HERNANDO CORTÉS

THE DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF MEXICO 1517–1521

by Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Edited from the only exact copy of the original MS (and published in Mexico) by Genaro García. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by A. P. Maudslay. Introduction to the American edition by IRVING A. LEONARD

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Introduction to American Edition

A date familiar to every one is 1492. Columbus's feat of joining two worlds—though one was not Asia as he stoutly maintained —had rung down the curtain on the Middle Ages. Behind it the stage was being set for the new era of modern history. If that year was momentous for all Europe, it was particularly so for Spain, whose centuries-long struggle with Moslem invaders had triumphantly ended with the fall of Granada shortly before the three caravels sailed to the New World. Flushed with victory, Spain felt itself a chosen nation and was proud of its queen. Less than two decades before, when young Isabella of Castile with her husband Ferdinand as King of Aragon ascended the throne, the prestige of monarchy in her realm had fallen low. Almost everywhere the turbulence of rebellious feudal barons had brought disorder and anarchy. Like little potentates these lords of feudalism had holed up in their stony castles where they dominated completely their peasant serfs, waged private wars against each other, preyed on trade, made highways unsafe, and defied the authority of the crown. But from 1479 on these recalcitrant subjects found their match in the will of a mild but determined woman. By clever strategy, guile, and sheer force of character she began to bring relative order out of chaos, using every resort of her keen intelligence and royal power. Bribery, flattery, political bargains, and a religious war against the re-

maining Moorish infidels were her means to stimulate a wider patriotism and a national unity among insubordinate nobles and provincial masses.

The discovery of America was most opportune in this process of consolidating her authority. Now faced with comparative peace in the Peninsula, the New World offered an outlet for the tireless energy of leaders long habituated to war, and for the restless ambition of disinherited second sons. The vigor of these adventurers, who were prone to resist the absolutist tendencies of the crown, could now be diverted to the conquest, exploration, and settlement of hitherto unknown lands added by Columbus to Isabella's patrimony. And so, many military expeditions, subsidized for the most part by their commanders, poured out of Spain and, from the bridgeheads of Santo Domingo and Cuba in the West Indies, they overran with their few thousands the vast reaches of two continents in almost as few decades. Like most entrepreneurs then and since, these men, who were investing their fortunes and lives in risky ventures, sought large dividends and quick returns. Gold they wanted, to be sure, but equally desirable for social prestige and permanent satisfaction were landed estates amply equipped with peasant serfs perpetually bound to extract the fruits of the soil for them. Such holdings the feudal lords might enjoy like their prototypes at home and then pass them on to their heirs, as nobles in all Western Europe had done since time immemorial. This lordly grandeur was, after all, what was most prized, and feudal fiefs in the New World had the advantage of remoteness from the restraints of an increasingly absolute monarchy in the distant Peninsula.

During that year of crowded history, 1492, a little noted event appears to have occurred in Spain—the birth of a future adventurer-chronicler in the New World who was destined to leave the most detailed, colorful, and stirring account of Spanish exploits in all the rich annals of the Conquest. This personage was Bernal Díaz del Castillo of Medina del Campo in Castile, author of the remarkable *True History of the Conquest of Mexico*. The words "appear to have occurred" regarding his birth in 1492 are used advisedly because the doughty soldier-writer was himself apparently uncertain about this particular vital statistic. But students of his life and work tend to agree

that he was born that year, perhaps because it seems a proper coincidence.

There is little to tell of his early life. Though he betrays no shyness about his part in Cortes's great feat, he supplies remarkably few details concerning his own life before or after that event. He does tell us that he was the son of a magistrate named Francisco Díaz del Castillo, and it is learned that his mother was María Díez Rejón. As a member of a middle class family he probably received a fair education; at least he possessed the somewhat uncommon ability for the time to read and write. His father and a brother had won military distinction in the royal service, and the youthful Bernal no doubt felt bound to prove his own mettle. Nothing is known of his activities, however, until 1514 when he sailed with an expedition to Panama.

In the bright morning of the sixteenth century life was exhilarating in the Spanish Peninsula, for it seemed to hold a richer promise for mankind than ever before in human history. The rapid emergence of Spain as one of the first modern nations had coincided with the realization that the habitable world was a vaster space than theretofore conceived. This sudden expansion of horizons to unbelievable dimensions, intellectual as well as physical, was now coupled with a sense of destiny as the appointed agent of God for the tremendous task of Christianizing the globe. Was not the final, crushing victory over the Moors after nearly eight centuries of warfare a sign of divine approval? And were not the discoveries of Columbus at the same time clear indications of the special approbation of Providence? The Spaniard could not but feel himself very precious in the eyes of the Lord, and he easily conceived his people as the chosen race of the Almighty. This conviction released a prodigious national energy and powerfully stimulated the passionate imagination of youth.

To be young in the Hispanic Peninsula during this period of human experience was to have faith in the impossible. An enormously enlarged world teemed with possibilities of adventure, riches, and romance in which the wildest dreams and the fondest hopes of fame and fortune might be fulfilled. Life had a zest and an irresistible allure in the bright Renaissance light that was swiftly dissipating the medieval gloom. This mood of

exaltation was heightened by the first popular literature to come from the recently invented printing press.

From about 1500 the so called "romances of chivalry" began to exercise much the same hypnotic influence on contemporary readers in reality that they later did on Don Quixote in fiction. All literate classes were addicted to them, from the monarchs of the land to the lowliest clerks in the royal service. Even the clergy succumbed to their spell, for Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order, and the great mystic, Santa Teresa de Avila, confessed an early attachment. These novels, resembling authentic chronicles, were usually long accounts of the exploits of knightly heroes in strange and enchanted lands. They presented a highly idealized concept of life in which strength, virtue, and passion were all of a transcendent and unnatural character. Though they might be termed the "comic books" of the time, they brought to the fevered minds of the readers plausible accounts of fantastic places, riches, monsters, and wonders that, conceivably, had their reality in the vast, new lands so recently revealed to mankind. Young men burned to see and possess for themselves the marvels portrayed in these absorbing tales. Scarcely did they disembark in the New World when they rushed inland toward the elusive El Dorado, the Amazons and their golden implements, the Fountains of Youth, the Seven Enchanted Cities, and other will-o'-the-wisps made real by the "lying histories," as the moralists branded these romances. To the Conquest, as a result, this fantasy imparted a spirit of romance and chivalry which gave the Spanish expeditions, as Washington Irving once wrote, "a character wholly distinct from similar enterprises undertaken by other nations." Most famous of these ardently read tales was *Amadis of Gaul,* a novel of considerable literary merit whose fabulous success stimulated a long procession of sequels and imitations. In the effort to outdo each other the latter reached extremes of absurdity and so destroyed their vogue even before Cervantes's *Don Quixote* administered the *coup de grace.*

That these highly seasoned novels influenced Bernal Díaz is discernible in the narrative style and manner of his *True History of the Conquest of Mexico.* Moreover, it is this soldier-chronicler himself who provides the most direct proof of the familiarity of Cortes's followers with these engaging tales. Relating the profound impression on the Spaniards caused by the

first glimpse of the Vale of Anahuac and Lake Texcoco in which the Aztec capital was located, Bernal Díaz declares:

> "When we saw so many cities and villages built in the waters of the lake and other large towns on dry land, and that straight, level causeway leading into Mexico City, we were amazed and *we said that it was like the enchanted things related in the book of Amadis* because of the huge towers, temples, and buildings rising from the water, and all of masonry. And some of the soldiers even asked whether the things we saw were not a dream."

It was the reading of such persuasive fiction that probably helped to excite all Spain with the baseless rumor of fabulous wealth in the isthmus of Panama at a locality called Castilla de Oro. Extravagant stories of pearls as common as pebbles and gold glittering in brooks and streams excited the cupidity even of King Ferdinand himself, and a large scale expedition was organized in 1514 under the tough old governor, known as Pedrarias, who was to execute Balboa, the discoverer of the Pacific ocean. Bernal Díaz joined up full of zeal and hope. But on arrival at the isthmus the reality of the situation, as so many hardy adventurers were to learn, fell dismally short of expectations. With other discontented individuals, young Bernal soon decided to try his luck on the island of Cuba so recently conquered by his kinsman, Diego Velásquez. Three obscure years there only brought an eager readiness to listen to vague rumors of fabulous kingdoms hidden behind the dim, mysterious shore to the west. If his own account may be trusted, Bernal Díaz enlisted in three different expeditions sent to reconnoiter the Mexican coast, the last sailing late in 1518 under Cortes.

From this moment on Bernal Díaz's life is fused with the spectacular epic of the Conquest of Mexico. Like the peripatetic hero of a historical novel he is invariably present where the most dramatic events are happening, he is close in the counsels of the leaders, and he intimately shares their hardships and triumphs. In all he fought in some one hundred and nineteen battles and skirmishes, receiving many wounds, narrowly escaping capture by a foe bent on human sacrifice, and enduring every form of discomfort. "There is another thing I must say, but not with the intention of boasting about it," he wrote in his old age, "that I grew so accustomed to go about armed, and to sleep in

the way I have said, that after the Conquest of Mexico, I kept to the habit of sleeping in my clothes and without a bed, and I slept thus better than on a mattress."

After the fall of Mexico City parties of Spaniards fanned out over the country seeking the mines and tributary Indians that had so enriched Montezuma. Restless and impatient for larger spoils than the fallen city had yielded Bernal Díaz joined successive forays of this sort, but the rewards were invariably disappointing and he, like many others, was to spend the remainder of his days grumbling about the inadequacy of the compensation for his services. Towards 1539 he returned to Spain to press his claims personally at court but with trifling success. The prized grants in the vicinity of Mexico City were already allotted and he was compelled to content himself with a less attractive one in Guatemala. From about 1541 to the end of his long life, except for another journey to Spain, he remained in that province. There he reared his families, legitimate and illegitimate, and there in the 1560's he wrote his highly personalized *True History* which one historian prefers to call *The Reminiscences of Bernal Díaz del Castillo.* Some time in the mid 1570's the manuscript was forwarded to Spain for publication, but it did not appear in print until 1632, long after the soldier-chronicler had died full of years—probably over ninety of them. To the very end he served as a magistrate in his community, expiring in the first days of 1584.

It is generally asserted that the aging ex-soldier of Cortes undertook his prolix narrative to correct a work entitled *The History of the Conquest of Mexico,* which first appeared in Spain in 1552. Written in fine, classic style by a former chaplain of Cortes named Francisco López de Gómara, who had never been in the New World, this account tended to exalt the figure of the leader at the expense of his valorous followers. Bernal Díaz had already begun writing when a copy of this book came into his hands. Its polished style and clarity of diction made him keenly conscious of his own literary deficiencies but, as an eyewitness of so many events narrated, its alleged inaccuracies incensed him. In colloquial rather than refined language and with a reading experience largely limited to the currently popular romances of chivalry to guide him in form and organization, he plunged into the liveliest and most gossipy composition that the Spanish Conquest offers and the one on which William H. Prescott leaned heavily in his justly famous *The Conquest of Mexico.* Evidence of the untutored skill of Bernal Díaz is present on every page of the extant manuscript in the whimsical spelling, the lofty indifference to punctuation, and the disheveled syntax, but the rapid movement of the lusty prose, the salty diction, and the hearty fidelity which animate the many scenes, personalities, and incidents of the epic adventure all carry the modern reader along gratefully. With a realism and intensity genuinely Spanish he transfers to his pages the scenes of the explorations along the coast, the finding of Doña Marina, the indispensable Indian interpreter, the founding of Vera Cruz, the march inland after burning the ships, the conquerors' horses, the bloody battles with Indian hordes, the sumptuous luxury of Montezuma's palaces, the capture of that luckless monarch, the harrowing disaster of the retreat from the lake-circled city known as the *Noche Triste,* the later return, the long siege and the eventual destruction of the Aztec capital, the division of the spoils, and innumerable other episodes. The figures of Cortes, Alvarado, Olid, Narváez, and many other protagonists of the great epic are limned unforgettably in the simple, unvarnished prose of the veteran writing nearly a half century later with an extraordinarily unclouded memory. The entire narrative has something of the quality of a novel with its spontaneous recital of adventures, spirited anecdotes, and the invented speeches and dialogues that he places in the mouths of his personages with the freedom permitted by contemporary conventions of historical writing.

