

country produced, and supplied the camp very liberally, and during the twenty days that we stayed there there was always more than enough to eat.

We made our entry into the city, as I have said, on the 23rd September, 1519. I will leave off here, and go on to say what else happened.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

How Mass was said in the presence of many of the Caciques, and about a present which the old Caciques brought us.

EARLY next day Cortés ordered an Altar to be put up and Mass to be said, for now we had both the wine and the sacred wafers.

It was the priest Juan Diaz who said the Mass, for the Padre de la Merced was ill with fever and very feeble. There were present Mase Escasi and Xicotenga the elder and other Caciques. When Mass was over Cortés entered his lodging with some of us soldiers who usually accompanied him, and the two old Caciques, and Xicotenga said to him that they wished to bring him a present, and Cortés showed much affection to them, and said that they should bring it whenever they wished, so some mats were at once spread out and covered with a cloth, and they brought six or seven trifles of gold, and some stones of small value, and some loads of henequen cloth; it was all very poor and not even worth twenty dollars and when it had been presented, those Caciques said, laughing, "Malinche, we know well enough that as what we have to give is so small you will not receive it with good grace. We have already sent to tell you that we are poor and that we own neither gold nor riches, and the reason of it is that these traitorous and evil Mexicans and Montezuma, who is now their Lord, have taken all that we once possessed, when we asked them

for peace or a truce, to prevent their making war on us, so do not consider the small value of the gift, but accept it with a good grace as the gift of friends and servants which we will be to you." Then they brought, separately, a large supply of food.

Cortés accepted it most cheertfully, and said to them that he valued it more as coming from their hands with the good will with which it was offered, than he would a house full of grains of gold brought by others, and it was in this spirit that he accepted it, and he displayed much affection towards them.

It appears that it had been arranged among all the Caciques to give us from among their daughters and nieces the most beautiful of the maidens who were ready for marriage, and Xicotenga the elder said "Malinche, so that you may know more clearly our good will towards you and our desire to content you in everything, we wish to give you our daughters, to be your wives, so that you may have children by them, for we wish to consider you as brothers as you are so good and valiant. I have a very beautiful daughter who has not been married, and I wish to give her to you," so also Mase Escasi and all the other Caciques said that they would bring their daughters, and that we should accept them as wives, and they made many other speeches and promises. Throughout the day Mase Escasi and Xicotenga the elder never left Cortés' immediate neighbourhood. As Xicotenga the elder was blind from old age, he felt Cortés all over his head and face and beard and over all his body.

Cortés replied to them that, as to the gift of the women, he and all of us were very grateful and would repay them with good deeds as time went on. The Padre de la Merced was present and Cortés said to him "Señor Padre, it seems to me that this would be a good time to make an attempt to induce these Caciques to give up their

Idols and their sacrifices, for they will do anything we tell them to do on account of the great fear they have of the Mexicans." The friar replied, "Sir, that is true, but let us leave the matter until they bring their daughters and then there will be material to work upon, and your honour can say that you do not wish to accept them until they give up sacrifices—if that succeeds, good, if not we shall do our duty."

So thus the matter rested until next day, and what was done I will go on to relate.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

How they brought their daughters to present to Cortés and to all of us, and what was done about it.

THE next day the same old Caciques came and brought with them five beautiful Indian maidens, and for Indians they were very good looking and well adorned, and each of the Indian maidens brought another Indian girl as her servant, and all were the daughters of Caciques, and Xicotenga said to Cortés, "Malinche, this is my daughter who has never been married and is a maiden, take her for your own," and he gave her to him by the hand, "and let the others be given to the captains." Cortés expressed his thanks, and with every appearance of gratification said that he accepted them and took them as our own, but that for the present they should remain in the care of their parents. The Chiefs asked him why he would not take them now, and Cortés replied that he wished first to do the will of God our Lord, whom we believed in and worshipped, and that for which our Lord the King had sent us, which was to induce them to do away with their Idols, and no longer to kill and sacrifice human beings, and the other infamies they were wont to practise, and to lead them to