urged many objections. Cortés kept a good countenance, and returned his thanks to them, and with many flattering expressions gave each of the ambassadors two holland shirts and some blue glass beads and other things, and begged them to go back as his ambassadors to Mexico and to tell their prince, the great Montezuma, that as we had come across so many seas, and had journeyed from such distant lands solely to see and speak with him in person, that if we should return thus, that our great king and lord would not receive us well, and that wherever their prince Montezuma might be we wished to go and see him and do what he might order us to do. The ambassadors replied that they would go back and give this message to their prince, but as to the question of the desired interview—they considered it superfluous. By these ambassadors Cortés sent what our poverty could afford as a gift to Montezuma : a glass cup of Florentine ware, engraved with trees and hunting scenes and gilt, and three holland shirts and other things, and he charged the messengers to bring a reply. The two governors set out and Pitalpitoque remained in camp ; for it seems that the other servants of Montezuma had given him orders to see that food was brought to us from the neighbouring towns. Here I will leave off, and then go on to tell what happened in our camp.

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CHAPTER XL.

How Cortés sent to look for another harbour and site where to make a settlement, and what was done about it.

AS soon as the messengers had been sent off to Mexico, Cortés despatched two ships to go and explore the coast further along, and placed Francisco de Montejo in command of them and ordered him to follow the course we had taken with Grijalva (for Montejo had accompanied us during Grijalva's expedition) and to seek out a safe harbour, and search for lands where we could settle, for it was clear that we could not settle on those sand dunes, both on account of the mosquitoes and the distance from other towns. Cortés ordered Alaminos and Juan Álvarez el Manquillo to go as pilots as they knew the route, and told them to sail as far along the coast as was possible in ten days. They did as they were told and arrived at the Rio Grande, which is close to Panuco,¹ which we had reached during the expedition under the Captain Juan de Grijalva. They were not able to proceed any further on account of the strong currents. Seeing how difficult the navigation had become, they turned round and made for San Juan de Ulúa, without having made any further progress, or having anything to tell us, beyond the news that, twelve leagues away, they had seen a town looking like a fortified harbour which was called Quiahuitztlan, and that near that town was a harbour where the pilot Alaminos thought that the ships would be safe from the northerly gales. He gave to it an ugly name, that of Bernal, for it is like another harbour in Spain of that name. In these comings and goings Montejo was occupied ten or twelve days.

¹ The expedition under Grijalva did not pass beyond Cape Rojo.

I must now go back to say that the Indian Pitalpitoque, who remained behind to look after the food, slackened his efforts to such an extent that no provisions reached the camp and we were greatly in need of food, for the cassava turned sour from the damp and rotted and became foul with weevils and if we had not gone hunting for shell fish we should have had nothing to eat. The Indians who used to come bringing gold and fowls for barter, did not come in such numbers as on our first arrival and those who did come were very shy and cautious and we began to count the hours that must elapse before the return of the messengers who had gone to Mexico. We were thus waiting when Tendile returned accompanied by many Indians, and after having paid their respects in the usual manner by fumigating Cortés and the rest of us with incense, he presented ten loads of fine rich feather cloth, and four chalchihuites, which are green stones of very great value, and held in the greatest esteem among the Indians, more than emeralds are by us, and certain other gold articles. Not counting the chalchihuites, the gold alone was said to be worth three thousand dollars. Then Tendile and Pitalpitoque approached (the other great cacique, Quintalbor, fell ill on the road and did not return) and those two governors went aside with Cortés and Doña Marina and Aguilar, and reported that their prince Montezuma had accepted the present and was greatly pleased with it, but as to an interview, that no more should be said about it; that these rich stones of chalchihuite should be sent to the great Emperor as they were of the highest value, each one being worth more and being esteemed more highly than a great load of gold, and that it was not worth while to send any more messengers to Mexico. Cortés thanked the messengers and gave them presents, but it was certainly a disappointment to him to be told so distinctly that we could not see Montezuma,

and he said to some soldiers who happened to be standing near: "Surely this must be a great and rich prince, and some day, please God, we must go and see him"—and the soldiers answered: "We wish that we were already living with him!"

Let us now leave this question of visits and relate that it was now the time of the Ave Maria, and at the sound of a bell which we had in the camp we all fell on our knees before a cross placed on a sand hill and said our prayers of the Ave Maria before the cross. When Tendile and Pitalpitoque saw us thus kneeling, as they were very intelligent, they asked what was the reason that we humbled ourselves before a tree cut in that particular way. As Cortés heard this remark he said to the Padre de la Merced who was present: "It is a good opportunity, father, as we have good material at hand, to explain through our interpreters matters touching our holy faith." And then he delivered a discourse to the Caciques so fitting to the occasion that no good theologian could have bettered it. After telling them that we were Christians and relating all the matters pertaining to our holy religion, he told them that their idols were not good but evil things which would take flight at the presence of that sign of the cross, for on a similar cross the Lord of Heaven and earth and all created things suffered passion and death; that it is He whom we adore and in whom we believe, our true God, Jesus Christ, who had been willing to suffer and die in order to save the whole human race; that the third day He rose again and is now in heaven; and that by Him we shall all be judged. Cortés said many other things very well expressed, which they thoroughly understood, and they replied that they would report them to their prince Montezuma. Cortés also told them that one of the objects for which our great Emperor had sent us to their countries was to abolish human sacrifices, and the other

evil rites which they practised and to see that they did not rob one another, or worship those cursed images. And Cortés prayed them to set up in their city, in the temples where they kept the idols which they believed to be gods, a cross like the one they saw before them, and to set up in the same place an image of Our Lady, which he would give them, with her precious son in her arms, and they would see how well it would go with them, and what our God would do for them. However, as many other arguments were used and as I do not know how to write them all out at length I will leave the subject and recall to mind that on this latest visit many Indians came with Tendile, who were wishing to barter articles of gold, which, however, were of no great value. So all the soldiers set about bartering, and the gold which we gained by this barter we gave to the sailors who were out fishing in exchange for their fish so as to get something to eat, for otherwise we often underwent great privations through hunger. Cortés was pleased at this although he pretended not to see what was going on, and many of the servants and friends of Diego Velásquez asked him why he did not prevent us from bartering. What happened about this I will tell later.

CHAPTER XLI.

What was done about the bartering for gold, and other things that took place in camp.

WHEN the friends of Diego Velásquez saw that some of us soldiers were bartering for gold, they asked Cortés why he permitted it, and said that Diego Velásquez did not send out the expedition in order that the soldiers should carry off most of the gold, and that it would be as well to issue an order that for the future no gold should be

bartered for by anyone but Cortés himself and that all the gold already obtained should be displayed so that the royal fifth might be taken from it, and that some suitable person should be placed in charge of the treasury.

To all this Cortés replied that all they said was good, and that they themselves should name that person, and they chose Gonzalo Mejia. When this had been done, Cortés turned to them with angry mien and said: "Observe, gentlemen, that our companions are suffering great hardships from want of food, and it is for this reason that we ought to overlook things, so that they may all find something to eat; all the more so as the amount of gold they bargain for is but a trifle,—and God willing, we are going to obtain a large amount of it. However, there are two sides to everything; the order has been issued that bartering for gold shall cease, as you desired; we shall see next what we will get to eat."

This is where the historian, Gomara, states that Cortés did this so that Montezuma might think that we cared nothing for gold, but he (Gomara) was not well informed, for ever since the event of Grijalva's visit to the Rio de Banderas, Montezuma must have understood well enough, and even more so when we sent the helmet to him with a request that it should be filled with gold grains from the mines, besides they had seen us bargaining and the Mexicans were not the sort of people to misunderstand the meaning of it all.

Let us drop this subject then, which Gomara says he knows about because "they told him so" and I will go on to relate how, one morning, we woke up to find not a single Indian in any of their huts, neither those who used to bring the food, nor those who came to trade, nor Pitalpitoque himself; they had all fled without saying a word. The cause of this, as we afterwards learned, was that Montezuma had sent orders to avoid further conversation

with Cortés and those in his company ; for it appears that Montezuma was very much devoted to his idols, named Tezcatepuca, and Huichilobos, the latter the god of war, and Tezcatepuca, the god of hell ; and daily he sacrificed youths to them so as to get an answer from the gods as to what he should do about us ; for Montezuma had already formed a plan, if we did not go off in the ships, to get us all into his power, and to raise a breed of us¹ and also to keep us for sacrifice. As we afterwards found out, the reply given by the gods was that he should not listen to Cortés, nor to the message which he sent about setting up a cross and an image of Our Lady, and that such things should not be brought to the city. This was the reason why the Indians left our camp without warning. When we heard the news we thought that they meant to make war on us, and we were very much on the alert. One day, as I and another soldier were stationed on some sand dunes keeping a look out, we saw five Indians coming along the beach, and so as not to raise a scare in camp over so small a matter, we permitted them to approach. When they came up to us with smiling countenances they paid us homage according to their custom, and made signs that we should take them into camp. I told my companion to remain where he was and I would accompany the Indians, for at that time my feet were not as heavy as they are now that I am old, and when we came before Cortés the Indians paid him every mark of respect and said : *Lope luzio, lope luzio*—which in the Totonac language means : “ prince and great lord.” These men had large holes in their lower lips, some with stone disks in them spotted with blue, and others with thin leaves of gold. They also had their ears pierced with large holes in which were placed disks of

¹ Blotted out in the original MS.—With which to make war.—G. G.

stone or gold, and in their dress and speech they differed greatly from the Mexicans who had been staying with us. When Doña Marina and Aguilar, the Interpreters, heard the word *Lope luzio* they did not understand it, and Doña Marina asked in Mexican if there were not among them *Nahuatatos*, that is, interpreters of the Mexican language, and two of the five answered yes, that they understood and spoke it, and they bade us welcome and said that their chief had sent them to ask who we might be, and that it would please him to be of service to such valiant men, for it appeared that they knew about our doings at Tabasco and Potonchan, and they added that they would have come to see us before but for fear of the people of Culua who had been with us, (by Culua they meant Mexicans, as we might say Cordovans, or rustics) and that they knew that three days ago they had fled back to their own country, and in the course of their talk Cortés found out that Montezuma had opponents and enemies, which he was delighted to hear, and after flattering these five messengers and giving them presents he bade them farewell, asking them to tell their chief that he would very soon come and pay them a visit. From this time on we called those Indians the *Lope luzios*. I must leave them now and go on to say that in those sand dunes where we were camped there were always many mosquitos, both long-legged ones and small ones which are called *xexenes* which are worse than the large ones, and we could get no sleep on account of them. We were very short of food and the cassava bread was disappearing, and what there was of it was very damp and foul with weevils. Some of the soldiers who possessed Indians in the Island of Cuba were continually sighing for their homes, especially the friends and servants of Diego Valásquez. When Cortés noted the state of affairs and the wishes of these men he gave orders that we should go to the fortified town which had been seen by Montejo and

the pilot, Alaminos, named Quiahuitztlan where the ships would be under the protection of the rock which I have mentioned. When arrangements were being made for us to start, all the friends, relations and servants of Diego Velásquez asked Cortés why he wanted to make that journey without having any provisions, seeing that there was no possibility of going on any further and that over thirty five soldiers had already died in camp from wounds inflicted at Tabasco, and from sickness and hunger ; that the country we were in was a great one and the settlements very thickly peopled and that any day they might make war on us ; that it would be much better to return to Cuba and account to Diego Velásquez for the gold gained in barter, which already amounted to a large sum, and the great presents from Montezuma, the sun and the silver moon and the helmet full of golden grains from the mines, and all the cloths and jewels already mentioned by me. Cortés replied to them that it was not good advice to recommend our going back without reason ; that hitherto we could not complain of our fortune and should give thanks to God who was helping us in everything, and as for those who had died, that that always happened in wars and under hardship ; that it would be as well to find out what the country contained ; that meanwhile we could eat the maize and other food held by the Indians and by the neighbouring towns, unless our hands had lost their cunning. With this reply, the partisans of Diego Velásquez were somewhat, but not wholly appeased, for there were already cliques formed in camp who discussed the return to Cuba. I will leave off here and then go on to say what happened.

CHAPTER XLII.

How we raised Hernando Cortés to the post of Captain General and Chief Justice, until His Majesty's wishes on the matter should be known, and what was done about it.