Yet it is history as recalled by a foot soldier, a private who slogged through the mud, who endured hunger, thirst, and sleeplessness, the pain of wounds, the fear and frenzy of personal combat, the bone-weariness of campaigning in strange, ominous lands against a foe of tremendous numbers and sinister practices. If the narrative suffers from a colorful distortion at times, if an ostentatious vanity seems present on many pages, and if the author appears too certain of the thoughts as well as the acts of historical figures, we can forgive him for the good show that he puts on, especially when there comes through it all an essential honesty and an essential fairness in apportioning the merits of every participant, including Indian enemies. The simplicity and forthrightness tinged with naïveté, with which this account is presented, is typified, perhaps, in the preface

which the old soldier later wrote for his bulky manuscript, declaring:

"That which I have myself seen and the fighting I have gone through, with the help of God, I will describe quite simply as a fair witness, without twisting events one way or another. I am now an old man, over eighty-four years of age, and I have lost my sight and hearing, and, as luck would have it, I have gained nothing of value to leave to my children and descendants but this true story, and they will presently find out what a wonderful story it is."

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Extracts from the Introduction by Señor Don Genaro García[1]

The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, written by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, one of the Conquerors, was known to, and appreciated by historians and bibliographers before it was published. Antonio de Herrera[2] quotes it frequently, Friar Juan de Torquemada[3] also refers to it on several occasions, and the Licentiate Antonio de Leon Pinelo[4] devotes some lines to it in his brief bibliography.

Although the original manuscript has always been kept in Guatemala, first by the Author and afterwards by his descendants, and still later by the Municipality of the Capital, in whose archives it is preserved to-day, a copy of it was made in the sixteenth century and sent to Spain to King Philip II[5] and was there consulted by the Royal chroniclers. After its publication

[1] The following extracts are translated direct from Señor Don Genaro García's Introduction. Any differences entertained with regard to the names of persons or places or the routes followed, will be explained in note attached to the translation of the text of Bernal Díaz's narrative.

[2] *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas i Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano.* Madrid, 1726–30, Decada 2ª passim. The first edition was published in 1601.

[3] *Los Veinte i un libros rituales y Monarchia Indiana.* Madrid, 1723, Tomo I passim. The first edition was published in 1615.

[4] *Epitome de la Biblioteca Oriental i Occidental, Nautica y Geografica* (Madrid, 1629), p. 75.

[5] So it was stated by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo de Medrano in 1579. In the *Historia de Guatemala ó Recordacion Florida,* by D. Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán (Madrid, 1882–3), Vol. i, p. 398.—G. G.

in Madrid by Friar Alonzo Remón of the Order of Mercy in the year 1632 the *True History* was universally accepted from that time onwards as the most complete and trustworthy of the chronicles of the Conquest of New Spain. A second edition followed almost immediately, in the same city, some four years later, a third, a fourth, and a fifth. It was translated into English by Maurice Keatinge in 1800 and John Ingram Lockhart in 1844; into German by Ph. J. von Rehfues in 1838 and Karl Ritter in 1848; into French by D. Jourdanet in 1876 and José María de Heredia in 1877,[1] and into Hungarian by Károly Brózik in 1878 and Moses Gaal in 1899.

Several of these translations obtained the honours of a second edition, as that of Keatinge in 1803, that of Rehfues in 1843, and that of Jourdanet in 1877.

†

It must be pointed out that no secret has ever been made of Remón's extensive corruption of the original text. Don Antonio de Leon Pinelo, in his account of the *True History* in 1629, says, no doubt without malice, that Friar Alonzo Remón kept in readiness a "corrected" copy for publication. It was no sooner printed than the author of the *Isagoge Histórico Apologét co*[2] found in it "many things added which were not found in the original". More explicitly and with a better judgment Don Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, the great-great-grandson of the author, and at that time the possessor of the manuscript, wrote at the end of the same century that the book, published by the reverend father Friar Alonzo Remón, differs considerably from the original, "for in some places there is more and in others less than what my great-grandfather the author wrote, for I find corruptions in chapters 164 and 171, and in the same way in other parts in the course of the history, in which not only is the credibility and fidelity of my Castillo clouded over, but many real heroes are defrauded of their just merit."

Fuentes y Guzmán states that this corruption (of the text)

[1] The French translations were—although an interval of one year lay between their publication—written simultaneously by the distinguished author of the *Influence de la pression de l'air sur la vie de l'homme*, and the excellent poet to whom France is indebted for the inimitable *Les Trophées*. This synchronism strongly indicates the extraordinary importance attributed to the *Historia Verdadera*.—G. G.

[2] Published in Madrid, 1892.

was not the least important of the motives that induced him to write his own work.[1] At the beginning of the following century Friar Francisco Vásquez proved that Friar Bartolomé de Olmedo was not in Guatemala at the time of its conquest, as is stated in the edition of Remón, and therefore he was not the first to spread the Christian faith through that province, unless, as he says, one should concede another miracle such as that of Saint Anthony of Padua, who managed to be in two different places at the same time.

Some years afterwards Don Andrés González Barcia, referring to the charge that Fuentes y Guzmán had launched against Remón, arbitrarily surmised that the differences that existed between the edition published by the latter and the original manuscript were matters of no importance, and simply inferred that it was "easy to believe that in copying the author should make some alterations, as ordinarily happens". This defence was not convincing, and on this account our great bibliographer in Mexico, Don Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren, delicately objected that P. Vásquez had declared even the first edition to be falsified, while in Spain the indefatigable chronicler Don Juan Bautista Muñoz endeavoured to procure a copy of the original manuscript with the object of ascertaining the alterations due to Padre Remón.

Finally, if there could be any doubt remaining about the bad faith of Remón, it was completely dispelled by the Guatemalan historians Padre Domingo Juarros Don José Milla, the Bishop Don Francisco de Paula García Paláez, and Don Ramón A. Salazar, who from personal inspection fully corroborated what had been asserted by their predecessors the author of the *Isagoge,* Fuentes y Guzmán, and Vásquez.

As a matter of fact we can see at a glance in the following notes (par. iv, and Appendix No. 2)[2] that Fray Alonzo Remón in printing the *True History* suppressed whole pages of the manuscript, interpolated others, garbled the facts, changed the names of persons and places, increased or lessened the numbers,

[1] *Historia de Guatemala ó Recordación Florida*, p. 8.

[2] This paragraph and appendix has not been translated. As we have now before us an accurate copy of the original text, the reader would not be much interested in a discussion of the corruptions of the text by Padre Remón. In most instances these corruptions of the text were introduced for the purpose of magnifying the importance of Padre Olmedo and the Friars of the Order of Mercy, of which Order Padre Remón was himself a member. In the edition of Don Genaro García these matters are fully investigated, and a complete bibliography is given.

modified the style, and modernized the orthography moved thereto either by religious fervour and false patriotism, or by personal sympathy and vile literary taste. As all the later editions, and all the translations without exception were copied from the first edition published by Remón, it results that in reality we do not know the *True History*.

†

On the 20th October, 1895, Don Emilio León, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic of Guatemala accredited to Mexico, presented in the name of his Government to ours, "as a proof of friendship and especial regard", a photographic reproduction of the original manuscript. It was then, with some reason, believed that, at last, we should see the *True History* published; but this could not be carried out, for accompanying the gift of the reproduction was a prohibition against its being copied and printed.

Five years later, when I wrote my book entitled *Caracter de la Conquista Española en America y en México,* I was convinced that to perfect our Ancient history an exact edition of the *True History* was indispensable, and I desired to carry this work through.

Soon afterwards, in August, 1901, I wrote to the then President of Guatemala, Don Manuel Estrada Cabrera, telling him of my wish to print the precious manuscript.

This distinguished official had the kindness to reply on the first of the following month that on that very day he had decreed that "an exact and complete copy of the manuscript" should be made and sent to me for the purpose that I had stated. Señor Don Juan I. Argueta, Secretary of the Interior and Justice in that Republic, at once began punctually to send me instalments of the copy as soon as they were made, which copy I corrected here, and perfected with all care and accuracy by comparing it with the photographic reproduction already referred to, which is preserved in our National Library.

†

The author says that, after making a fair copy of his narrative, two licentiates of Guatemala begged him to lend it to them, and that he did so most willingly; but he warned them not to correct it in any way, neither by addition nor deletion, for all he had written was true.

Assuredly with regard to truth the author would find no fault with us, for we have taken care to religiously respect the original text, without introducing the slightest variation, not even of the artless orthography or punctuation.

Any change would have been dangerous, and we might have fallen into the same error that we attribute to Remón; everybody knows that by a single comma one might reverse the meaning of a statement.

We reproduce in notes placed at the foot of the page all the erasures that can have any interest for inquiring readers, and in like manner we have transcribed all the various words blotted out, which, besides exhibiting important variations, give an idea of the method of composition employed by the author.

Occasionally, when a full understanding of the text necessitates it, or for the purpose of finishing off a clearly implied word or phrase, or of correcting some manifest numerical error, we have ventured to insert some word or number between brackets, so that it can be known at once that it is not the author who is speaking, and the readers are left at liberty to admit or reject the slight interpolation; finally, we have allowed ourselves to indicate by dotted lines the gaps that are found in the original manuscript, which, happily, are very few in number, except on the first and last pages, which, in the course of time, have naturally suffered more than the others.

May our modest effort meet with the approbation of the intelligent and learned, for we long for it as much as we fear their censure.

BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO

Bernal Díaz del Castillo was born in the very noble, famous, and celebrated town[1] of Medina del Campo in the year 1492 at the very time when Christopher Columbus was joining the two worlds.

Bernal tells us that at the time that he made up his mind to

[1] "Muy noble é insigne y muy nombrada Villa". In old Spain towns and cities were formally granted such titles of honour.

come to New Spain, about the year 1517, he was a youth "of about twenty-four years", a statement which corroborates the date of his birth.

His parents were Don Francisco Díaz del Castillo and Doña María Diez Rejón.

†

Bernal was not the only son, he tells us of his brother, probably older than himself, whom he wished to imitate.

†

Bernal himself writes that he was a gentleman,[1] and that his grandparents, his father, and his brother were always servants of the Crown and of their Catholic Majesties Don Fernando and Doña Isabel, which Carlos V. confirms by calling them "our retainers and servants".

