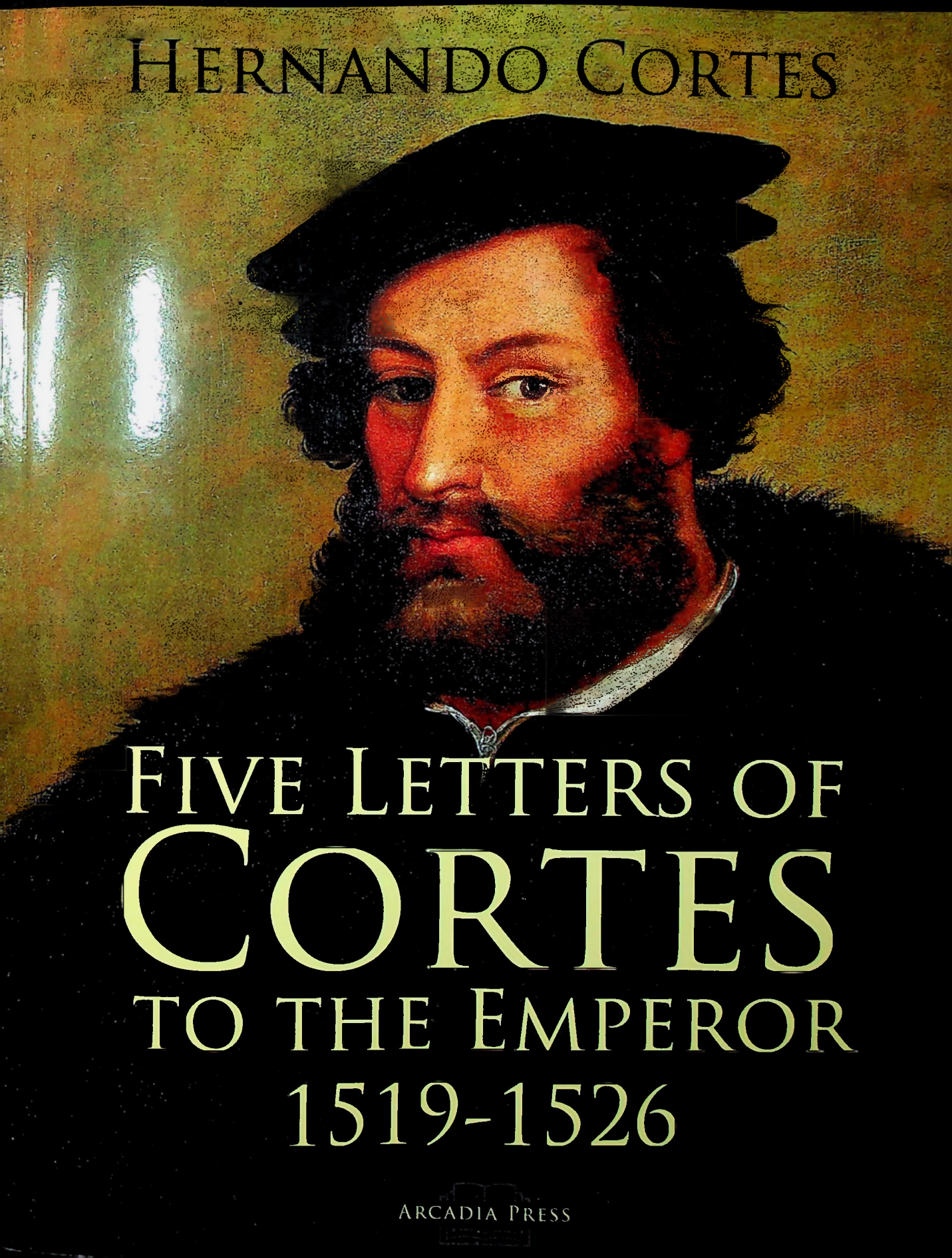


HERNANDO CORTES

A detailed oil painting of Hernando Cortes, showing him from the chest up. He has a full, dark beard and mustache, and is wearing a black cap and a dark, fur-lined garment. The background is a textured, golden-brown color.

FIVE LETTERS OF
CORTES
TO THE EMPEROR
1519-1526

ARCADIA PRESS

LETTERS OF CORTES

The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes to the
Emperor Charles V.

Translated, and Edited, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes
Compiled from Original Sources
Francis Augustus MacNutt

Letters of Cortes
(1908)

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PREFACE

THE narrative contained in the Letters of Fernando Cortes is the first description ever written of the most highly developed civilisation on the continent of North America at the date of its discovery. Astronomical science has brought the existence of planets within common knowledge, and our imagination is already so familiar with the possibility of a Martian population, that a discovery positively demonstrating such a fact would be received as confirmatory rather than surprising. By the discoveries of Christopher Columbus, the civilisations of two worlds as absolutely strange to one another as different planets were brought into sudden contact productive of conflict and that conflict was naturally fiercest where the alien invaders were confronted by the best organised effort to contest their advance; hence the period of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, which is depicted by Cortes in these letters to Charles V. was prolific in deeds the most striking to the imagination of any that modern history records. No element of drama was absent, for the most heroic qualities, as well as the blackest passions of the human heart, were engaged on both sides in a life-and-death struggle, which culminated in an appalling race-tragedy, replete with epic horror. The piratical complexion of the Conqueror's initial movements forced him to wrest justification from success, and this was only made possible by the exercise of his indomitable courage, his relentless and unscrupulous diplomacy, and by that strange favour, which capricious Fortune sometimes destines as a reward for sheer audacity.

Fortunate for posterity was the anxious need of Cortes to win royal approval for his lawless courses, for from it sprang the inspiration which prompted him to pen his descriptions of the Aztec civilisation at the zenith of its splendour and to report in detail to his sovereign the progress of his conquest.

Although historians have from the beginning recognised the superlative value of these letters and several editions of them are accessible to students familiar with the Spanish language, it has been left to my modest labours to provide an English translation of the complete series of *Relaciones*. The translation of sixteenth century Spanish into readable, modern English is not devoid of difficulty, though greater demands are made on the translator's patience and ingenuity than on his erudition.

Cortes wrote with soldier-like terseness, but his powers of observation were acute and accurate; hence his descriptions are both lucid and striking. His vocabulary was very limited, and as he was unfamiliar with the classical and scholastic styles of composition then in vogue amongst men of letters, his plain tale is unadorned with the digressions into philosophy and theology and the lengthy citations from scripture and the classics, which abound in the more polished writings of his times. I suspect, moreover, that he had in mind to capture the fancy of the royal youth to whom he wrote, and, in days when novels were not, and court life must have weighed on a monarch of seventeen, still too young to be engrossed either in the delusive pleasures of private dissipation or in the absorbing intrigues of public ambition, many of his pages may have furnished the youthful sovereign with diverting reading in his leisure hours.

I have aimed rather to preserve accuracy and the characteristics of Cortes's original style than to produce a more finished piece of English literature, by excessive rearrangement and the employment of a richer vocabulary than he commanded.

The subjects touched upon in the Letters are so little known to the general reader (though they constantly engage the attention of able specialists) that I have supplied notes to accompany the text, which are intended to explain and complete the narrative of Cortes. These notes deal with various and very large subjects, on some of which historical authorities are not in agreement, while on many others of the

greatest interest and importance the last word has not yet been spoken. The statements I have made and the opinions I have expressed on these debatable questions are based upon the results of my researches in the works cited in the Bibliographical Note preceding the Letters: their scope is explanatory and complementary — not controversial.

Since the days when those illustrious pioneers in this particular field of historical research, Washington Irving and William H. Prescott laboured with results that have won them enduring fame, the classification of the vast and scattered archives of Spain has gone steadily forward, with the result that the worker of to-day finds a mass of valuable material easily accessible that had formerly to be sought at great cost of time, labour, and expense in the collections of state papers and correspondence which were not infrequently in a condition of disheartening and baffling confusion. The collections of unedited documents published by Rivadeneira under the title of *Biblioteca de Autares Espanoles*, that of Navarrete published in Madrid in 1842, the *Biblioteca Occidental oi Barcia*, the voluminous French translations of Ternaux-Compans, and finally the indefatigable labours of Senor Garcia Icazbalceta and Don Pascual Gayangos have cleared the modern student's path of formidable difficulties.

Although I am the fortunate possessor of a number of these valuable collections, I have likewise had to make researches in libraries and collections, both public and private, in Mexico, Spain, Italy, and England, in the course of which I have met with courteous and helpful encouragement from many to whom my sense of obligation is profound; but primarily I owe the pleasure and interest which the preparation of this work has afforded me to the late Abbe Augustin Fischer, sometime chaplain to the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, under whose cultured guidance it was my privilege to begin my studies in Spanish-American history. The death of my delightful and accomplished mentor, after a life of great vicissitudes, deprives me of one of the chief satisfactions which the publication of this work would otherwise have afforded me, but it does not lessen my obligation to pay a tribute of grateful thanks to his memory.

Francis A. MacNutt.
Palazzo Pamphili,
Rome, October, 1907.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS

FERNANDO CORTES, son of Martin Cortes y Monroy and of Catalina Pizarro Altamirano, his wife, was born in 1485 at Medellin, an unimportant town in Estremadura. The house in which he first saw the light stood in the Calle de la Feria until it was destroyed by the French in the campaign of 1809. (*Alaman, Dissertazioni sulla Storia del Messico; Dissert. V.*) Both his father's and his mother's families were of good descent, and respected, though poor. Martin Cortes had been a captain of fifty light cavalry, and he is further described by the anonymous author of *De Rebus Gestis* as "*pietate tamen et religione toto vitae tempore clarus,*" while to his wife the same writer gives the highest praise, saying, "*Caterina namque probitate pudicitia et in conjugem amore nulli cetatis suae femince cessit.*" Las Casas also states that he had known Martin Cortes in a poor and humble condition, but that he was a *Cristiano viejo*, and said to be a gentleman. Later when the great fame of Cortes had converted him into an ancestor of whom the most illustrious family might be proud, ingenious genealogists sought to prove him also the descendant of very noble, and even royal, forefathers; but these unconvincing efforts must seem somewhat unimportant in the case of one whose name and place in history were won by his own achievements, unaided by the support either of influential family or superior fortune.

During his early childhood his health was so frail that he was several times thought to be at death's door. It seemed, therefore, all important to provide him with a powerful patron saint, who was finally chosen by drawing lots among the twelve apostles, the choice thus falling upon St. Peter, to whom Cortes rendered profound devotion during all his life and to whose protection he constantly attributed his victories.

When their son was fourteen years old, his parents sent him to the University of Salamanca to prepare himself for the practice of law, which was held in high esteem and opened a promising career to a young man of ability. During the two years he remained there, he lodged in the house of his paternal aunt, Inez de Paz, who was married to one Francisco Nunez Valera. This brief course of study was sufficient to prove that he was in no way fitted for the profession his parents had chosen for him, so in 1501 he caused them the liveliest chagrin by returning to Medellin.

An idle year of rather disorderly life followed. The boy's taste was for arms and adventures, and, after hovering between the rival attractions of the Italian campaign under Gonsalvo de Cordoba, and those of service with Don Nicolas de Ovando, the recently appointed Governor of Hispaniola, he finally decided to join the latter, who was preparing to sail, with an important fleet of thirty ships, fitted out at the royal expense, to take possession of his office. In this he was urged, probably, by the consideration that the Governor was a family friend, who might be counted upon to advance his interests. Just before sailing, however, Cortes had the mishap of falling from a wall which he was scaling to keep an appointment with a lady, an accident which might have ended fatally for him but for the intervention of an old woman who, attracted by the noise of his fall at her very door, arrived just in time to prevent her son-in-law from

running him through the body as he lay prostrate. As it was, his bruises laid him up until after Ovando's fleet had sailed, and, upon his recovery, he went to Valencia with the intention of embarking for Italy to join the forces of the great Captain. What defeated his purpose is not recorded, but, upon his return to Medellin about a year later, his parents consented to his following Ovando and provided him with the money for his journey. He was thus enabled to sail from San Lucar de Barameda in 1504 on the trading vessel of one Alonzo Quintero of Palos, bound with four others carrying merchandise to the Indies.

The little fleet touched first at the Canaries which was the usual route. Alonzo Quintero was a shifty fellow, who, twice on the voyage, sought to overreach his brother captains by detaching himself from the fleet in the hope of making port ahead of them and disposing of his cargo to advantage and without their competition. Both times, however, untoward weather overtook him, and, the second time, his pilot, Francisco Nino, lost his bearings, and the ship, in a bad condition, short of water and provisions was like to be lost. At dawn on Good Friday a dove was seen perching on the rigging, and, by following the flight of the bird of good omen, land was sighted by Cristobal Zorno on Easter Day, and four days later, the weather-beaten craft reached port where the others of the fleet had long since arrived and disposed of their goods.

Seekers after signs and wonders were not slow to claim the appearance of this dove to guide Quintero's ship at such a critical moment as evidence of the celestial protection and miraculous intervention of providence in the direction of Cortes's fortunes, of which numerous other similar examples are cited, and to which he himself was always ready to ascribe his success; and, in the early chronicle, *De Rebus Gestis* of authoritative but unknown authorship, it is stated that, even at the time of this occurrence, there were those present who claimed to recognise the Holy Ghost in the white-winged pilot sent to rescue the hapless ship. — "*Alius, Sanctum esse Spiritum, qui in illius alitis specie, ut maestos et afflictos soLarctiir, venire erat dignatus.*"

The Governor being absent, his secretary, Medina, who already knew Cortes, met him upon his landing, and gave him hospitality in his house, acquainting him with the condition of things in the island, and advising him to settle near the town. To this Cortes is said to have replied that he had come to seek gold rather than to till the ground. During the war against Queen Anacoana of Hayti, which followed close upon his arrival, the horrors of which have been described first by Las Casas and later by Washington Irving, Cortes gave a very good account of himself, and upon the establishment of peace he received a grant of good land and a *repartimiento* of Indians at Daiguao where he was likewise appointed notary of the newly founded town of Azua. (*Gomara, Cronica. Cap. III; De Rebus Gestis*). During the five or six ensuing years, his life was that of a planter, and was barren of any salient event, though Bernal Diaz says that he was involved in several affairs about women which led to quarrels and duels, in one of which he was wounded in the lip. He was prevented by an opportune illness from joining the luckless expedition of Alonso de Ojedo and Diego de Nicuesa to Darien. Don Nicolas de Ovando was succeeded in the office of Governor by Don Diego Columbus, who in 1511 fitted out an expedition for the conquest of Cuba, which he placed under the command of Don Diego Velasquez, and in which Cortes volunteered.

His conduct at this time advanced his interests in every respect, for his genial character and lively conversation soon made him a favourite with his companions in arms, while his bravery and address acquired him the best reputation as a soldier and attracted the attention of his commander. This conquest afforded indeed but scanty opportunity either to the commander or the soldiers of the invading force to display their prowess, for the pacific natives were hunted through the island like timorous hares to yield after the feeblest resistance only. Thus they were brought into subjection with the barest semblance of serious military operations. Yet such mild warfare and the equally nerveless conflicts in the island of Hispaniola (San Domingo) supplied Cortes with the only training in campaigning he ever received. The skill he later displayed in military tactics, and his masterly generalship, were due to his latent genius, which sprang fully fledged into consciousness in response to the first demand made upon it, furnishing him liberally with an equipment for conquest which less gifted commanders must wrest from experience.

He received in recognition of his services in Cuba, an encomienda of Indians at Manicaro where he settled, becoming a citizen of Santiago. Gomara states that he was successful in the management of his estate, and was the first of the colonists to introduce certain breeds of sheep and cattle into the island. He had as his partner at Manicaro, Juan Xuarez.

Here may be said to close the first period of the life of Cortes, which might have been that of any spirited young Spaniard of his class and times, fretting within the restrictions of a provincial town, averse to the plodding career offered him by his parents, and finally cutting loose and winning his place in a new life in the colonies, by force of valour in feats of arms, and his ability in managing affairs.

CHAPTER II.

COLONIAL LIFE IN CUBA

INFORMATION concerning the events of the first years of the residence of Cortes in the island of Cuba is scanty, but it may be assumed that he attended to his interests, which prospered, and enjoyed considerable popularity among his fellow-colonists as well as the favour of the Governor, Diego Velasquez, who extended a protecting friendship to him such as an older man of high rank might naturally feel for one of the most promising young men among his colonists. Mr. George Folsom, in the Introduction to his English translation of the *Despatches of Hernando Cortes* (New York, 1843), says that Velasquez was brother-in-law to Cortes, having married one of the Xuarez sisters. I have found no authority for this assertion, and, a few pages farther on, the same writer describes Velasquez as seeking to arrange a marriage for himself with a sister of the Bishop of Burgos. This alleged relationship between the two through their marriages is apocryphal.

As the changes which the relations between these two men underwent, worked powerfully and far upon the course of events in the New World, it is necessary before going further to consider somewhat the character of Diego Velasquez, and the causes which brought about the breach in their friendship. Oviedo states that Velasquez was of noble family, and, though arriving in the Indies poor, had there accumulated an ample fortune. His military experience had been gained by seventeen years of service in European wars. The anonymous author of *De Rebus Gestis* confirms these points adding, "He was covetous of glory and somewhat more so of money." The latter also represents that an intimate friendship existed during several years between the two in Hispaniola, and that Velasquez had insisted on Cortes's joining his expedition, to which the latter counselled by friendship and his longing for adventures, readily consented. Velasquez had the habit of command, which as Governor of Cuba he exercised with the scarcely restricted and arbitrary freedom which his own temperament dictated, and the usage amongst Spanish colonial governors sanctioned. With all this he was amiable, accessible, and fond of dispensing favours. Prescott estimates him as one of those captious persons who "when things do not go exactly to their taste, shift the responsibility from their own shoulders where it should lie to those of others," and Herrera describes him as "ungenerous, credulous, and suspicious!" Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, who knew him personally in Cuba gives more place to his virtues in the description he has left of him, than do some others; while admitting that he was quick to resent a liberty, jealous of his dignity, easily taking offence, he adds that he was not vindictive nor slow to forgive. As an administrator of the affairs of the island he showed himself active and capable, encouraging immigration, assisting the colonists, and extending the zone of Spanish influence. He founded many towns, some of which still bear the names he gave them, notably Havana, Puerto del Principe, Matanzas, Trinidad, and Santiago where he had his seat of government. It appears therefore that Diego Velasquez was a man whose rather petty defects of character did not usually interfere with his public conduct and who discharged his official duties satisfactorily to the colonists and as a faithful representative of the crown. He was, however, unquestionably avaricious, egotistical, and

ambitious; withal no easy master to serve. Commenting on the reproaches he afterwards heaped upon Cortes for his ingratitude towards him, Oviedo says that it was no whit worse than his own had been towards his benefactor, Diego Columbus, and hence it was "measure for measure." His desire to explore and conquer by deputy, and to win distinction vicariously, was defeated by the impossibility of finding men possessed of the required ability to undertake successfully such ventures, combined with sufficient docility to surrender to him the glory and profits resulting from them.

The two fundamental versions of the historic quarrel between Cortes and Velasquez are contradictory. One is furnished by Gomara, the other by Las Casas, and, upon one or the other, later historians have based their accounts. The version of Las Casas is that of an eye-witness, for he was present in Cuba at the time, and knew both men well. He stood high in the favour of the Governor, but, even allowing something for the bias of personal friendship and possibly something more for the influence of Velasquez's position, his acknowledged integrity excludes the possibility of a conscious misstatement of facts, and hence the greatest weight attaches to his testimony. Gomara, on the other hand, was never in Cuba in his life and only began his *Cronica de la Conquista* some twenty-five years or more after the events of which he wrote, under the inspiration and direction of Cortes, then Marques del Valle, whose chaplain he had shortly before become.

Gomara's chronicle was somewhat of the nature of an apologia, and it no sooner appeared than its accuracy and veracity were impugned by participants in the events he described; notably by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, whose work was undertaken for the declared purpose of correcting Gomara, and was called with emphasis the "True History" of the conquest. Gomara's account is briefly as follows: Cortes at that time paid court to Catalina Xuarez la Marcaida, one of the poor but beautiful sisters of his partner in Manicaro, Juan Xuarez, and won such favours from the lady as entitled her to exact the fulfilment of a promise of marriage which she declared he had made her, but with which he refused to comply. The Xuarez family was from Granada and came originally in the suite of Dona Maria de Toledo, wife of the Viceroy Don Diego Columbus to Hispaniola, where it was hoped the four girls whose only dowry was their beauty might make good marriages among the rich planters. This hope was not realised in San Domingo and they removed to Cuba. Catalina, the eldest, was the most beautiful of all and had many admirers, amongst whom her preference fell upon Cortes, who was ever ready for gallant adventures. The matter was brought before the Governor who summoned Cortes *ad audiendum verbum*, influenced in Catalina's favour it was said, by one of her sisters to whose charms he himself was not indifferent. But, in spite of official pressure, Cortes refused to make the reparation exacted of him. Such high words followed that the Governor ordered him to be imprisoned in the fortress under the charge of the alcalde Cristobal de Lagos. His imprisonment was brief, for he managed to escape, carrying off the sword and buckler of his gaoler, and took sanctuary in a church, from which neither the promises nor the threats of Velasquez could beguile him. One day, however, when he unwarily showed himself before the church door, the *alguacil* Juan Escudero seized him from behind, and, aided by others, carried him on board a ship lying in the harbour. Cortes feared this foreshadowed transportation, and, setting his wits to work, he contrived to escape a second time, dressed in the clothes of a servant who attended him. He let himself down into a small skiff and pulled for the shore, but the strength of the current at that point, where the waters of the Macaguanigua River flow into the sea, was such that his frail craft capsized, and he reached the shore swimming, with certain valuable papers tied in a packet on the top of his head. He then betook himself to Juan Xuarez, from whom he procured clothes and arms, and again took sanctuary in the church. These repeated escapes suggest sympathetic collusion on the part of his gaolers.

Velasquez professed to be won over by such bravery and resource, and sent mutual friends to make peace. But Cortes, although he married Catalina, refused the Governor's overtures and would not even speak to him, until, some Indian troubles breaking out, and Velasquez being at his headquarters outside the town, he somewhat alarmed the Governor by suddenly appearing before him late one night, fully armed, saying that he had come to make peace and to offer his services. They shook hands and spent a long time in conversation together, and slept that night in the same bed, where they were found next

morning by Diego de Orellana who came to announce to the Governor that Cortes had fled from the church. This version is accepted by the author of *De Rebtis Gestis* without reservation; Solis, while omitting the details, also dwells upon the intimate friendship existing between the two men.

Las Casas tells a different tale, in which no mention is made of the refusal to marry Catalina Xuarez as having any part in the quarrel, but asserts rather that Cortes was secretary to Velasquez, and that the news of the arrival of certain appellate judges in Hispaniola having reached Cuba, all the malcontents in the colony, and those disaffected towards Velasquez, began secretly to collect material on which to base accusations against him, and that Cortes, acting with them, had been chosen to carry this information to the judges. The Governor was informed of the plot, and arrested Cortes in the act of embarking, with the incriminating papers in his possession, and would have ordered him to be hanged on the spot but for the intervention of his friends who pleaded for him. A memorial presented to the King on behalf of Velasquez by his chaplain Benito Martinez enumerates this, amongst other grievances of the Governor, and fully confirms the statement of Las Casas on this point. Las Casas admits the story of the imprisonment, the escape, and the sanctuary in the church, but he scouts the idea of any such reconciliation as Gomara describes, and says that the Governor, although he pardoned him, would not have him back as secretary, adding, "I saw Cortes in those days so small and humble that he would have craved the notice of the meanest servant of Velasquez."

Las Casas reminds his readers that Gomara wrote of things about which he knew only what Cortes and his adherents told him, and at a time when Cortes, who had risen from small beginnings to great rank and fame, was anxious to have his former humble condition forgotten. It should be borne in mind that Las Casas never ceased to regard Cortes as other than an exceptionally bold and lucky adventurer, nor did he ever miss an opportunity of recalling his humble origin and irregular beginnings. The wrath of Velasquez was short lived, for he afterwards made Cortes, alcalde, and stood godfather to one of his children. During the succeeding years the fortunes of Cortes improved, and he amassed a capital of some three thousand *castellanos*, of which Las Casas remarks "God will have kept a better account than I of the lives it cost." Though married reluctantly, he seems to have been contented, and he described himself to the bishop as just as happy with Catalina as though she were the daughter of a duchess (Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. iii, cap. xxvii.).

Don Manuel Orozco y Berra unhesitatingly accepts the version of Las Casas, and Prescott inclines also to the opinion that Gomara's account is improbable. Indeed he seeks to prove too much, and his description of the reconciliation is overcharged, for the Governor was more than dignified — he was pompous, and something of a martinet in his ideas of discipline, being so tenacious of etiquette that no one, not even the first citizens in the colony sat uninvited in his presence. Nor had he ever stood in relations of equal comradeship to Cortes, however friendly he may have been, hence it is not to be imagined that he humbled himself to offer a reconciliation, being first rebuffed by his subordinate, and afterwards, when it suited the latter to present himself before him, that he celebrated the resumption of friendly relations with such demonstrations of affection and intimacy as Gomara describes. If the Gomara version is the true one, and the quarrel had no other origin than the hot words exchanged concerning Cortes's conduct in a private affair which, strictly speaking, was no concern of the Governor's, Velasquez might easily have forgiven and forgotten, especially as the lady's honour was saved, if but tardily. But if the statement of Las Casas is correct, and the Governor discovered his secretary in the act of plotting with his enemies for his overthrow, then Diego Velasquez must be considered to have been the most fatuous and frivolous of men. Magnanimity might prompt forgiveness of even such treachery, and Velasquez might choose to forget the falsity of a man whose enmity he could afford to ignore or despise, but to afterwards confide the most important venture of his life to such a one was a blunder, than which it would be difficult to imagine a greater. Yet Diego Velasquez's vast capacity for blundering enabled him even to do this.

Gold was the magnet which drew the Spanish adventurers to the New World, and though it had nowhere been found either so easily or so plentifully as they expected, enough had been discovered to

whet their appetites for more. They lived in the midst of a world of mysterious possibilities which might any day by a lucky discovery become realities. One navigator after another sailed the seas of unknown limits, discovered islands, landed on strange coasts, beheld primeval forests and lofty mountain-peaks clothed with untrodden snows, and, returning to the settlements on the islands, they brought back more or less accurate accounts of lands where gold and pearls were plentiful, peopled by natives eager to exchange these treasures for Spanish trinkets, at the same time producing enough specimens of precious metal to vouch for the truth of their descriptions. Rich colonists, as well as merchants in Cadiz and Seville, were easily found to risk funds in fitting out expeditions for the dual purpose of exploration and trade, while numberless were the skilful pilots, daring sailors, and bold soldiers of fortune ready to enlist for such service. After conquering Puerto Rico, Juan Ponce de Leon cruised among the Lucayan Islands, and in 1512, discovered the coast which he named Florida, where, instead of the fountain of eternal youth he sought, he met his death; in 1513, Balboa first beheld the Pacific Ocean from the mountain ridge on the isthmus of Darien; in 1515 Juan Diaz de Solis discovered the mouth of the river Plate.

In 1517 Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, a rich planter of Cuba, organised and equipped a fleet of three vessels, manned in part by some of the survivors of the first colony at Darien, and of which he himself took command. The principal object of this expedition was to capture Indians to be sold as slaves in Cuba, and the Governor furnished one ship on condition that he should be reimbursed in slaves (Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. i.). The first land discovered was a small island to which the name of *Las Mugerres* (Women's Island) was given, because of the images of female deities which they found in the temple there. This island lies off the extreme point of Yucatan, and from it the Spaniards saw what seemed to them a large and important city with many towers and lofty buildings, to which they gave the fanciful name of Grand Cairo. They discovered the island of Cozumel, and, in a battle with the Indians at Catoche, they captured two natives who afterwards became Christians, baptised under the names of Julian and Melchor, and rendered valuable services as interpreters. Besides the coast of Yucatan, the most interesting discovery made by this expedition was the mysterious crosses which they found the Indians venerating at Cozumel. Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba died a few days after his arrival in Cuba from the wounds he had received at Catoche, and the other members of the expedition made their way back to Santiago where the spoils taken from the temples, the small quantity of gold, the two strange Indians, and most of all the marvellous tales of the men served to excite the eager cupidity of the colonists, ever ready to believe that Eldorado was found. The news spread throughout the islands, and even reached Spain and Flanders, where the young King Charles the First (the Emperor Charles V.), then was.

Diego Velasquez promptly organised an expedition to follow up these discoveries, and establish trading relations with the natives, which he placed under the command of his kinsman, Juan de Grijalba. It was composed of four ships, the *San Sebastian*, *La Trinidad*, *Santiago*, and *Santa Maria*. The captains under Grijalba were Francisco de Avila, Pedro de Alvarado, and Francisco de Montejo (Bernal Diaz, cap. viii; Oviedo, *Sumario*, lib. xvii., cap. viii., Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, vol. iv., cap. i). This fleet set sail on May 1, 1518, and after a fair voyage reached the island of Cozumel on May 3rd (*Itinerario de larmata del Re Cattolico apud Icazbalceta*, *Documentos Ineditos*, vol. i.).

Grijalba visited several points along the coast, giving Spanish names to various bays, islands, rivers, and towns. The Tabasco River, of which the correct Indian name seems to have been *Tabzcoob*, received the name of Grijalba. On arriving at the river which they named Banderas, because of the numerous Indians carrying white flags whom they saw along the coast, they first heard of the existence of Montezuma, of whom these people were vassals, and by whom they had been ordered to keep a look out for the possible return of the white men, whose former visit to Cozumel had been reported to the Emperor. On the 17th of June, a landing was made on a small island, where the Spaniards first discovered proofs that human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised by the natives, for they found there a blood-stained idol, human heads, members, and whole bodies, with the breasts cut open and the hearts gone. They named the island *Isla de los Sacrificios* (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. xiv.).

From the island which they named *San Juan de Ulua* (from the word *Culua* which they imperfectly caught from the natives), Grijalba sent Pedro de Alvarado on June 24th, with the *San Sebastian* to carry the results of his trading operations, and an account of his discoveries to Diego Velasquez, and to ask for an authorisation to colonise which had not been given in his original instructions, but which the members of the expedition exacted should now be granted (Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. iii., cap. cxii.).

Diego Velasquez had meanwhile felt some impatience, which gradually became alarm at hearing nothing from his expedition, so he sent Cristobal de Olid with a ship to look for it. Olid landed also at Cozumel, and took formal possession by right, as he supposed, of discovery. After coasting about for some time, and finding no traces of Grijalba, and having been obliged to cut his cables in a storm which had lost him his anchors, he returned to Cuba to augment the uneasiness of the Governor. At this juncture, however, Alvarado arrived with the treasure and Grijalba's report, which threw the Governor into an ecstasy of hope, and plunged all the colony into the greatest excitement. Without waiting for more news, Velasquez set about preparing another expedition, and sent Juan de Saucedo to Hispaniola to solicit from the Jeronymite Fathers the necessary authority for his undertaking, whose objects it was stated were to look for Grijalba's lost armada, which might be in danger, to seek for Cristobal de Olid (notwithstanding he was already safely returned), and to rescue six Spanish captives who were said to be prisoners of a cacique in Yucatan. On October 5th, Grijalba arrived in Cuba with his ships, and was coldly received by the Governor, who professed himself much disappointed at the meagre results of the voyage, and criticised the captain severely for not having yielded to his companions' wishes to found a settlement on the newly discovered coast, despite his own instructions to the contrary.

Several names were under consideration for the commandership of the new armada but one after another was excluded, and the Governor's final choice fixed upon Fernando Cortes (Las Casas, lib. iii., cap. civ.; Bernal Diaz, cap. xix.).

