

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.

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## 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*<sup>1</sup> of Diego

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<sup>1</sup> *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.

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## 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 Tercera<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> Terceira in the Azores.

<sup>2</sup> This is an error ; Charles V was in Catalonia.