If the family of Bernal had not enjoyed esteem and respect in Medina del Campo, the inhabitants would not have chosen Don Francisco as their *Regidor*.[2] On the other hand, his financial position must have been a very modest one, for the author most certainly came here to seek his fortune, and often complains of his poverty.

After all, the fact that in the *True History* he discloses a very scrupulous moral sense, a fair amount of learning, accurate philosophy, and a piety out of the common, permits us to infer that his family educated him with great care: it would be exceptional for a man illiterate and untaught during his youth to acquire such qualities in his old age; it is proven, on the other hand, that the author knew how to write when he reached New Spain. Nevertheless, we know nothing for certain about the childhood and youth of Bernal, our information begins in the year 1514.

The author was then twenty-two years old.

From some of his remarks one may judge that he was tall or of middle height, active, quick, well made, and graceful; his comrades called him "the elegant" (el galan).

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Following the example of so many other Spanish youths, Bernal left his country in the year 1514 to emigrate to America in

[1] Hijodalgo.
[2] *Regidor* = magistrate, prefect.

search of adventures and riches, resolved to be worthy of his ancestry. He accompanied Pedro Arias de Avila, the Governor of Tierra Firme, as one of his soldiers.

When he reached Nombre de Dios he remained there three or four months, until an epidemic that broke out and certain disputes that arose between the Governor and his son-in-law, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, obliged him to flee to Cuba, to his relation, Diego Velásquez, who was Governor of the Island.

During three years Bernal "did nothing worthy of record", and on that account he determined to set out on the discovery of unknown land with the Captain Francisco Hernández de Córdova and one hundred and ten companions.

They sailed in three ships from the port of Ajaruco on the 8th February, 1517, and after enduring a passage occupying twenty-one days and one fierce gale, they arrived at Cape Catoche, where the natives gave them a hostile reception.

After touching at Lázaro they stopped at Champotón, where the natives killed forty-eight Spaniards, captured two of them, and wounded the rest, including the captain, who received ten arrow wounds, and the author, who received "three, and one of them in the left side which pierced my ribs, and was very dangerous".

The survivors returned by way of Florida to Cuba, disillusioned and in ill-health, suffering from burning thirst and barely escaping shipwreck, for the ships were leaking badly. When recounting these calamities the author exclaims:

"Oh! what a troublesome thing it is to go and discover new lands and the risks we took it is hardly possible to exaggerate".

Nevertheless Bernal was not discouraged by experience; his poverty, which, of necessity, increased daily, impelled him to seek his fortune even at the risk of losing his life, and his youth made him naturally impatient; he did not care to wait for the Indians which Diego Velásquez had promised to give him as soon as there were some unemployed, and he at once enlisted in a second expedition, composed of four ships and two hundred soldiers, under the command of Juan de Grijalva, which weighed anchor in the port of Matanzas on the 8th April, 1518.

The author says that he went "as ensign", but it is doubtful.

The expedition went by way of Cozumel and Champotón, whose intrepid inhabitants wounded Grijalva and broke two of his teeth, and killed seven soldiers, by the Boca de Términos,

the Rio de Tabasco which they called the Rio de Grijalva, La Rambla, the Rios de Tonalá or de Santo Antón, de Coatzacoalcos, de Papaloapan or de Alvarado, and the Rio de Banderas, where they obtained by barter "more than sixteen thousand pesos in jewels and low grade gold". They sighted the Isla Blanca and the Isla Verde and landed on the Isla de Sacrificios and the sand dunes of Ulúa; thence Alvarado, accompanied by certain soldiers, returned to Cuba in search of reinforcements, while Grijalva, with the rest of his followers, including the author, pushed ahead by Tuxtla,[1] Tuxpan and the Rio de Canoas, where the Spaniards were attacked by the natives of Cape Rojo; then Grijalva, yielding to the entreaties of his soldiers, agreed to return to Cuba.

Velásquez, fascinated beyond measure by the gold which Grijalva had obtained by barter, organized a third expedition consisting of "eleven ships great and small", and appointed Hernan Cortés to command it. Bernal again enlisted, as at this time he found himself much in debt. Cortés set out from the Port of Trinidad on the 18th February, 1519. The author had started eight days earlier in the company of Pedro de Alvarado. All met together again at the Island of Cozumel, where a review was held, which showed a muster of five hundred and eight soldiers, "not including ship-masters, pilots, and seamen, who numbered one hundred and sixteen horses and mares". Keeping on their course, they passed close by Champotón without venturing to land; they stopped at Tabasco, where they fought with the natives, who gave the author "an arrow wound in the thigh but it was not a severe wound", and finally they arrived at Ulúa.

They went inland and marched to Cempoala and Quiahuiztlan, and in the neighbourhood of the latter they founded the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, and they determined to push on to México, whose Prince, Motecuhzoma,[2] had been exciting their cupidity by rich presents of gold and other objects of value.

Before undertaking this march, the friends of Cortés (one of whom was Bernal) advised him to destroy the ships, lest any of the soldiers should mutiny and wish to return to Cuba, and so that he could make use of the ship-masters, pilots and

[1] This is an error. Tuxtla was passed before reaching the Isla de Sacrificios.
[2] Montezuma.

seamen "who numbered nearly one hundred persons" as we have already stated. When this had been done, "without concealment and not as the chronicler Gómara describes it", they started for Mexico in the middle of August, probably on the sixteenth, and passed without incident through Jalapa Xicochimalco, Ixhuacan, Texutla, Xocotla, and Xalacingo, but on reaching the frontiers of Tlaxcala they were stopped by the natives, who fought against them for several days. There he author received "two wounds, one on the head from a stone, and the other an arrow wound in the thigh", from which he was seriously ill in the Capital of Tlaxcala, after Cortés had made peace and an alliance with the inhabitants.

"On the 12th October" they continued their march by Cholula, where they committed a shocking massacre, Itzcalpan, Tlamanalco, and Itztapalatengo. Here Cacamatzin the Lord of Tetzcoco met them in royal state to welcome them in the name of Motecuhzoma, and they accompanied him along the causeway of Itztapalapa, which crossed the lake in a straight line to Mexico, and from it could be seen on both sides innumerable "cities and towns", some in the water and others on dry land, all of them beautified by stately temples and palaces. This wonderful panorama, as picturesque as it was novel, made the deepest impression on Bernal and his companions, and he says, "we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they tell us of in the story of Amadis, on account of the great towers and *cues*[1] and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not all a dream".

When they reached the junction of the causeways of Itztapalapa and Coyohuacan they met many Caciques and Chieftains of importance coming in advance of Motecuhzoma, who received the Spaniards a little further on, almost at the gates of Mexico, with sumptuous pomp and extreme ceremony. Many times the Mexican sovereign had contemplated attacking the Spaniards, but weighted down by superstition and rendered powerless by a timid and vacillating character, he now conducted them into the great Tenochtitlan, only to deliver it up to them at once. The autocrat felt himself fatally conquered before beginning the struggle.

[1] *Cue* = temple. This is not a Nahua or Maya word but one picked up by the Spaniards in the Antilles.

Thence step by step within a few days he suffered seven Spaniards, among whom was Bernal, to make him a prisoner in his own palace; he allowed his jailors to burn [to death] Quauhpopoca and other native chieftains, whose crime consisted in having, by his own orders, given battle to Juan de Escalante and other Spanish soldiers; he handed over to Cortés Cacamatzin, Totoquihuatzin, Cuitláhuac and Cuauhtémoc, lords respectively of Tetzcoco, Tlacopan, Itztapalapan and Tlatelolco, who wished to set their sovereign at liberty, and finally, weeping like a tender unhappy woman, he swore fealty to the King of Spain.

With ease and in a short time Cortés was able to collect an immense treasure which amounted to "seven hundred thousand gold dollars", which he found it necessary to divide among his soldiers; nevertheless, he made the division with such trickery and cunning that there fell to the soldiers "a very small share, only one hundred dollars each, and it was so very little that many of the soldiers did not want to take it, and Cortés was left with it all". If the author did not complain of this as much as some of his companions, for example, as Cárdenas, who even "fell ill from brooding and grief", it was owing to his having already received from Motecuhzoma some presents of "gold and cloths", as well as of "a beautiful Indian girl . . . the daughter of a chieftain", whom he ventured to beg of the sovereign through the good offices of the page Orteguilla, a gift which he certainly thought that he had gained by his respectful courtesy "for whenever I was on guard over him, or passed before him, I doffed my helmet to him with the greatest respect".

The Spaniards began to enjoy the gold divided among them, abandoning themselves to a life of licentious pleasure, when in March, 1520, Pánfilo de Narvaez arrived at Ulúa with sixteen ships,[1] fourteen hundred soldiers, ninety crossbowmen, seventy musketeers, and eighty horses.

Diego Velásquez had sent him to punish Cortés and his followers as traitors, because they had rebelled against him without reason. However, as Cortés was immensely rich, and there is no power greater than riches, he soon won over almost

[1] The author says that there were nineteen, but the Oidor Lucas Vásquez de Ayllon, who accompanied Narvaez, writes that there were sixteen (Hernan Cortés, *Cartas y Relaciones*, Paris, 1866: (p. 42).—G. G.

all the soldiers of Narvaez with ingots and jewels of gold, in such a way that when the fight took place at Cempoala, Narvaez was the only man who fought in earnest, until he was wounded and lost an eye. The author figures among his captors: "the first to lay hands on him was Pedro Sanchez Farfan, a good soldier, and I handed him (Narvaez) over to Sandoval".

After his victory, Cortés returned with all speed to Mexico, where the inhabitants had risen in arms with the purpose of avenging the inhuman massacre carried out by Pedro de Alvarado in the precincts of the great Teocalli, which Alonzo de Avila pronounced to be disgraceful, saying that it would for ever remain "an ill memory in New Spain". Cortés now brought with him over thirteen hundred soldiers, eighty crossbowmen and as many musketeers, and ninety mounted men, without counting his numerous native allies.

Although they all reached the great Tenochtitlan "on the day of San Juan de Junio (St John's Day) in the year 1520", they could not make a stand against the Mexicans, who, under the command of Cuitláhuac and Cuahtémoc, killed the greater number of the invaders and forced the rest, wounded and ruined, for they were unable to save the riches they had collected, to flee to Tlaxcala. The Tlaxcalans received them, lodged them and attended to them with affection. When they were somewhat recovered, the Spaniards began Vandal-like forays through Tepeyácac, Cachula, Guacachula, Tecamachalco, the town of the Guayabos, Ozúcar, Xalacingo, Zacatami, and other places in the neighbourhood, enslaving and branding with a hot iron all the youths and women they met with; "they did not trouble about the old men": the inhuman mark was placed "on the face", and not even the most beautiful young women escaped it.

The author did not assist in all these forays because "he was very ill from fever and was spitting blood".

Cortés then founded a second city, which he named Segura de la Frontera.

After the Spaniards had been reinforced by various expeditions that had come from Cuba, they resolved to return to Mexico to recover their lost treasure, and they forthwith took the road to Tetzcoco.

They took with them many thousands of native allies.

When the headquarters had been established at Tetzcoco,

Cortés opened hostilities by an assault on Itztapalapa, where he and his followers nearly lost their lives by drowning, for the Mexicans "burst open the canals of fresh and salt water and tore down a causeway": the author was "very badly wounded by a lance thrust which they gave me in the throat near the windpipe, and I was in danger of dying from it, and retain the scar from it to this day".