This selection was attributed to the influence of Amador de Lares, a royal official of astute character who exercised a certain ascendancy over Velasquez, and of Andres de Duero, the Governor's private secretary, both of whom Cortes had induced to present his name and secure his appointment, by promises of a generous share of the treasures to be discovered. Since both Grijalba and Olid were safely back in Cuba, the only one of the three reasons first advanced for this expedition which remained was the rescue of the Christian captives in Yucatan, and, although Velasquez had severely censured Grijalba for not establishing a colony or trading post somewhere, he also omitted this authorisation in his instructions to Cortes. These instructions are dated October 23, 1518, and consist of thirty items of minute and tedious directions and counsels, covering every imaginable emergency. They are quoted in full in the *Documentos Ineditos del Archivo de Indias* in pages 59-79, inclusive, in the fourth volume of Orozco y Berra. The document opens by stating that the glory of God and the spread of the faith being the chief objects of the undertaking, only God-fearing and loyal men should be allowed to compose it; swearing and blasphemy against God, the blessed Virgin, and the saints are provided against by the severest penalties; the men are not to take concubines with them nor to give scandal by communication with native women; nor is gambling to be permitted in any form, dice being forbidden on board the ships. The exhaustive instructions concerning exploration and trading contain no mention of any authorisation to colonise, but very full powers are granted the commander to cover unforeseen cases.

Cortes threw himself heart and soul into the new enterprise which offered him exactly the opportunity in search of which he had come to the Indies fourteen years before. The mutual recriminations, afterwards indulged in, so obscure the facts that it is difficult to discover exactly what share of the expense of the equipment was borne by each, but of Cortes it must be said that he staked everything he possessed or could procure on the venture, even raising loans by mortgages on his property. Bernal Diaz states that the amount he expended was four thousand dollars in gold, besides supplying many provisions. In the sworn statement of Puertocarrero made in La Coruna, April, 1520, the witness said that Cortes had paid two thirds of the total costs. Gomara describes Velasquez as stingy and timid, wishing to fit out the armada with the least possible risk to himself, and that he proposed to halve the cost.

The appointment of Cortes to such an important command did not fail to arouse jealousies on the part of some, and the increased consequence which he gave himself in his dress, manners, and way of living served to stimulate these sentiments, so that hardly had the work of organisation got fairly under way, when these mischief makers adroitly began to work on the suspicious spirit of Velasquez. A dwarf, who played court jester in the Governor's household, was inspired to make oracular jokes in which thinly veiled warnings of what was to be expected from Cortes's over-masterful spirit, once he was free from control and in command of such an armada, were conveyed to Velasquez; these double barbed jests did not fail of their purpose, so that his distrust finally completely mastered his reason, and pushed him to the incredible folly of deciding to revoke Cortes's appointment as commander, and substitute one Vasco Porcallo a native of Caceres. This decision he made known to Lares and Duero, the very men through whom Cortes had negotiated to obtain his place, and they hastened to warn their protege of the Governor's intention. To accept the humiliation, the public ridicule, to say nothing of the financial ruin into which the revocation of his appointment almost on the eve of sailing would have plunged him, was an alternative which never could have been for a moment considered by Cortes, who immediately took the one step essential to his salvation, which was to hasten his preparations, and, by unflagging efforts, to get his provisions and men on board that same day, and stand down the bay with all his ships during the night. He even seized the entire meat supply of the town for which he paid with a gold chain he wore. The accounts of the manner of the departure of the fleet also conflict. It has been represented as a veritable flight, but Bernal Diaz avers that, although he got everything ready very quickly and hastened the date of sailing, Cortes went with a number of others, and took formal leave of the Governor with embraces and mutual good wishes, and that after he had heard mass, Diego Velasquez came down to the port to see the armada off. Las Casas however says that Velasquez only heard very early in the morning (from the butcher probably), that the preparations had been so rapidly pushed forward, and that rising from bed he made haste to the port accompanied by all the citizens in a state of great wonder and excitement. As soon as the Governor appeared, Cortes approached within a bow-shot of the shore in a boat full of his friends, all fully armed, and, in reply to the Governor's upbraidings and reproaches for such unseemly haste in his leave-taking, replied that, "some things were better done first and thought about afterwards and this was one of them"; after which bit of exculpating philosophy he returned to his ship, and the armada sailed away. Although Gomara, in whom we hear Cortes himself, agrees essentially with Las Casas in thus describing the departure, the story of the dialogue between Cortes in the midst of a boat-load of armed friends and Velasquez, helpless on the quay, surrounded by excited colonists, savours more of fiction than of fact. The simple and natural version of Bernal Diaz is more in consonance with Cortes's character, and he doubtless exercised scrupulous care to avoid provoking the testy Governor. Aware of the intrigues against him and the uncertainty of his position, his safety lay in pushing forward his preparations with unostentatious haste, masking his determination under an astute display of increased deference towards his suspicious superior. Although Cortes had evidently secured his captains, and could count on his crews, the moment for an act of open defiance was not yet, nor did Velasquez, in a letter dated November 17, 1519, to the *licenciate* Figueroa which was to be delivered to Charles V., allege any such, though he would hardly have failed to make the most of each item in his arraignment of his rebellious lieutenant. Stopping at Macaca, Trinidad, and Havana, he forcibly seized stores at these places, and also from ships which he stopped, sometimes paying for them, and sometimes giving receipts and promises. Everywhere he increased his armament, and enlisted more men.

The Governor's uneasy suspicions augmented after the sailing of the fleet, being also aggravated by the acts of the members of his household who were jealous of the sudden rise in Cortes's fortunes, and possibly also honestly distrustful of the signs of independence he had already manifested. In the work of fretting Velasquez, a half foolish astrologer was called in, who delivered oracular warnings, and imputed to Cortes schemes of revenge for past wrongs, (referring to his imprisonment by the Governor's orders), and forecasting treachery. These representations harmonised but too well with Velasquez's own fears, and easily prevailed upon him to try to recall his attainted lieutenant by sending decisive orders to his brother-

in-law, Francisco Verdugo, alcalde mayor of Trinidad, to assume command of the fleet until Vasco Porcallo, who had been appointed successor to Cortes should arrive. For greater security, he repeated these instructions to Diego de Ordaz, Francisco de Morla, and others on whose loyalty to himself the hapless Governor thought he could count. Nobody, however, undertook to carry out the orders to displace and imprison Cortes, whose faculty for making friends was such that he had already won overall those on whom Velasquez relied, especially Ordaz and Verdugo. The very messengers who brought the official orders to degrade and imprison him went over to Cortes, and joined the expedition. Public sympathy was entirely with him, for he had rallied some of the best men in Cuba to his standard, who thus had a stake in the success of the enterprise which depended primarily on the ability of the commander. In Cortes they had full confidence, and it suited neither their temper nor their interest to see him superseded. It was Cortes himself who replied to the Governor's letters, seeking to reassure him with protestations of loyalty and affection, counselling him meanwhile to silence the malicious tongues of the mischief makers in Santiago.

The Governor was in no way tranquillised by such a communication; on the contrary, the suppression of his orders by Verdugo enraged him beyond measure. The fleet had meanwhile gone to Havana whither a confidential messenger, one Garnica, was sent with fresh, and more stringent orders to the lieutenant-governor, Pedro Barba, who resided there, positively forbidding the fleet to sail, and ordering the immediate imprisonment of Cortes. Diego Velasquez was rarely happy in his choice of men and, in this instance his "confidential" messenger not only brought these official orders to the lieutenant-governor, but he likewise delivered to Fray Bartolome Olmedo, the chaplain of the expedition, a certain letter from another priest who was in the executive household, warning Cortes of the sense of the Governor's orders. Failure attended all Velasquez's efforts, for Don Pedro Barba replied, telling him plainly that it was not in his power to stop Cortes, who was so popular, not only with his troops but also with the townspeople, that any attempt to interfere with him would result in a general rising in his favour. Bernal Diaz declares that they would have died for him, to a man.

During these days he played, as he himself afterwards described it to Las Casas, the "part of the gentle corsair." Parting in this manner from the royal Governor of Cuba, joint owner of the ships and their contents, it is obvious that there was no turning back for Cortes; he was henceforth driven forward by the knowledge that sure disgrace, very likely death was behind him, and drawn on by the enticing prospect of achieving such complete success as should vindicate his lawless courses. To redeem the irregularity of these initial proceedings, it was incumbent on Cortes from thenceforth to hedge his every act with the strictest legal sanctions, and we search in vain for the slightest lapse from prescribed forms in all the succeeding acts of his career.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONQUEROR

THE entire fleet sailed for the island of Cozumel on February 10, 1519, and the first vessel to land was the one commanded by Pedro de Alvarado. Alvarado began his career by an act of disobedience to orders, characteristic of his headstrong and cruel temperament, which procured him a severe reprimand from the commander, who arrived two days later and found that the Indians had all been frightened away by the Spaniards' violence in plundering their town and taking some of them prisoners. Cortes's policy in dealing with the natives was forcibly declared at the very outset, for the pilot Camacho, who had brought the vessel to land before the others, he clapped into irons, for disobeying his orders, and he rebuked Alvarado, explaining to him that his measures were fatal to the success of the expedition. The Indian prisoners were not only released, but each received gifts, and all were assured through the interpreters, Melchor and Julian, that they should suffer no further harm, and that they should therefore go and call back the others who had fled. Everything that had been stolen from the town was restored, and the fowls and other provisions which had been eaten were all paid for liberally. Discipline was enforced also among the Spaniards, and seven sailors, who were found guilty of stealing some bacon from a soldier, were sentenced to be publicly whipped.

The opinion that Cortes's followers formed a lawless band of marauders, which rioted unchecked through Mexico, pillaging, torturing, and outraging the natives, has been lightly formed, and too generally accepted. These facts, however, point to a different state of things.

We read in the first letter the concise and simple account of the change in the character of the expedition, and of the founding of a Spanish settlement at Vera Cruz, and that this decision originated spontaneously, and all but unanimously, among the members of it. Their high motives — the conversion of barbarians to the true faith, and the subjection of vast and fabulously rich kingdoms to the Spanish crown — impelled them in these superlative interests to set aside the trivial projects of Diego Velasquez, and to impose upon Cortes the office of His Majesty's lieutenant. They required his acceptance of this duty by formal act of a notary public, and under menace of reporting his disloyalty to the emperor should he refuse to comply with the will of the community. Thus, from the simple commander of a few trading vessels commissioned by the Governor of Cuba to take soundings and exchange Spanish beads for Mexican gold, in the interest of his employer, Cortes appears, transformed into the Spanish sovereign's lawful representative, holding power conferred by a legally established Spanish municipal corporation, recognising no superior in the new world, and exercising his functions in the royal name; and the band of adventurers becomes a regularly organised colony, with its administration and its municipal officers bearing the same titles, and empowered to perform the same functions, as though the scrambling settlement of Vera Cruz were stately Seville or historic Toledo. All these creations are described as existing subject to an expression of the sovereign's will, and the royal sanction for all that had been done in the interest of the crown is humbly petitioned.

In dealing with the Indians the same strict observance of legal form was never once relaxed. They were first invited to renounce idolatry and embrace Christianity; and they were "required" — just as solemnly as Cortes was by the Vera Cruz magistrates — to acknowledge the supremacy of the Spanish crown. A notary public performed this function of his office as gravely as a sheriff in our own day reads the riot act, and calls on a mob to disperse before resorting to force. That the "requirement" was unintelligible to the Indians did not invalidate the act of promulgation. The strength, also, of Cortes's position invariably lay in the identity of his ambitions with the interests of the crown; he was always right. By no other conceivable policy could he have accomplished what he did. The men whom Velasquez, in his helpless rage, sent to supersede or overthrow him, were mere playthings for his far-seeing statecraft and his overpowering will. The story of these events appears in all its wonderful simplicity and astounding significance, told in Cortes's own words in these letters, which have been compared with the Commentaries of Caesar on his campaigns in Gaul, without suffering by the comparison. Gaul, when overrun and conquered by Julius Caesar, possessed no such political organisation as did the Aztec Empire when it was subdued by Cortes. There were neither cities comparable with Tlascala and Cholula, nor was there any central military organisation corresponding to the triple alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, with their vast dependencies, from which countless hordes of warriors were drawn. On the other hand while Caesar led the flower of the Roman legions, Cortes captained a mixed band of a few hundred men, ill-trained, undisciplined, indifferent to schemes of conquest, and bent only on their own individual aggrandisement; of whom many were also disaffected towards the commanders, and required alternate cajoling and threats to hold them in hand. The very men who were sent under Narvaez to take him alive or dead, and bring him back to the vengeance of Diego Velasquez, were won over to his standard, and fought under his leadership until Mexico fell, while their rightful commander lay a prisoner at Vera Cruz. Tapia was stripped of his goods and bundled ignominiously back to Cuba with their price in his pockets, and Cortes's delusive arguments in his ears, and, when Francisco de Garay's mission arrived by a fortuitous coincidence, simultaneously with the long delayed royal commission which recognised Cortes as Captain-General of the New Spain, his men also enthusiastically deserted in a body to Cortes, leaving Garay to humble himself before the man he had come to supplant, and to remain as his guest until death suddenly brought his career to an end.

Nothing more disastrous for Spain or for Mexico could be imagined than the success of any one of these ignorant and incompetent men. The mission of Cristobal de Tapia and its inglorious failure illustrate the deplorable conflict of authorities which rendered the Spanish colonial administration of that time almost farcical. The confusion and uncertainty prevailing in the direction of colonial affairs left many loopholes of escape for all who wished to disregard unpalatable orders. The President of the Royal Council for the Indies, who was in reality the highest authority, might order one thing, but the Jeronimite Fathers, who were supported by the *audiencia* in Hispaniola, and who exercised vague but supreme power in the Islands, would oppose or suspend the execution of his commands. There was also the Viceroy with his immense pretensions to be considered, and the Governors of Cuba and Jamaica, who were jealous of any trespass on their prerogatives, while over all there was the Sovereign, from whom cédulas or decrees could be obtained granting jurisdiction which contradicted the exercise of authority already established, or annulled all other orders. As Cristobal de Tapia brought no letters from the Emperor, but only from the President of the Council, the lieutenant at Vera Cruz, while receiving him with respect, and protesting every intention to observe his commands, declared that his credentials must first be submitted to the Municipal Council. That rather vagrant body was composed chiefly of captains, who were either in Mexico with Cortes, or off executing his orders in various places, and it was not an easy thing to unite them promptly. Cortes claimed to hold his authority from that Council, which he had himself created, and which in its turn recognised no superior short of the Emperor. Treating with Tapia through Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urea, and members of the Council, it was quickly discovered that he was accessible to golden arguments, so he was loaded with gifts, and, after selling his negro slaves, horses, arms, etc., at a good price, he consented to return to Hispaniola. Here he was sharply censured by the *audiencia* and the

Jeronymites, who had originally forbidden him to land in Mexico, or interfere in any way with the conquests of Cortes.

The foundations of a liberal and independent colonial administration already existed in Mexico, on which a stable system of government might have been built up, but unfortunately these principles, which were better known to Spaniards in that century than to any other continental people, were in their decadence. Under Charles V., began the disintegration of the people's liberties, which affected likewise the government of all the dependencies, and the system of rule by Viceroy and a horde of rapacious bureaucrats was initiated, which lasted in Latin-America until the last Spanish colony disappeared with the proclamation of Cuba's independence.

Cortes was daring but never rash. His plans were carefully formed, and his decisions were the result of cautious calculations which seemed to take cognisance of every emergency, to forestall every risk. In the execution of his designs, he was as relentless as he was daring. Both his resolution and his perseverance were implacable, and those who did not choose to bend to his will were made to break; but if his hand was iron, soft was the velvet of his glove. *Sois mon frère, ou je te tue*, describes his dealings with all about him. Equanimity and resolution were the chief characteristics of his conduct. His self-possession was never disturbed by misfortune, and as he sustained success without undue elation, so did he support reverses with fortitude, recognising defeat as a momentary check, but never accepting it as final.

Besides being compared with Julius Caesar as a general, he has been ranked with Augustus and Charles V. as a statesman, and he unquestionably possessed many of the qualities essential to greatness in common with them. He ruled his motley band with a happy mixture of genial comradeship and inflexible discipline, and hence succeeded, where an excess of either the one or the other would have brought failure. He knew whom and when to trust, giving his friendship he avoided favouritism, with the consequence that his men were united by the bond of a common trust in their commander. He shared their hardships, sympathised with their sufferings, and joined in their pleasures, but he hanged a soldier who robbed an Indian, he cut off the feet of another who plotted desertion, while, in the supreme moment when the conspiracy to kill him was discovered in Texcoco, he hanged the leader before his own door, but wisely ignored the trembling accomplices, though he had the list of their names in his pocket at the time.

From the moment Cortes learned from the Indian chief of Cempoal that the Aztec rule was heavy on the subject tribes, and that disloyalty seethed throughout the Empire only waiting the propitious moment to throw off the supremacy of fear, his plan to unite all the discontented elements in the land under his standard, and to overthrow Montezuma by the very instrument his own cruelties and extortions had created, took shape. His first move was to persuade the *Cacique* of Cempoal to refuse the tribute of twenty men for sacrifice, and to imprison the collectors sent by Montezuma; by this act of open rebellion the Totonac tribes exposed themselves to the summary vengeance of the Aztecs, and were left with the sole hope of alliance with the Spaniards to save themselves from the consequences of their insubordination. This much accomplished, the next step was to win the gratitude of the tax collectors, and put Montezuma under obligations. This was done by opposing the Cempoalans' wish to sacrifice the collectors forthwith, and by later arranging for the escape by night of two of them, and sending them to Montezuma with his expressions of regret at the indignities they had suffered, and his assurance to the Emperor that he would also effect the escape of the remaining three. These he held as hostages, for when the escape of the two became known the next day, Cortes feigned great wrath at the negligence of the guards and, in order to secure the remaining prisoners, he put them in irons and sent them on board one of his own caravels. The news of these events spread quickly, and the Totanacs, convinced that the hour of successful revolt against Aztec oppression was at hand, rose as one man against Montezuma, and committed their lives and fortunes to the Spaniards. This result was a diplomatic victory of no mean value.

He next beat the Tlascalans, not into submission but into an alliance, and this pact he cemented by every art of which he was master. The astonishment, which many have lightly expressed, that a mighty state should be so easily invaded and overthrown by a handful of adventurers is considerably lessened when the political and racial conditions in the decaying Empire are understood, and the part played by the

Tascalans in the conquest is rightly estimated. They were a warlike people who had preserved the independence of their mountain republic against the might of Montezuma, somewhat as the Montenegrins have ever defended themselves against the Ottoman power. They were from a military point of view the equals, if not the superiors, of the Aztecs in the field, fighting with the same weapons and employing like tactics; hence one hundred thousand Tascalans, captained by Cortes, who came as the fulfiller of prophecies, almost a supernatural being with demigods in his train, commanding thunder and lightning, and mounted upon unknown and formidable beasts, were invincible. The Tascalans had long bided the time for their vengeance, and in the alliance with Cortes they saw their opportunity. In two potential moments Tascalala held the balance of victory or defeat, and a hair would have tipped it either way. When the famished, blood-stained remnant of the Spaniards, flying from the horrors of the *Noche Triste*, fell exhausted at the gates of their capital, to annihilate them was within their choice, but these loyal, short-sighted Indians stood fast to their bond, took the wreck of the army in as brothers, nursed them, cured their wounds, and played the good Samaritan with suicidal success. Again, without the brigantines, the capture of Mexico was more than doubtful; the brigantines meant famine for the invested city, and even with them it took seventy-five days to reduce it. Tascalala provided the material, built the brigantines, paid for them, and sent eight thousand men to carry them across the mountain passes, escorted by twenty thousand more to protect the convoy, and finally built the canal from which they were launched on the lake of Texcoco. Throw the weight of Tascalala on the Aztec side, and the history of the conquest of Mexico would have to be re-written.

But even these brave people were wanting in the true spirit of unity and discipline essential to the success of large military operations, and their leaders, despite their unquestioned bravery, invited defeat by their foolish jealousies and petty quarrels over questions of personal vanity. The Indian tribes in Mexico would indeed seem to have been destitute of patriotic sentiment; tribal feeling undoubtedly existed, but was, unfortunately for them, a source rather of disunion than a bond of strength. In his description of the engagements between the armies under Xicotencatl and the forces of Cortes, Bernal Diaz ascribes the victory to three causes, saying that next to God's help, it was owing to the cavalry (as the elephants of Pyrrhus struck terror to the Romans, so did the Spaniards' horses spread panic amongst the Indians); secondly to the inexperience of the Tascalans, which prevented their bringing up their troops without confusion, instead of which they massed them together, thus enabling the Spanish artillery to do fearful execution amongst them; and finally because the forces of Guaxocingo, commanded by the chief Chichimecatl, did not support the action of the commander-in-chief, owing to their leader's sulkiness over some observations of Xicotencatl on his conduct during the engagement of the previous day. This chieftain was plagued with a morbid touchiness which despoiled his bravery of its virtue, and Cortes later mentions with what difficulty he was induced to take the rear-guard rather than the lead, during the famous convoy of the brigantines from Tascalala over the mountain passes to the lake of Texcoco, and how he was only finally persuaded by being assured that the rear-guard was the post of greatest honour and danger: even then he made the condition that no Spaniards should share the responsibility with him. Similar rivalries prevailed likewise in the Senate, and during the discussion on the reception to be given the Spaniards, the venerable princes actually came to blows. The story of the conquest is, on the Indian side, a humiliating recital of treachery, mutual betrayals, and tribe plotting against tribe, each foolishly thinking to use the Spaniards as an instrument of vengeance against their neighbours, whereas the fact was that the astute Cortes saw with eminent satisfaction these enervating dissensions, all of which he deftly turned to his own profit.

A perpetual coming and going of Aztec ambassadors accompanied the march from Vera Cruz. These unfortunate messengers, burdened with conflicting and impossible instructions, must have felt themselves sent upon a fool's errand, pulled hither and thither according as Montezuma's hopes or fears happened to be in the ascendant. The task of turning back the obnoxious strangers, but without offending them, lest, being gods, they might wreak vengeance on the Empire, was laid upon them. They carefully watched and quickly reported every step in advance made by the Spaniards, but their despatches were disheartening

reading for their imperial master, being but chronicles of Spanish victories, and the defection of provinces. Only half convinced, yet not daring to disclose his doubts, of the semi-divine character of the invaders, Montezuma ordered every attention to be lavished upon them, while at the same time he consulted astrologers and magicians to discover some means to bane the pests, or inspired plans for their destruction, as at Cholula, where, upon the discovery of the plot, he disavowed responsibility, and left the Cholulans to suffer the consequences.

The absence or control of impulse in Cortes saved him from many a disaster which daring alone would have brought upon a leader of equal boldness but less wisdom, placed as he was. Perhaps the most supremely audacious act which history records is the seizure of Montezuma in the midst of his own court, and his conveyance to the Spanish quarters; an undertaking so stupefying in its conception and so incredible in its execution that only the multitude and unanimity of testimony serve to remove it from the sphere of fable into that of history. This, however, was not an act of mere daring, but as he explains to the Emperor in his second letter, a measure of carefully pondered policy. We are now accustomed to see "political agents," or financial and military "advisers," near the persons of nominal rulers, to whom the controlling foreign power concedes sufficient semblance of independence to mask their essential servitude, but the system of ruling a nation through the person of its enslaved sovereign originated with the seizure of Montezuma by Cortes. He was a man of unfeigned piety, of the stuff of which martyrs are made, nor did his conviction that he was leading a holy crusade to win lost souls to salvation ever waver. He says in his *Ordenanzas at Tlascalala*, that, were the war carried on for any other motive than to overthrow idolatry and to secure the salvation of so many souls by converting the Indians to the holy faith, it would be unjust and obnoxious, nor would the Emperor be justified in rewarding those who took part in it.

Among other ordinances governing the moral and religious welfare of the people in Mexico after the conquest, was one which prescribed attendance at the instructions in Christian doctrine, given on Sundays and feast days under pain of stripes. The Jesuit historian Cavo (*Los Tres Siglos de Mexico*, tom. i., p. 151) says that on one occasion when Cortes had himself been absent, he was reprimanded from the pulpit on the following Sunday, and, to the stupefaction of the Indians, submitted to the prescribed flogging in public. Cortes resembled the publican who struck his breast and invoked mercy for his sins, rather than the Pharisee who found his chief cause for thankfulness in the contemplation his own superior virtues. Prescott was uncertain whether this submission to a public whipping should be attributed to "bigotry" or to "policy." It seems to have been first of all an act of simple consistency by which the commander sanctioned the law he had himself established. Precept is ever plentiful but example is the better teacher, and a more striking and unforgettable example of the equality of all under the law, it would indeed be difficult to find in history. The policy of demonstrating that no one's faults were exempt from the punishment provided by the law was unquestionably present, and deserving only of applause, but for bigotry there seems to be no place whatever, unless indeed the provision of compulsory instruction for both the natives and the Spaniards in Christian doctrine be so described.

His religious zeal was sometimes intemperate, nor was it always guided by prudence, but he usually showed wisdom in submitting to the restraining influence of some handy friar whose saner and more persuasive methods promised surer results than his own strenuous system of conversion would have secured. Nowhere is the vindication of the religious orders in dealing with native races more convincingly established than in the history of their early relations with the Mexicans. The restraints the commander placed on the license of his soldiers might well have been prompted by his policy of winning the friendly confidence of the Indians, but his measures for repressing profanity of every sort, gambling and other camp vices, and his insistence upon daily mass and prayer before and thanksgivings after battle, are traceable to no such motive, and it is more than once recorded that the Indians were profoundly impressed by the decorous solemnity of the religious ceremonies and the devotion shown by the Spaniards.

Shortcomings in the practice of the moral precepts of religion, either in that century or in this, are not confined to men who find themselves cut adrift from the usual restraints of civilised society, isolated and

paramount amidst barbarians, whose inferior moral standard provides constant and easy temptations to lapse, and, while it were as difficult as it is unnecessary to attempt a defence of the excesses which the Spaniards undoubtedly committed in Mexico, it is equally impossible to condemn them as exceptional. Commenting upon the strange contradiction between professed piety, and practised vice and cruelty, Prescott writes: "When we see the hand, red with the blood of the wretched native, raised to invoke the blessing of heaven, we experience something like a sensation of disgust, and a doubt of its sincerity." The distinguished historian here voices a facile assumption all too common amongst many who, lacking his luminous comprehension of the spirit of that age, commit the injustice of measuring the acts of its men by the more humane standards of our own times. He himself acquits Cortes of the imputation of insincerity, and declares that no one who reads his correspondence, or studies the events of his career, can doubt that he would have been the first to lay down his life for the Faith. Too many barriers, however, interposed between the Anglo-Saxon protestant historian of the nineteenth century and the Spanish Catholicism of the sixteenth to allow even one of his superior historical acumen to accurately appreciate the operation of religious influences on the character of such a man as Fernando Cortes, whose military conquest was prompted in a large measure by genuinely religious motives, but whose fervent practice of the Church's teachings unfortunately alternated with lapses into grievous sensuality.

Whatever else may be doubted, the religious sincerity, and martial courage of Fernando Cortes are above impeachment. He was a stranger to hypocrisy which is a smug vice of cowards and if his reasons for acts of policy, which cost many lives, may be deplored by the humane, their honesty may be reasonably impugned by none. Had the influence of his faith on his morals been proportionate to its strength, he would have merited canonisation.

Sixteenth century Spain produced a race of Christian warriors whose piety, born of an intense realisation of, and love for a militant Christ, was of a martial complexion, beholding in the symbol of salvation — the Cross — the standard of Christendom, around which the faithful must rally, and for whose protection and exaltation swords must be drawn and blood spilled if need be. They were the children of the generation which had expelled the last Moor from Spain, and had brought centuries of religious and patriotic warfare to a triumphant close, in which their country was finally united under the crown of Castile. From such forebears the generation of Cortes received their heritage of Christian chivalry. The discovery of a new world, peopled by barbarians, opened a new field to Spanish missionary zeal, in which the kingdom of God upon earth was to be extended, and countless souls rescued from the obscene idolatries and debasing cannibalism which enslaved them. This was the "white man's burden" which that century laid on the Spaniard's shoulders. To the scoffing philosopher of the eighteenth century, these crusading buccaneers in whose characters the mystic and the sensualist fought for the mastery seemed but knaves clumsily masquerading as fools. The fierce piety, which furnished entertainment to the age of Voltaire, somewhat puzzles our own. Expeditions now set forth into dark continents unburdened with professions of concern for the spiritual or moral welfare of the natives. Indeed, nothing is deemed more foolish than attempts to interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of barbarians, and the commander in our times, who would overturn an idol merely to set up a wooden cross, thereby exposing his followers to the risk of being massacred, would be court-martialled and degraded, if indeed he ever ventured to return to civilisation. If such work is to be done at all, there are richly endowed missionary societies to attend to it. But even the equipment of the missionaries who undertake to carry evangelical doctrine amongst savage peoples presents some striking contrasts to the barefooted Spanish friars who first preached Christianity to the Mexicans. If the heathen are no longer brought by compulsion into the light, we make them pay a heavy indemnity for their privilege of sitting in darkness, and, whenever their opposition to the dissemination of Christian teaching amongst them emerges from quiescence into activity, a warship is ready to bombard their coasts while troops are at hand to annex a province.

In the eighth of Lord Lyttleton's *Dialogues of the Dead* the shades of Fernando Cortes and William Penn are made to discourse with one another upon the merits of their respective undertakings in North America, each ghost defending its own system. Friend Penn in one passage says to Cortes:

I know very well that thou wast as fierce as a lion and as subtle as a serpent. The Devil, perhaps, may place thee as high in his black list of heroes as Alexander or Caesar. It is not my business to interfere with him in settling thy rank. But hark thee, Friend Cortes, — What right hadst thou or had the King of Spain himself to the Mexican Empire? Answer me that, if thou canst.

Cortes. The Pope gave it to my Master.

Penn. The Devil offered to give our Lord all the kingdoms of the earth, and I suppose the Pope as His Vicar gave thy Master this; in return for which he fell down and worshipped him like an idolater as he was, etc.

The ghost of Penn defends his possession of Pennsylvania, alleging the honest right of fair purchase; to which Cortes replies:

I am afraid there was a little fraud in the purchase — thy followers, William Penn, are said to think cheating in a quiet, sober way no mortal sin.

The verbal skirmish continues in this vein, and concludes thus:

Penn. Ask thy heart whether ambition was not thy real motive, and zeal the pretence?

Cortes. Ask thine whether thy zeal had no worldly views, and whether thou didst believe all the nonsense of the sect at the head of which thou wast pleased to become a legislator. Adieu, self-examination requires retirement.

The author does not allow for any clearing of the human perceptions in the spirit world, and it is probable that had Fernando Cortes and William Penn been contemporaries and able to discuss their respective systems of dealing with Indians, and founding settlements, they would have found more points of agreement than their loquacious ghosts were able to discover. The flaccid defence advanced by Cortes's shade betrays some deterioration of mental power, for in his lifetime the conqueror was hardly less formidable in polemics than he was on the battle-field, but, in the feeble discourse put in the mouth of this pale spirit, we find nothing of the fierceness of the Hon or the subtlety of the serpent which Friend Penn attributed to Cortes in the flesh.

Penn's ghost professes to find Cortes's religious motives suspect, yet there are not more proofs of his presence in Mexico than there are of his absolute belief in himself as a divinely chosen instrument for the conversion of souls. Purging the human soul from the taint of idolatry or heresy by means of physical torments is a familiar blot on the pages of the history of religions.