I HAVE already said that the relations and friends of Diego Velásquez were going about the camp raising objections to our going on any further and insisting that we should return at once from San Juan de Ulúa to the Island of Cuba. It appears that Cortés had already talked the matter over with Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero, and Pedro de Alvarado and his four brothers, Jorge, Gonzalo, Gómez and Juan, and with Cristóbal de Olid, Alonzo de Ávila, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Lugo, and with me and other gentlemen and captains, and suggested that we should beg of him to be our captain. Francisco de Montejo understood what was going on and was on the watch. One night, after midnight, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero, Juan de Escalante and Francisco de Lugo, came to my hut. Francisco de Lugo and I came from the same country and were distant kinsmen. They said to me : " Señor Bernal Díaz, come out with your arms and go the rounds ; we will accompany Cortés who is just now going the rounds." When I was a little distance from the hut they said to me : " Look to it, sir, that you keep secret for a time what we wish to tell you, for it is a matter of importance, and see that your companions in your hut know nothing about it, for they are of the party of Diego Velásquez." What they said to me was : " Sir, does it seem to you to be right that Hernando Cortés should have deceived us all in bringing us here, he having proclaimed in Cuba that he was coming to settle, and now we find out that he has no power to do so, but only to trade, and they want us to return to Santiago de Cuba with all the gold

that has been collected, and we shall lose our all, for will not Diego Velásquez take all the gold as he did before? Look, sir, counting this present expedition, you have already come to this country three times, spending your own property and contracting debts and risking your life many times with the wounds you have received. Many of us gentlemen who know that we are your honour's friends wish you to understand that this must not go on; that this land must be settled in the name of His Majesty, and by Hernando Cortés in His Majesty's name, while we await the opportunity to make it known to our lord the King in Spain. Be sure, sir, to cast your vote so that all of us unanimously and willingly choose him captain, for it will be a service to God and our lord the King." I replied that it was not a wise decision to return to Cuba and that it would be a good thing for the country to be settled and that we should choose Cortés as General and Chief Justice until his Majesty should order otherwise. This agreement passed from soldier to soldier and the friends and relations of Diego Velásquez, who were more numerous than we were, got to know of it, and with overbold words asked Cortés why he was craftily arranging to remain in this country instead of returning to render an account of his doings to the man who had sent him as captain, and they told him that Diego Velásquez would not approve of it, and that the sooner we embarked the better; that there was no use in his subterfuges and secret meetings with the soldiers, for we had neither supplies nor men, nor any possibility of founding a settlement. Cortés answered without a sign of anger, and said that he agreed with them; that he would not go against the instructions and notes which he had received from Diego Velásquez, and he issued an order for us all to embark on the following day, each one in the ship in which he had come. We who had made the agreement answered that it was

not fair to deceive us so, that in Cuba he had proclaimed that he was coming to make a settlement, whereas he had only come to trade; and we demanded on behalf of our Lord God and of His Majesty that he should at once form a settlement and give up any other plan, because that would be of the greatest benefit and service to God and the King; and they placed many other well-reasoned arguments before him saying that the natives would never let us land again as they had done this time, and that as soon as a settlement was made in the country soldiers would gather in from all the islands to give us help and that Velásquez had ruined us all by stating publicly that he had received a decree from His Majesty to form a settlement, the contrary being the case; that we wished to form a settlement, and to let those depart who desired to return to Cuba. So Cortés agreed to it, although he pretended to need much begging, as the saying goes: "You are very pressing, and I want to do it,"¹—and he stipulated that we should make him Chief Justice and Captain General, and the worst of all that we conceded was that we should give him a fifth of all the gold which should be obtained, after the royal fifth had been deducted, and then we gave him the very fullest powers in the presence of the King's Notary, Diego de Godoy, embracing all that I have here stated. We at once set to work to found and settle a town, which was called the "Villa rica de la Vera Cruz" because we arrived on Thursday of the (last) supper and landed on "Holy Friday of the Cross" and "rich" because of what that gentleman said, as I have related in a former chapter (XXVI) who approached Cortés and said to him: "Behold rich lands! May you know how to govern them well!" and what he wanted to say was—"May you

¹ "Tu me lo ruegas y yo me lo quiero."

remain as their Captain General." That gentleman was Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero.

To go back to my story : as soon as the town was founded we appointed *alcaldes* and *regidores* ; the former were Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero and Francisco Montejo. In the case of Montejo, it was because he was not on very good terms with Cortés that Cortés ordered him to be named as *Alcalde*, so as to place him in the highest position. I need not give the names of the *Regidores*, for it is no use naming only a few of them ; but I must mention the fact that a pillory was placed in the Plaza and a gallows set up outside the town. We chose Pedro de Alvarado as captain of expeditions and Cristóbal de Olid as *Maestro de Campo*.¹ Juan de Escalante was chosen chief *Alguacil* ;² Gonzalo Mejia, treasurer, and Alonzo de Ávila accountant. A certain Corral was named as *Ensign*, because Villaróel who had been *Ensign* was dismissed from the post on account of some offence (I do not exactly know what) he had given Cortés about an Indian woman from Cuba. Ochoa, a Biscayan, and Alonzo Romero were appointed *Alguaciles* of the Camp.³

It will be said that I have made no mention of the Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval, he of whom our lord the Emperor has heard such reports, who was such a renowned captain that he ranked next to Cortés⁴ in our estimation. I say this was because at that time he was a youth, and we did not take such count of him and of other valiant captains until we saw him grow in worth in such a way that Cortés and all the soldiers held him in the same esteem as Cortés himself, as I shall tell later on.

¹ *Maestro de Campo* = Quartermaster.

² *Alguacil Mayor* = High Constable.

³ *Alguacil del Real* = Constables and storekeepers.

⁴ Blotted out in the original : "y Pedro de Alvarado."—G. G.

I must leave my story here and say that the historian, Gomara, states that he was told all that which he has written down. But I assert that these things happened as I have related them. Gomara is wrong in other things that he wrote because his informants did not give him a true account. However good the style may be in which he tells the story, so that all may appear to be true, I assert that all he says about this matter is wrong.

I will drop the subject now and go on to tell how the party of Diego Velásquez tried to stop the election of Cortés as captain, and to insist on our returning to the Island of Cuba.

CHAPTER XLIII.

How the party of Diego Velásquez tried to upset the powers we had given to Cortés, and what was done about it.

WHEN the partisans of Diego Velásquez realized the fact that we had chosen Cortés for our Captain and Chief Justice, and had founded a town and chosen the Alcaldes and Regidores, and appointed Pedro de Alvarado as captain [of expeditions] and named the Alguacil Mayor and Maestro de Campo and had done all that I have narrated, they were angry and furious and they began to excite factions and meetings and to use abusive language about Cortés and those of us who had elected him, saying that it was not right to do these things unless all the captains and soldiers who had come on the expedition had been parties to it; that Diego Velásquez had given Cortés no such powers, only authority to trade, and that we partisans of Cortés should take care that our insolence did not so increase as to bring us to blows. Then Cortés secretly told Juan de Escalante that we should make him produce the instructions given him by Diego Velásquez.

Upon this Cortés drew them from his bosom and gave them to the King's scribe to read aloud. In these instructions were the words: "As soon as you have gained all you can by trading, you will return," and the document was signed by Diego Velásquez and countersigned by his Secretary, Andrés de Duero. We begged Cortés to cause this document to be attached to the deed recording the power we had given him, as well as the proclamation which he issued in the Island of Cuba. And this was done so that his Majesty in Spain should know that all that we did was done in his royal service, and that they should not bring against us anything but the truth; and it was a good precaution, seeing how we were treated in Spain by Don Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and Archbishop of Rosano (for such were his titles) who, we knew for certain, took steps to destroy us as I shall tell later on.

After this was done, these same friends and dependents of Diego Velásquez returned to Cortés to say that it was not right that he should have been chosen Captain without their consent and that they did not wish to remain under his command, but to return at once to the Island of Cuba. Cortés replied that he would detain no one by force, and that to anyone who came to ask leave to return, he would willingly grant it, even although he were left alone. With this some of them were quieted, but not Juan Velásquez de Leon who was a relation of Diego Velásquez, and Diego de Ordás, and Escobar, whom we called the Page, for he had been brought up by Diego Velásquez, and Pedro Escudero and other friends of Diego Velásquez; and it came to this, that they refused all obedience to Cortés. With our assistance, Cortés determined to make prisoners of Juan Velásquez de Leon, and Diego de Ordás, and Escobar the Page, and Pedro Escudero and others whose names I do not remember, and we took care that the others should create no disturbance. These men re-

mained prisoners for some days, in chains and under guard.

I will go on to tell how Pedro de Alvarado made an expedition to a town in the neighbourhood. Here the chronicler, Gomara, in his history gives quite a wrong account of what happened, and whoever reads his history will see that his story is greatly exaggerated, had he been correctly informed he would have related what [really] took place.

CHAPTER XLIV.

How it was arranged to send Pedro de Alvarado inland to look for maize and other supplies and what else happened.

WHEN all that I have related had been settled and done with, it was arranged that Pedro de Alvarado should go inland to some towns which we had been told were near by and see what the country was like and bring back maize and some sort of supplies, for there was a great want of food in camp. Alvarado took one hundred soldiers with him, among them fifteen crossbowmen and six musketeers. More than half his soldiers were partisans of Diego Velásquez. All Cortés' party remained with him for fear there should be any further disturbance or tricks played or any rising against him, until things became more settled.

Alvarado went first to some small towns subject to another town called Cotastan,¹ where the language of Culua was spoken. This name, Culua, in this country means the common language of the partisans of Mexico and Montezuma ; so that in all that country when Culua is mentioned, it means people vassal and subject to Mexico, and must be thus understood, just as we should speak of the Romans and their allies

¹ Cotaxtla.

When Pedro de Alvarado reached these towns he found that they had all been deserted that same day, and he found in the *cues* bodies of men and boys who had been sacrificed, and the walls and altars stained with blood and the hearts placed as offerings before the Idols. He also found the stones on which the sacrifices were made and the stone knives with which to open the chest so as to take out the heart.

Pedro de Alvarado said that he found most of the bodies without arms or legs, and that he was told by some Indians that they had been carried off to be eaten, and our soldiers were astounded at such great cruelty. I will not say any more of the number of sacrifices, although we found the same thing in every town we afterwards entered, and I will go back to Pedro de Alvarado and say that he found the towns well provisioned but deserted that very day by their inhabitants, so that he could not find more than two Indians to carry maize, and each soldier had to load himself with poultry and vegetables, and he returned to camp without doing any other damage (although he had good opportunity for doing it) because Cortés had given orders to that effect, so that there should be no repetition of what happened at Cozumel.

We were pleased enough in camp even with the little food that had been brought, for all evils and hardships disappear when there is plenty to eat.

Here it is that the historian, Gomara, says that Cortés went inland with four hundred soldiers. He was misinformed, for the first to go was [Alvarado] as I have stated here, and no other.

To go back to my story: As Cortés was most energetic in every direction, he managed to make friends with the partisans of Diego Velásquez, for, with that solvent of hardness, presents of gold from our store to some, and promises to others, he brought them over to his side, and

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took them out of prison ; all except Juan Velásquez de Leon and Diego de Ordás, who were in irons on board ship. These, too, he let out of prison after a few days, and made good and true friends of them as will be seen further on,—and all through gold which is such a pacifier !

When everything had been settled, we arranged to go to the fortified town already mentioned by me, which was called Quiahuitztlan. The ships were to go to the rock and harbour which was opposite that town, about a league distant from it. I remember that as we marched along the coast we killed a large fish which had been thrown up high and dry by the sea. When we arrived at the river where Vera Cruz is now situated¹ we found the water to be deep, and we crossed over it in some broken canoes like troughs, and others crossed by swimming, or on rafts.

Then we came on some towns subject to the large town named Cempoala, whence came the five Indians with the golden labrets, who I have already said came as messengers to Cortés at the sand dunes, and whom we called *Lopezuzios*. We found some idol houses and places of sacrifice, and blood splashed about, and incense used for fumigation and other things belonging to the idols, and stones with which they made the sacrifices, and parrots' feathers and many paper books doubled together in folds like Spanish cloth ; but we found no Indians, they having already fled, for as they had never before seen men like us, nor horses, they were afraid.

We slept there that night, and went without supper, and next day, leaving the coast, we continued our march inland towards the west, without knowing the road we were taking, and we came on some good meadows called *savanas* where deer were grazing, and Pedro de Alvarado rode after one on his sorrel mare and struck at it with his

¹ The third site, now known as La Antigua.

ance and wounded it, but it got away into the woods and could not be caught.

While this was happening we saw twelve Indians approaching, inhabitants of the farms where we had passed the night. They came straight from their Cacique, and brought fowls and maize cakes, and they said to Cortés, through our interpreters, that their chief had sent the fowls for us to eat, and begged us to come to his town, which was, according to the signs they made, distant one sun's (that is one day's) march.

Cortés thanked them and made much of them, and we continued our march and slept in another small town, where also many sacrifices had been made, but as my readers will be tired of hearing of the great number of Indian men and women whom we found sacrificed in all the towns and roads we passed, I shall go on with my story without stopping to say any more about them.

They gave us supper at the little town and we learnt that the road to Quiahuitztlán, which I have already said is a fortress, passed by Cempoala. I will go on to say how we entered Cempoala.

CHAPTER XLV.

How we entered Cempoala, which at that time was a very fine town and what happened to us there.

WE slept at the little town where the twelve Indians I have mentioned had prepared quarters for us, and after being well informed about the road which we had to take to reach the town on the hill, very early in the morning we sent word to the Caciques of Cempoala that we were coming to their town and that we hoped they would approve. Cortés sent six of the Indians with this message

and kept the other six as guides. He also ordered the guns, muskets and crossbows to be kept ready for use, and sent scouts on ahead on the look out, and the horsemen and all the rest of us were kept on the alert, and in this way we marched to within a league of the town. As we approached, twenty Indian chieftains came out to receive us in the name of the Cacique, and brought some cones made of the roses of the country with a delicious scent, which they gave to Cortés and those on horseback with every sign of friendliness, and they told Cortés that their Lord was awaiting us at our apartments, for, as he was a very stout and heavy man, he could not come out to receive us himself. Cortés thanked them and we continued our march, and as we got among the houses and saw what a large town it was, larger than any we had yet seen, we were struck with admiration. It looked like a garden with luxuriant vegetation, and the streets were so full of men and women who had come to see us, that we gave thanks to God at having discovered such a country.

Our scouts, who were on horseback, reached a great plaza with courts, where they had prepared our quarters, and it seems that during the last few days they had been whitewashed and burnished, a thing they knew well how to do, and it seemed to one of the scouts that this white surface which shone so brightly must be silver and he came back at full speed to tell Cortés that the walls of the houses were made of silver! Doña Marina and Aguilar said that it must be plaster or lime and we had a good laugh over the man's silver and excitement and always afterwards we told him that everything white looked to him like silver. I will leave our jokes and say that we reached the buildings, and the fat Cacique came out to receive us in the court. He was so fat that I shall call him by this name; and he made deep obeisance to Cortés and fumigated him, as is their custom, and Cortés embraced

him and we were lodged in fine and large apartments that held us all, and they gave us food and brought some baskets of plums which were very plentiful at that season, and maize cakes, and as we arrived ravenous and had not seen so much food for a long time, we called the town Villa Viciosa ; and others called it Sevilla.

Cortés gave orders that none of the soldiers should leave the plaza and that on no account should they give any offence to the Indians. When the fat Cacique heard that we had finished eating he sent to tell Cortés that he wished to come and visit him ; and he came in company with a great number of Indian chieftains, all wearing large gold labrets and rich mantles. Cortés left his quarters to go out and meet them, and embraced the Cacique with great show of caressing and flattery, and the fat Cacique ordered a present to be brought which he had prepared, consisting of gold, jewels and cloths ; but although it did not amount to much and was of little value he said to Cortés : “ *Lope luzio, Lope luzio*, accept this in good part ; if I had more I would give it to you ! ” I have already said that in the Totonac language *Lope luzio* means Señor or great lord.