Cortés did not think of a direct attack on Mexico, he understood that it could lead to no satisfactory result; he proposed merely to invest the city and reduce it by starvation; so as to accomplish this he had entrusted to the Tlaxcalans the construction of thirteen launches, which he anxiously awaited.

Meanwhile, he attacked the neighbouring towns with fire and sword. The author did not join in these earlier combats as he was still ill from his dangerous wound, but as soon as it healed, he again took up arms, and accompanied Cortés, who went to assist the natives of Chalco, and distinguished himself among the most intrepid soldiers.

On his side, Cuauhtémoc, who was now Lord of Mexico, took measures for the defence of his country with unequalled courage; he had obtained from his subjects a promise "that they would never make peace, but would either all die fighting or take our lives".

The strife was remarkably prolonged and bloody, and no quarter was given.

The siege began on the 21st May, 1521, and lasted eighty-five days. Not for one moment did the Mexicans show signs of discouragement, notwithstanding the scarcity of fresh water and provisions, the superiority of the arms of the Spaniards, and the immense number of their native allies;[1] each day as it came was for them as the first day of the strife, so great was the determination and the strength with which they appeared on the field of battle, and, moreover, they never ceased fighting "from dawn to dusk".

When the greater number of them had already perished, the few who still remained stoically resisted thirst, hunger, weariness, and pestilence in the defence of their country, and even then refused, with indomitable fortitude, the proposals of peace

[1] The author makes immoderate efforts to lessen the number of the allies, but Cortés informs us that there were "numberless people", "an infinite number", "which could not be counted", that those that accompanied him alone numbered "more than one hundred and fifty thousand men".—G. G.

which Cortés repeatedly made to them. In this manner only did they die.

The army which was to attack the Mexicans by land was divided from the beginning into three sections. It fell to the lot of the author to serve in that of Tlacopan, commanded by Pedro de Alvarado. Many times Bernal was in danger of losing his life, first of all when the siege had just been commenced; a few days later when the Mexicans succeeded in seizing him, "many Indians had already laid hold of me, but I managed to get my arm free and our Lord Jesus Christ gave me strength so that by some good sword thrusts that I gave them, I saved myself, but I was badly wounded in one arm"; on another occasion they succeeded in taking him prisoner, but "it pleased God that I should escape from their power"; and, finally, at the end of June on the day that Cortés suffered his terrible defeat, the author received "an arrow wound and a sword thrust".

The siege ended on the 13th of August, 1521, with the capture of the north-east corner of the city where the few surviving Mexicans still offered a heroic resistance.

Prefatory Note

In 1908 the Hakluyt Society published my translation of *The True Story of the Conquest of New Spain* by Bernal Diaz del Castillo with maps and notes in five volumes, and I wish to express my thanks to the Council of that Society for permitting me to use that translation for the present volume, which tells the story so far as it relates to the discovery and conquest of Mexico in Bernal Diaz's own words, omitting all unnecessary passages, and ends with the fall of Mexico City.

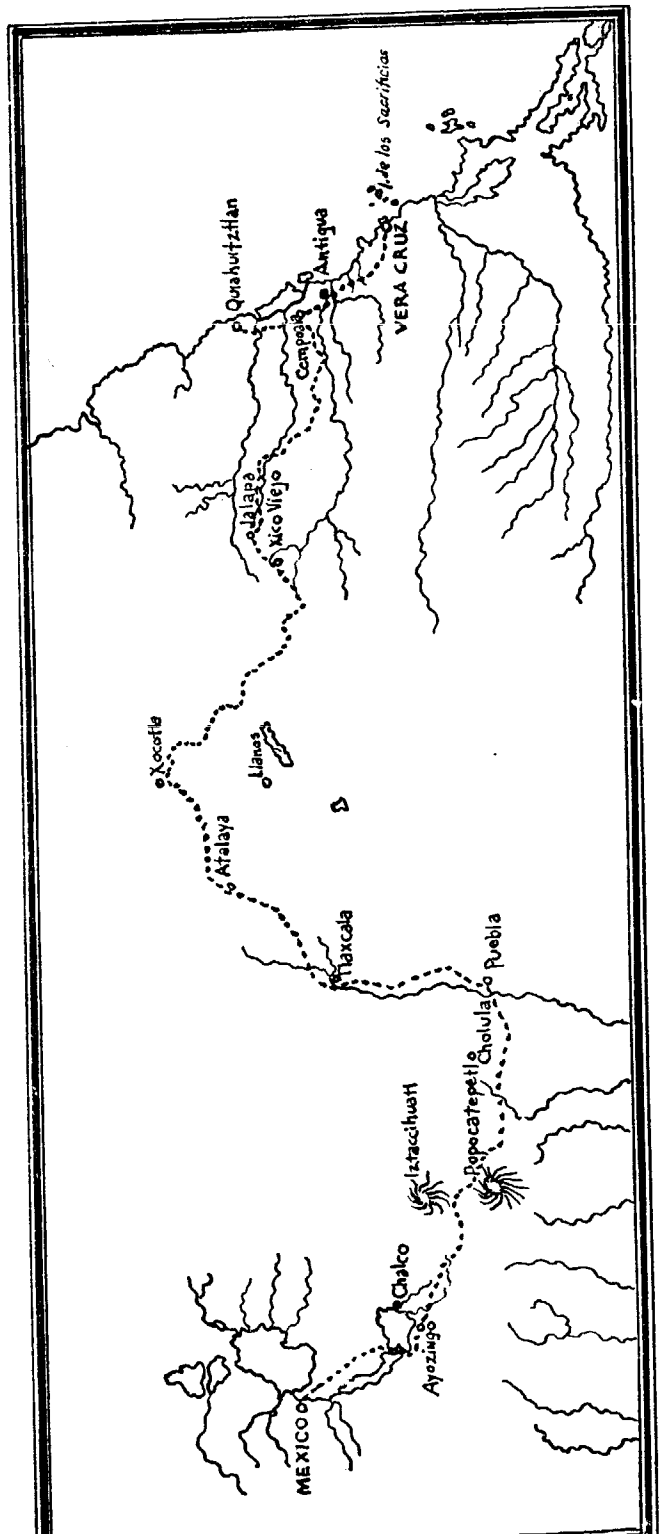
Some extracts from the letters of Hernando Cortés are added to make clear the topography of the siege of the City.

The latter part of Bernal Diaz's history deals with the march to Honduras, which is another story.

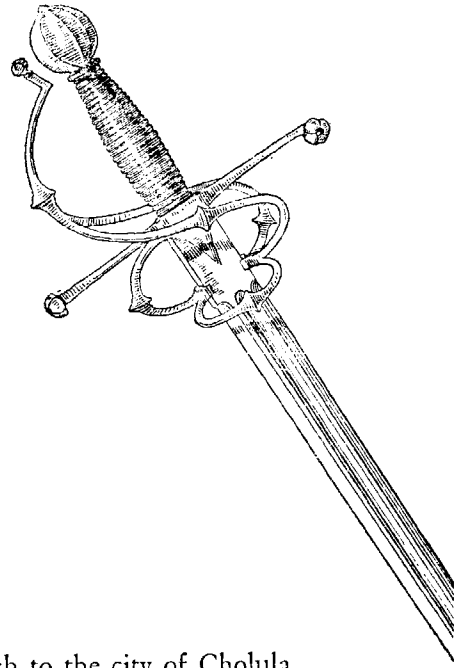
A. P. M.

Preface by the Author

I have observed that the most celebrated chroniclers, before they begin to write their histories, first set forth a Prologue and Preface with the argument expressed in lofty rhetoric in order to give lustre and repute to their statements, so that the studious readers who peruse them may partake of their melody and flavour. But I, being no Latin scholar, dare not venture on such a preamble or prologue, for in order properly to extol the adventures which we met with and the heroic deeds we accomplished during the Conquest of New Spain and its provinces in the company of that valiant and doughty Captain, Don Hernando Cortés (who later on, on account of his heroic deeds, was made Marqués del Valle) there would be needed an eloquence and rhetoric far beyond my powers. That which I have myself seen and the fighting I have gone through, with the help of God, I will describe quite simply, as a fair eye witness without twisting events one way or another. I am now an old man, over eighty-four years of age, and I have lost my sight and hearing, and, as luck would have it, I have gained nothing of value to leave to my children and descendants but this my true story, and they will presently find out what a wonderful story it is.



ROUTE OF CORTÉS' EXPEDITION TO MEXICO CITY



IV

The March to Mexico

† LVI

One morning we started on our march to the city of Cholula and that day we went on to sleep at a river which runs within a short league of the city, and there they put up for us some huts and ranchos. This same night the Caciques of Cholula sent some chieftains to bid us welcome to their country, and they brought supplies of poultry and maize bread, and said that in the morning all the Caciques and priests would come out to receive us, and they asked us to forgive their not having come sooner. Cortés thanked them both for the food they had brought and for the good will which they showed us.

At dawn we began to march and the Caciques and priests and many other Indians came out to receive us, most of them were clothed in cotton garments made like tunics. They came in a most peaceful manner and willingly, and the priests carried braziers containing incense with which they fumigated our Captain and us soldiers who were standing near him. When these priests and chiefs saw the Tlaxcalan Indians who came with us, they asked Doña Marina to tell the General that it was not right that their enemies with arms in their hands should enter their city in that manner. When our Captain understood this, he ordered the soldiers and the baggage to halt, and, when he saw us all together and that no one was moving, he said: "It seems to me, Sirs, that before we enter Cholula these Caciques and priests should be put to the proof with a friendly speech, so that we can see what their wishes may be; for they

come complaining of our friends the Tlaxcalans and they have much cause for what they say, and I want to make them understand in fair words the reason why we come to their city, and as you gentlemen already know, the Tlaxcalans have told us that the Cholulans are a turbulent people, and, as it would be a good thing that by fair means they should render their obedience to His Majesty, this appears to me to be the proper thing to do."

Then he told Doña Marina to call up the Caciques and priests to where he was stationed on horseback with all of us around him, and three chieftains and two priests came at once, and they said: "Malinche, forgive us for not coming to Tlaxcala to see you and to bring food, it was not for want of good will but because Mase Escasi and Xicotenga and all Tlaxcala are our enemies, and have said many evil things of us and of the Great Montezuma our Prince, and as though what they said were not enough, they now have the boldness, under your protection, to come armed into our city, and we beg you as a favour to order them to return to their own country, or at least to stay outside in the fields and not to enter our city in such a manner." But as for us they said that we were very welcome.

As our Captain saw that what they said was reasonable, he at once sent Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid to ask the Tlaxcalans to put up their huts and ranchos there in the fields, and not to enter the city with us, excepting those who were carrying the cannon, and our friends from Cempoala, and he told them to explain to the Tlaxcalans that the reason why he asked them to do so was that all the Caciques and priests were afraid of them, and that when we left Cholula on our way to Mexico we would send to summon them, and that they were not to be annoyed at what he was doing. When the people of Cholula knew what Cortés had done, they appeared to be much more at ease.

Then Cortés began to make a speech to them, saying that our Lord and King had sent us to these countries to give them warning and command them not to worship Idols, nor sacrifice human beings, or eat their flesh, and as the road to Mexico, whither we were going to speak with the Great Montezuma, passed by there, and there was no other shorter road, we had come to visit their city and to treat them as brothers. As other great Caciques had given their obedience to His Majesty, it would be well that they should give theirs as the others had done.