More than a century after the conquest of Mexico the New England Puritans were torturing and killing by process of law, — not savage enemies who threatened their security, but one another, and all within their power, who dissented from their own gloomy and peculiar theological delusions. They may have believed in the mercy of God, but they grimly preferred to see themselves as ministers of His wrath.

Nothing, more than the exercise of great power by a conscientious man, imbued with faith in himself as a chosen instrument for executing divine justice on his fellow men, is surer to produce a very Frankenstein of fanaticism, and all peoples and creeds have furnished the spectacle of men of professing godliness, who slew to save, and whose claim to a great mission was written in the blood of those who were described as God's enemies. There is even Scripture warranty for it. If invasion of an unoffending nation for the purpose of conquest be justifiable, either by moral or utilitarian arguments, then the sufferings which inevitable resistance must bring are covered by the same justifications.

The accusation of wanton cruelty, too lightly brought against Cortes has been diligently propagated by the interested, and complacently accepted by the indiscriminating, until dissent from it awakens incredulous surprise. Nevertheless, all that can be learned of his character proves that Cortes was not by

nature cruel, nor did he take wanton pleasure in the sufferings of others. Conciliation and coercion were both amongst his weapons, his natural preference being for the former, as is seen by his never once failing in his dealings with the Indians to exhaust peaceful methods before resorting to force. The secret of carrying on a war of conquest mercifully has not yet been discovered, and recent reports from Africa and the Philippines do not show much advance on the policy of the Spaniards in Mexico four hundred years ago, though it cannot be pretended that our modern expeditions are attended by the perils, known, — and most of all the unknown, — which awaited the ignorant adventurers in the New World at every turn.

There were three ends which according to Cortes's ethics justified any measures for their accomplishment, 1st, the spread of the faith, 2nd, the subjugation of the Indians to Spanish rule, and 3rd, the possession of their treasures; and as his narrative of the conquest unfolds itself, it will be seen that his resolution stopped at nothing for the achievement of these ends. But there is no instance of tortures and suffering being treated by him as a sport. Whether he might not have accomplished all he did with less bloodshed, is a purely speculative question. Fr. Acosta (*Storia de las Indias*, lib. vii., cap. XXV.) states that so entirely were the Mexicans imbued with the belief that the Spaniards came in fulfilment of the prophecy of their most beneficent deity, Quetzalcoatl, that Montezuma would have abdicated, and the whole empire have passed into their hands without a struggle, had Cortes but comprehended the force of the prevailing superstition, and met the popular expectation by rising consistently to his role of demigod. There are facts which tend to lend weight to this argument, and had Cortes but realised the possibilities, he might have been equal to the part, though his followers fell so lamentably short, that it is doubtful if the illusion could have been long sustained. As it was, the awful tragedy of the Sorrowful Night, and the downfall, amidst bloodshed and suffering unspeakable of Mexico, was precipitated by the brutal folly of Alvarado, — not of Cortes.

In his relations with women, Cortes shows his primitive polygamous temperament. Even at the age of sixteen in his native Medellin, we find him falling from a wall and all but losing his life in an amorous adventure with an anonymous fair one, and throughout his life these intrigues succeeded one another unbrokenly; but his loves were so entirely things "of his life apart," that their influence upon his motives or his actions is never discernible. In Cuba his role of Don Juan brought him into a conflict with the Governor, which was the origin of their life-long duel for supremacy in the colonies. But Catalina Xuarez, about whom the trouble first began, is quickly lost sight of; she passes like a pale shade across that epoch of her husband's life, and is never heard of again, until her uninvited presence in Mexico, followed quickly by her unlamented death, is briefly mentioned. The most important woman in his life was his Indian interpreter, Marina, and some writers have sought to weave a romance into the story of their relations, for which there seems, upon examination, to be little enough substantial material. During the period when she was indispensable to the business in hand, she was never separated from Cortes, but we know that he was not faithful to her even then, while, as soon as she ceased to be necessary, she was got rid of as easily as she had been acquired.

Montezuma gave him his daughter, who first received Christian baptism to render her worthy of the commander's companionship, and was known as Dona Ana. She lived openly with Cortes in his quarters, and had with her, her two sisters, Inez and Elvira, and a sister of the King of Texcoco who was called Dona Francisca. Dona Ana was killed during the retreat on the Sorrowful Night, and was pregnant at the time. A third daughter of the Emperor, Dona Isabel, married Alonso de Grado, who shortly afterwards died, when she also passed into the household of the conqueror, to whom she bore a daughter. (Bernal Diaz, cap. cvii.; Bernaldino Vasquez de Tapia, tom. ii., pp. 244, 305-306; Gonzalo Mejia, tom. ii., pp. 240-241). According to Juan Tirado two of Montezuma's daughters bore sons to Cortes, and one bore a daughter. (Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, ch. ii., cap. vi., note.)

In his last will, Cortes mentions another natural daughter, whose mother was Leonor Pizarro, who afterwards married Juan de Salcedo.

It is thus positively known that besides Marina, there were four other ladies who shared in his affections during this period of the conquest, and meanwhile his first wife Catalina Xuarez la Marcaida was alive in Cuba. These undisguised philanderings must have somewhat blighted Marina's romance.

His marriage with Dona Juana de Zuniga took place when he was at the zenith of his fame. The advantages such an alliance with a noble and powerful family of Castile seemed to promise, though many, were perhaps not as tangible as the ambitious conqueror had hoped. The marriage was negotiated before he and the lady had met, but it does not appear to have been less happy for this conformity to a custom which at that time was universal in noble families. Dona Juana could have seen but little of her restless husband, who was perpetually engaged elsewhere, but she was a good wife, and loved him, just as did Catalina Xuarez and all his mistresses while his uxorious instincts made it easy for him to be equally happy with all of them. He was affectionate and tender, devoted to all of his children, distinguishing but little between his legitimate and his natural offspring in a truly patriarchal fashion. For the latter he secured Bulls of legitimacy from the Pope, and provided generously in his will. Not less strong was his filial piety, and among the first treasure sent to Spain, there went gifts to his father and mother in Medellin, and, after his father's death, he brought his mother to Mexico, where she died, and was buried in the vault at Texcoco, where his own body was afterwards laid.

The Fifth Letter reports the events of his long journey of exploration through Yucatan. In setting forth on this expedition which was to cover a distance of five hundred leagues through savage wilds, Cortes affected the pomp of an Oriental satrap, taking with him besides the necessary soldiers, guides, Indian allies, and camp followers, a complete household of stewards, valets, pages, grooms, and other attendants, all under the command of a major-domo of the household. Gold and silver plate for his table was provided, also musicians, jugglers, and acrobats to amuse the company. Spanish muleteers and equerries were taken to have charge of the carriages and horses, and, in addition to the usual provender, to ensure a supply of meat, an immense drove of pigs was driven along, which could not have accelerated the march. He had a map painted on cloth by native artists, which showed after their fashion the rivers and mountain chains to be crossed. This and his compass were all Cortes could rely upon to guide him during his perilous undertaking. Dona Marina went as chief interpreter, but Geronimo de Aguilar did not accompany this expedition, though he was not dead, as Bernal Diaz states, for in 1525 he applied for a piece of land on which to build a house in the street now called Balvanera (Alaman, *Dissertazioni IV.*). The record of these events, however noteworthy, may seem tame reading after the exciting chronicle of the siege and fall of Mexico — a war drama of the most intense kind, but, in forming a correct estimate of Cortes's character we must not restrict ourselves to a study of the qualities displayed in the course of the conquest, and which prove him a most resourceful military genius. At five and thirty years of age he had successfully completed as daring and momentous an undertaking as history records, and it is as conqueror of Mexico that he takes his place among the world's great heroes. M. Desire Charnay, in the preface to his French translation of the Five Letters, says: "*La conquete de Cortes . . . couta au Mexique plus de dix millions d'etres humains emportes par la guerre, les maladies et les mauvais traitements: de sorte que cet homme de genie petit entrer sans conteste dans la redoutable phalange des fleaux de l'humanity.*"

His subsequent undertakings called for the exercise of qualities hardly less remarkable, though of a different order, and it was absence of productive success which has caused them to be overlooked in a world where results count for more than effort.

It was never the policy of the Spanish crown to entrust the government of dependencies to their discoverers or conquerors, and when powerful friends at Court sought in 1529 to prevail upon Charles the Fifth to grant Cortes supreme power under the crown in Mexico, His Majesty was not to be persuaded; and in refusing he pointed out that his royal predecessors had never done this, even in the case of Columbus, or of Gonsalvo de Cordoba, the conqueror of Naples. Had it been possible, however, or the Emperor to free himself from the suspicions which the persistent intrigues of Cortes's enemies fomented, especially from the jealous fear of a possible aspiration to independent sovereignty, it cannot be doubted that the wisest thing, both for Mexico and for the royal interests, would have been the installation of

Cortes in as independent a vice-royalty as was compatible with the maintenance of the royal supremacy. While Cortes, in common with all his kind, loved gold, he was not a mere vulgar plunderer, seeking to hastily enrich himself, at no matter what cost to the country, in order to retire to a life of luxury in Spain. Moreover even granting that he had started with no larger purpose, it is plain that he was himself at the outset unconscious, both of his own powers and of the strange drama about to unfold, in which destiny reserved him the first part. By the time the conquest was completed, his knowledge of the possibilities of Mexico had expanded, so that his views on all questions connected with the occupation, the government and the future welfare of the country, had developed from the schemes of a mere adventurer into the policy of a statesman. The constantly revived accusation of aspiring to independent sovereignty was a myth, for the Emperor had no more faithful subject than Cortes, in whom the dual mainsprings of action were religion and loyalty.

His better judgment condemned the system of *encomiendas*, and only admitted slavery as a form of punishment for the crime of rebellion, even then to be mitigated by every possible safeguard. Far from driving the natives from their homes, or wishing to deport them to the islands, he used every inducement to encourage them to remain in their towns, to rebuild their cities, and resume their industries, realising full well that the true strength of government, as well as the surest source of revenue, lay in a pacific and busy population. To this end he adopted the system of restoring or maintaining the native chiefs in their jurisdiction and dignity, imposing upon them the obligation of ruling their tribes, — and persuading those who had been frightened away to the mountains to return to their villages. The exceptions to this policy were in the cases of certain rebellious princes, whom he considered powerful enough to be dangerous.

That Cortes understood the Indians and had a kindly feeling for them, is proven many times over, while the proofs of their affection for him are even more numerous. Malintzin was a name to conjure with amongst them, and while familiar relations with most of the other Spaniards speedily bred contempt, their attachment to Cortes increased as time went on. The iron policy which used massacres, torture, and slavery for its instruments of conquest, did not revolt the Indians, since it presented no contrast to the usage common among themselves in time of war; *vae victis* comprised the ethics of native kings, who in addition to wars for aggrandisement of territory and increase of glory also waged them solely to obtain victims for the sacrificial altars of their gods. This ghastly levy ceased with the introduction of Malintzin's religion, and he brought no hitherto unfamiliar horror as a substitute for it.

Some writers have even essayed to parallel the cruelties incident to the procedure of the Inquisition, and the executions after sentence by that tribunal, with the human sacrifices of the Aztecs. Without here embarking upon an investigation of the methods of the Inquisition, it may, in strict justice, be pointed out that, as far as Mexico was concerned, the researches of the learned archaeologist, Garcia Icazbalceta, have shown that during the two hundred and seventy years of its existence in that country, the number of persons delivered to the secular arm for execution was forty-seven (*Bibliografia Mexicana del Siglo, XVI.*, page 382). Moreover the Indians were exempt from molestation for they were expressly defined as being outside the jurisdiction of the Holy Office.

Except the independent Tlascalans, all the other peoples of Anahuac were held in stem subjection by the Aztec emperor; heavy taxes were collected from them, human life was without value, torture was in common use; their sons were seized for sacrifice, their daughters replenished the harems of the confederated kings and great nobles, so that Cortes was welcomed as the liberator of subject peoples, the redresser of wrongs. He had procured them the sweets of a long nourished, but despaired of, vengeance, and, though it was but the exchange of one master for another, they tasted the satisfaction of having squared some old scores with their oppressors. The conquest completed, Cortes bent all his efforts to creating systems of government under which the different peoples might live and prosper in common security, and, with the disappearance of the need for them, the harsher methods also vanished. Few of his cherished intentions were realised, however, and the power which would have enabled him to bring his wiser plans to fruition was denied him.

The fruits of conquest are bitterness of spirit and disappointment, though Cortes fared better than his great contemporaries Columbus, Balboa, and Pizarro, who after discovering continents and oceans and subduing empires were requited with chains, the scaffold, and the traitor's dagger. True, he saw himself defrauded of his deserts, while royal promises were found to be elastic; and in his last years he was even treated as an importunate suppliant, being excluded from the presence of the sovereign to whose crown he had given an empire.

Lesser men would have been content with the worldwide fame, the great title, and vast estates to which from modest beginnings Cortes had risen in a few brief years, but a lesser man would never have accomplished such vast undertakings, and it was his curse that his ambitions kept pace with his achievements. From the fall of Mexico until his death, his life was a series of disappointments, unfulfilled ambitions, and petty miseries, due to the malice of rivals, and the faithlessness of friends, relieved only by some brief periods of splendid triumph, illumined by royal favour. Even financial embarrassments were not spared him. A curse was on the Aztec gold, and it was not enough that little treasure was found in the city, but Cortes must be accused, in the unreasoning fury of the general disappointment, of being in collusion with Quauhtemotzin to conceal the hoard and share it together later on. He yielded to this murmuring and consented to the torture of the captive Emperor, for whose safety he had pledged his word, thus staining his name with an indelible blot of shame. His journeys to Yucatan and Honduras, so fully related in the Fifth Letter, would have won renown for another but they added nothing to his reputation. The several expeditions to the South Sea, and his discovery of California, all cost him immense sums, plunged him into debt, and merely served to pave the way for later undertakings, so that he might with reason have exclaimed with Columbus, "I have opened the door for others to enter." During this time he was surrounded by enemies hidden and declared, who sent complaints of him to Spain by every ship; he was accused of murdering his wife Catalina Xuarez who had died within a few months after her arrival in Mexico where, though possibly unwelcome, she was received with due honours; he was accused of defrauding the royal treasury, as well as his companions in arms, and of taking an undue share of the spoils for himself; and finally he was accused of planning to throw off his allegiance to Spain, and set up an independent government with himself as king. These ceaseless intrigues against him finally decided the Emperor to send a high commissioner (*juez de residencia*) to investigate, not only all charges against the Captain-General, but also to report upon the general condition of affairs in New Spain. This was the means usually employed in such cases and did not necessarily constitute any indignity to Cortes, to whom the Emperor took occasion to write, notifying him of his decision, and assuring him that it was in no sense prompted by suspicions of his loyalty or honesty, but rather to furnish him with the opportunity of silencing his calumniators once for all by proving his innocence. Don Luis Ponce de Leon, a young man of high character and unusual attainments, was charged with this delicate mission, and his appointment was universally applauded as an admirable one.

He was received upon his arrival in Mexico by Cortes and all the authorities with every distinction due to him, but his untimely death of a fever within a few weeks after his arrival defeated the good results expected from his labours, and also furnished Cortes's enemies with another accusation — that of poisoning the royal commissioner. His powers devolved upon Marcos de Aguilar, who was not only too old for such an arduous post, but was ill of a disease which, it was said, obliged him to take nourishment by suckling, for which purpose wet nurses and she-goats were daily furnished him. The speedy death of this harmless old man started another story of poisoning, and was followed by the supreme disaster of Estrada's succession to the ill-starred commissionership, under whom the baiting of Cortes went on apace, while the entire population, Spanish as well as native, groaned under oppressions and vexations innumerable. The slave-trade was carried on shamelessly with nameless cruelties, chiefly by the brutal Nunez de Guzman, a partisan of Diego Velasquez, who had been placed by the latter's influence as Governor of Panuco, for the express purpose of tormenting Cortes, and fomenting cabals against his authority. This petty tyrant committed barbarities never before heard of in Mexico.

Wearied out with persecutions and insults, and hopeless of obtaining justice from such officials as Estrada and his subordinates, Cortes decided to go to Spain and lay his own case before the Emperor. His decision created some consternation amongst his opponents, and Estrada realised that it was a grave blunder to drive the Captain-General to make a personal appeal to the Emperor. If opposition or concessions could have stopped him, Cortes would have relinquished his plan, for overtures were made through the bishop of Tlascala, and promises of satisfaction were not spared; but his preparations were well under way, and, though perhaps somewhat mollified by the changed tone of Estrada, he remained firm in his purpose. Sailing with two ships from Vera Cruz (where he learned the news of his father's death), he landed after an unusually brief and prosperous voyage at the historic port of Palos in May, 1528.

CHAPTER IV.

MARQUES DEL VALLE

CORTES had arranged that his arrival at the Spanish Court should be of the nature of a veritable pageant. Different estimates of the treasure he took with him are given by different authorities, but these are mere matters of figures; the amount was fabulous, and, in addition to this, he carried a perfect museum of Mexican objects, such as the unique feather-work in which the Indians excelled, arms, embroideries, implements of obsidian, rare plants; indigenous products such as chocolate, tobacco, vanilla, and liquid amber; gorgeous parrots, herons, jaguars, and other beautiful birds and animals unknown in Spain were carried or led by Indians, in the dress of their tribes. That nothing might be wanting, he took with him many skilful jugglers, acrobats, dwarfs, albinos, and human monstrosities, which were much the fashion at that time, and these curiosities made such a sensation upon his arrival, that Charles the Fifth could think of no fitter destination for them than to send them on to His Holiness Clement the Seventh, before whom they performed and showed themselves to the delight and wonder of the pontifical Court. In the personal suite of the Conqueror, besides the numerous officials of his household, there went about forty Indian princes in their most gorgeous robes and jewels, amongst whom were the sons of Montezuma and of the Tlascalan chief, Maxixcatzin.

The arrival of this magnificent cortege at Palos was unannounced, and hence no fitting reception had been prepared there, but accident supplied a more remarkable grouping of interesting men of the century than design could have provided. Within the modest walls of Santa Maria la Rabida, where Columbus had found hospitality, there met with Cortes, who was accompanied by Gonzalo de Sandoval and Andres de Tapia, Francisco Pizarro, whose brilliant career in South America, rivalling that of Cortes in the North, was just dawning; and by a fateful coincidence, there was also in the suite of Cortes, the Spanish soldier Juan de Rada, by whose hand Pizarro was destined to perish in Peru. The date of his arrival at Palos is given by Bernal Diaz as December 1527, but Herrera's authority for the later date has been followed by Prescott, Alaman, and other historians.

The triumphal home-coming was marred at the very outset by the death of Gonzalo de Sandoval at Palos, a few days after their landing. For none of his captains did Cortes cherish the affection he felt for this gallant young soldier, who was his fellow-townsmen and loyal friend. Sandoval was buried at La Rabida, and Cortes first went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Guadeloupe, where he spent some days in mourning his loss, and having masses celebrated for the departed soul. This pious duty accomplished he set out for Toledo, where the Court then was, and as the news of his arrival had spread, and had also been announced by his own letter to the Emperor, he was everywhere accorded a veritable triumph by the people, who flocked from all sides to see the hero of the great conquest, and to gaze upon the marvellous trophies which he brought; so that since the first return of Columbus no such demonstrations had been seen in Spain.

A brilliant group of nobles comprising the Duke of Bejar, the Counts of Aguilar and Medellin, the Grand Prior of St. John, and many of the first citizens of Toledo, rode out from the city to meet the conqueror on the plain, and the next day the Emperor received him with every mark of favour, raising him up when he would have knelt in the royal presence, and seating him by his side. The moment was an auspicious one, for influences had been at work in his favour. Since the appointment of the new commission of *residencia*, presided over by the infamous Nunez de Guzman, which had already left Spain, the Emperor's information as to the real state of things in Mexico and the respective merits of the contending parties, had been much extended and perfected. He consulted Cortes during his stay at Court upon everything pertaining to the new realm; its resources, the natives, their customs, the Spanish colonists, and especially concerning the best means for establishing a stable government, and developing industries and agriculture.

Besides full power to continue his explorations, and the confirmation of his rank of Captain-General, the title of Marques del Valle de Oaxaca was conferred upon Cortes and his descendants, by patents dated July 6, 1529, to which was joined a vast grant of lands, comprising twenty-eight towns and villages; one twelfth of all his future discoveries was to be his own. He received the knighthood and habit of Santiago, and when he was confined to his lodgings by illness, the Emperor visited him in person, this latter being such a singular honour, that, as Prescott caustically observes, the Spanish writers of the time seemed to regard it as ample recompense for all he had done and suffered. It does not seem certain that he accepted the knighthood of Santiago, though Herrera says that he had already possessed it since 1525. His reason for his alleged refusal was that no *commenda* was attached to the dignity, and Alaman (*Dissertazione V.*) says that while his name is on the rolls of the order, the insignia do not appear either in his arms or his portraits, nor is any mention found of his possession of this grade in the list of his honours.

It is good to note that Cortes did not forget his friends while he was at court, but profited by the Emperor's hour of graciousness to obtain countless favours for them, especially for the Indians. The Tlascalans, in recognition of their loyalty, were exempted for ever from taxes and tribute; the Cempoalans were granted a like exemption for a period of two years; a college for the sons of Mexican nobles, and another for girls, were endowed. Money was awarded to the Franciscan order for building churches and schools; tithes were established to maintain the Bishop Zumarraga; various privileges were secured for the original "conquerors" who had settled in the country. Also generous dowries were appointed to the four daughters of Montezuma, who were being educated in a convent in Texcoco, as well as to the daughters of Mexican nobles who married Spaniards.

During his stay in Spain, Cortes married his second wife Dona Juana de Zuniga, a daughter of the Count of Aguilar, and niece of the Duke of Bejar. His gifts to his bride were of such magnificence as to arouse even the Queen's envy, especially the five large stones described as emeralds, which excelled any jewels ever seen, and were worth a nation's ransom. There were no emeralds in Mexico, and these stones were probably a kind of jade or serpentine of great brilliancy and value, which were easily confounded with emeralds. One of these stones was cut as a bell, whose tongue was formed of a large pear-shaped pearl, and which bore the inscription *benedito sea el que te crio*; another was shaped like a fish with golden eyes; the third was in the form of a rose; the fourth in that of a trumpet; and the fifth was fashioned into a cup, surmounted by a superb pearl, and standing on a base of gold, on which was the inscription, *inter natos mulierum non surexit major*. For this last jewel alone, some Genoese merchants who saw it at Palos offered forty thousand ducats. The fame of these jewels was such that the Queen expressed a wish to have them, and had not Cortes forestalled the royal desire by presenting them to Dona Juana de Zuniga as a marriage gift they would doubtless have passed into the crown jewels of Spain.

In the meantime, while Cortes was being lionised and honoured in Spain, his enemies in Mexico were not idle, for Nunez de Guzman from the moment of arriving there had begun secretly to collect information against him, and by unscrupulous and inquisitorial methods easily succeeded in forming a voluminous budget of accusations, among which figured the alleged poisoning of Luis Ponce de Leon, the conspiracy to establish himself as independent sovereign in Mexico, defrauding the royal fisc, and

incitement of the Indians to rebel against the royal authority while he was absent in Spain. Encouraging the enemies of Cortes to depose against him on the one hand, Guzman found excuses for persecuting his friends on the other, even to the extent of imprisoning, torturing, and hanging them on one pretext or another. Things reached such a pass through the violence of the president's conduct, that the Bishop Fray Juan Zumarraga, a man whose exemplary life gave him great influence, and the Franciscan monks, sent a vigorous protest to Spain against Guzman and his auditors, praying that he be deposed. This petition provoked an order from the Empress-Regent and the Royal Council, to take their *residencia*, and that they be imprisoned if found guilty of the abuses imputed to them. The bishop himself was appointed, *ad interim*, president of the new *audiencia*, which was composed of Quiroga, Salmeron, and Ceynos pending the arrival of the permanent president, Don Sebastian Ramirez de Fuenleal, then Bishop of San Domingo, and afterwards of Cuenca.

Nunez de Guzman sought to evade the issue by organising, against the Chichimecas, an expedition which he conducted with characteristic brutality. He left the city at the head of five hundred Spaniards, and over two thousand Indians, between auxiliaries and camp servants, before Cortes returned from Spain.

The powers conceded to Cortes as Captain-General, and for the continuation of his explorations and discoveries, were so large, and so ill-defined, that they could hardly fail to conflict with those of the royal *audiencia*, and this came to pass immediately after his arrival at Vera Cruz on July 15, 1530. The Marques, as he was henceforward called, was accompanied by his wife and his mother, and was received upon landing with jubilation by Spaniards and Indians alike, who flocked in thousands from all parts to welcome him, and to present their grievances for his adjustment. The new *audiencia* was not yet constituted, and the auditors, Matienzo and Delgadillo, sent strict orders to Vera Cruz that the people assembled there in Cortes's honour disperse to their homes, while to Cortes himself, who had meanwhile marched amid ovations by the way of Tlascala to Texcoco, they delivered a prohibition to enter the capital. This order was in conformity with the instructions given him before leaving Spain, so he was obliged to respect it, and to establish himself at Texcoco until the arrival of the new *audiencia* which took place in December of the same year, 1530. At the outset everything went well, and the new auditors rendered justice in several of Cortes's claims, and took counsel with him concerning affairs and the measures to be adopted. This promising state of things, however, was of brief duration, and, in their letter of February 22, 1531, to the Emperor, they made complaints of his pretensions, and mentioned among other things that the bishop in reading the prayers for the King and royal family added after the words *cum prole regia* "*et duce exercitus nostri*," and that they had corrected him for so doing.

Another of their letters, in August, 1532, complains of his great influence over the natives, and of his using his powers as Captain-General to revenge himself on his enemies, adding, "He says he will resign the Captaincy General and return to Spain. Oh if he would only do it!" (Munoz, torn. xxix., fol. 118). The auditors at other times advised that he be called to Spain on some pretext, — the more so as he wanted to go.

The conquest finished, Cortes's occupation was gone. His proud spirit and active temperament could ill brook the checks of the *audiencia*, and the limitations set to his enterprises by men who neither understood nor sympathised with them. At one time he retired in disgust from the capital, intending to devote himself to the administration of the affairs of his vast marquisate of Oaxaca. The capture of the picturesque town of Cuernavaca is described in the third letter, and for beauty of position it has few rivals even in Mexico. Here Cortes had built himself a handsome palace and a large church, both of which are still standing, though in a lamentable state of advancing dilapidation. As a planter in Cuba, he had already shown initiative and capacity, and he profited by his former experience to introduce successfully the sugar cane, the silk-worm culture, new breeds of the merino sheep and various other kinds of cattle. Mills for the handling of raw products were established in various places, and these new industries with which Cortes endowed Mexico have continued to be among her chief sources of wealth. But this was insufficient to occupy his restless activities, which, by the news of events in Peru, and of the rich countries discovered in the South Sea and along the Gulf of California, were constantly excited to plan fresh enterprises. In

May, 1532, he fitted out two vessels which sailed from Acapulco, under command of his cousin Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, one of which with the commander on board was never heard of again, while the other reached Jalisco after many perils. The misfortunes of this expedition began with a mutiny.

Two years later (1534) he built two more vessels at Tehuantepec, which he entrusted to Hernando Grijalba, and Diego de Bezerra de Mendoza (a relative) respectively, with Ortun Jimenez as pilot. The ships got separated the first night out and never saw one another again. The one commanded by Grijalba discovered a deserted island called Santo Tome, somewhere off the point of Lower California, and returned thence to Tehuantepec; the fate of the other was tragical, for Bezerra was murdered in his sleep by the pilot Jimenez, who took command, and, after coasting along Jalisco, landed at the Bay of Santa Cruz, where he, with twenty Spaniards, was killed by the natives. The remaining sailors got back to the port of Chiametla, where Nunez de Guzman, who was then in Jalisco, took possession of the vessel.

These two fruitless ventures decided Cortes to take command himself, and in 1536 he sent three ships from Tehuantepec to the port of Chiametla where he joined them, marching overland from Mexico. He regained possession of the ship which Guzman had seized from the sailors of Jimenez, refitted it, and set out on his voyage, exploring the coast for some fifty leagues beyond Santa Cruz (or La Paz), during which trip he suffered innumerable hardships, and lost many of his men from sickness. The news of his own death reached Mexico, and his wife sent two ships and a caravel to look for him and bring him back. His wife's letters, together with others from the royal *audiencia* and the Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza, urging his return as very necessary, decided Cortes to abandon further explorations, and after leaving Francisco de Ulloa in California, he returned to Acapulco in the early part of 1537.

He sent three ships, the *Santa Agneda*, *La Trinidad*, and the *Santo Tomas*, back to Francisco de Ulloa in May of that same year, which after some fruitless cruising about, returned to Acapulco, the whole venture having cost Cortes some two hundred thousand ducats (*Noticia Historica*. Lorenzana Cartas de Cortes, edition 1776). A royal cedilla, dated April 1, 1539 from Saragossa, provided for the payment of this claim, but remained ineffective (Alaman, *Dissertazioni*. V. Italian translation 1859).

Thus the only results obtained from these various undertakings were debts, and he complained that he had so many that he was obliged to raise money, even on his wife's jewels. He wrote in despair to the Emperor that it was easier to fight the Indians than to contend with His Majesty's officials, and after years of litigation, during which the royal authorities seemed to study how best to vex and circumvent him, and after the series of useless but costly expeditions in the Pacific, he started on his second journey to Spain, which was to be his last.

A very different reception from the former one awaited him, for the Emperor was coldly civil, and the Court in consequence was colder. His constant complaints and demands for satisfaction fell upon deaf or weary ears, for Court favours usually reckon more with present than with past services, and there was nothing more to be obtained from Cortes, who was broken in health and no longer young. At this time, too, Spain was all aflame with excitement over the brilliant achievements of Pizarro in Peru, which eclipsed the familiar exploits in Mexico, now grown stale.

He joined the unsuccessful expedition sent against Algiers in 1541, in which the ship on which he and his sons Martin and Luis sailed was wrecked, together with eleven galleys of Andrea Doria. They barely escaped with their lives, and the five famous emeralds, which constituted an important item in his fortune, and which he always carried on his person, were lost.

The supreme slight of leaving him out of the council of war, summoned to consider the plan of the campaign, was at this time put upon him, and, to his boast that with his Mexican veterans he could take Algiers, one of the generals superciliously replied, that fighting the Moors was different work from killing naked Indians. His situation became less and less worthy, and an anecdote, dramatically illustrating the depth to which he sunk, relates that after vain efforts to get a hearing from the Emperor, he thrust himself forward to the steps of the royal carriage, where upon perceiving him the Sovereign haughtily exclaimed, "And who are you?" to which Cortes proudly answered, "Sire, I am a man who has given Your Majesty more provinces than you possessed cities." What happened next we are not told. If it were true, the

incident would picture eloquently the degradation of the greatest captain of his age, forced to waylay his Sovereign at his carriage steps like the meanest beggar. There is no evidence forthcoming, however, to show that any such dialogue was ever spoken. Those who have believed and repeated this story, — and they are many, — have done so on the sole authority of Voltaire, with whom it apparently originated. (*Essai sur les Moeurs*, cap. 147.) He does not indicate from what source the information reached him. The scene as described seems to epitomise a very tragedy of disappointment and humiliation, so despite the staring stamp of fiction it bears, it will doubtless continue to pass for history when less dramatic facts are consigned to forgetfulness. Voltaire sceptically sneered at the credulity of the Spaniards, which enabled them, in the heat of the fight, to see St. James and St. Peter hovering over the Mexican battlefields but he himself had no difficulty in beholding Cortes in such a singularly improbable situation as this story depicts, though indeed nothing that is told of the appearances of those holy apostles seems further beyond the limits of credibility. As an unheeded suppliant, the Marques suffered snubs enough, without fictitious situations being invented to illustrate his fallen state. One last effort to attract his Sovereign's attention to his claims, and secure the fulfilment of the royal grants and promises, was made in the following pathetic letter, — the last he ever wrote to Charles V., — to which no response was ever made:

Sacred Catholic Caesarian Majesty:

I thought that the labour of my youth would have procured me repose in my old age, and thus for forty years I have given myself to God's service, deprived of sleep, eating poorly, and even at times not eating at all, with my arms always at my side, myself exposed to dangers and my fortune sacrificed to bring into His fold the sheep of a distant and unknown hemisphere, of which we even had no record, and to magnify the name, and extend the patrimony of my King by conquering and bringing under his royal yoke and sceptre the great kingdoms and dominions of barbarous peoples. And this I have done at my own expense, unaided in any way, — nay rather hindered by emulous rivals, who like leeches have sucked my very blood.