Cortés replied through Doña Marina and Aguilar that he would pay for the gift in good works, and that if the Cacique would tell him what he wanted to be done that he would do it for them for we were the vassals of a great prince, the Emperor Don Carlos, who ruled over many kingdoms and countries, and had sent us to redress grievances and punish evil doers, and to put an end to human sacrifices. And he explained to them many things touching our holy religion. When the fat Cacique heard this, he sighed, and complained bitterly of the great Montezuma and his governors saying that he had recently been brought under his yoke ; that all his golden jewels had been carried off, and he and his people were so grievously

oppressed, that they dared do nothing without Montezuma's orders; for he was the Lord over many cities and countries and ruled over countless vassals and armies of warriors.

As Cortés knew that he could not attend at that time to the complaints which they made, he replied that he would see to it that they were relieved of their burdens, that he was now on the way to visit his *Acales* (for so they call the ships in the Indian language) and take up his residence and make his headquarters in the town of Quiahuitztlan, and that as soon as he was settled there he would consider the matter more thoroughly. To this the fat Cacique replied that he was quite satisfied that it should be so.

The next morning we left Cempoala, and there were awaiting our orders over four hundred Indian carriers, who are here called *tamenes* who carry fifty pounds weight on their backs and march five leagues with it. When we saw so many Indians to carry burdens we rejoiced, as before this, those of us who had not brought Indians with us from Cuba had to carry knapsacks on our own backs. And only six or seven Cubans had been brought in the fleet, and not a great number as Gomara asserts. Doña Marina and Aguilar told us that in these parts in times of peace the Caciques are bound to furnish *tamenes* to carry burdens, as a matter of course, and from this time forward wherever we went we asked for Indians to carry loads.

Cortés took leave of the fat Cacique, and on the following day we set out on our march and slept at a little town which had been deserted near to Quiahuitztlan, and the people of Cempoala brought us food. The historian, Gomara, says that Cortés remained many days in Cempoala and planned a league and rebellion against Montezuma, but he was not correctly informed, because, as I have said, we left Cempoala on the following morning, and where the

rebellion was planned and what was the reason of it, I will relate further on.

I will pause here and go on to tell how we entered Quiahuitztlan.

CHAPTER XLVI.

How we entered Quiahuitztlan, which was a fortified town, and were peaceably received.

THE next day about ten o'clock we reached the fortified town called Quiahuitztlan, which stands amid great rocks and lofty cliffs and if there had been any resistance it would have been very difficult to capture it. Expecting that there would be fighting we kept a good formation with the artillery in front and marched up to the fortress in such a manner that if anything had happened we could have done our duty.

At this time, Alonzo de Ávila was acting as captain, and as he was arrogant and bad tempered, when a soldier named Hernando Alonzo de Villanueva failed to keep his place in the ranks, he gave him a thrust with a lance in his arm which maimed him ; and after this Hernando Alonzo de Villanueva was always called "El Manquillo."¹ It will be said that I am always turning aside to tell old stories, so I must leave off and go on to say that we went half way through the town without meeting a single Indian to speak to, at which we were very much surprised, for they had fled in fear that very day when they had seen us climbing up to their houses. When we had reached the top of the fortress in the plaza near by where they had their *cues* and great idol houses, we saw fifteen Indians awaiting us all clad in good mantles, and each one with a brasier in his hand

¹ El Manquillo = the one armed or the maimed.

containing incense, and they came to where Cortés was standing and fumigated him and all the soldiers who were standing near and with deep obeisances they asked pardon for not coming out to meet us, and assured us that we were welcome and asked us to rest. And they said that they had fled and kept out of the way until they could see what sort of things we were, for they were afraid of us and of our horses, but that night they would order all the people to come back to the town.

Cortés displayed much friendship toward them and told them many things about our holy religion ; this we were always in the habit of doing wherever we might go. And he told them that we were the vassals of our great Emperor, Don Carlos, and he gave them some green beads and other trifles from Spain, and they brought fowls and maize cakes. While we were talking, someone came to tell Cortés that the fat Cacique from Cempoala was coming in a litter carried on the shoulders of many Indian chieftains. When the fat Cacique arrived he, together with the Cacique and chiefs of the town addressed Cortés, relating their many causes of complaint against Montezuma and telling him of his great power, and this they did with such sighs and tears that Cortés and those who were standing with him were moved to pity. Besides relating the way that they had been brought into subjection, they told us that every year many of their sons and daughters were demanded of them for sacrifice, and others for service in the houses and plantations of their conquerors ; and they made other complaints which were so numerous that I do not remember them all ; but they said that Montezuma's tax gatherers carried off their wives and daughters if they were handsome and ravished them, and this they did throughout the land where the Totonac language was spoken, which contained over thirty towns.

Cortés consoled them as well as he was able through our

interpreters and said he would help them all he could, and would prevent these robberies and offences, as it was for that our lord the Emperor had sent us to these parts, and that they should have no anxiety, for they would soon see what we would do in the matter ; and they seemed to gather some satisfaction from this assurance but their hearts were not eased on account of the great fear they had of the Mexicans.

While this conversation was going on, some Indians from the town came in great haste to tell the Caciques who were talking to Cortés, that five Mexicans, who were Montezuma's tax gatherers, had just arrived. When they heard the news they turned pale and trembled with fear, and leaving Cortés alone they went off to receive the Mexicans, and in the shortest possible time they had decked a room with flowers, and had food cooked for the Mexicans to eat, and prepared plenty of cacao, which is the best thing they have to drink.

When these five Indians entered the town, they came to the place where we were assembled, where were the houses of the Cacique and our quarters, and approaching us with the utmost assurance and arrogance, without speaking to Cortés or to any of us, they passed us by. Their cloaks and loin cloths were richly embroidered (for at that time they wore loin cloths), and their shining hair was gathered up as though tied on their heads, and each one was smelling the roses that he carried, and each had a crooked staff in his hand. Their Indian servants carried fly-whisks, and they were accompanied by many of the chief men of the other Totonac towns, who until they had shown them to their lodgings and brought them food of the best, never left them.

As soon as they had dined they sent to summon the fat Cacique and the other chiefs, and scolded them for entertaining us in their houses, for now they would have to

speak and deal with us which would not please their lord Montezuma ; for without his permission and orders they should not have sheltered us, nor given us presents of golden jewels, and on this subject they uttered many threats against the fat Cacique and the other chiefs and ordered them at once to provide twenty Indians, men and women, to appease their gods for the wrong that had been done.

When he saw what was going on, Cortés asked our interpreters, Doña Marina and Jerónimo de Aguilar why the Caciques were so agitated since the arrival of those Indians, and who they were. Doña Marina who understood full well what had happened, told him what was going on ; and then Cortés summoned the fat Cacique and the other chiefs, and asked them who these Indians were, and why they made such a fuss about them. They replied that they were the tax gatherers of the great Montezuma and that they had come to inquire why they had received us in their town without the permission of their lord, and that they now demanded twenty men and women to sacrifice to their god, Huichilobos, so that he would give them victory over us, for they [the tax gatherers] said that Montezuma had declared that he intended to capture and make slaves of us.

Cortés reassured them and bade them have no fear for he was here with all of us in his company and that he would chastise them [the tax gatherers].

In the next chapter I will tell in full what was done about it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

How Cortés ordered the five tax gatherers of Montezuma to be taken prisoners and gave out that from that time forward neither obedience nor tribute should be rendered to the Mexicans, and how the rebellion against Montezuma was started.

AS soon as Cortés understood what the chiefs were telling him, he said that he had already explained to them that our lord the King had sent him to chastise evil doers and that he would not permit either sacrifice or robbery, and that as these tax gatherers had made this demand, he ordered them to make prisoners of them at once and to hold them in custody until their lord Montezuma should be told the reason, namely, how they had come to rob them and carry off their wives and children as slaves and commit other violence. When the Caciques heard this they were thunderstruck at such daring. What!—to order the messengers of the great Montezuma to be maltreated? They said that they were too much afraid, and did not dare to do it. But Cortés went on impressing on them that the messengers should be thrown into prison at once, and so it was done, and in such a way that with some long poles and collars (such as are in use among them) they secured them so that they could not escape, and they flogged one of them who would not allow himself to be bound. Then Cortés ordered all the Caciques to pay no more tribute or obedience to Montezuma, and to make proclamation to that effect in all their friendly and allied towns, and if any tax gatherers came to their other towns, to inform him of it, and he would send for them. So the news was known throughout that province, for the fat Cacique promptly sent messengers to spread the tidings, and the chiefs who had come in company with the tax gatherers, as soon as they had seen them taken prisoners,

noised it abroad, for each one returned to his own town to deliver the order and relate what had happened.

When they witnessed deeds so marvellous and of such importance to themselves they said that no human beings would dare to do such things, and that it was the work of Teules, for so they call the idols which they worship, and for this reason from that time forth, they called us Teules, which, as I have already explained, is as much as to say that we were either gods or demons. When in the course of my story I may use the word *Teule* in matters connected with our persons, let it be understood that we (Spaniards) are meant.

I must go back to tell about the prisoners. It was the advice of all the Caciques that they should be sacrificed so that none of them could return to Mexico to tell the story; but when Cortés heard this he said that they should not be killed, and that he would take charge of them, and he set some of our soldiers to guard them. At midnight, Cortés sent for these soldiers who were in charge and said to them: "See to it that two of the prisoners are loosened [the two] that appear to you the most intelligent, in such a way that the Indians of this town shall know nothing about it." And he told them to bring the prisoners to his lodging. When the prisoners came before him, he asked them through our interpreters why they were prisoners and what country they came from, as though he knew nothing about them. They replied that the Caciques of Cempoala and of this town, with the aid of their followers and ours, had imprisoned them, and Cortés answered that he knew nothing about it, and was sorry for it, and he ordered food to be brought them and talked in a very friendly manner to them, and told them to return at once to their lord Montezuma and tell him that we were all his good friends and entirely at his service, and that lest any harm should happen to them he had taken them from their prison, and

had quarrelled with the Caciques who had seized them and that anything he could do to serve them he would do with the greatest good will, and that he would order the three Indians their companions who were still held prisoners to be freed and protected. That they two should go away at once and not turn back to be captured and killed.

The two prisoners replied that they valued his mercy and said they still had fear of falling into the hands of their enemies, as they were obliged to pass through their territory. So Cortés ordered six sailors to take them in a boat during the night a distance of four leagues and set them on friendly ground beyond the frontier of Cempoala. When the morning came and the Caciques of the town and the fat Cacique found that the two prisoners were missing they were all the more intent on sacrificing those that remained, if Cortés had not put it out of their power and pretended to be enraged at the loss of the two who had escaped. He ordered a chain to be brought from the ships and bound the prisoners to it, and then ordered them to be taken on board ship, saying that he himself would guard them, as such bad watch had been kept over the others. When they were once on board he ordered them to be freed from their chains and with friendly words he told them that he would soon send them back to Mexico.

I must leave this subject and say that when this was done, all the Caciques of this town and of Cempoala, and all the other Totonac chiefs who had assembled, asked Cortés what was to be done, and that all the force of the great Montezuma and of Mexico would descend upon them and they could not escape death and destruction.

Cortés replied with the most cheerful countenance that he and his brothers who were here with him would defend them and would kill anyone who wished to molest them. Then the Caciques and other townsmen vowed one and all

that they would stand by us in everything we ordered them to do and would join their forces [with ours] against Montezuma and all his allies. Then, in the presence of Diego de Godoy, the scribe, they pledged obedience to his Majesty and messengers were sent to relate all that had happened to the other towns in that province. And as they no longer paid any tribute and no more tax gatherers appeared there was no end to the rejoicing at being rid of that tyranny.

Now, I will leave this incident and tell how we agreed to descend to the plain to some fields where we began to build a fort. This is what really took place and not the story that was told to the historian Gomara.¹

CHAPTER XLVIII.

How we determined to found "La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz" and to build a fort in some meadows near the salt marshes, and close to the harbour with the ugly name [Bernal] where our ships were at anchor, and what we did there.

AS soon as we had made this federation and friendship with more than twenty of the hill towns, known as [the towns of] the Totonacs, which at this time rebelled against the great Montezuma, and gave their allegiance to His Majesty, and offered to serve us—we determined with their ready help at once to found the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz on a plain half a league from this fortress-like town, called Quiahuitzlan, and we laid out plans of a church, market-place and arsenals, and all those things that are needed for a town, and we built a fort, and from the laying of the foundations until the walls were high enough to receive

¹ Blotted out in the original MS. "No matter how eloquently he may relate it."—G. G.

the woodwork, loopholes, watch-towers, and barbicans, we worked with the greatest haste.

Cortés himself was the first to set to work to carry out the earth and stone on his back, and to dig foundations, and all his captains and soldiers followed his example; and we kept on labouring [without pause] so as to finish the work quickly, some of us digging foundations and others building walls,¹ carrying water, working in the lime kilns, making bricks and tiles, or seeking for food. Others worked at the timber, and the blacksmiths, for we had two blacksmiths with us, made nails. In this way we all laboured without ceasing, from the highest to the lowest; the Indians helping us, so that the church and some of the houses were soon built and the fort almost finished.

While we were thus at work, it seems that the great Montezuma heard the news in Mexico about the capture of his tax gatherers and the rebellion against his rule, and how the Totonac towns had withdrawn their allegiance and risen in revolt. He showed much anger against Cortés and all of us, and had already ordered a great army of warriors to make war on the people who had rebelled against him, and not to leave a single one of them alive. He was also getting ready to come against us with a great army with many companies.

Just at this moment there arrived two Indian prisoners whom Cortés had ordered to be set free, as I have related in the last chapter, and when Montezuma knew that it was Cortés who had taken them out of prison and had sent them to Mexico,—and when he heard the words and promises which he had sent them to report, it pleased our Lord God that his anger was appeased, and he resolved to send and gather news of us. For this purpose he despatched his two young nephews under the charge of four old men

1 § ¹ Tapias = walls made of earth stamped into a mould.

who were Caciques of high rank, and sent with them a present of gold and cloth, and told his messengers to give thanks to Cortés for freeing his servants.

