

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