My hardships and vigils are sufficiently recompensed by God, in that He chose me for this. His work, and though people may attribute some merit to me, it will be clearly seen that not without reason did Divine Providence choose the meanest instrument for its greatest work, so that to God alone might be the glory.

As for the remuneration due me from my King, I have ever been confident that, coeteris paribus, it would not be less for being in Your Majesty's reign; for never did these kingdoms of my native Spain, to which these benefits accrue, possess so great and catholic a prince, so magnanimous and powerful a King. Thus when first I kissed Your Majesty's hands, and presented the fruits of my labours, you showed appreciation of them, and demonstrated intentions to recompense me with honours which, as it seemed to me, they were not equivalent to my deserts, Your Majesty knows I demurred at accepting.

Your Majesty commanded, however, that I should accept them, saying they were not in payment for my services, but to demonstrate your disposition to favour me, for Your Majesty would do as those who when shooting with the crossbow, begin by firing beside the mark, but end by piercing the bull's-eye, for the favours Your Majesty conferred upon me were outside the mark, but would improve until they struck the bull's-eye of my deserts. I was also assured that nothing should be taken from me, and that I must accept what was given me; hence I kissed Your Majesty's hands in gratitude. When you turned your back, all that I had was taken from me, nor were Your Majesty's promises to me fulfilled, for since Your Majesty has such a good memory, you will not have forgotten that besides these words and the promises Your Majesty made me, I possess still more and greater ones in Your Majesty's letters, signed with your Royal name. If my services up to that time merited such acts and the promises Your Majesty made me, they have not since then diminished, for I have never ceased to increase the patrimony of these kingdoms, and had it not been for the thousand obstacles opposed to me, I would have accomplished as much since I received Your Majesty's favours, as I had before done to merit them. I do not know wherefore the promised benefits are now withheld, nor why I am deprived of those I possessed. And if it be said that nothing has been taken

since I still possess something, I reply that to have nothing, or to have useless possessions, is one and the same thing, for what I have produces me nothing; better were it to have nothing at all than to have to use its profits to defend myself against Your Majesty's fiscal officers, which indeed is harder than it was to win the country from the Indians. Thus my labour has procured me peace of mind for having done my duty, but has brought me no profit, for not only am I without rest in my old age, but work on until my death, should it not please God to finish me now; for he who is so occupied in defending his body must needs neglect his soul.

I beseech Your Majesty not to requite such conspicuous services with so small a recompense, and since it must be believed that this is not Your Majesty's fault, let it be known; for, this work which God has accomplished through me is so great and marvellous, and its fame has spread so far through all your kingdoms, and through all Christendom, and even amongst the infidels, that everywhere the dissension between the Royal fisc and me is a subject of scandal. Some blame the fiscal officers, others blame me; but since the blame suffices neither to deprive me of the compensation nor to take from me my life, my honour, and my estate, (since none of this is done), it is clear that the fault is not mine. No one imputes it to Your Majesty, for did you wish to deprive me of all you had given me, the power to do so is yours, and nothing is impossible to your wish and power. To say that a form is sought in which the intention may be realised, does not sound credible, for it suffices for a King anointed of God to declare "thus I will and thus I command," for all to be accomplished without regard to forms.

I beseech that Your Majesty may be pleased to explain in Madrid your intention to requite my services, and I now recall some of these to your memory. Your Majesty told me you would order the Council to despatch my affairs, and I thought this order was given since Your Majesty said that you desired there should be no contention with the fiscal officers. When I asked for information, they told me I must defend myself in a suit against the claim of the fiscal officers, and abide by the sentence of the Court. This seemed to me to be grave, and I wrote to Your Majesty at Barcelona, begging that if Your Majesty was pleased to enter into litigation with your servant, that it should be before judges who were above suspicion, and that Your Majesty should order others to sit with those of the Council for the Indies, and jointly reach a decision. Your Majesty was not pleased to do this, though I cannot divine the cause, since the more numerous the judges the better would be their decision.

I am old and poor, with more than twenty thousand ducats of debts in the kingdom, besides a hundred more which I brought or were sent after me, and of which I also owe something, for they were borrowed to be sent to me. And all draw interest. During the five years which have elapsed since I left home, my expenses have been great, for I have maintained my three sons at Court, without once leaving, and besides them men of learning, procurators, and solicitors, who were all employed that Your Majesty might make use of them. I also assisted in the expedition to Algiers. It seems to me the fruit of my labours should not be thrown away, or left to the decision of a few, without my again begging that Your Majesty should be pleased to allow that all your judges of the Council should understand this case and decide it justly.

I have heard that the Bishop of Cuenca desired more judges than there are, because it is against him and the licenciado Salmeron, the new auditor of the Indian Council, that I am contending for sums of money, with interest, of which they deprived me when they were judges in New Spain, and it is clear that they cannot be asked to decide against themselves. I have not wished to recuse them in this case, because I always believed Your Majesty would not permit it to reach this stage, but since Your Majesty does not please to increase the number of judges, I am forced to recuse the Bishop of Cuenca and Salmeron, which I do unwillingly as it wastes time. This is the most damaging thing for me at sixty years of age, and, after five years' absence from home. I have but one son to succeed me, and though my wife is young enough to bear more, my age leaves little hope, and should it please God to dispose of this one before the succession, who will profit by what I have acquired? My very memory were lost in the succession of women. Again and again I implore Your Majesty to associate other judges with those of the Council; since all are your servants to whom the direction of your Kingdoms and your Royal conscience is

confided, so also may they be trusted to decide upon Your Majesty's grant to your vassal of a part of all which he won for Your Majesty, without labour or cost to your Royal Person, nor the responsibility of directing nor the expense of paying the men, who did the work, and who so loyally made over to Your Majesty, not only the country he conquered, but a vast quantity of gold and silver and jewels which he obtained as spoils.

May Your Majesty also be pleased to order the judges to give their decision within a certain time Your Majesty shall fix and without delay. This will be a great grace to me, for waiting is my loss, as I must return home, being now no longer of an age to travel from inn to inn, but rather to withdraw and settle my account with God, for it is a long one, and little life is left me to discharge it; better to lose my estate than my soul.

May God our Lord guard the Royal Person of Your Majesty, with the extension of your Kingdoms and glory as Your Majesty may desire.

From Valladolid, the 3rd of February, 1544.

Your Catholic Majesty's very humble servant and vassal, who kisses your Royal hands and feet.

The Marques del Valle.

No reply necessary, is the laconic annotation at the bottom of the last page of this letter.

The marriage arranged for his daughter with a son of the Marquis of Astorga was broken off, the bridegroom withdrawing because the full amount of the stipulated dowry was not forthcoming, and after this mortification, Cortes obtained permission to return to Mexico, travelling first to Seville, where he was accorded a public reception. His rapidly failing health made it apparent that his end was approaching, and prompted him to withdraw for quiet to Castelleja de la Cuesta, a small town near Seville, where he died in the house of a magistrate, Juan Rodriguez, in the Calle Real, on the 2nd of December, 1547, attended by his son Don Martin.

Fernando Cortes was a man of medium height, deep chested and slender limbed; his complexion was rather pale, and his expression was serious — even sad, though the glance of his eyes, which in repose were impenetrable, could be kindly and responsive. His hair and beard were dark and rather scanty.

Trained from his youth to the exercise of arms, he was a most dexterous swordsman, very light on his feet, and at home in the saddle.

His speech was calm, nor did he ever use oaths or strong language, nor give away to exhibitions of temper though a mounting flush and the swelling veins of his forehead betrayed his mastered passion when he was vexed, while a characteristic gesture of annoyance or impatience was the casting aside of his cloak.

He dressed with exquisite care and great sobriety, eschewing any excess of ornament. One splendid jewel adorned his hand, a gold medal of the Blessed Virgin, with St. John on the reverse, hung from a finely wrought gold chain around his neck, and just under the feathers of his cap was also a gold medal; these were his only ornaments. He had some knowledge of Latin, and many of the psalms, hymns, and parts of the Church liturgy, which he knew by heart, he was fond of reciting.

Though careless of his food, he was a great eater, but moderate in drinking, and no one could better withstand privations than he, as was constantly shown on his long marches. His chief relaxation was games of chance, in which he indulged habitually, but dispassionately, making either his winnings or losses a subject for jokes and laughter. When strict laws were enacted suppressing gambling in Mexico, his enemies alleged that he himself violated the law, and that the tables and cards were always ready in his own house.

One of the most notable things in his last will is the mention of his doubts about the right of holding slaves. He admonishes his eldest son to look well into the question, and if it should be decided by competent opinion that the practice was wrong, he must act in accordance with strict justice; meanwhile he must give great attention to the welfare and education of his people. He left a foundation and endowment fund for the hospital of Jesus (*la Concepcion*) in Mexico, and for a college and monastery at

Coyohuacan, but the funds ran short, and only the hospital was really established according to his intention. Masses were directed to be said at his father's tomb, and two thousand masses were provided for the souls of those who had fought with him in the conquest, a provision which cannot be considered in excess of their probable spiritual necessities.

In his will it was provided also that his body should be buried wherever he died for a period of ten years, at the expiration of which time his remains were to be taken to Mexico, to be there entombed in the monastery he had founded in Coyohuacan; consequently his body was first laid to rest with fitting ceremonies in the family Chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia, in the Church of San Isidro at Seville.

The following epitaph was composed by his son Martin:

*Padre, cuya suerte impropiamente
Aqueste bajo mundo poseia,
Valor que nuestra edad enriquecia
Descansa ahora en paz, eternamente.
(Andres Calvo, Los Tres Siglos de Mexico.)*

There his body lay, until by order of his son Don Martin Cortes, second Marques del Valle, it was removed in 1562 to Mexico, but, contrary to the provisions in the will, the place of sepulture was chosen in the monastery of St. Francis in Texcoco, where his mother and one of his daughters were already buried.

In 1629 Don Pedro Cortes fourth Marques del Valle died in Mexico, and with his death the male descendance of Cortes came to an end.

It was decided between the Viceroy, the Marques de Cerralbo, and the Archbishop of Mexico, D. Francisco Manso de Zuniga, to translate the body of the Conqueror to the capital and bury it together with that of his last descendant in the Church of St. Francis.

An elaborate funeral procession was organised, which set forth from the Cortes palace headed by all the religious associations and confraternities, carrying their respective banners, after which followed the civil tribunals. Next came the Archbishop accompanied by the cathedral chapter in full canonicals. The body of Don Pedro Cortes was exposed to view in an open coffin carried by knights of the chapter of Santiago, while the coffin of his great ancestor covered with a black velvet pall was borne by the royal judges, escorted by standard bearers carrying a white banner on which were embroidered the figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. John; another displaying the royal arms of Spain and a third of black velvet showing the arms of the Marques del Valle. Members of the University followed, and the procession closed with the Viceroy and all his court with an escort of soldiers carrying arms reversed and banners trailing. This funeral pageant — probably the most magnificent ever seen in the new world — advanced to the accompaniment of muffled drums and solemn chantings, halting at six different places for brief religious rites.

During more than a century and a half the bones of Cortes were left undisturbed, until in 1794 they were moved once more, and this time to the hospital of Jesus of Nazareth, which he had founded and endowed, and in whose chapel a monument was prepared to receive the body, which was confined in a crystal case riveted with silver bars. Would that this translation had been the last, and that the pilgrimages of this poor body had ended within the walls its owner's piety had built.

During the period of unrest which followed immediately upon the establishment of Mexican independence, a design was said to have been formed by some "patriots" to rifle the tomb, and scatter the conqueror's ashes to the winds, of which profanation the authorities were said to be aware, but either unwilling or unable to prevent it. Others contrived to forestall the threatened violation, and from 1823 the body of Cortes disappeared. Senor Garcia Icazbalceta wrote to Mr. Henry Harrisse upon the subject saying:

The place of the present sepulture of Cortes is wrapped in mystery. Don Lucas Alaman has told the history of the remains of this great man. Without positively saying so, he lets it be understood that they were taken to Italy.

It is generally believed that the bones of Cortes are in Palermo. But some persons insist that they are still in Mexico, hidden in some place absolutely unknown. Notwithstanding the friendship with which Senor Alaman has honoured me, I never could obtain from him a positive explanation; he would always find some pretext to change the conversation.

Senor Alaman's description of what occurred in 1823 is substantially as follows:

Early in the year 1822 discussions began in the Mexican Congress, in which the project of destroying the monument in the hospital (of Jesus) chapel was mooted; in the month of August of that year, Father Mier, in the hope of forestalling the intended desecration, proposed that the monument should be transferred to the National Museum. The following year, 1823, was marked by the transport to the capital of the remains of the patriots who had proclaimed the independence of 1810, and certain newspapers published violent articles, inciting the people to celebrate this event by rifling the tomb of the Conqueror, and burning his body at St. Lazaro. Fearing the execution of this threat, which would have left an indelible stain on the national honour, the Vicar General directed the chaplain of the hospital to conceal the body in a secure place, and both Senor Alaman himself and Count Fernando Lucchesi, who represented the Duke of Terranova's interests in Mexico at that time, assisted at the temporary hiding away of the remains under the steps of the altar. The bust and arms of gilded bronze were sent to the Duke of Terranova in Palermo, and the dismantled monument remained in the chapel until 1833, when it also disappeared (Alaman Dissertazioni sulla Storia del Messico Dissert. V., Italian translation by Pelaez, 1859).

Thus far Senor Alaman is as explicit as possible, but concerning the final resting place of the body he says nothing whatever on his own account, closing the subject by introducing a quotation from Dr. Mora (who, he says, was the first to publish these facts), which states that "afterwards the remains were sent to his family."

In the collaborated work published under the special direction of Don Vincente Riva Palacio, entitled *Mexico a Traves los Siglos*, it is stated in a note on page 353 of the second volume, that Cortes's body was sent to the Duke of Monteleone in Italy in 1823. ("*fuere[n] rimitidos a Italia a la casa de los Duques de Monteleone*"). In the chapters of the fourth volume, which chronicle the events of the year 1823, no mention is made of this occurrence, which it would surely seem was of sufficient importance to merit notice. Neither Mr. Prescott nor Sir Arthur Helps, nor any other as far as I can discover, has left a record of any attempts to clear up this mystery.

If the remains of the conqueror were taken to Palermo or consigned to the family of the Dukes of Monteleone, there is no record of the transaction, nor is any tradition of it known, even by hearsay, to the present members of the family, or to the keepers of the family archives.

Not the least of the glories of the Pignatelli family, which has kept its place among the foremost of Sicily and Naples, is their descent from the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, and it seems inadmissible that the body of this illustrious ancestor should arrive at Palermo as recently as 1823, be buried nobody knows where, and no record of any sort be kept of such an important and interesting event in the annals of the family. The absence, therefore, of any record, or even oral tradition, of such an event seems to be at least a negative proof that it never took place. It is quite thinkable that the custodians of the hospital chapel, where the body lay in 1823, should have invented and circulated the fiction of its transport out of the country to convince the intending desecrators that it had been put beyond their reach; meanwhile it was easy to hide the coffin in some secret place, doubtless within the walls of the hospital itself, where it may still lie in a forgotten grave. The legend of the transport to Italy and the burial in Palermo being thus started and doubtless diligently spread with a purpose, encountered no contradiction, and, with the death

of the necessarily few persons who possessed the secret, all knowledge of the facts was lost, while the invention passed from legend into history, and has been commonly accepted and quoted. Senor Garcia Icazbalceta's letter to Mr. HARRISSE does, however, state that "some persons insist that they are still in Mexico hidden in some place absolutely unknown," and these persons are doubtless right. Why Senor Alaman should have made any mystery about the matter, even with his friend Icazbalceta, does not seem easy to explain, especially if he knew the body to be in Palermo. If Senor Alaman knew the body was in Mexico, but wished to encourage the belief that it was in Palermo, his reticence with Senor Garcia Icazbalceta is explicable, for it must also be borne in mind that he never positively said he knew it to be in Palermo, — he merely gave it to be understood that he thought so by quoting Dr. Mora, who stated the fact without offering any proofs of its truth. If he wished what he knew was not true to be believed, his regard for truth forbade his going to the length of a positive statement, but he might feel justified for motives which, whatever they were, in the first half of the last century, have no existence now, in encouraging the spread of the Palermo legend. Or it may also well be that Senor Alaman was partly convinced by what he heard that the body was in Palermo, but in the face of the contrary assertions made by some persons, and the absence of any authentic record of the transaction, was reluctant to commit himself to a positive statement.

The Republic of Mexico has emerged from its state of infancy, and has successfully survived the periods of trials, and perilous struggles, which all new nations must traverse to reach the state of permanent and prosperous peace, indispensable to national greatness. The four hundredth anniversary of the discovery and conquest, which looms in sight, will find her in the foremost ranks of the republics of the New World, and these great events will doubtless be commemorated by becoming celebrations, which shall suitably revive the memory of the great Conqueror, and his intrepid allies of Tlascalala. If there be any clue or trace by which the body of Cortes can be found, it should be diligently followed up, until the remains are recovered and restored to the place of honour in the national pantheon.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF FERNANDO CORTES MARQUES DEL VALLE DE OAXACA

IN the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are three persons and one, only, and true God Whom I hold, believe, and confess to be my true God and Redeemer, and of the most glorious and fortunate Virgin His Blessed Mother, our Lady and Advocate. Let all who may see this Testament know that I, Don Fernando Cortes, Marques del Valle de Oaxaca, Captain General of New Spain and the South Sea for the Caesarian Majesty of the Emperor Charles, fifth of this name, my sovereign Prince and Lord, being ill, but in such free and sound judgment with which it has pleased God to endow me, fearing death, as is natural to every creature, and desiring to prepare myself against such time as it may please God to call me hence, do for the good of my soul, and the peace and discharge of my conscience, execute, and recognise this document which I do make, and order as my last testament and final will, in the following form and manner.

I. First I direct that, should I die in the Spanish realm, my body shall be interred in the church of that parish wherein shall stand the house in which I die, and that there it shall remain until such time as it may please my successor to transport my bones to New Spain; this I charge and direct him to do within ten years and sooner if possible, and that he transport them thence to my town of Coyoacan, and there give them sepulture in the monastery of the nuns called La Concepcion, of the order of St. Francis which I have founded in my said town, with provision for the interment of myself and my successors.

II. Item: I direct that should it please God that my end and death should take place in this realm of Spain, my burial shall be attended to, according to the provisions of those gentlemen whom I have named my executors, or of any one of them who may be present, and that everything suitable thereto be decently ordered.

III. I direct, furthermore, that the beneficed clergy and chaplains of the parish church of the town or place where I die shall carry my body, and that all the monks of the religious Orders shall also march in procession, headed by the cross, and assist at the obsequies which shall be celebrated; and I direct that the usual alms may be given to the said religious orders according to the judgment of my said executors.

IV. Item: I direct that, on the day of my death, fifty poor men be provided out of my means with full gowns of grey cloth, with large hoods of the same, and shall accompany my funeral procession bearing lighted torches, after which each shall receive one real.

V. Item: I direct that on the same day of my funeral, if it should take place before midday, and otherwise on the day following, all the masses possible shall be said in all the churches and monasteries of the said city or town or place of my death; and besides these masses, five thousand more shall be said on successive days in the following manner: one thousand for the souls in purgatory, two thousand for the souls of those who lost their lives serving under me in the discoveries and conquests which I made in New Spain, and the two remaining thousand for the souls of all towards whom I have obligations of which I am ignorant or forgetful; those which I do know and remember shall be discharged as I direct in this my testament. My executors shall recompense the said five thousand masses according to custom, and I beg them in all that concerns my funeral to suppress the worldly pomps, and devote money rather to the good of souls.

VI. Item: On the said day of my burial my executors shall furnish all my own servants and those of my sons with a suitable mourning dress, as they shall judge proper, and during six succeeding months, my

servants shall continue to receive their usual stipend with their food and drink, exactly as during my lifetime. Those who do not remain in the service of my son and successor Don Martin shall receive their payment in full on the day they leave his service.

VII. Item: I direct that when my bones shall be transported to New Spain for interment in the monastery church of Coyoacan, which I direct to be built, that this shall be done by order of the Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga, my wife, and in such wise as she or my son or my successor at that time, whichever of them may be living at that time, shall direct.

VIII. Item: I direct that the bones of Dona Catalina Pizarro my lady mother, and those of Don Luis my son, which are buried in the monastery church of St. Francis in Texcoco, and those of Dona Catalina my daughter which are in the monastery of Cuahuanavac (Cuernavaca), be brought, and buried in my sepulchre in the said monastery which I found in my town of Coyoacan.

IX. Item: I direct that the hospital of Our Lady of the Conception, which I directed to be founded in the city of Mexico in New Spain, shall be finished at my cost according to the plan drawn. The principal chapel of its church shall be completed according to the model in wood made by Pedro Vasquez Junetrico, and the plan described in the letter which I sent to New Spain, in this present year 1547. For these costs I set apart especially the rents deriving from my shops and houses in the said city, situated in the square and street of Tacuba and San Francisco, and in the street which unites them; this income shall be given exclusively to the said works until they are completed, nor shall my successor employ them for any other purposes. But it is my wish and will that the expenditure be made by my successor as patron of the hospital, and, when the works are finished according to the said plans, that the same rents shall be devoted to providing revenues for the wants of the administration, and the direction of the said hospital, following in this institution the order laid down by me before a notary public. Failing this, I direct that the same system of administration be adopted as that which obtains in the hospital of the Five Wounds, founded by Dona Catalina de Rivera (may she have glory), for maintaining the administrators, chaplains, and other officers and servants attached to the said hospital.

X. Item: I direct that in the chapel of the monastery of St. Francis in Medellin, where my father Martin Cortes is buried, the memorial masses, for which I leave provision, shall be celebrated yearly in perpetuity. My successor or successors shall for all time see to this, for which purpose I name, as patron of the said chapel, my son and successor Don Martin Cortes, and after him those who shall follow him in the succession. He, holding the said patronage (or those who succeed him by right of primogeniture), may name as his substitute for the exercise of the said patronage such person or persons as may be desirable for such time as may please him, and hold full power to revoke such appointment whenever he may so desire, substituting any other who is deemed suitable. Such person, thus appointed, shall, in the absence of the head of my house, hold the same power and faculties as the said patron himself, for such time as his appointment may last.

XI. Item: I declare that since Almighty God Our Lord has vouchsafed to advance and favour me in the discovery and conquest of New Spain, and I have always received from His merciful hand very great favours and mercies, both in my victories over the enemies of His Holy Catholic Faith, and in the pacification and settlement of those kingdoms, from which I hope great service may accrue to God our Lord. I order that the following works be undertaken in grateful recognition of those said favours and mercies, and also to discharge and satisfy my conscience for whatsoever faults or burdens may lie thereon, but of which my memory no longer takes account to enable me to specify them.

XII. I order and direct that, in addition to the aforesaid hospital which I have already provided shall be built in the city of Mexico, a monastery of the nuns of the Conception, belonging to the Order of St. Francis, shall be built in my town of Coyoacan, in such place, and according to such plan as I shall indicate; and should I not leave these instructions, then I direct that my successor or his deputy shall found and build it, providing a community with such endowment as shall be required. I designate the said monastery in my town of Coyoacan as my place of sepulture, which I direct shall be in the major chapel of

the church of the said monastery, where no other persons except my legitimate descendants may be buried.

XIII. Item: I direct that a college shall be built in my said town of Coyoacan for students of theology and canon law; that there may be learned persons to officiate in the churches, and to train and instruct the natives in our Holy Catholic Faith. This college shall be provided with faculties, and receive a number of students, and the rules and constitutions which I shall establish for it shall be observed. It shall be built in such place, and after a plan suitable to the said institution, and with such regulations and ordinances as I shall prescribe, and, if perchance I should not explain these, I direct that my successor or his deputy shall organise and build it, adopting the statutes, constitutions, and ordinances governing the college of Santa Maria de Jesus founded in this city of Seville. The costs and expenses of the said college shall be covered and supplied from the rents which will be designated.

XIV. Item: I destine, for the endowment of the said hospital of Our Lady of the Conception which I am building in Mexico, two front ground plots of the houses of Jorge Alvarado, and of the treasurer Juan Alonso de Sosa, between my house and the aqueduct which extends to the houses of Don Luis Saavedra, which being now unoccupied, I assume the obligation to construct such buildings as may amply suffice for the said endowment. During such time as the said buildings are not constructed, the said hospital shall receive support from my estate to the amount of one hundred thousand maravedis of good money. I direct that the said endowment shall be furnished as is provided, and with the conditions I shall hereafter state, and I direct that my successor shall be free at any time to allot the said hospital some part of the said one hundred thousand maravedis income, in lieu of the said buildings, should he so desire, affecting this substitution in any assured manner he may wish.

XV. Item: as, likewise, I have stated and bound myself to furnish to the said hospital lands near the city of Mexico, producing three hundred thousand fanegas of wheat, as is set forth in the said endowment to which I refer, I direct that this obligation be fulfilled, and I assign for such purpose a piece of land, which I own, at the extremity of Coyoacan, situated between that town, and the river which crosses the road leading to Chapultepec. Should this not suffice, the amount shall be completed, at the option of my successor, from other lands where I have had, and have, my plantations, situated beyond the said river in the direction of Chapultepec. Should my successor or successors at any time wish to substitute for the said hospital, as required by the endowment, other lands producing three hundred thousand fanegas of wheat, this may be done, on condition that they are as good as those I have designated. As I do not know whether some part of the lands, indicated and named by me for the said hospital, may not belong to me as Senor (proprietary lord) of that place, or by other title, I direct that any such be restored to their owners, who shall be paid the full value to their satisfaction. As I have worked such lands, profiting by them, under the belief that I might do so with a clear conscience, I direct that the rightful owners of the said lands be repaid the amount it may be shown I have derived from them, so that my conscience may be clean; my said successor shall be obliged, should these lands be shown not to belong to me, to make good the amount provided in the act of endowment to the said hospital.

XVI. Item: I declare and say that, as has been stated, the construction of the said hospital in Mexico shall be completed in the said city as above mentioned out of the rents of the lands and buildings I own in the square and streets of Tacuba and San Francisco; and this construction completed, the income from the said shops and buildings shall revert to my successor or successors. They shall henceforth devote this entire sum annually to the construction of the monastery of nuns, and of the above mentioned college which I directed to be founded and built in my said town of Coyoacan, using and distributing the sums necessary to put them in possession.

XVII. And, that the works of the said hospital, monastery, and college above described may be speedily completed, and the service of God our Lord thereby promoted, as it is hoped, I direct that, in addition to the four thousand ducats derived from the buildings already indicated for the works of the said hospital in Mexico, and the said college and monastery in Coyoacan, six thousand ducats more shall be used from my estate each year from the date of my death, so that in all there will thus be ten thousand ducats devoted to

this purpose; four thousand from the income of the shops and buildings for the work on the said hospital until it is finished; three thousand for the construction of the said monastery of nuns; and the remaining three thousand for the building of the said college. When the work on the said hospital shall be terminated, the four thousand ducats set apart therefor shall be divided into equal parts, and devoted to the works on the said monastery and college, so that each of these may thus dispose of five thousand ducats yearly. These works being completed, in order to relieve my successor of the obligation of continuing from thenceforth forever to give the six thousand and the four thousand ducats from the income of the said shops and buildings, these sums shall be distributed as follows: one thousand ducats for the endowment and estates of the said monastery of nuns which, as has been said, I directed to be founded in my town of Coyoacan; two thousand ducats for the endowment and expenses of the said college which I directed to be founded in the same town; and another thousand ducats do I adjudge to the said hospital of the Conception which I directed to be founded in the said city of Mexico. This last shall be with such condition that, by a yearly payment of this sum, the obligation assumed by me and my successor and successors (to build for the endowment of the said hospital certain houses, and two front ground plots of the houses of Jorge de Alvarado and the treasurer Juan de Sosa) may be acquitted, as well our obligation to provide one hundred thousand maravedis of annual income to the said hospital should we fail to construct the said buildings. This is also that I and my successor and successors may be released from the obligation, which I assumed when I endowed the said hospital, of giving it certain lands near the city of Mexico, yielding three hundred fanegas of wheat; for it is my wish and intention that, by giving the said hospital an annual income in perpetuity of one thousand ducats, I and my successor and successors may be released from all claim upon the said houses, or in lieu of them, the said one hundred thousand maravedis, and the said lands producing three hundred fanegas of wheat; all of which both in whole and in part I direct shall return to the possession and enjoyment of my successor and successors. Should the said hospital not desist from such claim, I direct that this provision and endowment of one thousand ducats yearly income shall be of no value or effect, but this sum shall revert to my successor or successors.

XVIII. Item: I say that, inasmuch as it is seen by experience that the revenues from lands and houses, both in Spain and in New Spain, increase daily, my shops and buildings, above mentioned, may become of greater value, and yield an income exceeding the amount of four thousand ducats which I devise and give forevermore, as is attested by the endowments of the said monastery of nuns, the said college, and the said hospital, and it is my will that should the said shops and buildings become more valuable and yield more rent, that the excess of value and rent, over and above the said four thousand ducats, shall be divided as follows: two parts of the said excess to go to the said college and of the remaining two parts one each to the said monastery of nuns and to the said hospital.

XIX. Item: I say and direct that, by virtue of the grant made to me by the Emperor our King, and Lord of the towns therein mentioned, his rights of patronage over the churches of the said towns belong to me in conformity with a clause of the said grant, in which it is declared that I possess in those towns all the rights, contributions, and customs, and everything else which His Majesty has or may have in the other towns of New Spain, which, excepting the mines and salt, remain the property of his royal crown. Thus, except these two things specified in the grant, the right of patronage belonging to him, belongs for the same reason to me. In addition to the grant made me by His Majesty, I hold the said rights of patronage by concession of His Holiness, the bull for which is deposited with His Majesty, and his Council for the Indies, that they may recognise as valid the said concession. I desire, and it is my will, that my successor or successors, may have and preserve forever the said right of patronage. As, at the time I solicited the concession from His Holiness, it was my intention that the natives of those towns should be better instructed in the doctrines of our Holy Catholic Faith, I direct and charge Don Martin, my son, and successor and successors, to have very special care of this, conferring the benefices of the said towns upon able men of good life and example, with the obligation to daily instruct the said natives; and that they take great care to oversee and ascertain very particularly how this is done and fulfilled. As the said concession from His Holiness says that I and my heirs and successors should have and receive the tithes and first

fruits from the said towns, comprised in the right of patronage for the endowment of the churches, I direct that dowries, vestments, and other things necessary for the cult, and the wine for the administration of the Sacraments, be all provided for out of the said tithes and first fruits. During such time as this is not complied with, through no fault of my successor or successors, the said tithes and first fruits may not be employed otherwise, for, from this time forth and forever, I destine and apply these to provide the said churches with all whatsoever belongs to or concerns them in so far as may be necessary for the purposes above expressed, the control and enjoyment of the said right of patronage remaining to my successors the same as it has been conceded to me; hence it is my will that whatever may remain of the said titles and first fruits of these churches, over and above the expenses above set forth, being properties dedicated to God Our Lord, and to His holy temples, shall be used and distributed in works of His service, and for no other purpose I say therefor and direct that such surplus of tithes and first fruits, after each year's expenditure for the above mentioned objects, shall be adjudged perpetually by my successor or successors or their deputies as follows: — one half to the endowment of the said college, and the remainder divided equally between the said monastery, and the said hospital, in the same proportion as the division which is made of the rents from the said shops and buildings.