On the other hand, he sent many complaints, saying that it was owing to our protection that those towns had dared to commit such a great treason as to refuse to pay him tribute and to renounce their allegiance to him, and that now, having respect for what he knew to be true—that we were those whom his ancestors had foretold were to come to their country, and must therefore be of his own lineage, how was it that we were living in the houses of these traitors? He did not at once send to destroy them, but the time would come when they would not brag of such acts of treason.

Cortés accepted the gold and the cloth, which was worth more than two thousand dollars, and he embraced the envoys and gave as an excuse that he and all of us were very good friends of the Lord Montezuma, and that it was as his servant that he still kept guard over the three tax gatherers, and he sent at once to have them brought from the ships—where they had been well treated and well clothed, and he delivered them up to the messengers.

Then Cortés, on his part, complained greatly of Montezuma, and told the envoys how the Governor, Pitalpitoque, had left the camp one night without giving him notice, which was not well done and that he believed and felt certain that the Lord Montezuma had not authorized any such meanness, and that it was on account of this that we had come to these towns where we were now residing and where we had been well treated by the inhabitants. And he prayed him to pardon the disrespect of which the people had been guilty. As to what he said about the people no longer paying tribute, they could not serve two masters and during the time we had been there they had rendered service to us in the name of our Lord and King; but

as he, Cortés, and all his brethren were on their way to visit him, and place themselves at his service, that when we were once there, then his commands would be attended to.

When this conversation and more of the same nature was over, Cortés ordered blue and green glass beads to be given to the two youths, who were Caciques of high rank, and to the four old men who had come in charge of them, who were also chieftains of importance, and paid them every sign of honour. And as there were some good meadows in the neighbourhood, Cortés ordered Pedro de Alvarado who had a good and very handy sorrel mare, and some of the other horsemen, to gallop and skirmish before the Caciques, who were delighted at the sight of their galloping, and they then took leave of Cortés and of all of us well contented, and returned to Mexico.

About this time Cortés' horse died, and he bought or was given another called "El Arriero," a dark chestnut which belonged to Ortiz, the musician, and Bartolomé Garcia, the miner ; it was one of the best of the horses that came in the fleet.

I must stop talking about this, and relate that as these towns of the sierra, our allies, and the town of Cempoala had hitherto been very much afraid of the Mexicans, believing that the great Montezuma would send his great army of warriors to destroy them, when they saw the kinsmen of the great Montezuma arriving with the presents I have mentioned, and paying such marked respect to Cortés and to all of us, they were fairly astounded and the Caciques said to one another that we must be Teules for Montezuma had fear of us, and had sent us presents of gold. If we already had reputation for valour, from this time forth it was greatly increased. But I must leave off here and go on to say what the fat Cacique and his friends were about.

CHAPTER XLIX.

How the fat Cacique and other chieftains came to complain to Cortés, that in a fortified town named Cingapacinga,¹ there was a garrison of Mexicans which did them much damage, and what was done about it.

As soon as the Mexican messengers had departed, the fat Cacique with many other friendly chieftains, came to beg Cortés to go at once to a town named Cingapacinga, two days' journey from Cempoala (that is about eight or nine leagues)—as there were many warriors of the Culuas, or Mexicans, assembled there, who were destroying their crops and plantations, and were waylaying and ill-treating their vassals, and doing other injuries. Cortés believed the story as they told it so earnestly. He had promised that he would help them, and would destroy the Culuas and other Indians who might annoy them, and noting with what importunity they pressed their complaints, he did not know what to answer them, unless it were to say that he would willingly go, or send some soldiers under one of us, to turn these Mexicans out. As he stood there thinking the matter over, he said laughingly to some of us companions who were with him: "Do you know, gentlemen, that it seems to me that we have already gained a great reputation for valour throughout this country and that from what they saw us do in the matter of Montezuma's tax-gatherers, the people here take us for gods or beings like their idols. I am thinking that so as to make them believe that one of us is enough to defeat those Indian warriors, their enemies, who they say are occupying the town with the fortress, that we will send Heredia against

¹ Not marked on the modern maps. Orozco y Berra (vol. iv, p. 163) says that it no longer exists, but that he found it marked in a MS. map of Patiño under the name of Tizapanecingo, eight or nine leagues N.W. of Cempoala.

them." Now, this old man was a Biscayan musketeer who had a bad twitch in his face, a big beard, a face covered with scars, and was blind of one eye and lame of one leg.

Cortés sent for him and said : "Go with these Caciques to the river which is a quarter of a league distant, and when you get there, stop to drink and wash your hands, and fire a shot from your musket, and then I will send to call you back. I want this to be done because the people here think that we are gods, or at least they have given us that name and reputation, and as you are ugly enough, they will believe that you are an idol." Heredia did what he was told, for he was an intelligent and clever man who had been a soldier in Italy, and Cortés sent for the fat Cacique and the other chieftains, who were waiting for his help and assistance, and said to them : "I am sending this brother of mine with you to kill or expel all the Culuas from this town you speak of, and to bring me here as prisoners all who refuse to leave." The Caciques were surprised when they heard this and did not know whether to believe it or not, but seeing that Cortés never changed his face, they believed that what he told them was true. So old Heredia shouldered his musket and set out with them, and he fired shots into the air as he went through the forest so that the Indians might see and hear him. And the Caciques sent word to the other towns that they were bringing along a Teule to kill all the Mexicans who were in Cingapacinga. I tell this story here merely as a laughable incident, and to show the wiles of Cortés. When Cortés knew that Heredia had reached the river that he had been told about, he sent in haste to call him back, and when old Heredia and the Caciques had returned, he told them that on account of the good will he bore them that he, Cortés himself, would go in person with some of his brethren to afford them the help they needed and visit the country and fortresses ; and he ordered them

at once to bring one hundred Indian carriers to transport the *tepusques*, that is, the cannon, and they came early the next morning, and we set out that same day with four hundred men and fourteen horsemen, and crossbowmen and musketeers who were all ready. Certain soldiers belonging to the party of Diego Velásquez refused to go and told Cortés that he could set out with those who were willing, but that they wished to go back to Cuba.

What was done about this I will tell in the next chapter.

CHAPTER L.

How certain soldiers, partisans of Diego Velásquez, seeing that we positively intended to make settlements, and establish peace in the towns, said that they did not want to go on any expedition, but wished to return to the Island of Cuba.

YOU have already heard me tell in the preceding chapter how Cortés had undertaken to go to a town named Cingapacinga, and take with him four hundred soldiers and fourteen horsemen and musketeers and crossbowmen, and we took good care to make certain soldiers of the party of Diego Velásquez go with us. When the officers went to warn them to get their arms ready, and those who had them to bring their horses, they answered haughtily that they did not want to go on any expedition but back to their farms and estates in Cuba ; that they had already lost enough through Cortés having enticed them from their homes, and that he had promised them on the sand dunes that whosoever might wish to leave, that he would give them permission to do so and a ship and stores for the voyage ; and for that reason there were now seven soldiers all ready to return to Cuba. When Cortés heard this he sent to summon these men before him, and when he asked them why they were doing such a mean thing they replied

somewhat indignantly and said that they wondered at his honour, with so few soldiers under his command, wishing to settle in a place where there were reported to be such thousands of Indians and such great towns; that as for themselves, they were invalids and could hardly crawl from one place to another and that they wished to return to their homes and estates in Cuba, and they asked him to grant them leave to depart as he had promised that he would do. Cortés answered them gently that it was true that he had promised it, but that they were not doing their duty in deserting from their captain's flag. And then he ordered them to embark at once without any delay and assigned a ship to them and ordered them to be furnished with cassava bread and a jar of oil and such other supplies as we possessed.

One of these soldiers, a certain Moron, a native of the town of Bayamo, owned a good dappled (gray) horse, with stockinged fore-feet, and he sold it a good bargain to Juan Ruano in exchange for some property which Juan Ruano had left in Cuba.

When these people were ready to set sail, all of us comrades, and the Alcaldes and Regidores of our town of Villa Rica, went and begged Cortés on no account to allow anyone to leave the country, for, in the interest of the service of our Lord God and His Majesty, any person asking for such permission should be considered as deserving the punishment of death, in accordance with military law, as a deserter from his captain and his flag in time of war and peril, especially in this case when, as they had stated, we were surrounded by such a great number of towns peopled by Indian warriors.

Cortés acted as though he wished to give them leave to depart, but in the end he revoked the permission and they remained baffled, and even ashamed of themselves; however Moron had sold his horse and Juan Ruano, who

had possession of it, did not want to give it back again ; but Cortés arranged all this and we set out on our expedition to Cingapacinga.

CHAPTER LI.

What happened to us at Cingapacinga, and how, on our return by way of Cempoala, we demolished the idols ; and other things that happened.

AS soon as the seven men who wished to return to Cuba had calmed down, we set out with the force of horsemen and foot soldiers already mentioned, and slept that night at the town of Cempoala. Two thousand Indian warriors divided into four commands, were all ready to accompany us, and on the first day we marched five leagues in good order. The next day, a little after dusk¹ we arrived at some farms near to the town of Cingapacinga, and the natives of the town heard the news of our coming. When we had already begun the ascent to the fortress and houses which stood amid great cliffs and crags, eight Indian chieftains and priests came out to meet us peacefully and asked Cortés with tears, why he wished to kill and destroy them when they had done nothing to deserve it ; that we had the reputation of doing good to all and of relieving those who had been robbed, and we had imprisoned the tax gatherers of Montezuma ; that these Cempoala Indians who accompanied us were hostile to them on account of old enmities over the land claims and boundaries, and under our protection they had come to kill and rob them. It was true, they said, that there was formerly a Mexican garrison in the town, but that they had left for their own country a few days earlier when they heard that we had

¹ A poco mas de Visperas.

taken the other tax gatherers prisoners, and they prayed us not to let the matter go any further, but to grant them protection. When Cortés thoroughly understood what they had said through our interpreters, Doña Marina and Aguilar, without delay he ordered Captain Pedro de Alvarado, and the quartermaster Cristovól de Olid, and all of us comrades who were with him, to restrain the Indians of Cempoala and prevent them from advancing; and this we did. But although we made haste to stop them, they had already begun to loot the farms. This made Cortés very angry and he sent for the captains who had command of the Cempoala warriors, and with angry words and serious threats, he ordered them to bring the Indian men and women and cloths and poultry that they had stolen from the farms, and forbade any Cempoala Indian to enter the town, and said that for having lied and for having come under our protection merely to rob and sacrifice their neighbours, they were deserving of death, and that our Lord and King, whose servants we were, had not sent us to these countries to commit such indignities, and that they should keep their eyes wide open in order that such a thing did not happen again, otherwise he would not leave one of them alive. Then the Caciques and captains of the Cempoalans brought to Cortés everything they had seized, both Indian men and women and poultry, and he gave them all back to their owners and with a face full of wrath he turned [to the Cempoalans] and ordered them to retire and sleep in the fields—and this they did.

When the caciques and priests¹ of that town saw how just we were [in our dealings] and heard the affectionate words that Cortés spoke to them through our interpreters, including matters concerning our holy religion which it was always our custom to explain, and his advice to them

¹ Papas.

to give up human sacrifices and robbing one another, and the filthy practice of sodomy, and the worship of their curséd Idols, and much other good counsel which he gave them, they showed such good will towards us that they at once sent to call together the people of the neighbouring towns, and all gave their fealty to his Majesty.

They soon began to utter many complaints against Montezuma, just as the people of Cempoala had done when we were at the town of Quiahuitzlan. On the next morning Cortés sent to summon the captains and caciques of Cempoala, who were waiting in the fields to know what we should order them to do, and still in terror of Cortés on account of the lies they had told him. When they came before him he made them make friends with the people of the town, a pact which was never broken by any of them.

Then we set out for Cempoala by another road and passed through two towns friendly to Cingapacinga, where we rested, for the sun was very hot and we were wearied with carrying our arms on our backs. A soldier, (a something) de Mora, a native of Ciudad-Rodrigo, took two chickens from an Indian house in one of the towns, and Cortés who happened to see it, was so enraged at that soldier for stealing chickens in a friendly town before his very eyes, that he immediately ordered a halter to be put around his neck, and he would have been hanged there if Pedro de Alvarado, who chanced to be near Cortés, had not cut the halter with his sword when the poor soldier was half dead. I call this story to mind here to show my curious readers, and even the priests who nowadays have charge of administering the holy sacraments and teaching the doctrine to the natives of the country, that because the poor soldier stole two fowls in a friendly town, it nearly cost him his life, so that they can see how one ought to act towards the Indians, and not seize their

property. This same soldier was killed later on in a battle fought on a rocky height in the province of Guatemala.

To go on with my story—when we had left those towns in peace and continued our march towards Cempoala, we met the fat cacique and other chiefs waiting for us in some huts with food, for although they were Indians, they saw and understood that justice is good and sacred, and that the words Cortés had spoken to them, that we had come to right wrongs and abolish tyranny, were in conformity with what had happened on that expedition, and they were better affected towards us than ever before.