They replied that we had hardly entered into their country, yet we already ordered them to give up their Teules, and that they could not do it. As to giving their obedience to our King they were content to do so. And thus they pledged their word, but it was not done before a notary. When this was over we at once began our march towards the City, and so great was the number of people who came out to see us that both the streets and house tops were crowded, and I do not wonder at this for they had never seen men such as we are, nor had they ever seen horses.

They lodged us in some large rooms where we were all together with our friends from Cempoala and the Tlaxcalans who carried the baggage, and they fed us on that day and the next very well and abundantly.

† LVII

After the people of Cholula had received us in the festive manner already described, and most certainly with a show of good will, it presently appeared that Montezuma sent orders to his ambassadors, who were still in our company, to negotiate with the Cholulans that an army of 20,000 men which Montezuma had sent and equipped should, on entering the city, join with them in attacking us by night or by day, get us into a hopeless plight and bring all of us that they could capture bound to Mexico. And he sent many presents of jewels and cloths, also a golden drum, and he also sent word to the priests of the city that they were to retain twenty of us to sacrifice to their idols.

The warriors whom Montezuma sent were stationed in some ranchos and some rocky thickets about half a league from Cholula and some were already posted within the houses.

They fed us very well for the first two days, but on the third day they neither gave us anything to eat nor did any of the Caciques or priests make their appearance, and if any Indians came to look at us, they did not approach us, but remained some distance off, laughing at us as though mocking us. When our Captain saw this, he told our interpreters to tell

the Ambassadors of the Great Montezuma to order the Caciques to bring some food, but all they brought was water and fire wood, and the old men who brought it said there was no more maize.

That same day other Ambassadors arrived from Montezuma, and joined those who were already with us and they said to Cortés, very impudently, that their Prince had sent them to say that we were not to go by his city because he had nothing to give us to eat, and that they wished at once to return to Mexico with our reply. When Cortés saw that their speech was unfriendly, he replied to the Ambassadors in the blandest manner, that he marvelled how such a great Prince as Montezuma should be so vacillating, and he begged them not to return to Mexico, for he wished to start himself on the next day, to see their Prince, and act according to his orders, and I believe that he gave the Ambassadors some strings of beads and they agreed to stay.

When this had been done, our Captain called us together, and said to us: "I see that these people are very much disturbed, and it behoves us to keep on the alert, in case some trouble is brewing among them," and he at once sent for the principal Cacique, telling him either to come himself or to send some other chieftains. The Cacique replied that he was ill and could not come.

When our Captain heard this, he ordered us to bring before him, with kindly persuasion, two of the numerous priests who were in the great Cue near our quarters. We brought two of them, without doing them any disrespect, and Cortés ordered each of them to be given a Chalchihuite, and addressing them with friendly words he asked them what was the reason that the Cacique and chieftains and most of the priests were frightened, for he had sent to summon them and they did not want to come. It seems that one of these priests was a very important personage among them, who had charge of or command over all the Cues in the City, and was a sort of Bishop among the priests and was held in great respect. He replied that they, who were priests, had no fear of us, and if the Cacique and chieftain did not wish to come, he would go himself and summon them, and that if he spoke to them he believed they would do as he told them and would come.

Cortés at once told him to go, and that his companion should

await his return. So the priest departed and summoned the Cacique and chieftains who returned in his company to Cortés' quarters. Cortés asked them what it was they were afraid of, and why they had not given us anything to eat, and said that if our presence in their city were an annoyance to them, we wished to leave the next day for Mexico to see and speak to the Lord Montezuma, and he asked them to provide carriers for the transport of the baggage and *tepusques* and to send us some food at once.

The Cacique was so embarrassed that he could hardly speak, he said that they would look for the food, but their Lord Montezuma had sent to tell them not to give us any, and was not willing that we should proceed any further.

While this conversation was taking place, three of our friends, the Cempoala Indians, came in and said secretly to Cortés, that close by where we were quartered they had found holes dug in the streets, covered over with wood and earth, so that without careful examination, one could not see them, that they had removed the earth from above one of the holes and found it full of sharp pointed stakes to kill the horses when they galloped, and that the *Azoteas* had breastworks of *adobes*[1] and were piled up with stones, and certainly this was not done with good intent for they also found barricades of thick timbers in another street. At this moment eight Tlaxcalans arrived, from the Indians whom we had left outside in the fields with orders that they were not to enter Cholula, and they said to Cortés: "Take heed, Malinche, for this City is ill disposed, and we know that this night they have sacrificed to their Idol, which is the God of War, seven persons, five of them children, so that the God may give them victory over you, and we have further seen that they are moving all their baggage and women and children out of the city." When Cortés heard this, he immediately sent these Tlaxcalans back to their Captains, with orders to be fully prepared if we should send to summon them, and he turned to speak to the Caciques, priests and chieftains of Cholula and told them to have no fear and show no alarm, but to remember the obedience which they had promised to him, and not to swerve from it, lest he should have to chastise them. That he had already told them that we wished to set out on the morrow and that he had need of two thousand warriors

[1] Sun-dried bricks.

from the city to accompany us, just as the Tlaxcalans had provided them, for they were necessary on the road. They replied that the men would be given, and asked leave to go at once to get them ready, and they went away very well contented, for they thought that between the warriors with whom they were to supply us, and the regiments sent by Montezuma, which were hidden in the rocky thickets and barrancas, we could not escape death or capture, for the horses would not be able to charge on account of certain breastworks and barricades which they immediately advised the troops to construct, so that only a narrow lane would be left through which it would be impossible for us to pass. They warned the Mexicans to be in readiness as we intended to start on the next day and told them that our capture would be sure, for they had made sacrifices to their War Idols who had promised them victory.

As our Captain wished to be more thoroughly informed about the plot and all that was happening, he told Doña Marina to take more chalchihuites to the two priests who had been the first to speak, for they were not afraid, and to tell them with friendly words that Malinche wished them to come back and speak to him, and to bring them back with her. Doña Marina went and spoke to the priests in the manner she knew so well how to use, and thanks to the presents they at once accompanied her. Cortés addressed them and asked them to say truly what they knew, for they were the priests of Idols and chieftains and ought not to lie, and that what they should say would not be disclosed in any manner, for we were going to leave the next morning, and he would give them a large quantity of cloth. They said the truth was that their Lord Montezuma knew that we were coming to their city, and that every day he was of many minds and could not come to any decision on the matter, that sometimes he sent orders to pay us much respect when we arrived and to guide us on the way to his city, and at other times he would send word that it was not his wish that we should go to Mexico, and now recently his Gods Tescatepuca and Huichilobos, to whom he paid great devotion, had counselled him that we should either be killed here in Cholula or should be sent, bound, to Mexico. That the day before he had sent out twenty thousand warriors, and half of them were already within this city, and the other half were stationed near by in some gullies, and that they already knew that

we were about to start to-morrow; they also told us about the barricades which they had ordered to be made and the two thousand warriors that were to be given to us, and how it had already been agreed that twenty of us were to be kept to be sacrificed to the Idols of Cholula.

Cortés ordered these men to be given a present of richly embroidered cloth, and told them not to say anything about the information they had given us for, if they disclosed it, on our return from Mexico we would kill them. He also told them that we should start early the next morning, and he asked them to summon all the Caciques to come then so that he might speak to them.

That night Cortés took counsel of us as to what should be done, for he had very able men with him whose advice was worth having, but as in such cases frequently happens, some said that it would be advisable to change our course and go by Huexotzingo, others that we must manage to preserve the peace by every possible means and that it would be better to return to Tlaxcala, others of us gave our opinion that if we allowed such treachery to pass unpunished, wherever we went we should be treated to worse treachery, and that being there in the town, with ample provisions, we ought to make an attack, for the Indians would feel the effect of it more in their own homes than they would in the open, and that we should at once warn the Tlaxcalans so that they might join in it. All thought well of this last advice. As Cortés had already told them that we were going to set out on the following day, for this reason we should make a show of tying together our baggage, which was little enough, and then in the large courts with high walls, where we were lodged, we should fall on the Indian warriors, who well deserved their fate. As regards the Ambassadors of Montezuma, we should dissemble and tell them that the evil-minded Cholulans had intended treachery and had attempted to put the blame for it on their Lord Montezuma, and on themselves as his Ambassadors, but we did not believe Montezuma had given any such orders, and we begged them to stay in their apartments and not have any further converse with the people of the city, so that we should not have reason to think they were in league with them in their treachery, and we asked them to go with us as our guides to Mexico.

They replied that neither they themselves nor their Lord Montezuma knew anything about that which we were telling them. Although they did not like it, we placed guards over the Ambassadors, so that they could not go out without our permission.

All that night we were on the alert and under arms with the horses saddled and bridled, for we thought that for certain all the companies of the Mexicans as well as the Cholulans would attack us during the night.

There was an old Indian woman, the wife of a Cacique, who knew all about the plot and trap which had been arranged, and she had come secretly to Doña Marina, having noticed that she was young and good looking and rich, and advised her, if she wanted to escape with her life, to come with her to her house, for it was certain that on that night or during the next day we were all going to be killed. Because she knew of this, and on account of the compassion she felt for Doña Marina, she had come to tell her that she had better get all her possessions together and come with her to her house, and she would there marry her to her son, the brother of a youth who accompanied her.

When Doña Marina understood this (as she was always very shrewd) she said to her: "O mother, thank you much for this that you have told me, I would go with you at once but that I have no one here whom I can trust to carry my clothes and jewels of gold of which I have many, for goodness sake, mother, wait here a little while, you and your son, and to-night we will set out, for now, as you can see, these Teules are on the watch and will hear us."

The old woman believed what she said, and remained chatting with her, and Doña Marina asked her how they were going to kill us all, and how and when and where the plot was made. The old woman told her neither more nor less than what the two priests had already stated, and Doña Marina replied: "If this affair is such a secret, how is it that you came to know about it?" and the old woman replied that her husband had told her, for he was a captain of one of the parties in the city; as to the plot she had known about it for three days, for a gilded drum had been sent to her husband from Mexico, and rich cloaks and jewels of gold had been sent to three other captains to induce them to bring us bound to their Lord Montezuma.

When Doña Marina heard this she deceived the old woman and said: "How delighted I am to hear that your son to whom you wish to marry me is a man of distinction. We have already talked a good deal, and I do not want them to notice us, so Mother you wait here while I begin to bring my property, for I cannot bring it all at once, and you and your son, my brother, will take care of it, and then we shall be able to go." The old woman believed all that was told her, and she and her son sat down to rest. Then Doña Marina went swiftly to the Captain and told him all that had passed with the Indian woman. Cortés at once ordered her to be brought before him, and questioned her about these treasons and plots, and she told him neither more nor less than the priests had already said, so he placed a guard over the woman so that she could not escape.

† LVIII

When dawn broke it was a sight to see the haste with which the Caciques and priests brought in the warriors, laughing and contented as though they had already caught us in their traps and nets, and they brought more Indian warriors than we had asked for, and large as they are (for they still stand as a memorial of the past) the courtyards would not hold them all.