XX. Item: I direct that ten thousand ducats be paid to my wife, the Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga, which sum I received as her dowry; forasmuch as I received and expended them, and they belong to her, I direct that they be paid without dispute or question from the first and best properties of my estate.

XXI. Item: I say that, since, between Don Pedro Alvarez Osorio, marques de Astorga, and myself, it has been arranged and concerted that his eldest son and heir, Don Alvaro Perez Osorio, should marry Dona Maria Cortes, legitimate daughter of myself and the Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga, my wife, and the conditions of this marriage have been set forth in a contract, it is my will that it should be fulfilled according to the stipulations; and as I have agreed and promised one hundred thousand ducats as a dower for the said Dona Maria, my daughter, of which the Marques de Astorga, conformably to the said stipulations, has already received twenty thousand ducats, I desire that before everything else the remaining eighty thousand ducats be paid from the estates of the said marquesa, my wife, and from my own to complete the said dower, at the time and in the manner provided in the said contract. These sums shall be charged against the legitimate share of our estates which would belong to my daughter Dona Maria.

XXII. As I am obliged to dower Dona Catalina and Dona Juana, the legitimate daughters of myself and my wife, the said marquesa, I direct that, in discharge of this obligation as best I can, each of them shall receive fifty thousand ducats, making one hundred thousand for both; for which purpose I transfer this sum irrevocably during my lifetime to Melchor de Mojica, my administrator and secretary, who is here present and accepts the same in my name. These hundred thousand ducats may be taken from the joint estate of the marquesa my wife, and mine, and charged against the share her legitimate daughters would have of our estate. Failing the necessary sum, at the time of my death, to pay these hundred thousand ducats, I desire that whatever is wanting shall be paid by my son and successor, Don Martin, or whatever other successor, by setting apart from my estate fifteen thousand ducats yearly, until the full amount of one hundred thousand ducats be made up, as said above.

I, Melchor de Mojica accept and receive the said dower of one hundred thousand ducats in the name of the said ladies. Dona Catalina and Dona Juana, as set forth in this article, and, in witness and confirmation of the same, I here sign my name.

Melchor de Mojica.

XXIII. Item: I direct, and place as a charge on my successor, and on the income of my estate. an annual pension of one thousand ducats in gold to each of my natural sons, Don Martin and Don Luis Cortes, for their lifetime, or until each of them may have an income of over five thousand maravedis. I direct that these sums be paid, free from any tax of any sort, annually; and from this time forth I establish them as theirs, from the best share of my rents. I direct that my sons, Don Martin and Don Luis, be subject and obedient to my successor in everything, in which they honestly may, as to the chief and head of the family

from which they spring, and that for no reason shall they disobey or fail in their respect to him, but shall assist and serve him in everything not contrary to God Our Lord, or His holy religion, and Catholic Faith, or against their rightful king; and I direct that should either show notorious disobedience or disrespect, such as may be proven as such, they shall lose the benefits and substance they receive, and shall be considered as strangers to my house and children.

XXIV. Item: I direct that marriages for my daughters, Dona Catalina and Dona Juana, are to be arranged only upon the counsel, and with the approval, of the marquesa, their mother, and of my successor. Should either of them marry outside this condition, my successor shall not be obliged to pay anything of the dower I have provided.

XXV. Item: I direct that Dona Catalina Pizarro, my daughter by Leonor Pizarro, wife of Juan de Salcedo, a citizen of Mexico, be given the full amount of the income and increase of the cows, mares, and ewes which I gave her when she first came to the kingdom of Mexico, together with the income from the town of Chinantla, and all else that I assigned for her marriage dower and delivered to the said Juan de Salcedo, husband of Dona Leonor Pizarro, her mother. And, as I have received from the increase on the said ranches a number of horses, bulls, rams, and monies, I direct that this amount be repaid out of my estate, to my daughter Dona Catalina, according to the account presented by the said Juan de Salcedo, at the price they were worth when I received them. I confess, now, that two receipts, made to me by Hernando de Saavedra, and Gil Gonzale de Benevides, for a certain amount in gold for some cows which I sold them at four different times, as will appear from the said receipts, really belong to the estate and increase of my daughter Dona Catalina, although they are made out to me; and I therefore direct that they be paid to her with interest, being hers, and coming from her estate. The amounts of the said receipts are two thousand pesos of good gold for the one, and two thousand seven hundred and fifty for the other.

XXVI. Item: I acknowledge another receipt from Francisco de Villegas, citizen of Mexico, given me for two thousand pesos in gold for some cows, of which, according to Juan de Salcedo's statement, he only owes one thousand, as he did not receive the full number of cows sold to him, which coming also from the property of my daughter, Dona Catalina, I order be paid to her.

XXVII. Item: I also acknowledge another receipt, of four hundred pesos, made me by Bernardino del Castillo, for mares, likewise coming from the property of my daughter, Dona Catalina; I order that this be paid to her.

XXVIII. Item: I acknowledge another receipt, for two thousand four hundred pesos in gold, given me by Alonzo Davalos, for twelve mares and six fillies, coming from the property of my daughter, Dona Catalina; I order that this be paid to her.

XXIX. Item: I declare that all the cows and flocks at Matalango belong to my daughter, Dona Catalina, and to the said Leonor Pizarro, besides all the mares and colts at Taltizapan, which bear her brand of a large E on the haunch.

XXX. Item: I declare that, of the receipt made by Gil Gonzale de Benevides with Hernando de Saavedra, which, as above said, belongs to my daughter, Dona Catalina, three hundred and fifty castellanos in gold have been paid, which I received in four horses which I possess; I order that this be paid to the said Dona Catalina.

XXXI. Item: I declare that I gave a final quittance to the said Juan de Salcedo, citizen of Mexico, husband of the said Leonor Pizarro, stating that I gave and give it him in full receipt for all accounts he had with the estate and goods of Dona Catalina Pizarro, my daughter, which were delivered to him. I say that I gave the said final quittance, notwithstanding I was not disposed to give it without the accounts and payments, at the instance and entreaty of the said Juan de Salcedo, to save him the necessity of rendering the said accounts during my absence; for which he promised, under oath, that, on my return from my journey, he would present them in full, without fraud nor taking anything from the said Dona Catalina; and this he did, with Andres de Tapia present as witness.

XXXII. Item: I direct that, when it may please Our Lord that the said Dona Catalina, my daughter, should marry, she shall do so on the counsel, and with the consent of my successor, whom I beg to take special care to provide that his sister Catalina marries as becomes the honour of our house and her own.

XXXIII. Item: I direct that my natural daughters, Dona Leonor and Dona Maria, shall receive as dowries, each, ten thousand ducats from my estate, recommending them to marry with the counsel and consent of my said successor, whom I charge as in the former article touching his sister. Dona Catalina. Should either or both die before marrying, or desire to enter the religious life, let them receive for their support and expenses sixty thousand maravedis yearly; the remainder reverting to my son and successor Don Martin, and those who follow him.

XXXIV. Item: I direct that, as some persons have served on my farming estates, and I do not know whether they have been paid, the conditions agreed upon with me or my administrators at the time of their engagement shall be ascertained, and that they be paid as the books of the administration show to be just, without wearying them with more controversy than is required to discover the truth. This to be done on the conscience of my successor and executors, without their being obliged to give any other account than that they have paid them.

XXXV. Item: I direct that all debts as shall appear from my account books, owing to people in my service, both here in Spain and in New Spain, shall be paid in accordance with the conditions established when they entered my service, and that this be done without delay or dispute. As Bernardino del Castillo was engaged in taking account of all that the licenciado Don Juan Altamirano has furnished and sent me, I direct that the statement of the said licenciado be accepted.

XXXVI. Item: I direct that all my debts of whatever nature public and private, when shewn to be justly mine, be paid without delay or process of law, but quickly and without incurring expense. As I may have debts for which I have no written proof, I direct that all such, if shewn to be mine, even without writing, be paid without process of law, up to the amount of one hundred pesos in good money.

XXXVII. Item: I say that I have spent large sums of money in New Spain and its provinces, which I conquered and brought under the dominion of the royal crown of Castile, both in the conquest, as well as in the armadas which I sent elsewhere, such as those I sent to Amaluco (Molucca Island), under the captain Alvaro de Saavedra, and one sent to Hibueras, with settlers commanded by Geronimo Prima, and another to the same province of Hibueras, of which Francisco de las Casas was captain. All were sent by order of our lord the Emperor, as may be seen from his royal instructions and signature, and as His Majesty, to discharge his royal conscience, and as a most Christian prince, sent me his royal cedilla, which is among the papers in possession of the licenciado Juan Altamirano, and an order of his royal council, authorised an account to be made with me of all I have spent in the said conquests and armadas, I direct that this account be made and presented to His Majesty, since he was pleased to order payment to me. This sum I wish and direct to go to my heir, the said Don Martin Cortes, my son and successor in my house and estate, and to the successors who shall follow him.

XXXVIII. Item: I direct that the said Don Martin, my son, (and those who may succeed), shall have the following upon his conscience: His Majesty granted me the towns, places, and lands of the estate I have and own in New Spain, with all the rents, rights, tributes, and contributions belonging to His Majesty, exactly as the former rulers used to receive them before the conquest. I have used all diligence to verify the said rents, tributes, rights, and contributions which those rulers enjoyed, and I was careful to continue the former masters where such tributes and rents are usually paid, in agreement with whom I have collected the said rents and tributes until today. I direct that, if it shall at any time appear that I was badly informed as to the above, and have taken anything not belonging to me, of which I was until today unaware, thinking I took my rights, it shall be rectified.

XXXIX. Item: as there have been many doubts and opinions as to whether it is permitted with a good conscience to hold the natives as slaves, whether captives of war or by purchase, and up till now this has not been determined, I direct my son and successor Don Martin, and those who may follow him, to use all diligence to settle this point for the peace of my conscience and their own.

XL. Item: I direct that, as in some places on my estates pieces of ground have been taken for orchards, vineyards, cotton-fields and other purpose, it must be ascertained whether such lands belonged to the natives of those towns, and, if so, I order that they be restored, with all such profits their owners might have derived from them, compensating, and receiving in total, discharge of all the rents and tributes which they were obliged to pay for them; and, in the case of Bernardino del Castillo, my servant, to whom, in past years, I gave a piece of land, situated on the outskirts of Coyoacan, on which he built a sugar mill, I order that this be done should it appear that the land belongs to third parties.

XLI. Item: I direct that, as I have received, in addition to the tributes paid me by vassals, other services both personal and real, and as on this point also opinions differ as to whether such maybe accepted with a good conscience, this matter shall be investigated, and, if it appears that I have received more of such services than belonged to me, those natives shall be paid and indemnified in all that it shall appear they may justly claim.

XLII. Item: I direct that all my account books be examined, especially a large one in possession of Francisco de Santa Cruz, which my secretary and scrivener Juan de Rivera began, but which passed to the said Francisco de Santa Cruz, who keeps my said books. I order that all debts found therein, due to all persons whatsoever shall be paid, and likewise that all debts due to me be collected; and, I order that the said Francisco de Santa Cruz render his accounts for the time he has had charge of my business, and everything be settled with him, and that all on our side and the other be paid.

XLIII. Item: I say that, inasmuch as I loaned Bernardino del Castillo at the time of his marriage one thousand castellanos in gold and silver, besides six hundred more in furnishings for the shop next to the clock tower, as will appear from a receipt signed with his name, and deposited with the licenciado Juan Altamirano, he shall be credited with what I owe him for the time of his sendee which may be determined by a receipt signed by me when I left Coyoacan, and the remainder shall go to my successor.

XLIV. Item: I direct that, for as long as Dona Elvira de Hermosa, daughter of Luis de Hermosa, citizen of Avila, who is now maid to the marquesa, my wife, shall remain in the service of any of my daughters or of the wife of Don Martin, she shall be paid twenty thousand maravedis annually; and should she desire to become a nun, or to live unmarried in this city, she shall be paid from my estate two hundred thousand maravedis besides giving her the twenty thousand maravedis annually.

XLV. Item: I direct that, for as long as my cousin Cecilia Vazquez Altamirano may desire to remain with the marquesa, my wife, or with any of my daughters, or the wife of Don Martin, she shall enjoy the same respect I have ever shown her; and I desire that, wherever she may choose to live, one thousand maravedis shall be surely and regularly paid her annually from my estate.

XLVI. Item: I direct that two hundred thousand maravedis be paid from my estate to each of the two daughters of the administrator, Juan Altamirano, my cousin, for their dowry, and marriage portion.

XLVII. Item: I direct that, for as long as the said Juan Altamirano may wish to retain the charge of the administration in my household, this shall be allowed him, and, with the profit assigned him by my cedula, shall be continued to him for as long as he may wish.

XLVIII. Item: I direct that three hundred thousand maravedis be paid to Dona Beatriz, and Dona Luisa, her sister, daughters of the marquesa my wife, to enable them to marry, two hundred thousand to the said Dona Luisa and to the said Dona Beatriz one hundred thousand maravedis.

XLIX. Item: I direct that, if Maria de Torres, now duenna with the marquesa, should wish to remain in her service, or in that of any of my daughters, or the wife of my son and successor, she be paid annually fifteen thousand maravedis, and should she want something for herself, she shall be given one hundred thousand whenever she wishes, in recognition of her past services, without subtracting any sums she may have received in that time, nor the fifteen thousand which I provide for the time she shall continue in service.

L. Item: I say that, as in the year 1542, while I was in Barcelona, Gonzalo Diaz my equerry was short forty ducats of my money which was placed in his hands, I ordered this amount to be deducted from his pay, and, although he sustained no harm, I now pardon him, and direct that no deduction of this sum be

made in his accounts, and if any has already been made to cancel it, and pay him in full; besides which, I leave him as a mark of favour one hundred ducats in gold, to be paid him from my estate.

LI. Item: I direct that, although in the year 1544 my groom of the chambers gave me his note for forty-four thousand five hundred and twenty maravedis for the value of certain pieces of silver for which he could not account when he was my plate-butler, for which he therefore owed me, nevertheless in consideration of his service, I forgive him that obligation, and pardon him, and he shall receive back his note, and be paid twenty ducats in gold from my estate.

LII. Item: I direct that, besides paying Geronimo de Andrada what is owing on his account he be given from my estate thirty ducats in gold, which I leave him in recognition of his services.

LIII. Item: I say inasmuch as there is a suit with the wife and heirs of the licenciado Nunez, member of the council, who was my solicitor, concerning certain of our accounts, which showed him my debtor for large sums, and although I am well informed, and have a clear conscience, nor on my side has this suit been sustained through malice, but only to have justice, that, nevertheless I direct, if the widow and heirs of the licenciado Nunez wish to settle our suit amiably, that two accountants be chosen to act for them with two of mine, to whom all necessary papers shall be given, and whose decision shall be accepted as final without other legal action. Should they not so agree, let the suit go on its ordinary course, as my only wish is to know the truth, and have justice done. Whatever sums may result from the suit, shall be distributed as is provided in a memorandum in the hands of my secretary, Melchor de Mojica; and the same shall be done with the sums received from the suit now pending with Francisco de Arteaga Martinez.

LIV. Item: I direct that thirty thousand maravedis be given as a marriage portion to a girl who is, and has been since childhood, a servant in my household and who is said to be a child of one Francisco Barco, born in Tehuantepec.

LV. Item: I direct that a suit of mourning, such as I have ordered to be given my servants, shall be furnished to Juan de Quintanilla, who came from Valladolid to this city of Seville to assist and treat me during my illness, and is present at my death. In addition, I leave him in recognition of his services fifty ducats in gold from my estate.

LVI. Item: I direct that, besides paying what is owing to my page, Pedro de Astorga, he shall be given from my estate thirty ducats in gold, which I leave him in recognition of his services, during my illness; and, in consideration of this, I charge and direct my son and successor, the said Don Martin, to retain him in his household and service in the position I now have him.

LVII. Item: I charge and direct the said Don Martin my son and successor, to retain in his household and service, my valet Antonio Galvarro, as I have him, feeling confident that he will prove a good and loyal servant to him, as he has been during the time he has served me.

LVIII. Item: I direct that Diego Gonzalez, citizen of Medellin, at present living in Seville, shall receive a robe and a cloak of black cloth, some stockings, a doublet, and a cap; besides this twenty ducats in gold, all of which I leave him because of the devotion he has shown, and does show, to my family.

LXIX. Item: I charge and direct the said Don Martin, my son and successor, to always retain my accountant Melchor de Mojica in his service, for as he has so well and faithfully served me during the short time he has been here in my household, that I am confident he will henceforward give good service and counsel to my son Don Martin in the affairs and matters which he has handled with me. I charge and direct the said Melchor de Mojica to do this, for I place this confidence in him, and I wish and direct that he continue to hold the charge and position he does at present, for such time as he can, and the marques may desire.

LX. Item: I direct that the hospital of Amor de Dios be paid the alms which the accounts of Don Juan Galiano may show are owing, as I have done each month since I have been in Seville; besides which I order one hundred ducats in gold to be paid from my estate.

XLI. Item: I direct that the accounts of Master Vicente (for works executed in my house and room) be inspected, and paid, after deducting such sums as he has already received.

LXII. For as much as Don Martin Cortes, my son and my wife's, the said Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga, who is my successor, is less than twenty-five years old, and more than fifteen, I desire, and it is my will, that he remain under control of the guardianship and care of such tutors and administrators as I herein name for my children, until they attain the age of twenty-five years completed. During the interim, let him not withdraw from or evade the guardianship and control, so that, until he complete the said age, as I have herein established, his property and estate may be the more advantageously increased, and administered, and all that I direct and dispose by this testament may be the better and more quickly complied with. Thus from the direction and administration of the properties of my son, the said Don Martin, as well as for the control and care of the persons and goods of my legitimate daughters, Dona Maria, Dona Catalina, and Dona Juana, I name and appoint for tutors and guardians, the most illustrious gentlemen, Don Juan Alonso de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia; Don Pedro Alvare Osorio, Marques de Astorga; and Don Pedro de Arellano, Count de Aguilar. I entreat the same to graciously accept the said tutelage and guardianship, and, in accepting and receiving it, they may remember and respect what I beg and entreat them, for these my said children are of their blood and lineage, by protecting whom they do but fulfill their duty as gentlemen, and profit their own lineage and quality. In recognition of their services and of their rights conformably to the law to be recompensed from my estate for the said tutelage and guardianship, I direct that, for each year during which their lordships exercise their functions, they shall receive fifty marks of silver, which I entreat them to agree to, and to accept in consideration of the causes and reasons above mentioned. I direct that my son and successor, the said Don Martin, shall, until he has completed his twenty-fifth year, receive twelve thousand ducats yearly for his support, and that of his servants. The remainder of my income may thus more fully and quickly provide for all that I have ordered and directed in this my testament. As the towns, properties, engineering works, mines, and other works belonging to my estate, to which, after my death, the said Don Martin, my son, will succeed, are divided and scattered through different provinces of New Spain, distant one from another, it is necessary that I, as one who knows by experience what is necessary, should indicate persons capable of carrying on the administration. Hence I beg and entreat the said gentlemen, tutors, and guardians to approve the appointments and selections of persons which I shall leave, drawn up and signed with my name; for I am positive that the said haciendas will be directed and administered to the best advantage, and their lordships relieved of the labour and responsibility of selecting persons for this purpose.

LXIII. Moreover, I leave and name as my successor over my household and estate, Don Martin Cortes, my son by the Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga my wife, and after him his descendants and other persons named in the institution of my entail, which I institute by the authority of the emperor and king our Lord, according to, and by the form, and with the conditions, and all else contained in the said act of institution. Further, if it be necessary, I do now renew the institution of the said entail in the said Don Martin, my son, in the manner above set forth, and by the said authority and licence which I possess, and I leave as my universal heir the said Don Martin, my son, successor to all my properties, goods, landed estates, and rights, and whatever else I may possess outside the said entail; and I leave as my heirs the above mentioned Dona Maria, Dona Catalina, and Dona Juana, my legitimate daughters by the said marquesa my wife, for what I leave them as their rightful dowries, ordering that they content themselves therewith, without pretending to other rights or claims of any sort against my estate, on the ground of their legitimacy.

LXIV. To cover all expenses of this my testament, and to fulfil its provisions, I name and appoint as my executors in Spain the most illustrious lords, Duke of Medina Sidonia, Marques de Astorga, and Count de Aguilar, to all three of whom jointly, and to each singly, I give full powers to use by their authority whatever sums from my estate are required to provide for, and carry into effect, all the provisions of this my testament. And, for all that touches the administration in New Spain and those provinces, I name and appoint as my executors, the Marquesa Dona Juana de Zuniga, my wife, and the lord bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, and Father Domingo de Betanzos, of the Order of St. Dominic, and the licenciado Juan de Altamirano, all at this present time in New Spain. And, I revoke every and all other testaments

which I may have made and delivered, and I desire, and it is my will, that none be executed other than this present writing; likewise I revoke whatsoever codicil or codicils I may have made and delivered either in writing or by word of mouth in the past. And this being seen and read in my presence with all that it contains, I sign it with my name, by my hand on each of its pages which are in all ten, all of which signatures I have written in the presence of the licenciado Infante.

Done at Seville on the eleventh day of the month of October, the year from the birth of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand five hundred and forty seven.

Item: I say that, as, in one article of this my will, I have disposed and ordered that the four thousand ducats, from the rent of the shops and buildings which I have in Mexico, should, after the works on the said hospital, monastery, and college I have ordered founded be entirely devoted to the endowment, and property of the said college, monastery, and hospital to which I refer, should it at any time happen that the said shops and buildings should produce less than this sum of four thousand ducats, and my will and intention be defeated, I order that in such a year of shortage, my successor shall complete the amount from his estate, so that the said four thousand ducats may be paid in full without any diminution. This page is added to the other ten, done and signed on the same date. The Marques del Valle. Witness by his lordship's command, the licenciado Infante.

By his lordship's command,
Melchor Mojica.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

CONCERNING the importance of the Five Letters of Relation of Hernando Cortes, which are now published altogether in an English translation for the first time, it may be permitted to quote a passage from the historian Dr. Robertson, whose part in the discovery of the first and fifth letters, here presented, was such as to give singular interest and value to his opinion.

"Our knowledge of the events which happened in the conquest of New Spain is derived from sources of information more original and more authentic than that of any transaction in the history of America.

"The letters of Cortes to the Emperor Charles V. are an historical monument, not only first in order of time, but of the greatest authenticity and value."

Dr. Robertson's appreciation was shared by his contemporaries, and has been confirmed by subsequent historians, who have drawn from the letters, as from an original source, many of their important facts, have appealed to them for confirmation of information procured from other sources, and have used them as a very touchstone of truth, in accepting or rejecting statements made by other early writers, even when these latter were eye-witnesses of the events they described.

From the beginning, Cortes adopted the plan of reporting faithfully and minutely to the Emperor, each incident, its causes and its consequences, and of recording his impressions of all that he saw in his strange surroundings, with the purpose of putting before his sovereign an accurate and complete picture of the momentous events then unrolling in the New World; and he has done this with perfect frankness and great simplicity, in letters which are minute but not wearisome, nor wanting in a certain literary excellence. His correspondence was voluminous, but, amongst all the others, both for the importance of the events recorded, as well as for their volume, the five letters or "relations" (*Relaciones*) as they are called, in which he recounts all that happened from the date of his sailing from Cuba in 1519, till his return from the expedition into Yucatan in 1526, are those which the English historian justly described as "an historical monument of the greatest authenticity and value."

The first of these letters has never been found, and by some is believed, perhaps to have been either the one suppressed by the Council for the Indies at the instance of Panfilo de Narvaez, or the one taken by Juan de Florez from Alonzo de Avila, and thus prevented from reaching the Emperor. It bore the date of July 10, 1519, and left Vera Cruz on the 16th of that month with the two envoys, Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo. This letter was in duplicate, as was likewise the letter of the magistrates of the newly founded colony, which was shown to Cortes before it was sent. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who was one of the signers of the joint letter, says that Cortes had omitted from his own letter the account of the expeditions of Francesco Hernandez de Cordoba, and of Juan de Grijalba. The letter of Cortes and that of the magistrates confirmed one another, as they were intended to do, and, according to Bernal Diaz, that of the magistrates was the more detailed of the two; hence it is, historically, the more valuable. The only important events which had happened up to that date were the change in the character and objects of the expedition, and the founding of Vera Cruz, and on these points Cortes and the magistrates were in perfect accord.

The search for this missing letter having been given up in despair, it remained for the perspicacity of Dr. Robertson to divine, that, as the Emperor was about leaving Spain for Germany at the time the envoys from Vera Cruz arrived with the letters, they might still be found in some of the Imperial archives, and he accordingly undertook a search, for which all necessary facilities were obtained by the British

Ambassador in Vienna. This was crowned with a dual success, in that a certified copy by a notary public of the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz was discovered and, at the same time, the Fifth Letter of the *Relaciones* was also unearthed.

The letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz supplies the place of the still missing First Letter of Cortes and serves to complete the series of five *Relaciones*. It was first published in the *Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de Espana of Navarrete*, Salva y Baranda, in 1844. Senor Alaman reproduced it in the first volume of his *Disertaciones sobre la Historia de la Republica Mexicana*.

The Second Letter was dated from Segura de la Frontera, October 30, 1520. It contained the first account ever written of the wonders of Mexico and the adventures of the Spanish conquerors in the newly discovered countries, and awakened the liveliest interest in Spain, where it was first published by Juan Cronberger, a celebrated German printer in Seville, November 8, 1522. It was again printed the following year by another German, George Coci, in Saragossa.

The Third Letter was dated from Coyuhuacan, May 15, 1522, and was likewise first printed in Seville by the same Juan Cronberger, March 30, 1523.

The Fourth Letter was dated from the city of Temixtitan (Mexico), October 15, 1524, and was first published in Toledo by Gaspar de Avila, and again in Saragossa, July 8, 1526.

All of these editions are folios in gothic lettering and are now extremely rare.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Letters, which were the only ones known until Dr. Robertson's fortunate discovery completed the series, have been translated into Latin, French, Italian, English, and German, at various times.

Of the Second and Third Letters a Latin translation made by Pietro Savorgnani of Forli, secretary to the bishop of Vienne (Dauphine), was dedicated to Pope Clement VII. and first published in Nuremberg in 1524. This translation was reproduced in the work entitled: *De Insulis nuper inventis*, which first appeared at Cologne in 1532 and was afterwards included in the *Novus Orbis* of Simon Grineo, of which one edition was issued at Basle in 1555 and another at Rotterdam in 1616.

Nicholas Liburno (or Liburnio) translated the Latin text of *Savorgnani* into Italian, publishing his work in Venice in 1524. This Italian translation was again published by Ramusio in the third volume of his work, *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, in Venice (edition of 1606).

A German translation of two of the letters was made by Xysto Betuleio and Andrea Diethero and published in Augsburg in 1550. (Garcia Icazbalceta, *Documentos*, vol. i., p. xxxvi.)

Another German edition was published in Heidelberg in 1779.

The first Spanish edition of the Second, Third, and Fourth Letters was published by Andres Gonzalez de Barcia in the first volume of his work entitled *Historiadores Primitivos de las Indias Occidentales*, Madrid, 1749.

In 1770, Archbishop Lorenzana of Mexico, afterwards Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, published the Second, Third, and Fourth Letters, together with other documents and his commentaries, under the title of *Historia de Nueva Espana*, and of this work an indifferent second edition was issued in New York by Manuel del Mar in 1828.

Mr. George Folsom, secretary of the New York Historical Society, translated Archbishop Lorenzana's text into English in 1843.

The Vicomte de Flavigni dedicated to the Marquise de Polignac a very free translation of the three letters then known, in a book published in Paris about 1778 (there is no date given), entitled *Correspondance de Fernand Cortes avec l'Empereur Charles V. sur la conquet du Mexique*: reprinted in Switzerland, 1779. Such liberties were taken with the Spanish text that Mr. Folsom, in his notice of this work, rightly calls it rather a paraphrase than a translation.

The Fifth Letter, which was discovered in Codex CXX. of the Imperial Library in Vienna, has no date, but a codex of the sixteenth century in the National Library in the City of Mexico bears the following: *De la cibdad de Temixtitan desta Nueva Espana, a 3 del mes de Setiembre, ano del nascimiento de miestro Senor e Salvador Jesucristo de 1526*.

Three editions of the complete series of five *Relaciones* have been published in Spanish: one is found in the first volume of *Historiadores Primitivos de Indias* of Don Enrique de Vedia, which is contained in Rivadeneyra's *Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles*, Madrid, 1877; another appears in the first volume of the *Biblioteca Historica de la Iberia*, and the third is the admirable collection of the learned Don Pascual Gayangos of the Spanish Academy, *Cartas y Relaciones de Hernan Cortes al Emperador Carlos V.*, published in Paris in 1866. The same author made an English translation of the Fifth Letter, which appeared in a single volume of the Hakluyt Society's publications in 1868.

A French translation of the five letters was published by Desire Charnay in Paris in 1896 under the title of *Lettres de Fernand Cortes a Charles Quint*.

In preparing this present edition, a careful comparison has been made of the various texts known, and, while idiomatic differences have imposed certain rearrangements of form, particularly in the matter of punctuation, and the suppression of many cumbersome repetitions, it has been sought to leave to the letters their unique characteristics, due to the personality of their author, and to the temper of their times.

The Spanish language was not yet the strong and stately vehicle of thought into which it was afterward shaped by generations of scholars, whose writings not only brought the Castilian tongue to a superlative degree of purity and perfection, but also conspicuously enriched the universal patrimony of literature. Fernando Cortes had but scanty learning, and the conditions under which he wrote were little conducive to the cultivation of literary style, but the absence of adornment, the precision of fact, and forceful terseness of expression furnish his compositions with singular merit. The restraint and self-control of which he was master appear in the equal and passionless style of his writings; for he seems neither exalted by success nor cast down by misfortunes, both of which he describes with calm simplicity in language which is both natural and fluent. Perhaps nowhere does the real superiority and inherent strength of his character more plainly appear than in those passages where he writes of the intrigues and detractions of his enemies, men whose ambitions were selfish and whose characters were vulgar and unscrupulous. Judged by his letters alone, Cortes must be ranked high amongst the Spanish-American discoverers and conquerors. His rudely honest contemporary and faithful follower Bernal Diaz del Castillo resented — and perhaps not unnaturally — the scanty mention of the other officers and men of the expedition, and, occasionally, in the course of his gossipy chronicle, he breaks into acrimony over what seems to him a cheating of others of their dues.

On the whole, however, Cortes was wise to eschew personalities in his reports, for no distribution of praise would have satisfied his followers, and he would have merely risked wearying the Emperor with a useless repetition of meaningless names. Cortes cannot be fairly reproached with self-laudation; he evidently knew the value also of occasional self-effacement, and he never loses sight of the high dual mission with which he felt himself invested, — the spreading of the Faith and the extension of the Spanish sovereignty; while the glory of victory is invariably ascribed to divine protection or the intervention of the saints, rather than to his own courage or ability, and the fruits of his victories were laid at the feet of his sovereign.