We slept the night in those huts, and all the caciques bore us company all the way to our quarters in their town. They were really anxious that we should not leave their country, as they were fearful that Montezuma would send his warriors against them, and they said to Cortés that as we were already their friends, they would like to have us for brothers, and that it would be well that we should take from their daughters, so as to have children by them ; and to cement our friendship, they brought eight damsels, all of them daughters of caciques, and gave one of these cacicas, who was the niece of the fat cacique, to Cortés ; and one, who was the daughter of another great cacique, (called Cuesco in their language,) was given to Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero. All eight of them were clothed in the rich garments of the country, beautifully ornamented as is their custom. Each one of them had a golden collar around her neck and golden ear-rings in her ears, and they came accompanied by other Indian girls who were to serve as their maids. When the fat cacique presented them, he said to Cortés : “Tecele, (which in their language means Lord)—these seven women are for your captains, and this one, who is my niece, is for you, and she is the señora of towns and vassals.” Cortés received them with a cheerful countenance and thanked the caciques for the gift, but he

said that before we could accept them and become brothers, they must get rid of those idols which they believed in and worshipped, and which kept them in darkness, and must no longer offer sacrifices to them, and that when he could see those cursed things thrown to the ground and an end put to sacrifices that then our bonds of brotherhood would be most firmly tied. He added that these damsels must become Christians before we could receive them, and the people must free themselves from sodomy, for there were boys dressed like women who went about for gain by that cursed practice, and every day we saw sacrificed before us three, four or five Indians whose hearts were offered to the idols and their blood plastered on the walls, and the feet, arms and legs of the victims were cut off and eaten, just as in our country we eat beef brought from the butchers. I even believe that they sell it by retail in the *tianguex*¹ as they call their markets. Cortés told them that if they gave up these evil deeds and no longer practiced them, not only would we be their friends, but we would make them lords over other provinces. All the caciques, priests, and chiefs replied that it did not seem to them good to give up their idols and sacrifices and that these gods of theirs gave them health and good harvests and everything of which they had need ; and that as for sodomy, measures would be taken to put a stop to it so that it should no longer be practiced.

When Cortés and all of us who had seen so many cruelties and infamies which I have mentioned heard that disrespectful answer, we could not stand it, and Cortés spoke to us about it and reminded us of certain good and holy doctrines and said : “ How can we ever accomplish anything worth doing if for the honour of God we do not first abolish these sacrifices made to idols ? ” and he told us

¹ Tianguiz or Tianguiztli.

to be all ready to fight should the Indians try to prevent us ; but even if it cost us our lives the idols must come to the ground that very day. We were all armed ready for a fight as it was ever our custom to be so, and Cortés told the caciques that the idols must be overthrown. When they saw that we were in earnest, the fat cacique and his captains told all the warriors to get ready to defend their idols, and when they saw that we intended to ascend a lofty *cue*—which was their temple—which stood high and was approached by many steps,—I cannot remember how many (steps there were)—the fat cacique and the other chieftains were beside themselves with fury and called out to Cortés to know why he wanted to destroy their idols, for if we dishonoured them and overthrew them, that they would all perish and we along with them. Cortés answered them in an angry tone, that he had already told them that they should offer no more sacrifices to those evil images ; that our reason for removing them was that they should no longer be deluded, and that either they, themselves, must remove the idols at once, or we should throw them out and roll them down the steps, and he added that we were no longer their friends but their mortal enemies, for he had given them good advice which they would not believe ; besides he had seen their companies come armed for battle and he was angry with them and would make them pay for it by taking their lives.

When the Indians saw Cortés uttering these threats, and our interpreter Doña Marina knew well how to make them understood, and even threatened them with the power of Montezuma which might fall on them any day, out of fear of all this they replied that they were not worthy to approach their gods, and that if we wished to overthrow them it was not with their consent, but that we could overthrow them and do what we chose.

The words were hardly out of their mouths before more

than fifty of us soldiers had clambered up [to the temple] and had thrown down their idols which came rolling down the steps shattered to pieces. The idols looked like fearsome dragons, as big as calves, and there were other figures half men and half great dogs of hideous appearance. When they saw their idols broken to pieces the caciques and priests who were with them wept and covered their eyes, and in the Totonac tongue they prayed their gods to pardon them, saying that the matter was no longer in their hands and they were not to blame, but these Teules who had overthrown them, and that they did not attack us on account of the fear of the Mexicans.

When this was over the captains of the Indian warriors who, as I have said, had come ready to attack us, began to prepare to shoot arrows at us, and when we saw this, we laid our hands on the fat cacique and the six priests and some other chiefs, and Cortés cried out that on the least sign of hostility they would all be killed. Then the fat cacique commanded his men to retire from our front and not attempt to fight, and when Cortés saw them calmed, he made them a speech which I will record later on, and thus they were all pacified.

This affair of Cingapacinga was the first expedition made by Cortés in New Spain, and it was very successful, and we did not, as the historian Gómara says, kill and capture and destroy thousands of men in this affair at Cingapacinga, and he who reads this can see how far one story differs from the other, and however good the style of his history may be, nothing is set down as it really happened.

CHAPTER LII.

How Cortés had an altar made and set up an image of Our Lady and a Cross, and how mass was said and the eight Indian damsels were baptized.

WHEN the Caciques, priests and chieftains were silenced, Cortés ordered all the idols which we had overthrown and broken to pieces to be taken out of sight and burned. Then eight priests who had charge of the idols came out of a chamber and carried them back to the house whence they had come, and burned them. These priests wore black cloaks like cassocks and long gowns reaching to their feet, and some had hoods like those worn by canons, and others had smaller hoods like those worn by Dominicans, and they wore their hair very long, down to the waist, with some even reaching down to the feet, covered with blood and so matted together that it could not be separated, and their ears were cut to pieces by way of sacrifice, and they stank like sulphur, and they had another bad smell like carrion, and as they said, and we learnt that it was true, these priests were the sons of chiefs and they abstained from women, but they indulged in the cursed practice of sodomy, and they fasted on certain days, and what I saw them eat was the pith or seeds of cotton when the cotton was being cleaned, but they may have eaten other things which I did not see.

Let us leave the priests and go back to Cortés who made them a good speech through our interpreters, Doña Marina and Jerónimo de Aguilar, and told them that now we would treat them as brothers and would help them all we could against Montezuma and his Mexicans, and we had already sent to tell him not to make war on them or levy tribute, and that as now they were not to have any more idols in their lofty temples he wished to leave with them

a great lady who was the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ whom we believe in and worship, and that they too should hold her for Lady and intercessor, and about this matter and others which were mentioned he made them an excellent discourse, so concisely reasoned, considering the time at his disposal, that there was nothing left to be said. He told them many things about our holy religion as well stated as only a priest could do it nowadays, so that it was listened to with good will. Then he ordered all the Indian masons in the town to bring plenty of lime so as to clean the place and he told them to clear away the blood which encrusted the cues and to clean them thoroughly. The next day when they were whitewashed, an altar was set up with very good altar cloths and he told the Indians to bring many of the roses which grew in the country and are very sweet-scented, and branches of flowers, and told the people to adorn the altar with garlands and always keep the place swept and clean. He then ordered four of the priests to have their hair shorn, for, as I have already said, they wore it long, and to change their garments and clothe themselves in white, and always keep themselves clean, and he placed them in charge of the altar and of that sacred image of our Lady, with orders to keep the place swept clean and decked with flowers. So that it should be well looked after, he left there as hermit one of our soldiers named Juan de Torres de Córdoba, who was old and lame. He ordered our carpenters, whose names I have already given, to make a cross and place it on a stone support which we had already built and plastered over.

The next morning, mass was celebrated at the altar by Padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, and then an order was given to fumigate the holy image of Our Lady and the sacred cross with the incense of the country, and we showed them how to make candles of the native wax and ordered these candles always to be kept burning on the altar, for

up to that time they did not know how to use the wax. The most important chieftains of that town and of others who had come together, were present at the Mass.

At the same time the eight Indian damsels were brought to be made Christians, for they were still in the charge of their parents and uncles and they were given to understand that they must not offer more sacrifices, nor worship idols, but believe in our Lord God. And they were admonished about many things touching our holy religion and were then baptized. The niece of the fat Cacique was named Doña Catalina, and she was very ugly; she was led by the hand and given to Cortés who received her and tried to look pleased. The daughter of the great Cacique, Cuesco, was named Doña Francisca, she was very beautiful for an Indian, and Cortés gave her to Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero. I cannot now recall to mind the names of the other six, but I know that Cortés gave them to different soldiers. When this had been done, we took leave of all the Caciques and chieftains who from that time forward always showed us good will, especially when they saw that Cortés received their daughters and that we took them away with us, and after Cortés had repeated his promises of assistance [against their enemies] we set out for our town of Villa Rica.

What happened there I will speak of later on. This, however, is the true account of what took place in the town of Cempoala, and differs from the stories told by Gómara and the other historians which are all stuff and nonsense.

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CHAPTER LIII.

How we returned to Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz and what happened there.

AFTER we had finished our expedition and the people of Cempoala and Cingapacinga had been reconciled to one another, and the other neighbouring towns had given their fealty to His Majesty, and the idols had been overturned and the image of Our Lady and the Holy Cross set up in their place, and the old soldier placed in charge as hermit, and all the other things that I have told about had happened, we returned to our settlement and took with us certain chieftains from Cempoala. On the day of our arrival there came into port a ship from the Island of Cuba, under the command of Francisco de Saucedo, whom we called *El Pulido*.¹ We called him this from his excessive pride in his good looks and elegance. They say that he was a native of Medina Rio Seco, and had been *Maestresala*² to the Admiral of Castille.

At the same time there arrived Luis Marin (a man of great merit who was afterwards a captain in the expedition against Mexico) and ten soldiers. Saucedo brought a horse, and Luis Marin a mare; and they brought from Cuba the news that the decree had reached Diego Velásquez from Spain giving him authority to trade and found settlements, at which his friends were greatly rejoiced, all the more when they learned that he had received his commission appointing him Adelantado of Cuba.

Being in that town without any plans beyond finishing the fort, for we were still at work on it, most of us soldiers suggested to Cortés to let the fort stand as it was, for a

¹ The elegant.

² *Maestresala*, the chief waiter at a nobleman's table.

memorial, (it was just ready to be roofed), for we had already been over three months in the country and it seemed to us better to go and see what this great Montezuma might be like and to earn an honest living and make our fortune ; but that before we started on our journey we should send our salutations to His Majesty, the Emperor, and give him an account of all that had happened since we left the Island of Cuba. It also began to be debated whether we should send to His Majesty all the gold that we had received, both what we had got from barter, as well as the presents that Montezuma had sent us. Cortés replied that it was a very wise decision and that he had already talked to some of the gentlemen about it, and that as perchance in this matter of the gold there might be some soldiers who wished to keep their shares, and if it were divided up there would be very little to send, that for this reason he had appointed Diego de Ordás and Francisco de Montejo who were good men of business, to go from soldier to soldier among those whom it was suspected would demand their share of the gold, and say these words: "Sirs, you already know that we wish to send His Majesty a present of the gold which we have obtained here, and as it is the first [treasure] that we are sending from this land it ought to be much greater ; it seems to us that we should all place at his service the portions that fall to our share. We gentlemen and soldiers who have here written our names have signed as not wishing to take anything, but to give it all voluntarily to His Majesty, so that he may bestow favours on us. If anyone wishes for his share it will not be refused him, but whoever renounces it let him do as we have all done, and sign here."

In this way they all signed to a man. When this was settled, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo were chosen as proctors to go to Spain, for Cortés had already given them over two thousand dollars to keep

them in his interest. The best ship in the fleet was got ready, and two pilots were appointed, one of them being Anton de Alaminos, who knew the passage through the Bahama Channel, for he was the first man to sail through it, and fifteen sailors were told off, and a full supply of ship's stores given to them. When everything was ready, we agreed to write to tell His Majesty all that had happened. Cortés wrote on his own account, so he told us, an accurate narrative of the events, but we did not see his letter.

The Cabildo¹ wrote a letter jointly with ten of the soldiers from among those who wished to settle in the land and had appointed Cortés as their general, and the letter was drawn up with great accuracy so that nothing was omitted, and I put my signature to it; and besides these letters and narratives, all the captains and soldiers together wrote another letter and narrative, and what was contained in the letter which we wrote is as follows :

CHAPTER LIV.

The narrative and letter which we sent to His Majesty by our proctors, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, which letter was signed by a number of the Captains and soldiers.

AFTER beginning with the expressions of well deserved respect which were due from us to the great Majesty of the Emperor our Lord, for such his Catholic Christian Royal Majesty was, and after adding other matters which it was appropriate to state in a narrative and account of our doings and voyage, each chapter by itself, there followed this, which I will here briefly recapitulate. How we sailed from

¹ Cabildo—Municipality, the alguaciles, etc., already mentioned.

the Island of Cuba with Hernando Cortés ; and the proclamations which were made ; how we intended coming to settle, but that Diego Velásquez was secretly minded to trade and not to settle. How Cortés wished to return with certain gold gained by barter in accordance with the instructions that he brought from Diego Velásquez which we have submitted to His Majesty. How we insisted on Cortés forming a settlement, and chose him as Captain General and Chief Justice, until His Majesty might please to order otherwise. How we promised him [Cortés] the fifth of what should be obtained, after the Royal fifth had been deducted. How we arrived at Cozumel and by what chance Jerónimo de Aguilar happened to be at Cape Catoche, and about the way he said that he got there, he and a certain Gonzalo Guerrero, who remained with the Indians because he was married and had children and had already become like an Indian. How we arrived at Tabasco, and of the war they waged against us, and the battle we fought with them, and how we brought them to peace. How that wherever we went excellent discourses were addressed to them [the Indians] to induce them to abandon their Idols, and matters concerning our Holy faith were explained to them. How they gave their fealty to His Royal Majesty, and became the first vassals that he has in these parts. How they [the Indians] brought a present of women, and among them a Cacica, for an Indian a woman of great importance, who knew the Mexican language, which is the language used throughout the country and that with her and Aguilar we possessed reliable interpreters. How we landed at San Juan de Ulúa, and about the speeches of the Ambassadors of the Great Montezuma, and who the Great Montezuma was and what was said about his greatness, and about the present that they brought. How we went to Cempoala, which is a large town, and thence to another town named Quiahuitztlan, which is fortified, and how in

that town an alliance and confederation was made with us and more than thirty towns withdrew their obedience from Montezuma, and all gave their fealty to His Majesty and are now part of his Royal possessions. The expedition to Cingapacinga, how we made a fortress, and that we are now on the road to the interior of the country to see Montezuma himself. How this country is very large with many cities and thickly peopled and the natives are great warriors. How there is a great diversity of languages among them and they make war one against the other. How they are idolators and kill and sacrifice many men, women and children, and eat human flesh and practice other iniquities. How the first discoverer was Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, and Juan de Grijalva came soon after and that now at the present time we offer him [His Majesty] the gold that we have gained, that is, the golden sun and silver moon and a helmet full of gold in grains as they take it from the mines, many different kinds of golden articles shaped in various ways, and cotton cloths much embroidered with feathers, of great excellence, and many other golden objects such as fly whisks and shields, and other things which, as so many years have already gone by, I cannot now call to mind. We also present four Indians whom we liberated in Cempoala whom they had kept in wooden cages to fatten, so that when they were fat they might be sacrificed and eaten. After giving the report of this and other things, we gave an account and narration of how we, four hundred and fifty soldiers in these his Majesty's dominions, were placed in very great danger among such a great number of towns, and such quarrelsome people and such great warriors, in order to serve God and His Royal Crown, and we begged him to show us favour in all that we might need, and that he would not grant the government of these countries or crown offices to any person whatever, for they are of such quality

and so rich with such great towns and cities, that they are suitable for an *Infante* or Great Lord, and we are thinking that as Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and Archbishop of Rosano, is President of the Council and rules all the Indies, that he will give it [the government] to some relation of his own or to some friend, especially to one Diego Velásquez who is governor of the Island of Cuba, and the reason why he will give him the government or any other office, is that he [Diego Velásquez] is always giving him presents of gold and has set apart for him in this same island, townships of Indians to get out the gold from the mines, and from among these he ought first of all to have given the best to the Royal Crown, but he did not set aside one of them, and on this account he is not worthy to receive favours. As in all things, we are his [Majesty's] most loyal servants, and are ready to lay down our lives in his service, we inform him of this so that he may know all about it and we are determined that until he has deigned to permit our proctors, whom we are sending, to kiss his feet, and has seen our letter, and until we see his Royal signature (when prostrate we may obey his Royal commands), that should the Bishop of Burgos on his own authority send us any one soever to govern us or be our captain, then, before obeying him, we would bring it to His Majesty's personal knowledge wherever he may be, and that whatever he should order, that would we obey as we are bound to do, as the command of our King and Lord.