We were already quite prepared for what had to be done. The soldiers with swords and shields were stationed at the gate of the great court so as not to let a single armed Indian pass out. Our Captain was mounted on horseback with many soldiers round him, as a guard, and when he saw how very early the Caciques and priests and warriors had arrived, he said: "How these traitors long to see us among the barrancas so as to gorge on our flesh, but Our Lord will do better for us." Then he asked for the two priests who had let out the secret, and he sent our interpreter, Aguilar, to tell them to go to their houses, for he had no need of their presence now. This was in order that, as they had done us a good turn, they should not suffer for it, and should not get killed. Cortés was on horseback and Doña Marina near to him, and he asked the Caciques why was it, as

we had done them no harm whatever, that they had wished to kill us, and why should they turn traitors against us, when all we had said or done was to warn them against certain things of which we had already warned all the towns that we had passed through, and to tell them about matters concerning our holy faith, and this without compulsion of any kind? To what purpose then had they quite recently prepared many long and strong poles with collars and cords and placed them in a house near to the Great Temple, and why for the last three days had they been building barricades and digging holes in the streets and raising breastworks on the roofs of the houses, and why had they removed their children and wives and property from the city? Their ill will however had been plainly shown, and they had not been able to hide their treason. They had not even given us food to eat, and as a mockery had brought us firewood and water, and said that there was no maize. He knew well that in the barrancas near by, there were many companies of warriors lying in wait for us, ready to carry out their treacherous plans, thinking that we should pass along that road towards Mexico. So in return for our having come to treat them like brothers and to tell them what Our Lord God and the King have ordained, they wished to kill us and eat our flesh, and had already prepared the pots with salt and peppers and tomatoes. If this was what they wanted it would have been better for them to make war on us in the open field like good and valiant warriors, as did their neighbours the Tlaxcalans. He knew for certain all that had been planned in the city and that they had even promised to their Idol, that twenty of us should be sacrificed before it, and that three nights ago they had sacrificed seven Indians to it so as to ensure victory, which was promised them; but as the Idol was both evil and false, it neither had, nor would have power against us, and all these evil and traitorous designs which they had planned and put into effect were about to recoil on themselves. Doña Marina told all this to them, and made them understand it very clearly, and when the priests, Caciques, and captains had heard it, they said that what had been stated was true but that they were not to blame for it, for the Ambassadors of Montezuma had ordered it at the command of their Prince.

Then Cortés told them that the royal laws decreed that such treasons as those should not remain unpunished and that for

their crime they must die. Then he ordered a musket to be fired, which was the signal that we had agreed upon for that purpose, and a blow was given to them which they will remember for ever, for we killed many of them, so that they gained nothing from the promises of their false idols.

Not two hours had passed before our allies, the Tlaxcalans, arrived, and they had fought very fiercely where the Cholulans had posted other companies to defend the streets and prevent their being entered, but these were soon defeated. The Tlaxcalans went about the city, plundering and making prisoners and we could not stop them, and the next day more companies from the Tlaxcalan towns arrived, and did great damage, for they were very hostile to the people of Cholula, and when we saw this, both Cortés and the captains and the soldiers, on account of the compassion that we had felt, restrained the Tlaxcalans from doing further damage, and Cortés ordered Cristóbal de Olid to bring him all the Tlaxcalan captains together so that he could speak to them, and they did not delay in coming; then he ordered them to gather together all their men and go and camp in the fields, and this they did, and only the men from Cempoala remained with us.

Just then certain Caciques and priests of Cholula who belonged to other districts of the town, and said that they were not concerned in the treasons against us (for it is a large city and they have parties and factions among themselves), asked Cortés and all of us to pardon the provocation of the treachery that had been plotted against us, for the traitors had already paid with their lives. Then there came the two priests who were our friends and had disclosed the secret to us, and the old woman, the wife of the captain, who wanted to be the mother-in-law of Doña Marina, and all prayed Cortés for pardon.

When they spoke to him, Cortés made a show of great anger and ordered the Ambassadors of Montezuma, who were detained in our company, to be summoned. He then said that the whole city deserved to be destroyed, but that out of respect for their Lord Montezuma, whose vassals they were, he would pardon them, and that from now on they must be well behaved, and let them beware of such affairs as the last happening again, lest they should die for it.

Then, he ordered the Chiefs of Tlaxcala, who were in the

fields, to be summoned, and told them to return the men and women whom they had taken prisoners, for the damage they had done was sufficient. Giving up the prisoners went against the grain with the Tlaxcalans, and they said that the Cholulans had deserved far greater punishment for the many treacheries they had constantly received at their hands. Nevertheless as Cortés ordered it, they gave back many persons, but they still remained rich, both in gold and mantles, cotton cloth, salt and slaves. Besides this Cortés made them and the people of Cholula friends, and, from what I have since seen and ascertained, that friendship has never been broken.

Furthermore, Cortés ordered all the priests and Caciques to bring back the people to the city, and to hold their markets and fairs, and not to have any fear, for no harm would be done to them. They replied that within five days the city would be fully peopled again, for at that time nearly all the inhabitants were in hiding. They said it was necessary that Cortés should appoint a Cacique for them, for their ruler was one of those who had died in the Court, so he asked them to whom the office ought to go, and they said to the brother of the late Cacique, so Cortés at once appointed him to be Governor.

In addition to this, as soon as he saw the city was reinhabited, and their markets were carried on in safety, he ordered all the priests, captains and other chieftains of that city to assemble, and explained to them very clearly all the matters concerning our holy faith, and told them that they could see how their Idols had deceived them, and were evil things not speaking the truth; he begged them to destroy the Idols and break them in pieces. That if they did not wish to do it themselves we would do it for them. He also ordered them to whitewash a temple, so that we might set up a cross there.

They immediately did what we asked them in the matter of the cross, and they said that they would remove their Idols, but although they were many times ordered to do it, they delayed. Then the Padre de la Merced said to Cortés that it was going too far, in the beginning, to take away their Idols until they should understand things better, and should see how our expedition to Mexico would turn out, and time would show us what we ought to do in the matter, that for the present the warnings we had given them were sufficient, together with the setting up of the Cross.

The city is situated on a plain, in a locality where there were many neighbouring towns, and it is a land fruitful in maize and other vegetables, and much Chili pepper, and the land is full of Magueys from which they make their wine. They make very good pottery in the city of red and black and white clay with various designs, and with it supply Mexico and all the neighbouring provinces. At that time there were many high towers in the city where the Idols stood, especially the Great Cue which was higher than that of Mexico, although the Mexican Cue was very lofty and magnificent.

As soon as the Squadrons sent by the Great Montezuma, which were already stationed in the ravines near Cholula, learned what had taken place they returned, faster than at a walk, to Mexico and told Montezuma how it all happened. But fast as they went the news had already reached him, through the two Chieftains who had been with us and who went to him post-haste. We learned on good authority that when Montezuma heard the news he was greatly grieved and very angry, and at once sacrificed some Indians to his Idol Huichilobos, whom they looked on as the God of War, so that he might tell him what was to be the result of our going to Mexico, or if he should permit us to enter the city. We even knew that he was shut in at his devotions and sacrifices for two days in company with ten of the Chief Priests, and that a reply came from those Idols which was, that they advised him to send messengers to us to disclaim all blame for the Cholulan affair, and that with demonstrations of peace we should be allowed to enter into Mexico, and that when we were inside, by depriving us of food and water, or by raising some of the bridges, they would kill us.

This affair and punishment at Cholula became known throughout the provinces of New Spain and if we had a reputation for valour before, from now on they took us for sorcerers, and said that no evil that was planned against us could be so hidden from us that it did not come to our knowledge, and on this account they showed us good will.

I think that the curious reader must be already satiated hearing this story about Cholula and I wish that I had finished writing about it, but I cannot avoid calling to mind the prisons of thick wooden beams which we found in the city, which were full of Indians and boys being fattened so that they could

be sacrificed and their flesh eaten. We broke open all these prisons, and Cortés ordered all the Indian prisoners that were confined within them to return to their native countries, and with threats he ordered the Caciques and captains and priests of the city not to imprison any more Indians in that way, and not to eat human flesh. They promised not to do so, but what use were such promises? as they never kept them.

† LIX

Fourteen days had already passed since we had come to Cholula and we had nothing more to do there, for we saw that the city was again fully peopled, and we had established friendship between them and the people of Tlaxcala. But as we knew that the Great Montezuma was secretly sending spies to our camp to enquire and find out what our plans were, our Captain determined to take counsel of certain captains and soldiers, whom he knew to be well disposed towards him, because he never did anything without first asking our advice about it. It was agreed that we should send to tell the Great Montezuma, gently and amicably, that in order to carry out the purpose for which our Lord and King had sent us to these parts, we had crossed many seas and distant lands, and that while we were marching towards his city, his ambassadors had guided us by way of Cholula, where the people had plotted a treason with the intention of killing us, and we had punished some of those who intended to carry out the plot. As our Captain knew that the Cholulans were his subjects, it was only out of respect for his person, and on account of our great friendship, that he refrained from destroying and killing all those who were concerned in the treason. However, the worst of it all is that the priests and Caciques say it was done on his advice and command. This of course we never believed, that such a great prince as he is could issue such orders, especially as he had declared himself our friend, and we had inferred from his character that since his Idols had put such an evil thought as making war on us into his head, he would surely fight us in the open field. But as we look upon him as our great friend and wish to see and speak to him, we are setting

out at once for his city to give him a more complete account of what Our Lord the King had commanded us to do.

When Montezuma heard this message and learned through the people of Cholula that we did not lay all the blame on him, we heard it said that he returned again with his priests to fast and make sacrifices to his Idols, to know if they would again repeat their permission to allow us to enter into the city or no, and whether they would reiterate the commands they had already given him. The answer which they gave was the same as the first, that he should allow us to enter and that once inside the city he could kill us when he chose. His captains and priests also advised him that if he should place obstacles in the way of our entry, we would make war on him through his subject towns, seeing that we had as our friends the Tlaxcalans, and all the Totonacs of the hills, and other towns which had accepted our alliance, and to avoid these evils the best and most sensible advice was that which Huichilobos had given.

When Montezuma heard the message which we sent to him concerning our friendship and the other fearless remarks, after much deliberation he despatched six chieftains with a present of gold and jewels of a variety of shapes which were estimated to be worth over two thousand pesos, and he sent certain loads of very rich mantles beautifully worked.

When the Chiefs came before Cortés with the present they touched the ground with their hands and with great reverence, such as they use among themselves, they said: "Malinche, Our Lord the Great Montezuma, sends thee this present, and asks thee to accept it with the great affection which he has for thee and all thy brethren, and he says that the annoyance that the people of Cholula have caused him weighs heavily on him, and he wishes to punish them more in their persons, for they are an evil and a lying people in that they have thrown the blame of the wickedness which they wished to commit upon him and his ambassadors," that we might take it as very certain that he was our friend, and that we could go to his City whenever we liked, for he wished to do us every honour as very valiant men, and the messengers of such a great King. But because he had nothing to give us to eat, for everything has to be carried into the city by carriers as it is built on the lake, he could not entertain us very satisfactorily, but he would endeav-

our to do us all the honour that was possible, and he had ordered all the towns through which we had to pass to give us what we might need. Cortés received the present with demonstrations of affection and embraced the messengers, and ordered them to be given certain twisted cut glass beads.