The notes with which the present edition is supplied have been carefully compiled from the best authorities, ancient and modern. Among these authorities, the soldier chroniclers contemporary with Cortes, and the Spanish priests in America at the same early period, take the first rank, and some brief notice of the character of these men, the circumstances under which, and the motives for which, they wrote may be of service in enabling the reader to estimate their testimony at its just historical worth.

It should always, however, be borne in mind that the letters of Cortes have the unique and superlative merit of having been composed on the spot from day to day, in the midst of the events in which their writer was playing the chief part, and that they were destined for the Emperor alone, hence misstatements of fact could only result from an intention to deceive the Sovereign. The astuteness of Cortes would seem to exclude the adoption of a short-sighted policy, which would have foredoomed him to exposure and failure, and, though the story of his dealings with Diego Velasquez, Panfilo de Narvaez, and the other Spanish officials with whom he came in conflict, is told from his own point of view, the version he gives

cannot be essentially untrue in any important particular. His story of the conquest from 1519 till 1527 is thus told almost in the form of a diary, written at different times and places, under varying circumstances of fortune, and as it was written, so do we now read it.

The other conquerors, and the priests, wrote or supplied material to others several years after the events they chronicled, and under the influence of different motives, either avowed or dissembled. These latter on some points give to their histories the bias of special pleading, besides which, in many instances, their manuscripts reached responsible hands only after many vicissitudes, and, at times, only in copies or translations, which may suggest reasonable doubts of their entire authenticity. Whenever, therefore, a conflict of testimony is found concerning any event described by Cortes, modern historians have almost invariably decided that his statements, on all points of which he had personal knowledge, should be held to outweigh those of other writers unless it conclusively appears that his conscious intention was to mislead the Emperor.

The death of Montezuma is one of the few cases in which it seems the decision should be against Cortes. With great and perfect frankness he admits the murder of Quauhpopoca, the torture and subsequent murder of Quauhtemoczin, and he owns to a somewhat extensive catalogue of indefensible crimes, but for Montezuma's death he refuses responsibility. Yet, whether we consider the unanimous testimony as to the trifling character of the Emperor's wound, the useless embarrassment his presence had become, the imprudence of leaving him free in the capital, or the impossibility of carrying him captive out of it, and finally the contemporary Mexican versions of his death, all the circumstances certainly point to the conclusion that the royal captive died by the will of his conqueror.

(I) FRANCISCO LOPEZ DE GOMARA

The *Historia Getieral de las Indias* and the *Cronica de la Conqnista de Nueva-Espana*, which were published in Saragossa, 1552, were at first received with the greatest favour by the public, and other editions as well as translations into Italian and French rapidly followed. This success, however, was short-lived, as Gomara's facts and appreciations were promptly impugned, first by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who, in publishing his book, called it *The True History of the Conquest*, in contradistinction to Gomara's false and fanciful one.

In 1553 the Spanish Government took steps to suppress the work, and withdraw it from circulation, imposing a fine of 200, 000 maravedis upon any one who should print or sell it in the future. This rigid prohibition was not revoked until 1727. Concerning Gomara's birth and antecedents, nothing is known, and, likewise, neither the date nor place of his death is recorded: "He came like water and like wind he went." He is said to have held the Chair of Rhetoric at the University of Alcala, and afterwards to have passed several years in Rome. In 1540 he entered the service of Fernando Cortes, then Marques del Valle, and recently returned to Spain. Dr. Robertson surmises that he then began his historical work, under the inspiration, if not at the dictation, of his patron, and this would seem to be likely. He is undoubtedly the apologist of Cortes, and, although the latter was dead some years when the work was published, the first part is dedicated to the Emperor, and the second to Don Martin Cortes, second Marques del Valle.

But, all reservations admitted, the work of Gomara illustrates a most important and interesting period of history, and, if he was constrained to treat his hero leniently, he nevertheless had access to a mass of original information, by which he profited with excellent results. His style is agreeable and scholarly, revealing a writer of wide culture, gifted with unusual knowledge of astronomy, geography, and history. Although he never was in America (as far as is recorded), he has known how to lend the realism to his descriptions which usually only an eyewitness can impart. When not vindicating Cortes, Gomara has every claim to be ranked amongst the most trustworthy of the early writers on Spanish-American events, and his facts and descriptions generally stand the test of comparison with authentic temporary records.

(2) BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

Bernal Diaz was a perfect type of the military adventurer of his age, and first went as a private soldier to America in 1514, under the command of Pedrarias de Avila, bound for Darien. He next appeared in Cuba, where he was always ready to join any expedition of adventure which might be organised, and, indeed, he went on most of them, and was one of the few who escaped from the disastrous exploration conducted by Ponce de Leon on the Florida coast. He next joined Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba on his journey to Yucatan. He returned again thither the following year with Juan de Grijalba, from whose expedition he arrived once more at Cuba just in time to take service under Fernando Cortes. Diaz was a brave soldier, popular amongst his comrades, and esteemed by his commander, who some years later (in 1540), recommended him to the notice of the Emperor, as did likewise the Viceroy Don Antonio Mendoza.

After the conquest, he received an encomienda in Guatemala, where he held the office of *regidor* of Santiago de los Caballeros, where presumably he died. And this would have been all there was to say about Bernal Diaz, had Francisco Lopez de Gomara not published his history of the conquest in 1552. His exaltation of Cortes, to the exclusion of other members of the expedition, enraged the old soldier, living in peaceful retirement on his estate at Chamula, and he resolved that he and his fellows, who had borne the burden of the conquest, should likewise make good their just claims to a share of the credit. It was a case of "mine enemy writing a book," and the old veteran slashes his cultivated rival's polished prose in the language of the camp. Thirty years had then elapsed since the fall of the Aztec Empire, and Bernal Diaz was no longer a young man; nowhere does he say that he had taken notes or memoranda of what happened from day to day, and yet, were his chronicle a journal, its details could hardly be more minute, nor its statements more emphatic. These were the great events of his life, worthy indeed to be the great events of a greater man's life, and doubtless he relived and rehearsed them constantly, and, being a man of quick and careful observation, given to pondering and reflecting upon all that he saw and heard, gifted moreover with a good memory, it is not so strange that in the quiet of his last years the retired soldier could evoke the procession of events in their perfect order.

He began writing in 1558, and his declared purpose was to correct the mistakes and misstatements of Gomara, and to show that not only had those under Cortes's control shared in the fighting, but had likewise been called into the counsels of their chief. His indubitable claim upon Mexico's perpetual gratitude is in his introduction of the orange-tree as, when on Grijalba's expedition, he landed one day, and planted eight orange seeds, which he brought from Cuba, all of which grew. The Indians, seeing the strange little plants coming up, carefully protected them from insects and other perils, and from this casual little plantation the culture of the orange-tree spread over all *tierra caliente*.

The father of Bernal Diaz was Francisco Diaz del Castillo y Gaban, and his mother was Maria Diez Rejon; as the former held the post of *regidor* of the important town of Medina del Campo, he must have been a man of some family.

The *Verdedera Historia*, as we have it, is incomplete, and was printed not from the original, nor even from a certified duplicate of it, but from a copy in possession of the councillor Ramirez de Prado. The work was undertaken by F. Remon, who died before its conclusion, so that it was passed on to Fray Gabriel Adarzo de Santander, afterwards Bishop of Otranto.

As literature, the work of Bernal Diaz ranks far below the letters of Cortes, and shows the writer to be without instruction or culture. The narrative is involved, the mass of small details bewildering, while through all pierces the jealous determination of a wounded vanity to assert its claims to recognition. The stamp of perfect sincerity and frankness, however, is upon the whole work, and its value as an historical document, particularly when paralleled with the letters of Cortes, and the chronicles of Gomara, is superlative and unimpeachable.

Prescott describes Bernal Diaz as of "a poor and humble family," but since his father held the office of *regidor* this can hardly be exact, as such posts, especially in a town of the importance of Medina del

Campo, were not held by the poor and humble. He himself claimed some kinship with Don Diego Velasquez.

(3) GONZALO FERNANDEZ DE OVIEDO Y VALDES

Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo was born of an illustrious family in Asturias in 1478, and passed his early years at Court as page to the Infante Don Juan, only son of the Catholic Sovereigns. He spent some years in Italy in the service of the King of Naples, but returned to Castile, where he became custodian of the crown jewels, until he was sent as royal inspector of the gold smelting in the Indies. After taking part in Pedrarias de Avila's colonising expedition to Darien, he returned and settled permanently in San Domingo.

Oviedo kept in touch with the Spanish Court and returned several times to Spain, on one of which occasions, in 1526, he published his *Sumario*, which was dedicated to the Emperor, and dealt with the geography, climate, vegetation, animals, and tribes of the American Colonies, and which met with a popular reception from the public. The first volume of his great work, however, *Historia General de las Indias*, in nineteen books, to which he had given years of careful labour, appeared in 1535. The entire work is divided into three parts, consisting in all of fifty books, and includes everything that had already appeared in his *Sumario*. The second and third parts are occupied with the conquest of Mexico, Peru, and other South American countries. Oviedo, through his relations with most of the great personages of his day and his personal knowledge of the countries he describes, the events he portrays, and the men who figured in them, collected an enormous mass of data, which, however, he never properly classified. He is, therefore, confused and confusing, self-contradictory and something of a plagiarist, of whom it was said that, not content with drawing his information from the higher and more trustworthy sources, he did not scruple to collect the gossip of the camp from common soldiers, and the cancanes of great men's ante-chambers. Las Casas describes his work as "a wholesale fabrication, and as full of lies as pages." Oviedo and Las Casas were poles asunder, and the good bishop was so averse to the sentiments and opinions of his contemporary (so contrary to his own) that he could see no good either in him or his work.

Despite the blemishes which mar his work, Oviedo must be considered an astute observer, nor can it be thought that he consciously or intentionally misstated facts. From the same events, two different observers draw opposite conclusions, and, in the study of historical records, their value may be more accurately estimated by considering the character of the medium through which they reach us.

Oviedo died at Valladolid in 1559, while on a visit to Spain to prepare for the publication of the remainder of his work.

(4) BERNARDINO DE SAHAGUN

The *Historia Universal de Nueva Espana* of Fray Bernardino de Sahagun serves as a most valuable text-book for all students of Mexican antiquities.

The author was born at Sahagun, and entered the Franciscan Order in Salamanca, where he studied at the University. He went to Mexico in 1529, where he devoted his energies to the conversion of the Indians. He entered upon this task on the basis that, to convert the natives to Christianity, it was first necessary to know them, to understand their language, beliefs, and traditions, and, most of all, to be thoroughly versed in their ancient mythology, theology, and ritual. To acquire such knowledge, he lived among the natives of Texcoco for several years, and mastered their language and their hieroglyphic writings to such an extent that his own work was originally written in the Mexican tongue.

His superiors did not give unqualified approval to the publication of his MSS., the tendency being rather to obliterate as far as possible all knowledge of ancient Aztec beliefs, with a view to detaching the Indians entirely from the traditions of their ancestors. Starting thus with a tabula rasa as it were, it was thought that the work of conversion would progress more rapidly. Fortunately this mistaken conception did not lead to the destruction of the mass of unique information which Fray Bernardino had accumulated, although his manuscripts were widely scattered through various convents of the Order.

Sahagun sent a statement of the nature and extent of his labours to Spain, where it attracted the attention of the President of the Royal Council for the Indies, at that time Don Juan de Ovando, who fortunately perceived its value, and caused the scattered manuscripts to be collected and restored to their owner, at the same time directing that he should return to Spain, and forthwith translate them into Spanish. Sahagun was nearly eighty years of age at this time, but he set diligently to work, and completed the translation, which was placed side by side with the original, and the whole illustrated with an Aztec vocabulary. The entire work, contained in two large folio volumes, was sent to Madrid, from which time it completely disappeared, not to be seen again for more than two hundred years, when the cosmographer Don Juan Bautista Munoz unearthed it in the Franciscan Library at Tolosa in Navarre.

The first publication, dedicated to Pope Pius VIII. and edited by Carlos Maria de Bustamente, deputy for the state of Oaxaca, appeared in Mexico at the cost of the national treasury. One year later Lord Kingsborough introduced it into the 6th volume of his magnificent work, under the natural impression that he was giving it for the first time to the public.

(5) BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS

Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, who later became Bishop of Chiapa, was born at Seville in 1474. His father went with Columbus on his second voyage in 1493, and amassed sufficient means to provide his promising son with a university education at Salamanca. He was the first priest ordained in the new world, where he went with Ovando in 1502. The sufferings of the natives under the cruelties of the first colonists, and especially the system of *ripartimientos* and *encomiendas*, so aroused the sympathies of the young priest that he dedicated his life to their defence, and was the first to bear the glorious title of Protector-General of the Indians, which Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros, regent in the absence of Charles V., conferred upon him. He was indefatigable in his crusade and not always discreet. After the failure of the native colony entrusted to him, he retired to a Dominican convent (which Order he entered) and devoted himself during many years to various compositions in vindication of the Indians and their violated rights. He enlisted his brethren of the Order in his apostolate, and never during his long and eventful life flagged in his zeal for the noble end he had set himself. After refusing the bishopric of Cuzco, the richest perhaps in the New World, he later accepted the poor diocese of Chiapa. He died in July, 1566, at the age of ninety-two, in the monastery of Atocha, at Madrid.

Las Casas barely tolerated Cortes, and, having known him as an obscure young man of no importance, courting the favour of Diego Velasquez in Cuba, he could never refrain in later years, when extraordinary fortune had elevated him at his former patron's expense, from recalling the humble origin and many doubtful transactions of the great Conqueror's youth. Indeed he treats Cortes throughout as a mere lucky adventurer. Prescott says of him that he had the virtues and faults of a reformer, being inspired by a great and glorious idea which "urged him to lift the voice of rebuke in the presence of princes, to brave the menaces of an infuriated populace, to cross seas, traverse mountains and deserts, to incur the alienation of friends, the hostility of enemies, to endure obloquy, insult, and persecution."

His great work, *Historia General de las Indias*, to which he devoted himself during thirty years, while still in manuscript, was largely drawn upon by different writers, notably by Herrera, who incorporated a large amount into his own work published in 1601. An edition of his works was published in five volumes at Madrid in 1876. His *Brevisima Relacion*, widely read and translated into foreign languages, was a terrible indictment of his countrymen and their dealings with the natives. The integrity of his character, the purity of his motives, and his apostolic virtues command admiration, and, though his intemperate zeal in the cause he championed troubled the serenity of his appreciations as an historian, his statement of facts may be invariably trusted, and his record of contemporary events is of unquestionable value.

(6) MOTOLINIA

Toribio de Benevente is best known by his Indian name (which he himself adopted) of Motolinia, meaning the "poor man" (equivalent of the Poverello which was St. Francis's dearest title). He was one of

twelve Franciscans who first came to Mexico in response to the request of Cortes, at the close of the conquest (1523). He travelled from Mexico to Guatemala and Nicaragua on foot, and knew the country and its peoples as did few. His headquarters were at a convent at Texcoco, where his life and energies were devoted with success to teaching and converting the Mexicans. His *Historia de los Indias de Nueva Espana* embraces first religion and rites of the Aztecs, second conversion, third their character, chronology, astrology, and some account of their principal cities, etc. His MS. was printed in the first volume of Icazbalceta's *Documentos Ineditos*.

(7) PETER MARTYR

Pietro Martire de Angleria of Arona, Italy, came to Spain in 1487. He wrote in Latin *De Orbe Novo*, printed in a complete edition by Hakluyt, Paris, 1587. He took great interest in the discoveries and colonisation, and was allowed to attend meetings of the Royal Council for the Indies. He was personally acquainted with Columbus, Cortes, and others, and their correspondence with the Court was open to him. His writings are those of a philosophical observer of historical events, unencumbered with the manifold details and small incidents which crowd and confuse the pages of the soldier chroniclers such as Bernal Diaz. He died in 1525.

(8) ANTONIO DE HERRERA

Antonio de Herrera was born at Cuellar in 1549, and was made Historiographer of the Indies from 1492-1 554. His *Historia General de las Indias Occidentales* is divided into eight decades, of which the first four were published in 1601, the others in 1615, five volumes in folio. A very free English translation, with omissions, was made by Stevens. The plan of this work is confused and interrupted, wanting in sequence, and filled with irrelevant details. He had access to all the State papers, colonial reports, and every MS. relating to the discovery, conquest, and colonisation of the New World, and he quoted very freely from Las Casas. Dazzled by the wonderful events of the times and the equally marvellous achievements of his countrymen, he was blind to their faults and excesses, so that, while not exactly a panegyric, his work is coloured by a strong patriotism, which shows in his optimistic appreciation of the character and deeds of the conquerors. His work is, however, a compendium of authentic information which cannot be too highly esteemed. He died in 1625.

(9) JUAN DE TORQUEMADA

Juan de Torquemada, Provincial of the Franciscans in Mexico from 1614-1617, spent more than fifty years of his life in the country, during which time he amassed an immense collection of ancient pictures, writings, and original manuscripts, besides the information, often legendary and contradictory, which he obtained from the Indians. Of his *Monarchia Indiana Clavigero* says that one must seek jewels among the rubbish. It was first published in Madrid in 1614, and again in 1724.

(10) WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

The work of the eminent American historian William H. Prescott is too well known to require extensive notice here. His diligence in research, and his scholarly familiarity with the sources of Spanish-American history, contributed to make his *Conquest of Mexico* a masterpiece of historical narrative, in which sober facts seem almost to catch the glamour of romance from the delightful style of their presentation, and this work will doubtless long remain the most complete, as it is the most fascinating, account in our language of the stirring events it describes.

(11)

MANUEL OROZCO Y BERRA

In 1880, the *Historia Antiqua de la Conquista de Mexico*, by Don Manuel Orozco y Berra, Vice-President of the Society of Geography and Statistics, was published by the order and at the expense of the

Mexican Government, Don Porfirio Diaz being then President, and Senor Mariscal Minister of Public Instruction. This erudite work, the fruit of a lifetime of discriminating research by the distinguished author, is divided into four parts: I. Civilisation, II. Prehistoric Man in Mexico, III. Ancient History, IV. The Conquest.

(12) MANUEL GARCIA ICAZBALCETA

The collection of documents, for the most part unedited, published in 1858 by Don Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, opens many original and invaluable historical sources to all. The labours of this learned Mexican in the field of historical research are beyond all praise.

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FIRST LETTER

Sent to the Queen Dona Juana, and the Emperor Charles v., her son, by the Judiciary and Municipal Authorities of the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, dated the 10th July 1519. Very High and Very Powerful and Excellent Princes, Very Catholic and Very Great Sovereigns and Rulers. We believe that Your Majesties by a letter from Diego Velasquez,¹ Lieutenant of the Admiral² in the Island of Fernandina,³ will have been informed of the new land, which was discovered in these parts about two years ago, which in the beginning was called Cozumel,⁴ and has since been named Yucatan,⁵ without its being the one or the

- 1) ^u He was a native of Cuellar, and accompanied Columbus on his second voyage in 1493; under commission of Diego Columbus, then viceroy, he effected the conquest of Cuba, and became governor of the island. He showed himself ungrateful to his benefactor, Diego Columbus, and he was in his turn betrayed, and finally outgeneralled, by Cortes. When the royal appointment of the latter, as Captain-General of New Spain, was proclaimed in Cuba by Rodrigo de Paz, and Francisco de las Casas, to the sound of trumpets in 1522, Diego Velasquez took to his bed from sheer mortification, and died within a few months. Fuller notice of his character, and his dealings with Cortes, are given in the preceding Biographical Note.
- 2) Diego Columbus, only son of the Admiral Christopher Columbus and his wife Felipa Mogniz Perestrello of Lisbon, succeeded Don Nicolas de Ovando as governor, and bore the title of viceroy.
- 3) Cuba, which was discovered by Columbus, on October 28, 1492, and named by him, Juana, in honour of the Royal Infante, Don Juan. He was convinced that he had reached China, or Cipango, of which he had read in Marco Polo's narrative. It was discovered to be an island by Ocampo, who first circumnavigated it in 1508. The island was conquered in 1511 by Velasquez, in command of three hundred men, but so peaceable and indolent were the natives, that the conquest was effected almost without a struggle; for only one chief, Hatuey, with a few followers, attempted to dispute the landing of the Spaniards. Hatuey was captured, and sentenced to be burned. When this cruel sentence was about to be carried out, a friar exhorted him to be baptised, and thus ensure his soul going to paradise. The chief asked if there would be Spaniards there, and when the friar answered that they all hoped to go there, he replied that then he would rather not. So he was burned, but not converted. The Indian name Cuba has persisted and survived all others. (Oviedo, Hist. Gen., lib. xxvii., cap. iii.; Las Casas, Hist. de las Indias, lib. iii., cap. xxi. -xxv.)
- 4) Cozumel, also sometimes called Acuzamil (Ah-Cuzamil meaning the "Swallows"), was discovered by Juan de Grijalba on the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, and hence named by him Santa Cruz. He took possession in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, and of Diego Velasquez, under whose commission the expedition had sailed. There was a stone building on the island, having a square tower with a door in each of its four sides. Inside this there were idols, palm branches, and bones, which they said were those of a great chief (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. ix.). The tower was surmounted by a smaller square turret which was reached by an outside staircase. Grijalba hoisted the Spanish flag on this turret, and named the place San Juan de Puerta Latina. The Chaplain Fray Juan Diaz said mass. Cristobal de Olid, who was sent by Velasquez in search of Grijalba's expedition, about whose safety fears were felt, also landed at Cozumel, and took formal possession, thinking that he was its discoverer (Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. i.). The inhabitants seemed poor, and what gold they produced was mostly an alloy with copper, of little value, which the Indians called guanin, and prized highly (Las Casas, lib. 7, cap. lxvii.).
Cozumel was a place of pilgrimage, and in one of the great temples there stood a hollow statue called Teel-Cuzam (the Swallows' Feet), made of terra-cotta, in which a priest placed himself to give oracular answers to the pilgrims (Cogolludo, Hist. de Yucatan, lib. iv., cap. vii.).
- 5) Yucatan, "The land of wounds and calamities," as Bernal Diaz called it. This coast was first sighted by Columbus, but he did not land. In 1511, a boat-load of men from the wreck of Valdivia's caravel drifted onto the coast, and the men were sacrificed, and eaten, all save two, who escaped as will be explained later. The coast was first really discovered by Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, as is here related, and the name of Yucatan was the word tectetan, meaning "I don't understand," caught by the Spaniards from the natives, and which they took to be the name of the country (Motolinia, trat. iii., cap. viii.). The Indian name was Ulumil Cuz, and Etel Ceh, meaning the land of birds and game; they also called it Peten, an island, though they well knew that it was not one. According to Ordonez, not only the coast province, but the

other. This your Royal Highnesses will be able to perceive from our narration because, until now the accounts, which have been made to Your Majesties concerning this country, both of its customs and wealth, as well as concerning the manner of its discovery, and other things which have been stated about it, are not and could not have been exact, for, as will appear from this account which we send to Your Highnesses, up till now no one has known them. We will deal with it here from the beginning of its discovery up to its present state, so that Your Majesties will know the country as it really is, the people who possess it, and the manner of their life, and the rites and ceremonies, the sect or law they obey, and the profit which Your Royal Highnesses may derive from it; and may also know who have here rendered services to Your Majesties, in order that Your Royal Highnesses may act as best suits your service. The most faithful and exact account is as follows:

It may be two years, a little more or less, Most Enlightened Princes, that, in the City of Santiago,⁶ which is in the Island of Fernandina, of whose towns we have been citizens, three inhabitants of the said Island united, and the one was called Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba,⁷ another or Lope Ochoa de Caicedo, and the third Cristobal Morante; and, as it is customary in these Islands, which have been peopled by Spaniards in the name of Your Majesties, to bring Indians for their service from the other Islands which have not been peopled by Spaniards, these said persons sent two ships and a brigantine, in order to fetch Indians from those Islands⁸ to Fernandina to make slaves of them. We believe, although we do not

entire country, was also called Maya (a waterless land). The language of all the country was known as the Maya tongue.

The subjoined references will be useful to students of the history of this most interesting country and its stupendous antiquities: Cogolludo, *Hist. de Yucatan*; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilises du Mexique*; Diego de Landa, *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan* (French translation by Brasseur de Bourbourg); Stephens, *Incidents of Travels in Yucatan*; Bancroft, *Native Races*; and Carrillo, *Compendio de la Hist. Yucatan*.

6) Santiago was the seat of the governor, and the cathedral city of the first bishop.

7) This expedition was organised by the men who had originally come from Spain with Pedro Arias de Avila, commonly called Pedrarias de Avila, when he was sent in command of an admirably equipped fleet to supersede Balboa as governor of Darien. Among these men was Bernal Diaz del Castillo, whose copious narrative of the events in the islands, and in Mexico, is one of the most valuable sources of American history.

These men, on their return from Darien, were cordially received in Cuba by Diego Velasquez, who encouraged them to continue explorations. After three years of fruitless delays during which many were ill and some had died, they decided to organise a venture on their own account, and they secured the co-operation of Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, a rich colonist, who was willing to put his money into the undertaking. He was chosen as captain, three vessels were bought, one of which Cortes and others assert, was furnished by Velasquez, on condition that he should be reimbursed for his outlay by slaves, who should be brought back from the islands. Bernal Diaz says that they refused this condition, but that Velasquez furnished the ship just the same; this, however, does not accord with other testimony, and it may well be that Bernal Diaz, who was simply an enlisted soldier-adventurer, knew little of the conditions negotiated amongst the owners and leaders.

The little flotilla put to sea from Santiago on February 8, 1517, stopping first at Puerto del Principe for supplies, and continuing thence under the direction of the pilot Alaminos, who laid the course. After a voyage not free from dangers, they discovered a small island off the peninsula of Yucatan, which they called Isia de las Mugerres (Women's Island), because they found there statues of the goddesses Xchel and Ixchebeliax, and others. From this island an important looking town on the mainland was visible, which they named Grand Cairo. This expedition, as will be seen in succeeding notes, ended badly.

8) The Spanish settlements in the New World were, at that time, limited to the islands of Hispaniola (Haiti), Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica, which were called the Indies by the discoverers and conquerors, because they were firmly persuaded they had encircled half the globe, and reached the Orient. Besides these four islands, there was the colony of Darien, of which more information will be given later. Popular imagination in Spain was inflamed by the tales of vast wealth in gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and spices, lying in the virgin lands waiting to be picked up by the first comer. Avaricious adventurers set out to enrich themselves by a lucky venture, and return with their easily and quickly won fortunes to Spain. Serious projects for colonisation were not yet conceived, and, what settlements there were, had been made by disillusioned immigrants who, when they found that gold and pearls, instead of lying at their feet, had to be sought as elsewhere with labour, enslaved the natives for the exploitation of the natural resources of the islands. Thus the slave trade sprang up, and as the Indians, unaccustomed to hard work and harsh treatment, died off in such numbers as to rapidly depopulate the neighbourhoods of the Spanish settlements, expeditions were constantly organised to the neighbouring islands for the purpose, as Cortes states, of capturing the natives. The system of repartimientos and encomiendas was begun under the sanction of Columbus, and, in spite of the denunciations of the Church, and repeated edicts from the

positively know it, that the said Diego Velasquez, Lieutenant of the Admiral, owned a fourth part of the armada. One of the owners of the said armada, called Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, went as its Captain, taking as pilot a resident of the town of Palos,⁹ one Anton de Alaminos,¹⁰ whom we have also now as pilot, and whom we have sent to Your Royal Highnesses that he may furnish information to Your Majesties.

Pursuing their voyage, they arrived at the said Island of Yucatan, at its uttermost point, which may be sixty or seventy leagues both from the Discovery said Island of Fernandina, and from this country of the rich land of Vera Cruz,[thus in the MS.], where we now are in the name of Your Royal Highnesses. At this point they disembarked at a town called Campoche,¹¹ whose chief they named Lazaro, and gave two spindles with a piece of cloth of gold; but, as the natives of the country did not allow them to remain in the town, or on land, they left, and went about ten leagues down the coast, where they again landed at a town called Machocobon,¹² whose chief was Champoto. Here they were well received by the natives, though they were not allowed to come into the towns; and that night they slept out of their ships, and on land. The natives, seeing this, attacked the¹³ on the morning of the following day, in such a manner that 26 Spaniards perished, and all the rest were wounded, and at last the Captain Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, seeing this, escaped with those who were left to him by taking refuge in the ships. The said Captain, seeing that more than a quarter of his people had been killed, and that he himself had received 30 odd wounds, and was almost dead, and despairing of escape, returned with the ships and people to the said Island of Fernandina.¹⁴

Here they made known to Diego Velasquez that they had found a land very rich in gold, because they had seen that all the natives wore it, some in their noses, some in their ears, and some in other parts, and, likewise, that there were in that country edifices built of mortar and stone. They made known to him also many other facts, which they published about the admirable things and riches of the said land, and they counselled him to send ships to barter for gold, saying that, if he would do so, a great amount of it could be obtained.¹⁵

home government, the slave trade flourished, and the island population rapidly dwindled. This subject is more fully noticed in Appendix I. to the Fourth Letter.

- 9) Anton de Alaminos had served under Columbus on his voyage in 1502, when the other pilots were Comacho de Triana and Juan Alvarez; there was also the inspector of the royal fifth Bernardino de Iniquez, and a Chaplain, Alonzo Gonzalez from the town of San Cristobal.
- 10) The little port from which Columbus originally sailed in 1492.
- 11) The point of Catoche, where they landed on March 5th, is the extremity of the peninsula nearest to Cuba. A chief and many people came out to the caravels in canoes, and having no interpreter they made themselves understood as best they could by signs, inviting the Spaniards to land, and saying *Conex Cotoche*, which means "come to our houses." but was thought by the Spaniards to be the name of the place. They called it Catoche therefore (Carrillo, *Compendia de la Hist. Yucatan* p. 105). Cortes here confuses Catoche with Campeche (in Maya. *Kimpech*), further westward on the bay of the same name, where the caravels arrived on Sunday, the feast of San Lazaro (March 22nd). Oviedo says that the Spaniards called the chief of the place Lazaro, and that the Indian name for the place was Campeche, but Orozco y Berra states that, in ancient letters, the place is called *llazaro*, and the river Campeche (tom, iv., cap. i., note).
- 12) There is much confusion amongst the early writers in the spelling of Indian names, and in assigning them correctly. In this case the place was called *Poton-Chan*, and the bay received the name of *Mala Pelea* from the Spanish sailors, on account of the disastrous rout they suffered there. The *Cacique*, *Machocobon*, according to Gomara, was a very formidable warrior.
- 13) See Appendix I. at close of Letter.
- 14) Alaminos, after consulting the other pilots, decided to sail for Florida, as being the best way back to Cuba, and because he knew that coast since its discovery by Ponce de Leon. They reached Florida in four days, and, upon landing to get water, they were again attacked. Both Alaminos and Bernal Diaz were wounded, while Berrio, the only soldier who had come unscathed out of the *Mala-Pelea* fight, met the worse fate of being taken alive. After many mishaps, they finally landed at *Carenas* (*Habana*), and, ten days later, Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba died from his wounds, and thus ended this disastrous expedition (Bernal Diaz, cap. i-vi.; Oviedo, lib xvii., cap. iv.; Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. lii.; Herrera, dec. ii. lib. iii., cap. xvii-xviii.; Cogolludo, *Hist. Yucatan*, lib. i., cap. i-ii.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. iii.).
- 15) Their description of the solidly built houses and temples, the spoils of gold which they brought, together with the two converted captives, aroused the greatest excitement, and inflamed Diego Velasquez's cupidity. Speculation as to the origin

Upon learning this, the said Diego Velasquez, moved more by cupidity than any other zeal, sent a Procurator to the Island of Hispaniola, with a certain account, which he made to the Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome,¹⁶ who resided there as Governors of the Indies, to obtain permission to colonise in the name of Your Majesties, by virtue of the authority which Your Highnesses had given them. He told them that they would do a great service to Your Majesties if they would give him permission to trade with the natives, for gold and pearls and precious stones and other things, all of which would become his property by paying the fifth part to Your Majesties. All this was granted by the said Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome, the Governors, inasmuch as he said in his account that he had discovered the land at his own cost, and moreover knew the secrets of it, and that he would provide in every respect as should best advance the service of Your Royal Highnesses. On the other hand, without communicating it to the said Jeronymite Fathers, he sent to Your Royal Highnesses a certain Gonzalo de Guzman,¹⁷ with power of attorney, and the same account, saying that he had discovered the country at his own cost, thus rendering service to Your Majesties, and that he wished to conquer it at his own cost, and he prayed Your Royal Highnesses to make him adelantado¹⁸ and governor of it, with certain privileges for which he asked further on, as Your Majesties will have seen by his account, and for which reason we do not express them here.