Besides these narratives, we begged him, until he be pleased to order otherwise, to grant the government to Hernando Cortés, and we praised him so highly as his most obedient servant, as to raise him to the clouds, and after having written all these narratives with the greatest respect and humility as well as we were able and as was proper, explaining every event, how and when and

in what manner they happened, in the form of a letter intended for our King and not in the style that is here set down in my story, we captains and soldiers who were on the side of Cortés, all of us signed it. Two copies were made of the letter, and Cortés begged us to show them to him, and when he saw such a true narrative, and the great praise which we gave to him, he was very pleased and said that he would remember it to our credit and made us great promises, but he did not wish us to mention or allude to the fifth of the gold that we had promised him, nor to say who were the first discoverers, because, as we understood, he gave no account in his letter of Francisco Hernández de Córdova nor of Grijalva, but attributed the discovery, and the honour and glory of it all, to himself alone, and he said that now at this time it would be better to write thus, and not to report it to His Majesty. There were not wanting those who said to him that to our King and Lord nothing that had happened should be left untold. When these letters had been written and given to our proctors, we impressed on them strongly, that on no account should they enter Havana or go to a farm which one of them, Francisco de Montejo, owned there, which was called *El Marien* and was a harbour for ships, lest Diego Velásquez should get to know what was happening. They did not do as they were told as I shall show later on. When everything was ready for them to embark, the Padre de la Merced said Mass, commending them to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

On the 26th July 1519 they left San Juan de Ulúa and with good weather, arrived at Havana, and Francisco de Montejo with the greatest importunity allured and induced the pilot Alaminos to steer to his farm, saying that he was going to obtain supplies of pigs and cassava, until he got him to do what he wanted which was to drop anchor at his farm, for Puertocarrero was very ill and he (Montejo) paid

no attention to him, and on the very night they arrived they despatched a sailor from the ship by land with letters and information for Diego Velásquez, and we know that Montejo sent the man who went with the letters, and this sailor went post haste through the Island of Cuba, from town to town making known all that I have here told, until Diego Velásquez himself knew it, and what he did about it I will tell later on.

CHAPTER LV.

How Diego Velásquez, the Governor of Cuba, learned for certain from letters, that we were sending proctors with an embassy and presents to our King and Lord, and what he did about it.

As Diego Velásquez the Governor of Cuba learnt the news both from the letters which were secretly sent him, (rumour said by Montejo) as well as from the sailor, who had been present during all that I have related in the last chapter, and who swam ashore to carry the letters to him, and when he understood about the great present of gold that we were sending to His Majesty, and knew who were the Ambassadors and proctors, he was taken with cold sweats as of death and uttered most lamentable words and curses against Cortés, and against his own secretary Duero, and the accountant Amador de Lares who had advised him to make Cortés a general, and he promptly ordered two ships of small burden which were fast sailors, to be armed with all the artillery and soldiers that could be provided and two captains, one named Gabriel de Rojas, and the other so and so de Guzman, to go in them and he ordered them to go as far as the Havana, and thence to the Bahama Channel and in any case to capture and bring the ship in which our proctors were sailing and all the gold that they were carrying. With all haste, in compliance with his commands, they arrived after some days of sailing at the

Bahama Channel, and asked of some of the vessels which were crossing the sea with cargo if they had seen a ship of large size go by and all gave news of her and said that she would already have passed out of the Bahama Channel, for they had had continuous good weather. So after beating about with those two ships between the Bahama Channel and the Havana and finding no news of what they came to seek they returned to Santiago de Cuba, and if Diego Velásquez was upset before he despatched the vessels, he was far more afflicted when he saw them return in this way, and his friends promptly advised him to send to Spain and complain to the Bishop of Burgos who was President of the Council of the Indies, and was doing much for him. He also sent his complaints to the Island of Santo Domingo to the Royal *Audiencia* which resided there and to the Jeronimite friars who were governors of the Island, named Fray Luis de Figuerea and Fray Alonzo de Santo Domingo and Fray Bernadino de Manzanedo, and these ecclesiastics were wont to stay and reside in the Mejorada Monastery two miles distant from Medina del Campo, and he sent a ship post haste to them to make many complaints against Cortés and all of us. When they came to know about our great services, the answer that the Jeronimite fathers gave him was that no blame could be laid on Cortés and those who went with him, for on all matters we turned to our King and Master, and we had sent him so great a present, such as had not been seen for a long time past in our Spain, and they said this because at that time and season no Peru existed nor any thought of it. They also sent to tell him that on the contrary we were worthy to receive the greatest favours from His Majesty; at the same time they sent to Cuba a Licentiate named Zuazo to take the *residencia*¹ of Diego

¹ *Residencia*—that is the examination and formal account demanded of a person holding public office.

Velásquez, or at least he arrived at the Island a few months later, and this same Licentiate made his report to the Jeronimite Friars. When that reply was brought to Diego Velásquez he was more dismayed than ever, and whereas before he was very stout he at this time became thin. With the greatest energy he at once ordered all the ships that could be found in the Island of Cuba to be searched out and soldiers and Captains to be got ready, and he took steps to send a powerful fleet to take Cortés and all of us prisoners, and he showed such personal energy, going from town to town and from one estate to the other, writing to all parts of the Island where he was not able to go himself, and entreating his friends to go on that expedition, that within eleven months or a year he got together eighteen sail, great and small, and over thirteen hundred soldiers including captains and seamen, for as they saw that he was so zealous and prompt, all the principal inhabitants of Cuba, his relations as well as those who possessed Indians, got ready to serve him. He sent as Captain General of the Fleet a gentleman named Pánfilo de Narvaez, a man tall of stature and robust, whose voice sounded hollow as if from a vault; he was a native of Valladolid and married in the Island of Cuba a lady who was already a widow, named Maria de Valenzuela and he owned good towns of Indians and was very rich.

Here I will now leave him, forming and preparing his fleet, and will go back to our proctors and their good voyage, and as three or four things happened at the same time I must leave the story and subject which I was discussing, so as to be able to speak of that which is more material, and for this reason they must not blame me because I set out and depart from the regular course of events in order to speak of what happened later on.

CHAPTER LVI.

How our Proctors passed through the Bahama Channel in good weather and in a short time arrived in Castille, and what happened to them at Court.

I HAVE already said that our Proctors left the port of San Juan de Ulúa on the 6th July, 1519, and after a good passage they arrived at Havana and they soon passed through the Bahama Channel, and it is said that this was the first time that it was navigated, and in a short time they reach the Islands of Tercera¹ and thence went to Seville. They journeyed post haste to the court which was at Valladolid and to the President of the Royal Council of the Indies, Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos (who styled himself Archbishop of Rosano), and ruled all the Court because our Lord the Emperor was absent in Flanders.² When our proctors quite cheerfully, expecting that he would show them favour, went to kiss the hands of the President, and to give him our letters and narrative and deliver all the gold and jewels, and begged him to send a messenger at once to His Majesty to hand over to him the present and letters, with whom they themselves would go to kiss the Royal feet, he received them with such an evil frown and such ill will, and even spoke to them contemptuously because they had thus addressed him, that our ambassadors were about to retort. However, they restrained themselves and replied that his Lordship should consider the great services that Cortés and his companions were rendering to His Majesty and they again begged him at once to send all those golden jewels and the letters and narratives to His Majesty that he might know what had happened, and that they

¹ Terceira in the Azores.

² This is an error ; Charles V was in Catalonia.

would go to him. He retorted very haughtily and even ordered that they should not have charge of it [the letters and jewels]; that he himself would write to say what was really happening, and not what they reported, for they had risen in rebellion against Diego Velásquez; and many other bitter words passed between them.

At this time Benito Martin, Chaplain to Diego Velásquez, who has been already mentioned by me, arrived at Court, and made many complaints against Cortés and all of us, which still more incensed the Bishop against us. As Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero was a gentleman and cousin of the Count de Medellin (for Montejo held back and did not dare to displease the President), he said to the Bishop that he appealed to him most earnestly to listen to them without passion, and not to utter such words as he had spoken, and at once to despatch those presents as they were brought for His Majesty; that we were most faithful servants of the Royal Crown, and worthy of favours and not of insults and rude words. When the Bishop heard that, he ordered him to be arrested, for he was told that three years before, he [Alonzo Puertocarrero] had seized a woman of Medellin and carried her off to the Indies. So all our merits and presents of gold were in the position that I have here related, and our Ambassadors decided to hold their tongues until the right time and place should occur.

The Bishop wrote to Flanders to his Majesty in favour of his favourite and friend Diego Velásquez and very evil words against Cortés and against all of us, and he made no report of the letters that we were bringing him, but merely said that Hernando Cortés had risen in rebellion against Diego Velásquez, and such-like things.

Let me go back to say that Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo and even Martin Cortés the father of Cortés and a certain Nuñez, a licentiate and a

Reporter of His Majesty's Royal Council and a near relation of Cortés, who worked on his behalf, decided to send a messenger to Flanders with other letters, the same as those they had given to the Bishop, for duplicates had been sent by our Proctors, and they wrote to His Majesty an account of all that was happening, and a memorandum of the golden jewels of the present, and made complaint of the Bishop and disclosed his business connection with Diego Velásquez. There were even other gentlemen who favoured them, those who did not stand well with Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, for it was rumoured that he was generally disliked on account of the great injustice and arrogance he displayed in the high offices that he held. As our great services were for God our Lord and for His Majesty, and we always put our full strength into them, it pleased God that His Majesty arrived at a clear knowledge of the affair and when he saw and understood it he and the Duke, Marquises, Counts and other gentlemen who were at his royal Court, showed such great satisfaction that they talked of nothing else but of Cortés and all of us who were helping him in the conquests for several days, and of the riches we were sending him from these lands. As for the letters of comment which the Bishop of Burgos had written to him about the matter, when His Majesty saw that it was all contrary to the truth, from then onwards he took a particular dislike to the Bishop, especially because he had not sent all the articles of gold but had kept back a great number of them. The Bishop got to know all this when it was written to him from Flanders, and he was very angry about it, and if the Bishop had spoken much that was evil of Cortés and all of us before our letters had come before His Majesty, from that time forward he openly called us traitors, but it pleased God that he lost his fury and vigour, and within two years he was defied and even shamed and dishonoured and we were reputed as very

loyal subjects, as I shall relate further on when occasion arises. His Majesty wrote to say that he was soon coming to Castille and would take notice of the matters concerning us, and would grant us favours. As I shall later on narrate more fully, how and in what manner this happened, I will leave the matter here, with our Proctors awaiting the arrival of His Majesty.

Before I go on any further I wish to speak with regard to what certain gentlemen who are curious in the matter have asked me, and they have a right to know about it, how it is that I am able to write down in this narrative things that I did not see, as at the time when our Proctors delivered the letters, messages, and presents of gold which they were carrying for His Majesty and had these disputes with the Bishop of Burgos, I was engaged in the conquest of New Spain. I say this, that our Proctors wrote to us the true *conquistadores*, word for word in Chapters, all that was happening, both about the Bishop of Burgos, as well as what His Majesty was pleased to promise in our favour, and how it all happened ; and Cortés sent us to the towns where we were living at the time, other letters that he had received from our Proctors that we might see how well they negotiated with His Majesty and how hostile the Bishop was to us. This I give as an answer to what I have been asked. Let us leave this subject and tell in another chapter what happened in our camp.

CHAPTER LVII.

What was done in camp and the judgment which Cortés delivered after our ambassadors had departed to go to His Majesty with all the gold and letters and narratives.

WITHIN four days of the departure of our proctors to present themselves before our Lord the Emperor, as I have already narrated, (as it seems that men's hearts are of many kinds and are swayed by different thoughts,) some of the friends and dependents of Diego Velásquez, named Pedro Escudero, Juan Cermeño, and Gonzalo de Umbria a pilot, and Bernaldino de Coria, who was afterwards a settler in Chiapas, the father of a certain Centeno and a priest named Juan Diaz, and certain sailors who called themselves Peñates¹, natives of Gibraltar², who bore Cortés ill will, some of them because he had not given them leave to return to Cuba when he had promised to do so, others because they had not received their shares of the gold which had been sent to Spain, and the Peñates on account of the flogging they had received in Cozumel for stealing salt pork from a soldier named Barrio, as I have already related. These men determined to seize a small ship and sail in her to Cuba to give notice to Diego Velásquez and advise him how at Havana he might be able to seize our proctors on the estate of Francisco de Montejo, with all the gold and the messages, for it appears that they [the conspirators] had been advised by other persons in our camp that they [the proctors] would go to that estate and they [the other persons] had even written to Diego Velásquez that he would have an opportunity of capturing them. Thus, these men, whom I have named, had already got their stores in the ship, such as cassava bread, oil, fish, water, and made other preparations, and the time being past midnight, were ready to embark, when

¹ Peñates = rockmen.