Cortés gave the ambassadors a suitable and affectionate reply and ordered the messengers who had come with the present to remain with us as guides and the other three to return with the answer to their Prince, and to advise him that we were already on the road.

When the Chief Caciques of Tlaxcala understood that we were going, their souls were afflicted and they sent to say to Cortés that they had already warned him many times that he should be careful what he was about, and should refrain from entering such a strong city where there was so much war-like preparation and such a multitude of warriors, for one day or the other we would be attacked, and they feared that we would not escape alive, and on account of the good will that they bore us, they wished to send ten thousand men under brave captains to go with us and carry food for the journey.

Cortés thanked them heartily for their good wishes and told them that it was not just to enter into Mexico with such a host of warriors, especially when one party was so hostile to the other, that he only had need of one thousand men to carry the tepusques and the baggage, and to clear some of the roads, and they at once sent us the thousand Indians very well equipped.

Just as we were ready to set out, there came to Cortés all the Caciques and all the principal warriors whom we had brought from Cempoala, who had marched in our company and served us well and loyally, and said that they wanted to go back to Cempoala and not to proceed beyond Cholula in the direction of Mexico, for they felt certain that if they went there it would be for them and for us to go to our deaths. The Great Montezuma would order them to be killed because they had broken their fealty by refusing to pay him tribute and by imprisoning his tax-gatherers.

When Cortés observed the determination with which they demanded permission, he answered that they need not have the slightest fear that they would come to any harm, for, as they would go in our company, who would dare to annoy either them or us? and he begged them to change their minds and

stay with us, and he promised to make them rich. Although Cortés pressed them to stay, and Doña Marina put it in the most warm-hearted manner, they never wished to stay, but only to return to their homes. When Cortés perceived this he said: "God forbid that these Indians who have served us so well should be forced to go," and he sent for many loads of rich mantles and divided them among them, and he also sent to our friend the fat Cacique two loads of mantles for himself and for his nephew the other great Cacique named Cuesco.

† LX

We set out from Cholula in carefully arranged order as we were always accustomed to do, and arrived that day at some ranchos standing on a hill about four leagues from Cholula, they are peopled from Huexotzingo, and I think they are called the Ranchos of Yscalpan. To this place soon came the Caciques and priests of the towns of Huexotzingo which were near by, and people from other small towns, which stand on the slopes of the volcano near their boundary line, who brought us food and a present of golden jewels of small value, and they asked Cortés to accept them and not consider the insignificance of the gift but the good will with which it was offered. They advised him not to go to Mexico as it was a very strong city and full of warriors, where we should run much risk. They also told us to look out, if we had decided upon going, for when we had ascended to the pass we should find two broad roads, one leading to a town named Chalco, and the other to another town called Tlamanalco,[1] both of them subject to Mexico; that the one road was well swept and cleared so as to induce us to take it, and that the other road had been closed up and many great pines and other trees had been cut down so that horses could not use it and we could not march along it. That a little way down the side of the mountain along the road that had been cleared, the Mexicans (thinking that we must take that road) had cut away a piece of the hill side, and had made ditches and barricades, and that certain squadrons of Mexicans had waited at that point so as to kill us there. So they counselled us not to go by the road which was clear, but by the road

[1] B. D. writes Tlamanalco in error—Cortés says it was Amecameca.

where the felled trees were, saying that they would send many men with us to clear it.

Cortés thanked them for the counsel they had given him, and said that with God's help he would not abandon his march but would go the way they advised him. Early the next morning we began our march, and it was nearly midday when we arrived at the ridge of the mountain where we found the roads just as the people of Huexotzingo had said. There we rested a little and began to think about the Mexican squadrons on the intrenched hillside where the earth works were that they had told us about.

Then Cortés ordered the Ambassadors of the great Montezuma who came in our company to be summoned, and he asked them how it was that those two roads were in that condition, one very clean and swept and the other covered with newly-felled trees. They replied that it was done so that we should go by the cleared road which led to a city named Chalco, where the people would give us a good reception, for it belonged to their Prince Montezuma, and that they had cut the trees and closed up the other road to prevent our going by it, for there were bad passes on it, and it went somewhat round about before going to Mexico, and came out at another town which was not as large as Chalco. Then Cortés said that he wished to go by the blocked up road, and we began to ascend the mountain with the greatest caution, our allies moving aside the huge thick tree trunks with great labour, and some of them still lie by the roadside to this very day. As we rose higher it began to snow and the snow caked on the ground. Then we descended the hill and went to sleep at a group of houses which they build like inns or hostels where the Indian traders lodge, and we supped well, but the cold was intense, and we posted our watchmen, sentinels, and patrols and even sent out scouts. The next day we set out on our march, and, about the hour of high mass, arrived at a town (Amecameca), where they received us well and where there was no scarcity of food.

When the other towns in the neighbourhood heard of our arrival, people soon came from Chalco and from Chimaloacan and from Ayotzingo, where the canoes are, for it is their port. All of them together brought a present of gold and two loads of mantles and eight Indian women and the gold was worth over one hundred and fifty pesos and they said: "Malinche, accept these presents which we give you and look on us in the future as your friends." Cortés received them with great good will and promised to help them in whatever they needed and when he saw them together he told the Padre de la Merced to counsel them regarding matters touching our holy faith, and that they should give up their Idols. Cortés also explained to them about the great power of our Lord, the Emperor, and how we had come to right wrongs and to stop robbery.

When they heard this, all these towns that I have named, secretly, so that the Mexican Ambassadors should not hear them, made great complaints about Montezuma, and his tax-gatherers, who robbed them of all they possessed, and carried off their wives and daughters, and made the men work as though they were slaves, and made them carry pine timber and stone and firewood and maize either in their canoes or over land, and many other services such as planting cornfields, and they took their lands for the service of the Idols.

Cortés comforted them with kindly words which he knew well how to say to them through Doña Marina, but added that at the present moment he could not undertake to see justice done them and they must bear it awhile and he would presently free them from that rule. The Caciques replied: "We are of opinion that you should stay here with us, and we will give you what we possess, and that you should give up going to Mexico, as we know for certain it is very strong and full of warriors, and they will not spare your lives."

Cortés replied to them, with a cheerful mien, that we had no fear that the Mexicans, or any other nation, could destroy us and, as we wished to start at once, he asked them to give him twenty of their principal men to go in his company, and they brought us the twenty Indians.

† LXI

Just as we were starting on our march to Mexico there came before Cortés four Mexican chiefs sent by Montezuma who brought a present of gold and cloths. After they had made obeisance according to their custom, they said: "Malinche, our Lord the Great Montezuma sends you this present and says that he is greatly concerned for the hardships you have endured in

coming from such a distant land in order to see him, and that he has already sent to tell you that he will give you much gold and silver and chalchihuites as tribute for your Emperor and for yourself and the other Teules in your company, provided you do not come to Mexico, and now again he begs as a favour, that you will not advance any further but return whence you have come, and he promises to send you to the port a great quantity of gold and silver and rich stones for that King of yours, and, as for you, he will give you four loads of gold and for each of your brothers one load, but as for going on to Mexico your entrance into it is forbidden, for all his vassals have risen in arms to prevent your entry, and besides this there is no road thither, only a very narrow one, and there is no food for you to eat." And he used many other arguments about the difficulties to the end that we should advance no further.

Cortés with much show of affection embraced the Ambassadors, although the message grieved him, and he accepted the present, and said that he marvelled how the Lord Montezuma, having given himself out as our friend, and being such a great Prince, should be so inconstant; that one time he says one thing and another time sends to order the contrary, and regarding what he says about giving gold to our Lord the Emperor and to ourselves, he is grateful to him for it, and what he sends him now he will pay for in good works as time goes on. How can he deem it befitting that being so near to his city, we should think it right to return on our road without carrying through what our Prince has commanded us to do? If the Lord Montezuma had sent his messengers and ambassadors to some great prince such as he is himself, and if, after nearly reaching his house, those messengers whom he sent should turn back without speaking to the Prince about that which they were sent to say, when they came back into his [Montezuma's] presence with such a story, what favour would he show them? He would merely treat them as cowards of little worth; and this is what our Emperor would do with us, so that in one way or another we were determined to enter his city, and from this time forth he must not send any more excuses on the subject, for he [Cortés] was bound to see him, and talk to him and explain the whole purpose for which we had come, and this he must do to him personally. Then after he understood it all, if our presence in the city did not seem good to him, we would

return whence we had come. As for what he said about there being little or no food, not enough to support us, we were men who could get along even if we have but little to eat, and we were already on the way to his city, so let him take our coming in good part.

As soon as the messengers had been despatched, we set out for Mexico, and as the people of Huexotzingo and Chalco had told us that Montezuma had held consultations with his Idols and priests, who had said he was to allow us to enter and that then he could kill us, and as we are but human and feared death, we never ceased thinking about it. As that country is very thickly peopled we made short marches, and commended ourselves to God and to Our Lady his blessed Mother, and talked about how and by what means we could enter the City, and it put courage into our hearts to think that as our Lord Jesus Christ had vouchsafed us protection through past dangers, he would likewise guard us from the power of the Mexicans.

We went to sleep at a town called Iztapalatengo[1] where half the houses are in the water and the other half on dry land, and there they gave us a good supper.

The Great Montezuma, when he heard the reply which Cortés had sent to him, at once determined to send his nephew named Cacamatzin, the Lord of Texcoco, with great pomp to bid welcome to Cortés and to all of us, and one of our scouts came in to tell us that a large crowd of friendly Mexicans was coming along the road clad in rich mantles. It was very early in the morning when this happened, and we were ready to start, and Cortés ordered us to wait in our quarters until he could see what the matter was.

At that moment four chieftains arrived, who made deep obeisance to Cortés and said that close by there was approaching Cacamatzin, the great Lord of Texcoco, a nephew of the Great Montezuma, and he begged us to have the goodness to wait until he arrived.

He did not tarry long, for he soon arrived with greater pomp and splendour than we had ever beheld in a Mexican Prince, for he came in a litter richly worked in green feathers, with many silver borderings, and rich stones set in bosses made out of the finest gold. Eight Chieftains, who, it was said were all

[1] This is clearly a mistake; the town was Ayotzingo.

Lords of Towns, bore the litter on their shoulders. When they came near to the house where Cortés was quartered, the Chieftains assisted Cacamatzin to descend from the litter, and they swept the ground, and removed the straws where he had to pass, and when they came before our Captain they made him a deep reverence, and Cacamatzin said:

"Malinche, here we have come, I and these Chieftains to place ourselves at your service, and to give you all that you may need for yourself and your companions and to place you in your home, which is our city, for so the Great Montezuma our Prince has ordered us to do, and he asks your pardon that he did not come with us himself, but it is on account of ill-health that he did not do so, and not from want of very good will which he bears towards you."

When our Captain and all of us beheld such pomp and majesty in those chiefs, especially in the nephew of Montezuma, we considered it a matter of the greatest importance, and said among ourselves, if this Cacique bears himself with such dignity, what will the Great Montezuma do?

When Cacamatzin had delivered his speech, Cortés embraced him, and gave many caresses to him and all the other Chieftains, and gave him three stones which are called Margaritas, which have within them many markings of different colours, and to the other Chieftains he gave blue glass beads, and he told them that he thanked them and when he was able he would repay the Lord Montezuma for all the favours which every day he was granting us.