In the meantime, as the permission was given by the Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome, the Governors in the name of Your Majesties, he hastened to fit out three ships and a brigantine, so that, if Your Majesties were not pleased to grant Gonzalo de Guzman what he had asked, the ships would have already been sent, with the permission given by the said Reverend Jeronymite Fathers, the Governors. He sent as Captain one of his relatives, called Juan de Grijalba,¹⁹ and with him 160 men of the inhabitants of said Island,

of the natives of Yucatan was rife, and the theory was advanced that they descended from the tribes of Jews exiled from Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus.

- 16) Fray Bartolome Las Casas had succeeded, by the moving picture he drew of the oppression and injustice practised by the Spaniards on the natives of the islands, in interesting the Cardinal-Regent Ximenez de Cisereros in their behalf, and His Eminence's first step was to apply to the General of the Jeronymites at San Bartolome de Lupiano to furnish some men of that order for service in the Indies. A chapter of the Priors of Castile, which the General assembled, assented to the Cardinal's wish, and furnished three friars who were sent out with instructions, and very full powers. Las Casas says that they did not go as governors, as some supposed, but rather to see that the laws for the protection of the Indians were observed, and to report abuses. They were instructed to visit each island personally, to ascertain the number of chiefs and tribes, and to see how they were treated by the holders of encomiendas, as well as by the governors, judges, and other officials. Hispaniola (Haiti), Cuba, and Jamaica, were particularly designated for their visitations, and they were enjoined to inspect the mines, and report on possible ameliorations. They had power to regulate the amount of meat to be allowed each labourer, the market price of necessities, the housing of the Indians, the education of children, marriages between Spaniards and natives, etc.

These friars were selected by Cardinal Ximenez from among twelve names presented to him by four Priors, sent by the Chapter to Madrid for that purpose, and they sailed from San Lucar, November 11, 1516, landing in San Domingo thirteen days later (Las Casas). Gayangos, *Cartas de Cortes*, p. 3, mentions the Jeronymite Fathers as numbering but two. Fray Luis de Figeroa, a native of Seville, who was Prior of Mejorada, and Fray Alonso de Santo Domingo, Prior of San Juan de Ortega. The third, however, was Fray Bernardino de Manzanedo.

The island of Hispaniola, where the Jeronymites resided, was discovered on December 6, 1492, by Christopher Columbus who named the harbour where he landed San Nicolas. San Domingo became the principal city and residence of the viceroy. In consequence of the dissensions between Don Diego Columbus, who held that office, and various persons, notably the royal treasurer, Miguel Pasamonte, who headed a faction against him, the Spanish government in 1510 established the Royal Audiencia. This was a court of appeal for all causes in which the viceroy had pronounced judgment. The name Hispaniola (Espanola), given by Columbus to the island, has been superseded by the original Indian name of Haiti.

- 17) Gonzalo de Guzman was a royal treasurer in the islands.
18) Spanish title for the governor of a province.
19) A native of Cuellar, who came to Cuba when a mere lad. Las Casas describes him as a youth of great promise, and Gomara says he was a nephew of Velasquez's. He was of gentle birth, and, as a fellow-townsmen, he was treated by Velasquez with much consideration, whether he was a relative or not. The armada furnished him consisted of four caravels, the Santiago, San Sebastian, La Trinidad, and Santa Maria de los Remedios; the pilots were the same who went with the first expedition, with the addition of a fourth one, unnamed. There was a treasurer, Anton de Villasana, an inspector, Francisco de Penalosa, and a chaplain, Fray Juan Diaz; in all told above two hundred persons composed the

amongst whom some of us came as Captains for the purpose of serving Your Majesties, and not only did we and those of the said armada come risking our own persons, but we and they also provided almost all the outfit of the said armada from our own resources, in which we and they spent a very great part of our fortunes. And there went again as pilot of this armada the same Anton de Alaminos, who first discovered the said country when he went with Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba.

In making this voyage, they followed in his former track, and, before they reached the said land, they discovered a small island, called Cozumel, which may measure about thirty leagues, and lies off the southern part of the said land; and they arrived in the Island at a town, to which they gave the name of San Juan de Puerta Latina,²⁰ and the Island they named Santa Cruz.²¹ The same day on which they arrived there about 150 Indians of the town came to see them, and as it appeared, on the following day these Indians abandoned the town and fled to the woods.

Being in need of water, the Captain hoisted sail in order to obtain it elsewhere that same day, and while pursuing his voyage, it was agreed to return to the said port and Island of Santa Cruz, where he anchored and went on shore, finding the town without people, as though it had never been inhabited. He took his supply of water, returning to his ships without taking soundings, or learning anything so as to be able to give a true account to Your Royal Highnesses concerning that Island.

Setting sail he left, keeping on his voyage until he arrived at the land which Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba had discovered, where they coasted about, from south to west, until they came to a bay, which the said Captain Gonzalo and the chief pilot, Anton de Alaminos, named Bay of Ascension.²² This, according to the opinion of the pilots, is very near to Punta de las Velas, discovered by Vicente Yanez²³

company. After several false starts, they finally set sail on May 1st. This date, in spite of divers contradictions, is established by the *Itinerario de Varmata del Re Cattolico verso la Isola de Yucatan, MDXVII.*, which is given in the *Documentos Ineditos* of Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, Mexico, 1858.

Three other captains were Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Montejo, and Alonso Davila; the men including pilots and sailors numbered 250. They discovered the Tabasco River, which was henceforth named Grijalba, though the name Tabasco (Tabzcoob was the Indian name) remained to the province between Yucatan and Cuazocoalco.

After Rio Tabasco, they discovered a river (Xamapan, now called Jamapa), which they called Banderas, because Indians carrying white flags were seen along the coast. They received them with great civility and interest, and traded to the amount of 15, 000 dollars worth of gold (Bernal Diaz, cap. xiii.). Here the name of Montezuma was first heard by the Spaniards. The next stopping place was named Isla de los Sacrifios, because they found in a temple there six or seven bodies of men with their breasts cut open, and their hearts gone. The Island of Ulua was so named from the Indian word Culua, which the Spaniards imperfectly caught, and, to distinguish it from San Juan de Puerto Rico, they called the place San Juan de Ulua (Bernal Diaz, cap. xiv.; Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. ii.).

On the Island of Ulua the Spanish government afterwards built a fortress said to have cost forty millions of dollars, and which was the last stronghold of Spain in Mexico. On November 23, 1825, the President of the new republic announced its fall by a proclamation: "The standard of the republic floats over the castle of Ulua! I announce to you, fellow citizens, with inexpressible pleasure that, after a lapse of three hundred and four years, the flag of Castile has now disappeared from our coasts."

From here, Pedro de Alvarado with one of the four ships, the San Sebastian, was sent to report to Diego Velasquez what had been discovered. He took also the gold and treasures, and was to ask for further instructions concerning settlements, which Grijalba had no power to make. The others next went on to Panuco. Velasquez was vexed with Grijalba for not colonising, though the latter justified himself by the instructions given him, which expressly forbade this (Bernal Diaz, cap. xv.; Oviedo, lib. xviii., cap. xviii.; Gomara, *Cronica*, cap. v., vi.; Cogolludo, lib. i., cap. iii., iv.; Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. ii. -iii.).

- 20) The town thus named by Grijalba, as described in Note I, page 124.
- 21) Cozumel. Here the converted Indians, Melchor and Julian, began to act as interpreters.
- 22) Bay of Ascension. This was on Thursday the 13th, feast of the Ascension, and they remained there reconnoitring until Sunday.
- 23) Vincente Yanez Pinzon, who landed here about January 26, 1500, was one of the three Pinzon brothers who first sailed with Columbus from Palos in 1492. He afterwards commanded an expedition composed of four small ships which sailed from Palos in 1499, making the first discovery of land at the present Cape St. Augustine, on the coast of Brazil, in 1506. He again sailed with Juan de Solis, on a voyage to find the strait which it was thought joined the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and, in 1508, he repeated this fruitless experiment.

which is the part[passage in the MS. not intelligible] of the Bay which is very large, and it is thought that it reaches to the Sea of the North.

Thence they returned along the same coast by which they had gone, until they rounded the point of the said land, and, continuing in a northerly direction, they sailed until they arrived at the said Point Campoche, whose chief was named Lazaro, where Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba had stopped to trade, and, as ordered by Diego Velasquez, as well as to take the water he greatly needed, landed there.

As soon as the natives saw them coming, they placed themselves near their town, in array of battle, so as to defend its entrance. The Captain called to them, through the interpreters who accompanied him, and certain Indians came, whom he made to understand that he came merely for the purpose of trading with them for such things as they might have, and to get water; and thus he went with them until they arrived at a place, very near their town, where there was a spring. While taking the water he asked them through the said interpreter for gold, saying he would give them in exchange the valuables which he brought, and, as soon as the Indians saw this, having no gold to give him, they told him to go away but he begged them to allow him to finish taking water, saying that he would immediately leave. In spite of this, however, he was unable to save himself from being obliged the next day, at the hour of mass, to fight the Indians, armed with their bows and arrows, their lances, and rodelas,²⁴ so that they killed a Spaniard, and wounded the said Captain Grijalba and many others. That same afternoon they re-embarked in their caravels with all their people, without having gone into the town of the said Indians, and without having learned anything which they could truly relate to Your Majesties.

From there they went along the said coast until they came to a river, which they named Grijalba, and which they ascended about the hour of vespers. Early the following morning, they found on both sides of the river a great number of Indians and warriors, with their bows and arrows, and lances, and rodelas, to defend the entrance to their country; and to some, it seemed there were about five thousand Indians.

The Captain seeing this, no one landed, but he spoke to them from the ship through his interpreters, praying them to approach nearer so that he might explain to them the motives of his coming, and twenty Indians entered a canoe, and cautiously approached the ships. The Captain Grijalba then told them, and made them understand through his interpreter, that he had come only to barter, and that he wished to be their friend, and that they should bring their gold for which he would give them many valuables which he carried; and thus they did.

The next day, they brought certain jewels of thin gold, for which the said Captain gave them in return such valuables as he thought proper, and they returned to their town; and the said Captain remained there that day.

The next day he set sail, without learning anything else about the country, and continued until he arrived at the Bay, to which they gave the name of San Juan.

The Captain went ashore there with some of his people to some desolate sand-hills, and as, when the natives had seen the ships coming along the coast, they had assembled, he spoke to them, through his interpreter, and had a table brought on which he spread out some of his valuables, making them understand that he had come to trade with them and to be their friend. When the Indians saw and understood this, they brought some stuffs, and ornaments of gold, which they traded with the Captain; and from there the said Captain Grijalba dispatched one of the caravels to Diego Velasquez, with all that they had up till then obtained.

The caravel having departed for the Island of Fernandina where Diego Velasquez was, the Captain Grijalba went down the coast with the remaining caravels, cruising for a distance of about forty-five leagues without landing, or seeing anything except what could be seen from the sea. He then set out to return towards the Island of Fernandina, and never more did he see anything of the country worth mentioning, from which your Royal Highnesses may believe that all the accounts which have been made

24) These were round shields for defence, which were adorned with different coloured feathers of herons, parrots, and other birds, according to the category of the troops, or the heraldic emblem of the chief.

about this country cannot have been exact, because they knew nothing more of the secrets of it than what it has suited their purpose to write.

As soon as the said caravel, which the Captain Juan de Grijalba had dispatched from the Bay of San Juan, arrived, and Diego Velasquez saw the gold which it carried, and learned from Grijalba's letters about the stuffs and valuables which had been given in exchange, it seemed to him, according to information given him by those who arrived in the said caravel, that he had obtained little in proportion to what he expected. He declared that he had not even covered the cost he had incurred in the said armada, and he was vexed, and showed dissatisfaction at the little which Captain Grijalba had accomplished in this country.

In truth, Diego Velasquez had no reason to complain, because his outlays in the said armada were covered from certain casks, and tuns of wine, and other merchandise, and boxes of laced shirts, and beads, which he had sent with it. The wine was sold there to us at four dollars in gold, which are two thousand maravedis²⁵ the aroba, and each shirt at two dollars in gold, and the string of green beads at two dollars, so that he thus covered his outlay in the armada, and even made money. We make special mention of this to Your Majesties that it may be known that the armadas, which until now have been fitted out by Diego Velasquez, have been intended as much for trading merchandise as for privateers, and this with our persons and with our property; and although we have suffered infinite hardships we have served, and we shall serve. Your Royal Highnesses as long as life lasts.

Diego Velasquez being vexed by the small amount of gold that had been brought him, and wishing to obtain more, determined, without making it known to the Governors, the Jeronymite Fathers, to equip a swift armada, and to send it in search of his relative, the said Captain Juan de Grijalba. To do this at less cost to himself, he spoke to Fernando Cortes, a resident and alcalde for Your Majesties in the city of Santiago, proposing to him that they should fit out between them eight or ten ships, because at that time Fernando Cortes had more resources than any other person in the said Island, and because it was believed that more people would enlist with him than with any other.

The said Fernando Cortes, considering what Diego Velasquez had proposed, and moved by zeal to serve Your Royal Highnesses, was ready to spend all he had, and to equip almost two parts of this armada at his own cost, not only in ships, but also in stores, and moreover to distribute his moneys amongst those who were going in the armada, and who needed to provide things necessary for the voyage.

The armada having been fitted and equipped, Diego Velasquez in the name of Your Majesties, named the said Fernando Cortes Captain of it, that he should come to this land to trade, and accomplish what Grijalba had failed to do. The agreement respecting the said armada, although he did not invest or spend more than one-third part of it, was made entirely according to Diego Velasquez's wishes as Your Royal Highnesses may command to be verified from the instructions and faculty which the said Fernando Cortes received from him in the name of Your Majesties. These we now send with these our procurators to Your Royal Highnesses.

Let it be known to Your Majesties that the larger part of the third, which Diego Velasquez spent in fitting out the said armada, consisted in investing his money in wines, and clothing, and in other things of little value, in order to sell them to us here at a much higher price than they had cost him, so that we may say that Diego Velasquez has made his bargains, and the profits on his money, amongst us Spaniards, vassals of your Royal Highnesses, doing a very good business.

25) A small Spanish coin: Bancroft (*Hist. Mex.*, vol. ii., p. 376) gives the value of the ducat as equal to 375 maravedis, and peso de minas as 450 maravedis, which he computes as equal to \$9. 75; he refers to Clemencin, secretary of the Spanish Royal Academy as his authority. Prescott (*Conquest of Mex.*) computes the ducat at \$8. 75, and gives the feso de oro, and the castellano as identical, and worth \$11. 67. Mr. George Folsom, in his English translation of three Letters of Cortes, gives the value of the castellano as only \$2. 75. According to these calculations, the feso de minas, and the peso de oro, were different coins. The value of these monies is difficult to estimate. Their purchasing power was far greater than their exact equivalent would be today, and the value of articles of European manufacture, of horses, iron, and other imported necessities was variable, according to their scarcity, and to the needs of the buyer. Nails, horseshoes, and like objects, sometimes cost their weight in gold, or double in silver.

Having finished fitting out the said armada. Your Royal Highnesses' Captain, Fernando Cortes, sailed upon his voyage from the Island of Fernandina, having ten caravels, and four hundred men at arms, amongst whom were many knights and other noblemen, and sixteen horses. Pursuing their voyage, the first land where they arrived was the Island of Cozumel (now called Santa Cruz, as has been said), in the port of San Juan de Puerta Latina. Upon landing, the town which existed there was found to be deserted, as though it had never been inhabited, and the Captain Fernando Cortes, wishing to know the cause of that place being deserted, brought the people on land, and quartered them in that town. While there with his people he learned from three Indians, who had been taken in a canoe²⁶ at sea while going to Yucatan, that the caciques of that Island, seeing the Spaniards were approaching, had, out of fear of them (not knowing with what purpose, and in what disposition they came), abandoned their town, and gone with all their Indians into the woods.

Fernando Cortes, speaking to them through the medium of an interpreter who accompanied him, told them we were not going to do them any evil or injury, but only to instruct them, and win them to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith, so that they might become vassals of Your Majesties, serving and obeying them, as had all the Indians of these parts which the Spaniards have settled, who are likewise vassals of Your Royal Highnesses. The said Captain, having thus reassured them they put aside their fears, in great part, and said that they would go and call the caciques who had gone into the woods; and the Captain immediately gave them a letter, so that the said caciques might come in all confidence, and, the Captain having given them a term of five days in which to return, they went off thus.

But while the Captain was waiting for the reply the Indians were to bring, and as already three or four days beyond the five which he had stipulated had elapsed, and he saw that they did not come, he determined, in order that the Island might not remain deserted, to send along the coast to the other side. He despatched two captains, therefore, each with one hundred men, directing that one should go to the extremity of the island from one side, and the other from the other, and that they should speak to the caciques whom they might encounter, telling them that he was waiting for them in that town and port of San Juan de Puerta Latina to speak to them on behalf of Your Majesties. He also directed that they should invite and attract them as best they could, so as to induce them to come to the said port of San Juan, and that they should do them no harm, either in their persons, or houses, or property, so as not to alarm them, nor drive them further away than they already were.

The two captains went as the Captain Fernando Cortes had ordered them, and three or four days afterwards they returned, saying that all the towns they had found were empty and bringing with them ten or twelve persons whom they had captured. Amongst these was a principal Indian to whom the said Fernando Cortes spoke in the name of Your Highnesses, through his interpreter, telling him to go and call the caciques, as he would on no account leave the Island without having seen and spoken with them. The Indian answered that he would do this, and thus he left with a letter to the said caciques, returning two days later with the principal cacique, who said that he was Lord of the Island, and had come to see for what he was wanted.

The Captain spoke to him through the interpreter, and told him that he did not wish, nor had he come to do them any harm, but in order to bring them to a knowledge of our Holy Faith, and to let them know that our rulers were the greatest Princes in the world, and that they obeyed a Greater Prince. And what the said Captain Fernando Cortes told them he wanted of them was that the caciques and Indians of the said Island should also obey Your Royal Highnesses, and that in so doing they would be much favoured, and no one would ever molest them. The Cacique answered that he would be glad to do this, and he immediately sent to call all the principal people of the Island, who came and were much pleased with all that the said Captain Fernando Cortes had told the chief cacique of the Island. Thus he ordered them to come back, which they joyfully did, becoming reassured to such an extent that, within a few days, the towns were as

26) Their canoes were made of tree-trunks, hollowed, and were sometimes large enough to hold forty or fifty men (Bernal Diaz, cap. ii.).

full of people as before, and all the Indians went about amongst us with as little fear as if they had already had a long period of intercourse with us.

In the meantime, the Captain learned that there were in the power of certain caciques in Yucatan, some Spaniards who had been made captives as long since as seven years, when, having been lost in a certain caravel²⁷ which was wrecked on the reefs of Jamaica,²⁸ while coming from Tierra Firme, they had escaped in one of the boats of the caravel, and reached that coast. From that time they had been held captives and prisoners by the Indians. Since the said Captain Fernando Cortes had left the Island of Fernandina to seek for these Spaniards, and as he here received information about them, and about the country where they were, it seemed to him that he was rendering a great service to God and to Your Majesty in striving to liberate them from their imprisonment and captivity. He himself with the whole fleet would have gone immediately to rescue them, had not the pilots told him on no account to do this, as it would be the cause of the loss of the fleet and all the people of it, because the coast was very rough, as it really is, and has no port or any place where the ships could anchor. For this reason he abandoned the idea, and ordered that certain Indians, who had told him they knew that cacique with whom those Spaniards were, should go in a canoe; and he wrote to the Spaniards that the only reason why he gave up coming himself with his armada to liberate them was because the coast was very bad and rough for anchoring, but that he prayed them to strive for their liberation, and to escape in canoes, and that he should wait for them in the Island of Santa Cruz.

Three days after the said Captain had sent those Indians with his letters, as it appeared to him that he had not acted satisfactorily, and believing that those Indians would not know how to carry out his wishes, he determined to send forty Spaniards to the said coast with two brigantines, and a boat from his armada, so that they might recover those captive Spaniards if they could find them. With them he sent three other Indians, who should go ashore with another letter²⁹ of his to seek the Spanish prisoners. "When those two brigantines and the boat reached the coast, they landed the three Indians, and sent them to seek for the Spaniards, as the Captain had ordered; and they remained six days along the coast with much difficulty, always waiting for them, though they were almost lost and nearly foundered as the sea along the said coast was very rough, just as the pilots had said. Seeing then that neither the Spanish captives, nor the Indians who had gone to look for them, returned, they determined to go back to the Island of Santa Cruz where the Captain Fernando Cortes was waiting for them.

When they reached the Island, and the Captain learned their bad news he was much grieved, and immediately proposed to embark the next day, firmly resolved to visit that country, even if the whole flotilla should be lost, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was any truth in the report which Captain Juan de Grijalba had sent to the Island of Fernandina, to the effect that it was all an invention, and that no such Spaniards as were said to be captives had ever arrived on that coast.

- 27) The caravel of Valdivia, sent from Darien and wrecked (1511) on the reefs called las Viboras, situated fifteen leagues to the south of Jamaica, and which extend for a distance of forty-five leagues, from 27° 10' longitude, and 17° north latitude (Alcedo, Diccionario Geogr. Hist. de las Indias Occid.). Twenty were saved in an open boat without sails, food, or water, and, after thirteen days' drifting, reached the Maya coast. Seven or eight had died in the meantime from exhaustion, and Valdivia and five others were fattened and sacrificed by the Mayas, who captured them on their landing, and were afterwards eaten. Notice of those who escaped is given in a later note.
- 28) Discovered by Columbus on his second voyage, in 1494, and named Santiago. His son Diego effected its conquest, and governed it from San Domingo, through his captains, of whom the best known was Francisco de Garay.
- 29) Noble Sirs, — I left Cuba with a fleet of eleven ships, and five hundred Spaniards, and have arrived at Cozumel, whence I write you this letter.

The people of this island assure me that there are five or six bearded white men in this country, who greatly resemble us, and, I conjecture, though they can give me no other indications, that you are Spaniards. I, and the gentlemen, who have come with me to explore and take possession of these countries, earnestly beg you to come to us within five or six days after you receive this, without further delay or excuse.

If you will come, all of us will recognise, and thank you, for the assistance this armada shall receive from you. I send a brigantine to bring you, with two ships as escort.

Hernan Cortes.

The Indian took this letter tied in his hair.

Having taken this decision, he had all the people embarked, except himself, and some other twenty Spaniards, who remained with him on shore. The weather had been most favourable to his intention to leave the port, but there suddenly sprang up a contrary wind, with squalls of rain, so that the pilots advised the Captain not to set sail while the weather was unfavourable for getting to sea; so, in view of this, the Captain commanded all on board the armada to disembark once more.

The next day at noon, a canoe with sails was seen coming in the direction of the Island, in which, upon its approach, we saw one of the Spanish captives, whose name was Jeronimo de Aguilar,³⁰ who told us all about how he came to be lost, and the length of time he had been in captivity, which is as we have already related to Your Royal Highnesses.

Of a truth, this adverse weather coming upon us so unexpectedly seemed a great mystery and miracle of God, and led us to believe that no enterprise undertaken in Your Majesties' service, be it what it may, could end in anything but good.

We learned from Jeronimo de Aguilar, that the other Spaniards, who were lost with him in the shipwrecked caravel, were scattered over all the land, which he told us was very extensive, and that it would be quite impossible to gather them without staying and losing much time over it. So, as the Captain Fernando Cortes saw that the provisions of the armada were giving out, and that the people would be exposed to suffer great want from hunger if they delayed longer, and that this would not contribute to the object of their voyage, he determined, with the approval of the others to depart. They immediately set sail, therefore, leaving that Island of Cozumel, which is now called Santa Cruz, entirely pacified, so that had it been their intention to colonise, the Indians would have served them to the best of their ability; and the caciques were very pleased and contented both with what the said captain had told them on the part of Your Royal Highnesses, and with the many ornaments he had given them; and I am confident that any Spaniards who from henceforward shall arrive at Cozumel will be as well received there as in any of those Islands which have been long since settled. The said Island is small, and there is no creek or river in it, and all the water which the Indians drink is from wells, and there are only rocks, and stones, and mountains. The only trade which the Indians have is in bee-hives, and our Procurators will bear to Your Highnesses specimens of the honey and the bee-hives that you may command them to be examined.³¹

Be it known to Your Majesties, that the Captain exhorted the caciques of the said Island, admonishing them to renounce the heathen sect in which they were living, and, when they asked him to give them a law according to which they might henceforth live, the said Captain instructed them as best he could in the Catholic Faith. He left them also a cross of wood in a lofty house, and an image of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, making them understand perfectly well what they were obliged to do to become good Christians; and they showed that they received everything with the best will, and thus they were left contented and happy.

After leaving the Island, we went to Yucatan, and, continuing towards the north, we kept in sight of land, until we arrived at the great river called Grijalba (Rio de Tabasco), which, according to the account given to Your Royal Highnesses, is where Captain de Grijalba, relative to Diego Velasquez, had been. The

30) He was a native of Encija, and had taken holy orders. Seeing the dreadful fate of their companions, Aguilar and Gonzalo Guerrero managed to escape from the cages, in which they were being fattened for the sacrificial feasts, and to lose themselves in the forests. Here they were finally captured by the cacique of another tribe, who was less bloodthirsty, and held them as slaves instead of killing them. Aguilar's virtues and abilities soon attracted attention, and won the respect of his captor, and he rose to a position of influence in the country.

When the news came of the arrival of the ships with more white men, and Cortez's letter was delivered to Aguilar, he procured permission to go to his countrymen; but his companion Guerrero, who had married, and had a family, refused to go, for he was ashamed to show himself naked and tattooed, and with his nose and lips pierced in Indian fashion. Jeronimo de Aguilar was not distinguishable from the Indians, as he was burned nearly black, and wore the same ornaments. He remained with Cortes as his interpreter, rendering invaluable services throughout the conquest.

31) Clavigero notices six different varieties of bees in Mexico, some like those common in Europe, and others without stings, which make the honey "Estabentun," the clearest, sweetest, and most aromatic known. These bees are found in Yucatan, and Chiapa, and it is doubtless their honey which is here mentioned. It was collected every two months, but the November honey was the best, because it was made from a very sweet flower called "Estabentun," which blooms in September.

mouth of that river is so shallow, that none of the larger ships could enter, but, as the said Captain Fernando Cortes is so devoted to the service of Your Majesties, and has the best intention to relate truthfully everything about that country, he determined not to go further until he had learned the mystery of that river, and because of their great reputation for wealth, of the towns which people its banks.

He therefore embarked all the people of his armada in his small brigantines and boats, and ascended the said river, observing the country and the towns along it; and when we came to the first town we found the Indians drawn up on the banks, to whom the said Captain spoke through the interpreter, and through the said Geronimo de Aguilar, who having, as we have heretofore stated, been a captive in Yucatan, understood and spoke the language of that country very well. He made them understand how he had not come to do them any harm or evil, but only to speak to them on the part of Your Majesties; and that he, therefore, prayed that they would allow and approve of his landing, because we had no place to sleep that night in the brigantines and barques, in which we could not even stand on our feet; and as for returning to our ships, it was already very late and they were on the high sea. The Indians answered to this that he could say all he wished from where he was, but that he should not talk of landing, neither he nor his people, for they would dispute his entrance; and, saying this, they menaced us with their arrows, bidding us to go away from there. So as it was late in the afternoon (it being already the hour of sundown), the Captain ordered us to go to some sand-hills which were opposite the town, and there we slept that night.

On the morning of the following day some Indians came in a canoe and brought us a certain number of chickens and a little maize, which might be sufficient for [text missing] number of men for one meal. They told us to take that, and to depart from their country, and the captain spoke to them through the interpreter whom we had, and made them understand that he would in no wise go away until he knew the secret of it, so that he might write a true account of it to Your Majesties. He again begged them that, as they would suffer no harm from him, they would not obstruct his entrance to the said town, because they were vassals of Your Royal Highnesses. But still they answered, that we should not venture into the said town but must depart from their country.

When they were gone the Captain determined to go there, so he ordered one of his captains to start with two hundred men by a road which he had discovered during the night we slept on land, while he, himself, embarked with about eighty men in the barques and brigantines, stationing himself in front of the town, ready to disembark whenever they would allow him.

When he came there he found the Indians ready for battle, armed with their bows and arrows and lances and rodels, and they told him to depart from their country, but if he would not go, and wanted war, to begin at once, for they were men to defend their town. After the Captain had required³² them three times and asked Your Highnesses' notary, whom he carried with him, to bear witness to the fact, he told them that he did not want war. Seeing, however, that it was the determination of the said Indians to resist his landing, and that they began to discharge arrows at us, he ordered the charges of artillery to be fired, and that we should charge them. When the shots were being fired and while landing they wounded some of us, but finally, in consequence of our rapid charges, and of the attack in the rear by those who had gone by the road, they fled, leaving us the town, and we took possession of that part of it which seemed to us the stronger.

32) See Appendix II. at close of Letter.

The next day following, at the hour of vespers, two Indians,³³ on the part of the caciques, came to us, bringing certain jewels of very thin gold of little value. They told the Captain that they brought him those ornaments to induce him to go away, and, without doing them any harm or injury, to leave them their land where they had always been. The said Captain answered, saying, that, as to doing them any harm or injury, he had no such wish, and as to leaving them the land, they must understand that from henceforward they were to have for their Lords, the greatest Princes of the earth, whose vassals they would be, and that they would have to serve them, and that, in acting thus, Your Majesties would grant them many mercies, and favours would grow upon them, and that they should be protected and defended from their enemies. They answered that they would be satisfied to do this, but still they required that their country should be left to them. Thus we all became friends, and, our friendship being established, the Captain told them that the Spaniards there with him had nothing to eat, as nothing had been brought from the ships, and he prayed them to bring us food during the time we remained on the Island; they answered that the next day they would, and thus they went away, and remained away that day and the next, nor did they bring us any food.

As all of us were, on this account, in great need of supplies, on the third day some Spaniards asked permission of the Captain to go to some farms in the neighbourhood to look for something to eat; and the Captain, seeing that the Indians did not return as they had promised, sent four captains with more than two hundred men to hunt round about the town, and see if they could find anything to eat. While these were engaged in searching, they met many Indians who immediately shot arrows at them, wounding twenty Spaniards, and had not the Captain been immediately advised of this, so as to go, as he did, to their assistance, they would probably have killed more than half the Christians. So we all retreated to our camp, where the wounded were cared for, and those who had fought obtained some rest.