² Gibraleon in the text.

one of them (it was a certain Bernaldino de Coria) seems to have repented of his wish to return to Cuba, and went to report the matter to Cortés. When Cortés heard of it and learned how many there were and why they wished to get away, and who had given counsel and held the threads of the plot, he ordered the sails, compass and rudder to be removed at once from the ship, and had the men arrested, and their confessions taken down. They all told the truth, and their confessions involved in their guilt others who were remaining with us, but Cortés kept this quiet at the time as there was no other course open to him. The sentence which Cortés delivered was that Pedro Escudero and Juan Cermeño should be hanged ; that the pilot Gonzalo de Umbria, should have his feet cut off, and the sailors, Peñates, should receive two hundred lashes each, and Father Juan Diaz, but for the honour of the church, would have been punished as well ; as it was he gave him a great fright. I remember that when Cortés signed that sentence, he said with great grief and sighs : “ Would that I did not know how to write, so as not to have to sign away men’s lives ! ”—and it seems to me that that saying is common among judges who have to sentence men to death, and is a quotation taken from that cruel Nero at the time when he showed signs of being a good Emperor.

As soon as the sentence was carried out,¹ Cortés rode off at break-neck speed for Cempoala which was five leagues distant, and ordered two hundred of us soldiers, and all the horsemen to follow him ; and I remember that Pedro de Alvarado, who three days before had been sent by Cortés with two hundred soldiers to the hill towns so as to get enough to eat, for in our town there was a great scarcity of supplies, was also ordered to go to Cempoala,

¹ As the signature of Juan Cermeño is attached to the letter written by the army in 1520, it looks as though the sentence was not executed.

so that orders could be there issued for our journey to Mexico. So Pedro de Alvarado was not present when, as I have described, justice was executed.

The orders which were issued when we came together in Cempoala, I will relate fully further on.

CHAPTER LVIII.

How we settled to go to Mexico and to destroy all the ships before starting, and what else happened, and how the plan of destroying the ships was done by advice and decision of all of us who were friends with Cortés.

BEING in Cempoala, as I have stated, and discussing with Cortés questions of warfare, and our advance into the country, and going on from one thing to another, we, who were his friends, counselled him, although others opposed it, not to leave a single ship in the port, but to destroy them all at once, so as to leave no source of trouble behind, lest, when we were inland, others of our people should rebel like the last ; besides, we should gain much additional strength from the masters, pilots and sailors who numbered nearly one hundred men, and they would be better employed helping us to watch and fight than remaining in port.

As far as I can make out, this matter of destroying the ships which we suggested to Cortés during our conversation, had already been decided on by him, but he wished it to appear as though it came from us, so that if any one should ask him to pay for the ships, he could say that he had acted on our advice and we would all be concerned in their payment. Then he sent Juan de Escalante (who was chief alguacil and a person of distinguished bravery and a great friend of Cortés, and an enemy of Diego Velásquez, because he had not given him good Indians in the Island of Cuba) to Villa Rica with orders to bring on shore all

the anchors, cables, sails, and everything else on board which might prove useful, and then to destroy the ships and preserve nothing but the boats, and that the pilots, sailing masters and sailors, who were old and no use for war, should stay at the town, and with the two nets they possessed should undertake the fishing, for there was always fish in that harbour, although they were not very plentiful. Juan de Escalante did all that he was told to do, and soon after arrived at Cempoala with a company of sailors, whom he had brought from the ships, and some of them turned out to be very good soldiers.

When this was done, Cortés sent to summon all the Caciques of the hill towns who were allied to us and in rebellion against Montezuma, and told them how they must give their service to the Spaniards who remained in Villa Rica, to finish building the church, fortress and houses, and Cortés took Juan de Escalante by the hand before them all, and said to them: "This is my brother," and told them to do whatever he should order them, and that should they need protection or assistance against the Mexicans, they should go to him and he would come in person to their assistance.

All the Caciques willingly promised to do what might be asked of them, and I remember that they at once fumigated Juan de Escalante with incense, although he did not wish it done. I have already said that he was a man well qualified for any post and a great friend of Cortés, so he could place him in command of the town and harbour with confidence, so that if Diego Velásquez should send an expedition there, it would meet with resistance. I must leave him here and go on with my story.

It is here that the historian Gomara says that when Cortés ordered the ships to be scuttled that he did not dare to let the soldiers know that he wished to go to Mexico in search of the great Montezuma. It was not as

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he states, for what sort of Spaniards should we be not to wish to go ahead, but to linger in places where there was neither profit nor fighting? This same Gomara also says that Pedro de Ircio remained as captain in Vera Cruz ; he was misinformed. I repeat that it was Juan de Escalante who remained there as Captain and chief Alguacil of New Spain, and that so far, Pedro de Ircio had not been given any position whatever—not even charge of a company.

CHAPTER LIX.

About a discourse which Cortés made to us after the ships had been destroyed, and how we hastened our departure for Mexico.

WHEN the ships had been destroyed, with our full knowledge, and not [secretly] as is said by the historian Gomara, one morning after we had heard mass, when all the captains and soldiers were assembled and were talking to Cortés about military matters, he begged us to listen to him, and argued with us as follows:—

“ We all understood what was the work that lay before us, and that with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ we must conquer in all battles and encounters [that fell to our lot], and must be as ready for them as was befitting, for if we were anywhere defeated, which pray God would not happen, we could not raise our heads again, as we were so few in numbers, and we could look for no help or assistance, but that which came from God, for we no longer possessed ships in which to return to Cuba, but must rely on our own good swords and stout hearts,”—and he went on to draw many comparisons and relate the heroic deeds of the Romans. One and all we answered him that we would obey his orders, that the die was cast for good fortune, as Cæsar said when he crossed the Rubicon, and that we

were all of us ready to serve God and the King. After this excellent speech, which was delivered with more honied words and greater eloquence than I can express here, he [Cortés] at once sent for the fat Cacique and reminded him that he should treat the church and cross with great reverence and keep them clean; and he also told him that he meant to depart at once for Mexico to order Montezuma not to rob or offer human sacrifices, and that he now had need of two hundred Indian carriers to transport his artillery, for as I have already said these Indians can carry two arrobas¹ on their backs and march five leagues with it. He also asked fifty of the leading warriors to go with us. Just as we were ready to set out, a soldier, whom Cortés had sent to Villa Rica with orders for some of the men remaining there to join him, returned from the town bearing a letter from Juan de Escalante, saying that there was a ship sailing along the coast, and that he had made smoke signals and others, and had raised some white cloths as banners, and had galloped along on horseback waving a scarlet cape so that those on ship-board might see it, and he believed that they had seen his signals, banners, horse and cape, but that they did not wish to come into the harbour, and that he had sent some Spaniards to watch to what place the ships should go, and they had reported that the ship had dropped anchor near the mouth of a river distant about three leagues, and that he wished to know what he should do.

When Cortés had read the letter he at once ordered Pedro de Alvarado to take charge of all his army at Cempoala and with him Gonzalo de Sandoval who was already giving proofs of being a very valorous man, as he always remained. This was the first time that Sandoval was given a command, and because he was appointed

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¹ Two arrobas = 50 lbs.

to this command, and Alonzo de Ávila was passed over there arose certain irritation between Alonzo de Ávila and Sandoval.

Then Cortés rode off at once in company with four horsemen, leaving orders for fifty of the most active soldiers to follow him, and he named those of us who were to form this company and that same night we arrived at Villa Rica. What happened there, I will tell further on.

CHAPTER LX.

How Cortés went to where the ship was anchored and how we captured six of the soldiers and mariners who belonged to the ship, and what happened about it.

WHEN, as I have related, we reached Villa Rica, Juan de Escalante came to speak to Cortés and said that it would be as well to go to the ship that night, lest she should set sail and depart, and that he would go and do this with twenty soldiers while Cortés rested himself. Cortés replied that he could not rest, that "a lame goat must not nap," that he would go in person with the soldiers he had brought with him. So before we could get a mouthful of food we started to march along the coast and on the road we came on four Spaniards who had come to take possession of the land in the name of Francisco de Garay the governor of Jamaica. These men had been sent by a captain named Alonzo Álvarez de Pineda or Pinedo, who a few days before had made a settlement on the Rio Panuco.¹ These four Spaniards whom we captured were named Guillen de la Loa, who had come as notary, and the witnesses he had brought with him to take possession

¹ Pinedo had brought his ships right around the Gulf of Mexico from the coast of Florida. See *Orozco y Berra*. vol. iv. p. 176.

of the country were Andrés Nuñez, who was a boat builder, another named Master Pedro, he of the harp¹ from Valencia, and another whose name I cannot now remember.

When Cortés clearly understood that they had come to take possession of the country in the name of Francisco de Garay, and knew that he was staying behind in Jamaica and sending captains to do the work, Cortés asked them by what right and title those captains came. The four men replied that in the year 1518 as the fame of the lands we had discovered by the expeditions of Francisco Hernández de Córdova and Juan de Grijalva and of the twenty thousand golden dollars which we had taken to Cuba for Diego Velásquez had spread throughout the Islands, that then Garay had information from the pilot, Anton de Alaminos, and the other pilot who had accompanied us, that he could beg from His Majesty the right to all the country he could discover from the Rio San Pedro and San Pablo towards the north.

As Garay had friends at Court who could support his petition, namely, the Bishop of Burgos, the lawyer Zapata, and the secretary Conchillos, he hoped to obtain their assistance, and he sent his Mayordomo, named Torralva, to negotiate the matter, and this man brought back a commission for him as Adelantado and Governor of all [the land] he could discover [north] of the Rio San Pedro and San Pablo. Under this commission he at once despatched three ships with about two hundred and seventy soldiers and supplies and horses under the captain whom I have already mentioned named Alonzo Álvarez Pineda or Pinedo, who was settling on the Rio Panuco, about seventy leagues away ; and these Spaniards said that they

¹ Maestre Pedro, el de la Arpa :—another named the shipmaster (or mate) Pedro, he of the harp (probably a musician).

were merely doing what their captain told them to do, and were in no way to blame.

When Cortés had learned their business he cajoled them with many flattering speeches and asked them whether we could capture the ship. Guillen de la Loa, who was the leader of the four men, answered that they would wave to the ship and do what they could, but although they shouted and waved their cloaks and made signals, they would not come near, for, as those men said, their captain knew that the soldiers of Cortés were in the neighbourhood and had warned them to keep clear of us.

When we saw that they would not send a boat, we understood that they must have seen us from the ship as we came along the coast, and that unless we could trick them they would not send the boat ashore again. Cortés asked the four men to take off their clothes so that four of our men could put them on, and when this was done we returned along the coast the way we had come, so that our return could be seen from the ship and those on board might think that we had really gone away. Four of our soldiers remained behind wearing the other men's clothes, and we remained hidden in the wood with Cortés until past midnight, and then when the moon set it was dark enough to return to the mouth of the creek, but we kept well hidden so that only the four soldiers could be seen. When the dawn broke the four soldiers began to wave their cloaks to the ship, and six sailors put off from her in a boat. Two of the sailors jumped ashore to fill two jugs with water and we who were with Cortés kept in hiding waiting for the other sailors to land; but they stayed where they were and our four soldiers who were wearing the clothes of Garay's people pretended that they were washing their hands and kept their faces hidden. The men in the boat cried out: "Come on board, what are you doing? Why don't you come?" One of our men answered:

"Come on shore for a minute and you will see." As they did not know his voice, they pushed off with their boat, and although we shouted to them they would answer nothing. We wanted to shoot at them with muskets and cross bows, but Cortés would not allow it, and said: "Let them go in peace and report to their captain."

So six soldiers from that ship remained in our company, the four we had first captured, and the two sailors who had come ashore. And we returned to Villa Rica without having had anything to eat since we first started.

This is really what happened and not what the historian Gomara relates, for he says that Garay came at this time; but it was not so, for before he himself came he first sent three captains with ships, and later on I will explain at what time they came and what happened to them, and I will tell, as well, about the coming of Garay. But we must get on now and I will relate how we settled to go to Mexico.

THE MARCH FROM CEMPOALA TO TLAXCALA.

Introductory Note to Chapter LXI.

THE Spaniards left Cempoala on the 16th August and crossed the frontier into Tlaxcalan territory on the 31st August.

Bernal Díaz says that they reached Jalapa on the first day, but that is not probable. Between Jalapa and Ixtacmaxtitlan there is no name given by Bernal Díaz or Cortés which coincides with a name on the modern map, although the Socochima of the narrative is undoubtedly Xico Viejo, a few miles from the modern village of Xico. The ruins of Xico Viejo were recently visited by Dr. J. W. Fewkes, who says that "the last half mile of the road is practically impassable for horses, and must be made on foot, justifying the statements of Gomara regarding the difficulties the horsemen of Cortés encountered in reaching the pueblo." (Twenty-fifth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1903-4.)

The Theuhixuacan mentioned by Gomara must be the Ixuacan of the modern map.

The Spaniards passed to the south of the great mountain mass of the Cofre de Perote (13,403 ft.) between that mountain and the

snowcapped volcano of Orizaba (17,365 ft.) to the tableland of Tlaxcala.

There is a considerable rise between Cempoala and Jalapa, which stands at an elevation of 4608 ft.

I am unable to ascertain the height of the pass between Perote and Orizaba, but it probably exceeds 10,000 ft., followed by a descent of about 3000 ft. to the plains of Tlaxcala and Puebla, which are 7000 ft. to 8000 ft. above sea level.