As soon as the speech-making was over, we at once set out, and as the Caciques whom I have spoken about brought many followers with them, and as many people came out to see us from the neighbouring towns, all the roads were full of them.

During the morning, we arrived at a broad Causeway[1] and continued our march towards Iztapalapa, and when we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land and that straight and level Causeway going towards Mexico, we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they tell of in the legend of Amadis, on account of the great towers and cues and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers even

[1] The Causeway of Cuitlahuac separating the lake of Chalco from the lake of Xochimilco.

asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream. It is not to be wondered at that I here write it down in this manner, for there is so much to think over that I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about.

Thus, we arrived near Iztapalapa, to behold the splendour of the other Caciques who came out to meet us, who were the Lord of the town named Cuitlahuac, and the Lord of Culuacan, both of them near relations of Montezuma. And then when we entered the city of Iztapalapa, the appearance of the palaces in which they lodged us! How spacious and well built they were, of beautiful stone work and cedar wood, and the wood of other sweet scented trees, with great rooms and courts, wonderful to behold, covered with awnings of cotton cloth.

When we had looked well at all of this, we went to the orchard and garden, which was such a wonderful thing to see and walk in, that I was never tired of looking at the diversity of the trees, and noting the scent which each one had, and the paths full of roses and flowers, and the many fruit trees and native roses, and the pond of fresh water. There was another thing to observe, that great canoes were able to pass into the garden from the lake through an opening that had been made so that there was no need for their occupants to land. And all was cemented and very splendid with many kinds of stone [monuments] with pictures on them, which gave much to think about. Then the birds of many kinds and breeds which came into the pond. I say again that I stood looking at it and thought that never in the world would there be discovered other lands such as these, for at that time there was no Peru, nor any thought of it. Of all these wonders that I then beheld to-day all is overthrown and lost, nothing left standing.

Let us go on, and I will relate that the Caciques of that town and of Coyoacan brought us a present of gold, worth more than two thousand pesos.

† LXII

Early next day we left Iztapalapa with a large escort of those great Caciques whom I have already mentioned. We proceeded along the Causeway which is here eight paces in width and

runs so straight to the City of Mexico that it does not seem to me to turn either much or little, but, broad as it is, it was so crowded with people that there was hardly room for them all, some of them going to and others returning from Mexico, besides those who had come out to see us, so that we were hardly able to pass by the crowds of them that came; and the towers and cues were full of people as well as the canoes from all parts of the lake. It was not to be wondered at, for they had never before seen horses or men such as we are.

Gazing on such wonderful sights, we did not know what to say, or whether what appeared before us was real, for on one side, on the land, there were great cities, and in the lake ever so many more, and the lake itself was crowded with canoes, and in the Causeway were many bridges at intervals, and in front of us stood the great City of Mexico, and we—we did not even number four hundred soldiers! and we well remembered the words and warnings given us by the people of Huexotzingo and Tlaxcala, and the many other warnings that had been given that we should beware of entering Mexico, where they would kill us, as soon as they had us inside.

Let the curious readers consider whether there is not much to ponder over in this that I am writing. What men have there been in the world who have shown such daring? But let us get on, and march along the Causeway. When we arrived where another small causeway branches off [1] [leading to Coyoacan, which is another city] where there were some buildings like towers, which are their oratories, many more chieftains and Caciques approached clad in very rich mantles, the brilliant liveries of one chieftain differing from those of another, and the causeways were crowded with them. The Great Montezuma had sent these great Caciques in advance to receive us, and when they came before Cortés they bade us welcome in their language, and as a sign of peace, they touched their hands against the ground, and kissed the ground with the hand.

There we halted for a good while, and Cacamatzin, the Lord of Texcoco, and the Lord of Iztapalapa and the Lord of Tacuba and the Lord of Coyoacan went on in advance to meet the Great Montezuma, who was approaching in a rich litter accompanied by other great Lords and Caciques, who owned vassals. When we arrived near to Mexico, where there were some

[1] Acachinango.

other small towers, the Great Montezuma got down from his litter, and those great Caciques supported him with their arms beneath a marvellously rich canopy of green coloured feathers with much gold and silver embroidery and with pearls and chalchihuites suspended from a sort of bordering, which was wonderful to look at. The Great Montezuma was richly attired according to his usage, and he was shod with sandals, the soles were of gold and the upper part adorned with precious stones. The four Chieftains who supported his arms were also richly clothed according to their usage, in garments which were apparently held ready for them on the road to enable them to accompany their prince, for they did not appear in such attire when they came to receive us. Besides these four Chieftains, there were four other great Caciques who supported the canopy over their heads, and many other Lords who walked before the Great Montezuma, sweeping the ground where he would tread and spreading cloths on it, so that he should not tread on the earth. Not one of these Chieftains dared even to think of looking him in the face, but kept their eyes lowered with great reverence, except those four relations, his nephews, who supported him with their arms.

When Cortés was told that the Great Montezuma was approaching, and he saw him coming, he dismounted from his horse, and when he was near Montezuma, they simultaneously paid great reverence to one another. Montezuma bade him welcome and our Cortés replied through Doña Marina wishing him very good health. And it seems to me that Cortés, through Doña Marina, offered him his right hand, and Montezuma did not wish to take it, but he did give his hand to Cortés and then Cortés brought out a necklace which he had ready at hand, made of glass stones, which I have already said are called Margaritas, which have within them many patterns of diverse colours, these were strung on a cord of gold and with musk so that it should have a sweet scent, and he placed it round the neck of the Great Montezuma and when he had so placed it he was going to embrace him, and those great Princes who accompanied Montezuma held back Cortés by the arm so that he should not embrace him, for they considered it an indignity.

Then Cortés through the mouth of Doña Marina told him that now his heart rejoiced at having seen such a great Prince,

and that he took it as a great honour that he had come in person to meet him and had frequently shown him such favour.

Then Montezuma spoke other words of politeness to him, and told two of his nephews who supported his arms, the Lord of Texcoco and the Lord of Coyoacan, to go with us and show us to our quarters, and Montezuma with his other two relations, the Lord of Cuitlahuac and the Lord of Tacuba who accompanied him, returned to the city, and all those grand companies of Caciques and chieftains who had come with him returned in his train. As they turned back after their Prince we stood watching them and observed how they all marched with their eyes fixed on the ground without looking at him, keeping close to the wall, following him with great reverence. Thus space was made for us to enter the streets of Mexico, without being so much crowded. But who could now count the multitude of men and women and boys who were in the streets and on the azoteas, and in canoes on the canals, who had come out to see us. It was indeed wonderful, and, now that I am writing about it, it all comes before my eyes as though it had happened but yesterday. Coming to think it over it seems to be a great mercy that our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to give us grace and courage to dare to enter into such a city; and for the many times He has saved me from danger of death, as will be seen later on, I give Him sincere thanks, and in that He has preserved me to write about it, although I cannot do it as fully as is fitting or the subject needs. Let us make no words about it, for deeds are the best witnesses to what I say here and elsewhere.

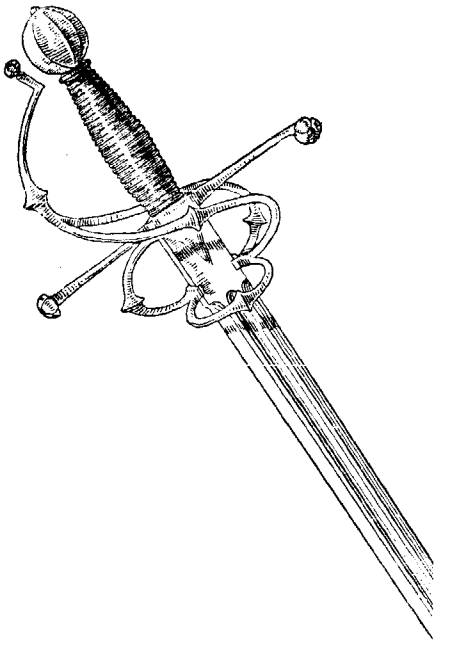
Let us return to our entry to Mexico. They took us to lodge in some large houses, where there were apartments for all of us, for they had belonged to the father of the Great Montezuma, who was named Axayaca, and at that time Montezuma kept there the great oratories for his idols, and a secret chamber where he kept bars and jewels of gold, which was the treasure that he had inherited from his father Axayaca, and he never disturbed it. They took us to lodge in that house, because they called us Teules, and took us for such, so that we should be with the Idols or Teules which were kept there. However, for one reason or another, it was there they took us, where there were great halls and chambers canopied with the cloth of the country for our Captain, and for every one of us beds of matting

with canopies above, and no better bed is given, however great the chief may be, for they are not used. And all these palaces were coated with shining cement and swept and garlanded.

As soon as we arrived and entered into the great court, the Great Montezuma took our Captain by the hand, for he was there awaiting him, and led him to the apartment and saloon where he was to lodge, which was very richly adorned according to their usage, and he had at hand a very rich necklace made of golden crabs, a marvellous piece of work, and Montezuma himself placed it round the neck of our Captain Cortés, and greatly astonished his [own] Captains by the great honour that he was bestowing on him. When the necklace had been fastened, Cortés thanked Montezuma through our interpreters, and Montezuma replied—"Malinche, you and your brethren are in your own house, rest awhile," and then he went to his palaces, which were not far away, and we divided our lodgings by companies, and placed the artillery pointing in a convenient direction, and the order which we had to keep was clearly explained to us, and that we were to be much on the alert, both the cavalry and all of us soldiers. A sumptuous dinner was provided for us according to their use and custom, and we ate it at once. So this was our lucky and daring entry into the great city of Tenochtitlan Mexico on the 8th day of November the year of our Saviour Jesus Christ, 1519.

Thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for it all. And if I have not said anything that I ought to have said, may your honours pardon me, for I do not know now even at the present time how better to express it.

Let us leave this talk and go back to our story of what else happened to us, which I will go on to relate.



V

The Stay in Mexico

Introductory Notes

THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

The Valley of Mexico is a level plain about 7,244 feet above the sea, completely surrounded by mountains which leave no exit for the escape of the water from a fairly abundant rainfall, and as a consequence the whole valley at one period must have formed one vast lake, whose volume was limited only by soakage and the very rapid evaporation due to a tropical sun. At the time of the Conquest the area of the surface of the lakes was (very roughly) 442 square miles.

The mountains surrounding the valley may be roughly divided into three ranges. To the East the Sierra Nevada, with the great peaks of Popocatepetl (17,887 ft.) and Ixtaccihuatl (17,342 ft.) capped with perpetual snow, and the three lower peaks to the North, Papayo, Telapon and Tlaloc; to the South lies the great volcanic barrier of Ajusco, to the West the range of Las Cruces, and to the North that of Pachuca.

Although the lakes have received different names, the water surface must have been continuous until separated by the earthworks of the Indians. Starting from the North the lakes are named Zumpango, Xaltocan, Texcoco, Xochimilco and Chalco. All these lakes were very shallow.

The site of the City was originally, in all probability, two reed-covered mud banks or islands, which may have been cultivated in much the same manner as were the *chinampas* or floating gardens at the time of the Conquest, or as the chinampas of Xochimilco are at the present day, and these two islands became respectively the sites of the towns of Tlatelolco and Tenochtitlan, and the space between them was eventually reduced to a rather broad canal.

The chinampas were formed by heaping up the soft mud from the lake