According to Bernal Díaz, the most difficult pass (Puerto de Nombre de Dios) was crossed before reaching the main divide.

After the passage between the mountains the Spaniards came to the salt lakes, marshes, and inhospitable stretches of sand and volcanic ash which extend along the western slope of the Cofre de Perote.

It is impossible to locate the exact route between the mountain pass and Zocotlan, as no names are given and part of the country is uninhabitable. Zocotlan itself was in all probability the Zautla of the modern map, but we are not on secure ground until the Spaniards reach Ixtacmaxtitlan, near the Tlaxcalan frontier. This frontier is still marked by the ruins of the wall built by the Tlaxcalans as a defence against their enemies, but the ruins are not marked on the Government map. However, the natural line of travel would be up stream from Ixtacmaxtitlan, and this would bring us to a place marked on the map Altlatlaya (no doubt *Atalaya*, which means *a watch tower*), and I have taken this to be the spot where the Spaniards passed the wall, and have so marked it on the map which accompanies this volume.

The march from Jalapa to Zocotlan must have been a most arduous one, and all the more difficult from the fact that it was undertaken in the middle of the rainy season. There is a much easier, although somewhat longer, route passing round the north of Cofre de Perote, but this was probably avoided by the Cempoalans as passing through too much of the enemies' country.

Appended is an Itinerary, with dates compiled from the writings of Bernal Díaz¹, Cortés,² Gomara³, and Andrés de Tápia,⁴ with the modern spelling of some of the names taken from Padre Agustin Rivera.⁵

August

16. Leave Cempoala.

17.

18. Jalapa.

19. Xico (modern map), Cocochima (B. D.), Sienchimalen (C.), Sienchimatl (G.), Xicochimilco (R.)

¹ (B. D.)

² (C.)

³ (G.)

⁴ (T.)

⁵ (R.)

20. A high pass and Tejutla (B. D.), Puerto de Nombre de Dios and Ceyconacan (C.), Theuhixuacan (G.), Ceycocnacac, now Ishuacan de los Reyes (note to Cortés' letter in Rivadeneyra Edition), Ixuacan, modern map.
 21. Finish ascent of Mountain (B. D.), Despoblado—uninhabited country.
 22. Despoblado. Lakes of salt water and Salitrales (T.), Salitrales (G.)
 23. Despoblado. Puerto de la Leña. March 2 leagues to
 24. Çocotlan (B. D.), Zaclotan (G.), Xocotla (R.), valley called Caltanmi (C.), Zacatami (G.). Spaniards called it Castil Blanco. Probably the Zautla of modern maps.
 25. Xocotlan.
 26. Xocotlan.
 27. Xocotlan. March 2 leagues up the valley to
 28. Iztacmastitan (C.), Iztacmixtlitan (G.), Ixtamaxtitlan (R.), Ixtacamastitlan (modern map).
Xalacingo of Bernal Díaz (evidently an error.)
 29. Ixtacamastitlan.
 30. Ixtacamastitlan.
 31. Cross the frontier into Tlaxcala at the great wall. March 4 leagues, skirmish with force of Tlaxcalans and Otomies.
- September.
2. First battle with the Tlaxcalan army under Xicotenga.
 5. Second battle.
 23. Spaniards enter the city of Tlaxcala.

CHAPTER LXI.

How we settled to go to the City of Mexico and on the advice of the Cacique we went by way of Tlaxcala, and what happened to us in our warlike engagements and other matters.

WHEN our departure for Mexico had received full consideration, we sought advice as to the road we should take, and the chieftains of Cempoala were agreed that the best and most convenient road for us to take was through the province of Tlaxcala, for they [the Tlaxcalans] were their allies and mortal enemies of the Mexicans.

Forty chieftains, all warriors, were already prepared to accompany us and were of great assistance to us on that journey; and they provided us as well with two

hundred carriers to transport our artillery. We poor soldiers had no need of help, for at that time we had nothing to carry except our arms, lances, muskets, cross-bows, shields and the like, with which we both marched and slept, and we were shod with hempen shoes, and as I have often said, were always prepared for a fight.

In the middle of August, 1519, we set out from Cempoala, keeping always in good formation, with scouts and some of the most active soldiers in advance.

The first day we marched to a town named Jalapa, and thence to Socochima, a strong place with a difficult approach, and inside there were many vines of the grapes of the country¹ on trellises. In both these towns, through our interpreters, Doña Marina and Jerónimo de Aguilar, all matters touching our holy religion were explained to the people, and that we were the vassals of the Emperor Don Carlos, who had sent us to put an end to human sacrifices and robbery, and they were told other things which it was advantageous to state. As they were friends of the Cempoalans and did not pay tribute to Montezuma, we found them very well disposed towards us, and they provided us with food. A cross was erected in each town and its meaning was explained to them and they were told to hold it in great reverence.

Beyond Socochima we crossed some high mountain ranges by a pass, and arrived at another town named Texutla, where we were also well received, for like the others they paid no tribute to Mexico. On leaving that town we finished the ascent of the mountains and entered an uninhabited country, and it was very cold and hail and rain fell that night. There was a great scarcity of food and a wind came down from the snowy hills on one side of us which made us shiver with cold. As we had come from

¹ These were probably grenadillas, the fruit of passion flowers.

the Island of Cuba and from Villa Rica, where the whole coast is very hot, and had entered a cold country and had nothing with which to cover ourselves, only our armour, we suffered from the frost, for we were not accustomed to a different temperature.

Then we entered another pass where there were some hamlets and large temples with idols, which I have already said are called *Cues*, and they had great piles of firewood for the service of the idols which were kept in those temples ; but still there was nothing to eat, and the cold was intense.

We next entered into the land belonging to the town of Xocotlan, and we sent two Cempoala Indians to advise the Cacique how we were faring so that the people might receive us favourably. This town was subject to Mexico, so we always marched on the alert and in good order for we could see that we were already in a different sort of country, and when we saw the white gleam of the roof tops and the houses of the Caciques and the cues and numerous oratories, which were very lofty and covered with white plaster, they looked very pleasing like a town in our own Spain, so we called the place Castilblanco, for some Portuguese soldiers said that it reminded them of Castilblanco in Portugal, and so it is called to this day. And when, through our messengers, they knew in this town that we were approaching, the Cacique and other chieftains came out to meet us close by their houses. The name of the Cacique was Olinteclé, and he conducted us to some lodgings and gave us food, but there was very little of it and it was given with ill will.

As soon as we had eaten, Cortés asked through our interpreters about their Lord Montezuma. The chief told us of his great strength in warriors, which he kept in all the provinces under his sway, without counting many other armies which were posted on the frontiers and in neighbouring provinces, and he [the chief] then spoke of the

great fortress of Mexico, and how the houses were built in the water, and how one can only pass from one house to another by means of bridges which they have made, or canoes; and how all the houses have flat roofs, which, by raising breastworks when they are needed, can be turned into fortresses. That the city is entered by three causeways, each causeway having four or five openings in it through which the water can flow from one part to another, and each opening has a wooden bridge over it so that when any one of those bridges is raised no one can enter the city of Mexico. Then the chief told us of the great store of gold and silver, and chalchihuite stones and other riches which Montezuma, his lord, possessed, and he never ceased telling us how great a lord he was, so that Cortés and all of us marvelled at hearing him. The more he told us about the great fortress and bridges, of such stuff are we Spanish soldiers made, the more we wanted to try our luck against them, although it seemed a hopeless enterprise, judging from what Olintecle explained and told us. In reality Mexico was much stronger and had better munitions and defences than anything he told us about, for it is one thing to have seen the place itself and its strength, and quite another thing to describe it as I do. He added that Montezuma was so great a prince that he placed anything he chose under his rule, and that he did not know if he would be pleased when he heard of our stay in that town, and that we had been given lodgings and food without his permission.

Cortés replied through our interpreters :—“ I would have you know that we have come from distant lands at the order of our lord and King, the Emperor Don Carlos, who has many and great princes as his vassals, and he sends us to command your great Prince Montezuma not to sacrifice or kill any more Indians, or to rob his vassals, or to seize any more lands, but to give his fealty to our lord the King.

And now I say the same to you, Olintecle, and to all the other Caciques who are with you, desist from your sacrifices, and no longer eat the flesh of your own relations, and cease to commit sodomy, and the other evil customs which you practice, for such is the will of our Lord God, whom we believe in and worship, the giver of life and death who will take us up to heaven."

He told them many other things concerning our holy religion, to all of which things they made no reply.

Cortés said to the soldiers who were present around him : " It seems to me, gentlemen, that there remains nothing for us to do but to set up a cross." But Padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo replied :—" It seems to me, sir, that the time has not yet come to leave crosses in the charge of these people for they are somewhat shameless and without fear, and as they are vassals of Montezuma they may burn the crosses or do some other evil thing, and what you have said to them is enough until they know something more of our holy religion." So the matter was settled and no cross was set up. Let us leave this subject and that of the holy warnings which we gave them, and I will go on to say that we had with us a very large lurcher which belonged to Francisco de Lugo, which barked much of a night, and it seems that the Caciques of the town asked our friends whom we had brought from Cempoala, whether it was a tiger or a lion, or an animal with which to kill Indians, and they answered them : " They take it with them to kill anyone who annoys them."

They also asked what we did with the artillery we had brought with us, and the Cempoalans replied that with some stones which we put inside them we could kill anyone we wished to kill, and that the horses ran like deer and they would catch anyone we told them to run after. Then Olintecle said to the other chiefs : " Surely they must be Teules ! " I have already said that Teule is the name they

give to their gods or idols and such like evil things. Our Indian friends replied : " So at last you have found it out ! Take care not to do anything to annoy them, for they will know it at once ; they even know one's thoughts. These Teules are those who captured the tax gatherers of your great Montezuma and decreed that no more tribute should be paid throughout the sierras nor in our town of Cempoala ; and they are the same who turned our Teules out of their temples and replaced them with their own gods and who have conquered the people of Tabasco and Chanpoton, and they are so good that they have made friendship between us and the people of Cingapacinga. In addition to this you have seen how the great Montezuma, notwithstanding all his power, has sent them gold and cloth, and now they have come to your town and we see that you have given them nothing ;—run at once and bring them a present ! "

It seems that we had brought good advocates with us, for the townspeople soon brought us four pendants, and three necklaces, and some lizards, all made of gold, but all the gold was of poor quality ; and they brought us four Indian women who were good for grinding maize for bread, and one load of cloth. Cortés received these things with a cheerful good will and with many expressions of thanks.

I remember that in the plaza where some of their oratories stood, there were piles of human skulls so regularly arranged that one could count them, and I estimated them at more than a hundred thousand. I repeat again that there were more than one hundred thousand of them. And in another part of the plaza there were so many piles of dead men's thigh bones that one could not count them ; there was also a large number of skulls strung between beams of wood, and three priests who had charge of these bones and skulls were guarding them. We had occasion to see many such things later on as we penetrated into the

country for the same custom was observed in all the towns, including those of Tlaxcala.

After all that I have related had happened, we determined to set out on the road to Tlaxcala which our friends told us was very near, and that the boundary was close by where some boundary stones were placed to mark it. So we asked the Cacique Olintecle, which was the best and most level road to Mexico, and he replied the road which passed by the large town named Cholula, and the Cempoalans said to Cortés :—" Sir, do not go by Cholula for the people there are treacherous, and Montezuma always keeps a large garrison of warriors in that town ;"—and they advised us to go by way of Tlaxcala where the people were their friends and enemies of the Mexicans. So we agreed to take the advice of the Cempoalans, trusting that God would direct us.

Cortés demanded of Olintecle twenty warrior chiefs to go with us, and he gave them at once. The next morning we set out for Tlaxcala and arrived at a little town belonging to the people of Xalacingo. From this place we sent two of the Cempoala chieftains as messengers, choosing two who had said much in praise of the Tlaxcalans and had declared that they were their friends, and by them we sent a letter to the Tlaxcalans, although we knew that they could not read it; and also a red fluffy Flemish hat, such as was then worn.

What happened I will relate further on.



Introductory Note.

BETWEEN the 31st August when the Spaniards crossed the Tlaxcalan frontier and fought a skirmish with some Otomi-Tlaxcalan troops, and the 23rd September when they entered the Capital of Tlaxcala, only two dates are mentioned by Bernal Díaz. He gives the 2nd September (Gomara says the 1st September) as the date of the first great battle against the Tlaxcalan army under Xicotenca (Xicotencatl), and the name of the battlefield as Tehuacingo or Tehuacacingo, which cannot now be identified.

After the battle the Spaniards took shelter in a village with a temple on a hill ; this hill is still pointed out by the natives as the site of Cortés' camp. Here the Spaniards formed a fortified camp, which continued to be their headquarters until the war was over, and they marched to the Capital of Tlaxcala.

Bernal Díaz tells us that this camp was near Cunpanzingo, probably the Tzompantzingo of the modern maps.

Bernal Díaz gives the 5th September as the date of the second great battle, which was fought close by the camp.

Although the accounts of the war in Tlaxcala given by Bernal Díaz and Cortés agree in the main points, they do not always give the events in the same order. It seems probable that Bernal Díaz places the night attack too early, and that it took place after Xicotenga had sent the spies to the Spanish camp.

The boundaries of the so-called Republic of Tlaxcala appear to have been almost identical with those of the modern state of the same name.

It has become a commonplace to describe the Tlaxcalans as hardy mountaineers and their form of Government as Republican, but such discrimination is misleading. Their country was no more mountainous than that of the Mexicans, and their form of Government was much the same as that of other Nahuá communities ; but as they had achieved no foreign conquests, they were compelled to be self-supporting, and in that differed from the Mexicans, who were becoming a military caste, supported to a great extent by tribute from conquered tribes. Their country was fertile, and there must have been a large agricultural population, and all the men were inured to hardship and continual border warfare.

According to Andrés de Tápia, the existence of the Tlaxcalans as an independent nation was owing to the forbearance of the Mexicans themselves, for when he asked why they had not been conquered, Montezuma himself answered : " We could easily do so, but then there would be nowhere for the young men to exercise themselves without going a long way off, and besides we always like to have people to sacrifice to our Gods."