The Captain, seeing how wrongly the Indians had acted, in that, instead of bringing us food as they had agreed, they had wounded us with their arrows, and made war upon us, ordered ten of the horses and mares we had on board to be brought, and all the people to be prepared, because he thought that those Indians, encouraged by the advantage they had obtained the day before, would fall upon us hoping to

33) The appearance of the ships of de Cordoba and Grijalba, and the fighting in Yucatan, were quickly reported to Montezuma, whose superstitious mind was so affected by events, in which he saw the disasters to himself and his people foretold by Quetzalcoatl, that his first impulse was to save himself by some enchantment or incantation, which should translate him to the abode, or Walhalla, of the famous kings and demi-gods of antiquity. The simultaneous apparition of a great comet in the sky confirmed these forebodings, and he gave himself entirely into the hands of his diviners and necromancers, who exercised all their resources of interpreting dreams, reading signs in natural phenomena, and studying the heavens, to obtain direction for their sovereign in his perplexity. Many, whose dreams presaged evil, were starved to death or put to tortures; a reign of terror set in, and none dared to speak in the sovereign's presence, while the prisons were full of luckless magicians, and death penalties were inflicted even upon their families in the provinces (Duran, cap. lviii., and Tezozomoc. apud Orozco y Berra, tom, iv., cap. ii.). As the proofs of the presence of the white strangers in their floating houses accumulated, despite Montezuma's reluctance to believe the reports which were repeatedly brought to him, the sovereign fell into a state of profound depression, and despairing of warding off the ominous presence, he ordered costly gifts to be especially made, and he sent the two envoys, Teutlamacazqui and Cuitlalpitoc, to Pinotl, governor of Cuertlactla, commanding him to provide in every way for the reception and entertainment of the celestial guests. After the departure of Grijalba's men, the fears of Montezuma somewhat subsided, and he persuaded himself that he had staved off the impending disaster. The governor of the coast provinces, however, had strict orders to keep watch, and immediately report any further appearance of the fearsome strangers. Hence the arrival of Cortes, nine months later, was at once announced, by fleet messengers, to the Emperor, who decided in council to send ambassadors to welcome him, and bring exact information concerning all they could see and learn. Thus, on Easter Day, the twenty-fourth of April, Teuhtlilli, governor of Cuertlactla and Cuitlalpitoc, who had been before sent to Grijalba, appeared before Cortes. While extending the welcome his superstitious fears forbade him to withhold, the Emperor secretly charged his magicians, whom he assembled from far and wide, to rid the country of the strangers by the power of magic. The allied kings and nobles were in constant council from which no decision issued, the greater number being of Cacamatzin's opinion, that, if the strangers were gods, it was useless to resist them, if they were envoys of a distant monarch, they should be received as such, while if they were men who came with hostile intent, they could easily be crushed. Only Cuitlahuac, lord of Itztapalapan, opposed this view (Ixtilxochitl, Hist. Chichimeca, cap. lxxx.) This prince with patriotic foresight was for crushing the strangers instantly, and before they could work the nation any evil.

injure us. On the next day when all was thus prepared, he sent certain captains with three hundred men, to the place where the battle had been fought the day before, to learn if the Indians were still there or what had become of them. A little later, he sent two other captains, with a rear-guard and another hundred men, and the said Captain Fernando Cortes went secretly to one side with ten men on horseback. Proceeding in this order, those who went ahead met a great number of warriors coming to attack us in our camp, and, if we had not gone out that day to encounter them on the road, we should probably have found ourselves in great distress.

When the captain of artillery, who went ahead, made certain requirements before the notary, of the warriors whom he met, giving them to understand through the interpreters that we desired no war, but peace and love with them, they did not bother to answer us with words, but let fly a thick volley of arrows at us. While those in the fore were fighting with the Indians, two captains of the rear-guard came up, and, after two hours of fighting, the Captain Fernando Cortes arrived with the horsemen, coming out from the woods at the point where the Indians were surrounding the Spaniards on all sides; and so he kept up the fight with the Indians for an hour, and such was their multitude that neither those who were fighting the Spanish foot-soldiers could see the horsemen, nor know where they were, nor could the horsemen, advancing and retreating amongst the Indians, see each other. As soon, however, as the Spaniards realised that the horsemen had come up, they charged quickly upon the Indians, who immediately began to fly, and pursued them for half a league. The Captain, seeing that the Indians were in full flight, and that nothing remained to be done, and that his troops were very fatigued, gave the order that all should collect in some farmhouses near by; and, when they were assembled, twenty were found to be wounded, of whom no one died, nor did anyone who had been wounded the day before. Thus assembled, and the wounded cared for, we returned to our camp, carrying with us two Indians whom we had captured, whom the Captain ordered to be liberated, and sent letters by them to the caciques, telling them that, if they would come to him, he would pardon them the offence which they had committed, and they would be his friends.

That same afternoon two who seemed to be principal Indians³⁴ came, saying that they were very sorry for the past, and that those caciques besought the him to pardon them, and not to do any further injury nor kill any more of their people, for there were as many as two hundred and twenty men slain. They also said that the past should be the past, and henceforward they wished to be vassals of those Princes of whom, he had told them, giving and holding themselves as such, and that they would acknowledge and bind themselves to serve them whenever they should be commanded to do so in the name of Your Majesties. Thus peace was made and agreed upon, and the Captain asked the said Indians, through the interpreter whom we had with us, who were the people who had taken part in the battle, and they answered that they came from eight provinces, and according to their counting they were in all forty thousand men,³⁵ and that they knew perfectly well how to count up to that number. Your Royal Highnesses may believe for certain.

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- 34) The first messengers seemed from their dress to be slaves, and though their gifts of chickens, smoked fish, and maize-cakes, were accepted, and they were given some glass beads in return, they were sent back to say that if their people wanted peace the chiefs must come themselves, as the Spaniards could not treat with slaves. Some thirty head-men appeared the next day, bringing the usual present of provisions, and asking permission to bury and cremate their dead, offering to conclude peace the following day. This was agreed to, and the dead were buried, or burned according to the usage of each tribe. At noon the next day, the chiefs appeared, and in the conversation Jeronimo de Aguilar acted as interpreter. Cortes adroitly arranged a show of gun firing and horsemanship to impress them, and he threw all the blame for the fighting upon them, but declared that, if they were ready for peace his sovereigns would regard them as friends, and favour and help them. Negotiations terminated the next day, when an assembly of all the neighbouring chiefs acknowledged themselves vassals of the Spanish king, giving Cortes presents of gold and slaves. Amongst these latter was Marina, of whom further notice will appear.
- 35) Andres de Tapia fixes the number at 48, 000, but these figures seem hardly possible, and Orozco y Berra observes that they must be taken as representing the idea of multitude, rather than an actual counting. This decisive battle, which took place on March 25th, became known as the battle of Ceutla, and in Gomara's chronicle, as well as in Tapia's narrative, and that of others, the victory was attributed to the miraculous intervention of St. James, the patron of Spain, or of St. Peter the patron of Cortes. Bernal Diaz says that it may be as Gomara describes, and that "los glorias apostolos Senor Santiago and Senor San Pedro" did appear, but he, miserable sinner, was not worthy to behold the apparition.

that this battle was won, rather by the will of God, than by our forces, because weak was the defence of our four hundred against forty thousand warriors.

After we had become good friends, they gave us, during the four or five days we still remained there, some one hundred and forty dollars of gold in pieces of all kinds, and very thin, and so much esteemed by them that it seemed their country was very poor in gold, because it appeared certain that the little they possessed had come from other parts in trading. The land is very good and provisions are abundant, both in maize, as well as fruits, fish, and other things which they eat. This town is situated on the banks of the afore-named river, about which extends a plain, where there are many farms and cultivated fields, such as they have. He[Cortes] reproved them for the evil they did in adoring their idols and gods, and he made them understand that they should come to the knowledge of our Very Holy Faith, and he left them a large wooden cross set up on an elevation, and they remained very satisfied, saying they would hold it in great veneration, and would adore it; thus these Indians became our friends and vassals of Your Royal Highnesses.

The said Captain Fernando Cortes left there, continuing his voyage, and we arrived at the port, and bay, which is called San Juan, where the above-named Captain Grijalba traded, of which extensive relation has heretofore been made to Your Majesty. Immediately upon our arrival, the natives came to inquire what caravels were those which had arrived, and as it was very late that day, almost night, the Captain remained quietly in the caravel, and ordered that no one should go on shore. Early the next day the Captain landed with a great part of the people of his armada, and found two of the principal Indians there, to whom he presented certain of his own valuable garments, and, speaking to them through the interpreters, he gave them to understand that he had come to these parts, by command of Your Royal Highnesses, to speak to them, and to tell them what they should do to advance your service. For this he besought them that they should immediately go to their town, and call the cacique, or caciques who might be there, to come and speak to him; and, to ensure their coming, he gave them two shirts for those caciques, and two jackets, one of silk and one of velvet, also various caps, and some hawk's bells; so they went with these valuables to the said caciques. The next day a little before noon one of the caciques of that town came, to whom the said Captain spoke, and made him understand, through the interpreter, that he had not come to do them any hurt nor injury, but to inform them that they were to be vassals of Your Majesties, and how they were to serve them and to pay tribute of what they had in their country, as did all who are such. And the cacique answered that he was very satisfied to be such, and to obey, and that he would be much pleased to serve them, and to have such high Princes for lords as the Captain had made them understand Your Royal Majesties were. Immediately afterwards, the Captain told him that, since he was so well disposed towards his King and Lord, he would see what great favours Your Majesties would grant him in the future; and, saying this, he made him put on a shirt of holland, and a robe of velvet, and a girdle of gold, with which the said cacique was much pleased and happy. He told the Captain then, that he wanted to go to his country, and asked him to wait for him there, for the next day he would come back, and bring him such things as he had, so that we might more fully understand his good will towards the service of Your Royal Highnesses. Thus he took his leave, and departed; and, the next day, the said cacique returned, as he had agreed, and spreading a white cloth before the Captain, he offered him certain precious jewels of gold, which he placed upon it; of these, and the others which we afterwards obtained, we make relation to Your Majesties in a memorial which our procurators take with them.

After the said cacique had taken leave of us, and returned satisfied to his house, some of those noble persons³⁶ who came in this armada, gentlemen, and sons of gentlemen, zealous in the service of our Lord,

36) The armada was composed of eleven vessels, of which the largest, on which Cortes sailed, was of 100 tonels, the tonel being somewhat more than one ton. The number of men is variously given by different authorities, but, in the memorandum of Cortes at the time of his residencia in 1534, it is stated that there were 530 men. The persons of nobility must be sought among the leaders and captains who were Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Francisco de Orozco, Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Diego de Ordaz, Alonzo de Avila, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco de Morla, Francisco de Saucedo, Juan Velasquez de Leon, and Cristobal de Olid. Pedro de Alvarado had two brothers, Jorge and Gomez, and a natural brother, called Juan, and there may have been some other adventurers of good origin

and of Your Royal High-nesses, and desirous for the exaltation of your royal crown, and the extension of your dominions, and the increase of your revenues, assembled and spoke with the Captain Fernando Cortes, saying that this land was good and that, judging by the sample of gold which that cacique had brought, it was reasonable to believe that it must be very rich, and that he and all his Indians were well disposed towards us. For these reasons, it seemed to us that it was not advantageous for Your Majesties' service to do as Diego Velasquez had ordered the said Captain Fernando Cortes to do (which was to trade for all the gold we could, and, having obtained it, to return to the island of Fernandina, in order that the said Diego Velasquez, and the said Captain might profit exclusively by it, and that it seemed better to all of us that a town should be founded and peopled there in the name of Your Royal Highnesses. In this, there should be a court of justice, so that you would have your jurisdiction in this country just as in your kingdoms and dominions, since possibly this country, being peopled by Spaniards, in addition to the increase of the kingdoms and dependencies, and the incomes of Your Majesties, you might show some favours to us, and to the colonists who would come there hereafter.

Having decided this, we all agreed with one accord and mind, and we made a requirement to the said Captain, in which we told him that, as he saw how agreeable it would be to the service of God, Our Lord, and of Your Majesties, that this country should be peopled (giving the reasons which we have heretofore recounted to Your Highnesses), we required him to cease trading, as he was doing, inasmuch as it was equivalent to destroying the country to a great extent, and that Your Majesties would thus be but poorly served; and that, for the same reason, we asked and required him to name *alcaldes*, and municipal authorities, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, for the town which was to be founded and built by us. This was accompanied by intimations in legal form that we would protest against him if he acted otherwise. This requirement having been made to the said Captain, he replied that he would give his answer the next day; and the said Captain, having seen how all that we had asked him to do would be profitable to the service of Your Royal Highnesses, answered us the next day, saying that he was exclusively devoted to the service of Your Majesties, and that, without considering the profit which might result to him from carrying on the trading as planned, so as to recover the great expenses which had been sustained out of his property in fitting out that armada with the said Diego Velasquez, but rather putting aside everything else, he was glad and satisfied to do whatever we had asked him to do, inasmuch as it was advantageous to the service of Your Royal Highnesses.

Immediately, therefore, he began with great diligence to found and people a town, to which the name was given of Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz.³⁷ He named those of us who will sign at the *endas alcaldes* and

amongst the company (Orozco y Berra; tom. iv., cap. iii.).

37) The legal formalities so scrupulously observed, were a trifle farcical in this particular instance. and Cortes doubtless listened to the reading of the "requirements" with a solemn exterior, but with his "tongue in his cheek." The narrative here is clear. He resigned the authority he had received from Velasquez, the royal governor of Cuba, into the hands of the municipal authorities he had himself appointed in response to the popular demand, and who thereby likewise became royal officials. They in their turn exercised their powers to appoint him Captain-General, and Chief Justice, of the new colony, and thus, by due form of law, Cortes found himself, within twenty-four hours after his abdication, installed as the recognised dispenser of civil justice, and as military commander. He showed a becoming reluctance to accept the nomination, and finally had all the appearance of yielding to an irresistible expression of the popular will. Bernal Diaz quotes to the point an old Spanish proverb: *Tu mi lo ruegas y yo mi lo quiero*. The partisans of Cortes, led by the Alvarados, Olid, Avila, Escalante, and Puertocarrero, secretly formed a party among the men and propounded the new plan of colonisation for the crown, in substitution for that of merely trading in the interest of Diego Velasquez, arguing that he, Velasquez would get the lion's share of the profits, on their return to Cuba, while they would be about as poor as when they started. This idea won adherents, but was not slow in reaching the knowledge of the friends of Velasquez, who protested vigorously against such a betrayal of confidence, and insisted that they should return to Cuba with the treasure, and make their report to the governor. Cortes feigned to accede to their view, and perplexed them greatly by giving immediate orders to embark the next day. No sooner were these orders given, than the "imperialist" group, to describe them by a modern term, held a second meeting, in which it was resolved that their allegiance and duty were to the crown, that being already in practical possession of a rich strip of coast, and well received by the Indians, since they had proved their superiority, they should rather consider the conversion of the natives, and the extension of His Majesty's dominions, than the mere trading profits of the governor of Cuba, and hence that they should found there a port and city in the name

municipal officers of the said town receiving from us the oath in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, with the solemnity customary in such cases; after which we assembled the next day in our council and assembly chamber, and, being thus assembled, we sent to summon the Captain Fernando Cortes, and we asked him in the name of Your Royal Highnesses to show us the powers and instructions, which the said Diego Velasquez had given him for coming to these parts. He immediately sent for these, and showed them to us, and, having been seen and read by us, and well examined according to the best of our understanding, it seemed to us that, by those powers and instructions, the said Captain Fernando Cortes, had no longer any authority, and that, they having expired, he could no longer exercise the office of justice, or of captain.

It seemed to us, Very Excellent Princes, that, for the sake of peace and concord amongst us, and in order to govern us well, it was necessary to install a person for Your Royal service to act in the name of Your Majesties in the said town, and in these parts as Chief Justice, and Captain, and head, whom we could all respect and obey until we might give account of everything to Your Royal Highnesses, so that you could provide as best suited your service. Recognising that to no one could we better give such a charge than to the said Fernando Cortes, because, besides being a most suitable person, he is moreover very zealous in the service of Your Majesties, as well as being very experienced in these parts and islands, of which he has always given good proofs, for having spent all that he possessed to serve Your Majesties in this armada, and heeded so little (as we have already related) his possible gains and profits from continuing to trade, we therefore elected him, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, to the office of Justice and Superior Alcalde, receiving from him the oath which is required in such cases. And, having done this as profitable to the service of Your Majesty, we received him in Your Royal name in our Council and Assembly Chamber, as Chief Justice and Governor of Your Royal arms, and thus he is, and will continue, until Your Majesties provide what is best for your service.

We have wished to fully relate all this to Your Royal Highnesses, that you may know what has been done here, and in what condition we are living here.

Having done as stated, and, being all assembled in our Council Chamber, we agreed to write to Your Majesties, and to send you, in addition to the one-fifth part which belongs to your rents, according to Your Royal prescriptions, all the gold, and silver, and valuables which we have obtained in this country, on account of its being the first, and above which we keep nothing for ourselves. We place this at the disposition of Your Royal Highnesses, as a proof of our very good will for your service, as we have heretofore done with our persons and property, and, having agreed upon this amongst ourselves, we selected as our procurators³⁸ Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, whom we send to Your Majesties with all this, that they may kiss Your Royal hands on our behalf, and that, in our names, and in that of this town, and its Council, they may pray Your Royal Highnesses to favour us as may be agreeable to God, and to Your Majesties, and for the coming good of this town, as will appear at greater

of the sovereigns, who would certainly approve when they came to understand the circumstances. The Velasquez party seems to have offered no open resistance.

The elaborate name of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz was given to the new settlement, the "rica" being suggested by the rich character of the soil, and the "Vera Cruz" by the date of their landing, which was a Good Friday, the day when the Cross is especially venerated.

The transformation scene was very complete. Cortes, from being the semi-rebellious captain of a trading fleet became the recognised representative of the King of Spain in Mexico; the volunteer soldiers of the expedition became a militia; municipal officers, and royal officials sprang into existence, who acknowledged no superior but the King, while Diego Velasquez was eliminated from the scheme of things entirely.

The partisans of Velasquez, though in a minority, still argued that Cortes's election was irregular, because they had not taken part in it, nor had it been confirmed, either by the Jeronymite Fathers, or the governor of Cuba. This incipient sedition was characteristically met, by Cortes offering as many as were dissatisfied permission to re-embark, and return to Cuba, and, at the same time, to demonstrate the reality of the new state of things, he ordered the Alguacil Mayor to arrest Juan Velasquez, Diego de Ordaz, Pedro Escudero, and others of the more active agitators, and to imprison them on the captain's ship. This drastic move had the desired effect upon the waverers.

38) See Appendix III. at close of Letter.

length from the instructions which we have given them. We humbly beg Your Majesties, with all the respect which is becoming, to receive them, to give them Your Royal hands to kiss on our behalf, and to grant them all the favours they may ask and supplicate on behalf of this Council, and ourselves, because, in doing this Your Majesties, besides rendering service to Our Lord, and this town and Council, will bestow on us the special favour which we daily hope that Your Royal Highnesses will grant us.

In one chapter of this letter, we have already said that we would send an account to Your Royal Highnesses, by which Your Majesties might be perfectly informed of everything about this country, its condition, riches, the people who possess it, and of the law and sect, rites and ceremonies which they observe. This country, Most Potent Princes, where we now are in the name of Your Majesties, has fifty leagues of coast on the one side and the other of this town, the seacoast being low with many sand-hills, some of which are two leagues or more in length. The country beyond these sand-hills is level, with many fertile plains, in which are such beautiful river banks, that in all Spain there can be found no better; these are as grateful to the sight as they are productive in everything sown in them, and very orderly and well kept with walks, and facilities for grazing all kinds of animals. There is every kind of game in this country, and animals, and birds such as are familiar to us, — deer, fallow deer, wolves, foxes, quails, doves, and pigeons, and two or three kinds of hares and rabbits, — so that there is no difference between this country and Spain, as regards birds and animals; there are lions and tigers³⁹ about five leagues from the sea, in some places, and others are very beautiful[word missing]. There is, moreover, a great range of very beautiful mountains, some of them very high, amongst which one⁴⁰ very greatly exceeds all the others, and from it can be discovered and seen a great part of the sea and land; and it is so high that if the day is not very clear you cannot see or distinguish the summit of it, because one half of it is all covered with clouds; and sometimes when the day is very clear the peak of it can be seen above the said clouds, and it is so white that we judge it to be snow, and the natives even tell us that it is snow, but as we have not seen it well, although we have been very near to it, and because this region is so hot, we do not affirm it to be snow. We will endeavour to know and see it, as well as many other things about which we have information, so as to send a true account to Your Royal Highnesses of the wealth of gold and silver and stones, and we judge that Your Majesties may order it to be examined according to the samples of all which we remit to Your Royal Highnesses. According to our judgment, it is credible that there is everything in this country which existed in that from whence Solomon is said to have brought the gold for the Temple, but, as we have been here so short a time, we have not been able to see more than the distance of five leagues inland, and about ten or twelve leagues of the coast length on each side, which we have explored since we landed; although from the sea it must be more, and we saw much more while sailing.

The people who inhabit this country, from the Island of Cozumel, and the Cape of Yucatan to the place where we are now, are a people of middle size, with bodies and features well proportioned, except that in each province their customs differ, some piercing the ears, and putting large and ugly objects in them, and others piercing the nostrils down to the mouth, and putting in large round stones like mirrors, and others piercing their under lips down as far as their gums, and hanging from them large round stones, or pieces of gold, so weighty that they pull down the nether lip, and make it appear very deformed. The clothing which they wear is like long veils, very curiously worked. The men wear breech-cloths about their bodies, and large mantles, very thin, and painted in the style of Moorish draperies. The women of the ordinary people wear, from their waists to their feet, clothes also very much painted, some covering their breasts and leaving the rest of the body uncovered. The superior women, however, wear very thin shirts of cotton, worked and made in the style of rochets. Their food is maize and grain, as in the other Islands, and potuyuca, as they eat it in the Island of Cuba, and they eat it broiled, since they do not make bread of it;

39) The largest beasts of prey in Mexico were the puma, the jaguar, and the ocelot; lions and tigers there were none.

40) Orizaba; the usual Indian name for the volcano was Citlaltepētł, meaning star-mountain, though they also called it Zencēpatl, and Pojauhtecatl. According to Humboldt, its known period of greatest activity was from 1545 to 1566; he also notes that both this crater, and that of Popocatepētł, incline towards the south-east. His measurement of Orizaba is 5395 metres (Essai Politique, vol. i.). Ferrer's measurement is 5450 metres.

and they have their fishing, and hunting, and they roast many chickens, like those of the Tierra Firma, which are as large as peacocks.⁴¹

There are some large towns well laid out, the houses being of stone, and mortar when they have it. The apartments are small, low, and in the Moorish style, and, when they cannot find stone, they make them of adobes, whitewashing them, and the roof is of straw. Some of the houses of the principal people are very cool, and have many apartments, for we have seen more than five courts in one house, and the apartments very well distributed, each principal department of service being separate. Within them they have their wells and reservoirs for water, and rooms for the slaves and dependents, of whom they have many. Each of these chiefs has at the entrance of his house, but outside of it, a large courtyard, and in some there are two and three and four very high buildings, with steps leading up to them, and they are very well built; and in them they have their mosques and prayer places, and very broad galleries on all sides, and there they keep the idols which they worship, some being of stone, some of gold, and some of wood, and they honour and serve them in such wise, and with so many ceremonies, that much paper would be required to give Your Royal Highnesses an entire and exact description of all of them. These houses and mosques, wherever they exist, are the largest and best built in the town, and they keep them very well adorned, decorated with feather-work and well-woven stuffs, and with all manner of ornaments. Every day, before they undertake any work, they burn incense in the said mosques, and sometimes they sacrifice their own persons, some cutting their tongues and others their ears, and some hacking the body with knives; and they offer up to their idols all the blood which flows, sprinkling it on all sides of those mosques, at other times throwing it up towards the heavens, and practising many other kinds of ceremonies, so that they undertake nothing without first offering sacrifice there.

They have another custom, horrible, and abominable, and deserving punishment, and which we have never before seen in any other place, and it is this, that, as often as they have anything to ask of their idols, in order that their petition may be more acceptable, they take many boys or girls, and even grown men and women, and in the presence of those idols they open their breasts, while they are alive, and take out the hearts and entrails, and burn the said entrails and hearts before the idols, offering that smoke in sacrifice to them.⁴² Some of us who have seen this say that it is the most terrible and frightful thing to behold that has ever been seen. So frequently, and so often do these Indians do this, according to our information, and partly by what we have seen in the short time we are in this country, that no year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice fifty souls in each mosque; and this is practised, and held as customary, from the Isle of Cozumel to the country in which we are now settled. Your Majesties may rest assured that, according to the size of the land, which to us seems very considerable, and the many mosques which they have, there is no year, as far as we have until now discovered and seen, when they do not kill and sacrifice in this manner some three or four thousand souls. Now let Your Royal Highnesses consider if they ought not to prevent so great an evil and crime, and certainly God, Our Lord, will be well pleased, if, through the command of Your Royal Highnesses, these peoples should be initiated and instructed in our Very Holy Catholic Faith, and the devotion, faith, and hope, which they have in their idols, be transferred to the Divine Omnipotence of God; because it is certain, that, if they served God with the same faith, and fervour, and diligence, they would surely work miracles.

It should be believed, that it is not without cause that God, Our Lord, has permitted that these parts should be discovered in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, so that this fruit and merit before God should be enjoyed by Your Majesties, of having instructed these barbarian people, and brought them through your commands to the True Faith. As far as we are able to know them, we believe that, if there were interpreters and persons who could make them understand the truth of the Faith, and their error, many, and perhaps all, would shortly quit the errors which they hold, and come to the true knowledge; because they live civilly and reasonably, better than any of the other peoples found in these parts. To endeavour to give to Your Majesties all the particulars about this country and its people, might occasion

41) These were turkeys, which were unknown in Europe.

42) See Appendix IV, at close of Letter.

some errors in the account, because much of it we have not seen, and only know it through information given us by the natives; therefore we do not undertake to give more than what may be accepted by Your Highnesses as true. Your Majesties may, if you deem proper, give this account as true to Our Very Holy Father, in order that diligence and good system may be used in effecting the conversion of these people, because it is hoped that great fruit and much good may be obtained; also that His Holiness may approve and allow that the wicked and rebellious, being first admonished, may be punished and chastised as enemies of Our Holy Catholic Faith, which will be an occasion of punishment and fear to those who may be reluctant in receiving knowledge of the Truth; thereby, that the great evils and injuries they practise in the service of the Devil, will be forsaken. Because, besides what we have just related to Your Majesties about the men, and women, and children, whom they kill and offer in their sacrifices, we have learned, and been positively informed, that they are all sodomites, and given to that abominable sin.⁴³ In all this, we beseech Your Majesties to order such measures taken as are most profitable to the service of God, and to that of Your Royal Highnesses, and so that we who are here in your service may also be favoured and recompensed. Amongst other things which are contained in our instructions to our procurators, whom we send to Your Highnesses, one is to pray Your Majesties on our own behalf, that you should in no way give, or make concession in these parts, to Diego Velasquez Lieutenant Admiral in the Island of Fernandina of the adelanamiento, nor the perpetual governorship, nor any other, nor the charge of justice; and if any such has been given to him, to order it to be revoked, because it is not profitable to the service of Your Royal Crown that the said Diego Velasquez, nor any other person, should have authority, or any other perpetual concession of any sort, save as may be the will of Your Majesties, in this country of Your Royal Highnesses, inasmuch as it is, as far as we can foresee and hope, very rich. Moreover, far from profiting Your Majesties' service, should the said Diego Velasquez be provided with some office, we foresee that we, the vassals of Your Royal Highnesses, who have begun to colonise, and to live in this country, will be ill-treated by him, because we are convinced that, what has already been done in Your Majesties' service, in sending this gift of gold and silver, and valuables, which we have obtained here in this country, and now send, would not have been approved by him. This clearly appears through four of his servants who have come here, and who, when they perceived our wish to send all to Your Royal Highnesses, as we do, declared that it would be better to send it to Diego Velasquez, and otherwise opposed their being sent to Your Majesties. For this we ordered them to be imprisoned, and they will remain prisoners until justice decides, after which we shall relate to Your Majesties what we have done with them.⁴⁴ So, because we have seen what the said Diego Velasquez has done, and our experience of it, we fear that, if he should come to this country with any commission, he would treat us ill, as he has done

43) Clavigero denounces the blameworthy facility with which this vice was imputed to the Mexicans in general, by some of the early writers and, in accord with other authorities, asserts that while it existed amongst the Panuchesi, the only evidence of it elsewhere was the severe laws enacted for its punishment. He does not hesitate to say, that the accusation was made by some of the Spaniards to palliate their own excesses, — a peculiarly heinous tactic. The friars, who were later in the best position to know the morals and customs of the Indians, unanimously repudiate the charge. Amongst modern authorities, Orozco y Berra combats the imputation as unfounded. Bernal Diaz records that obscene images were found in the temples at Cozumel, and the Anonymous Conqueror describes in language which I do not translate, the debauchery common amongst the Indians of Panuco, and gives some singular details of their different ways of intoxicating themselves, similar to nothing I have ever heard of amongst any people, ancient or modern (Apud Icazbalceta, Doc. Inéd. *Il Modo di Sacrificare*, etc.).

44) Bernaldino de Coria, one of the conspirators, weakened at the last moment, and betrayed the plot to seize a boat, with provisions, and to put off to Cuba, for the purpose of warning Diego Velasquez of the sailing of the envoys, so that he might intercept them. Cortes did not mince matters; he promptly hanged Diego Cermeno, and Juan Escudero. The latter was the same alguacil who had captured him before the church in Santiago, where he had taken sanctuary during his quarrel with Velasquez, and had imprisoned him on the ship in the harbour. Gonzalo de Umbria had his feet cut off, and two hundred lashes were administered to each of the others, except the priest, Juan Diaz, whose cloth protected him. Gomara suppresses the amputation of Umbria's feet, and says he was whipped with the others. Bernal Diaz reports that Cortes exclaimed, when he signed the warrant for these punishments, "who would not rather be unable to write, than to have to sign away the lives of men!" but the old soldier shrewdly adds, that he believes most judges from the days of Nero down have expressed the same sentiment (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. viii.).

in the Island of Fernandina, during the time that he had charge of its government, doing justice to none except as he pleased. and punishing those whom he chose, from anger or passion, but not from justice or reason. He has thus destroyed many good subjects by reducing them to great poverty, in refusing to give them any Indians, and taking them all for himself, and in taking all the gold which they had obtained without giving them any share of it. He also has interests with dishonest men, for his own advantage, and by the mere fact of his having the Governorship, and power of distribution, nobody dares to oppose him, knowing and fearing that he can ruin them. Your Majesties have no information about this, nor has there ever been any account made of it. because the procurators, who have gone heretofore from the said Island, are creatures and servants of his hands, whom he holds by giving them Indians at their pleasure; and the procurators, who come from the smaller towns to attend to the affairs of the communities, have to do as he wishes, because he buys them up with Indians. When such procurators return to their towns, and are asked to give an account of what they have done, the people declare that poor men should not be sent as procurators, because, for one cacique whom Diego Velasquez gives them, they will do everything he wants. The municipal officers and alcaldes who have Indians dare not speak to, or reprove, the procurators, who have done what they ought not to have done out of compliance to Diego Velasquez, for fear that the said Diego Velasquez might take away their Indians. In this, and other things, it is very good[word missing in MS.] from which Your Royal Highnesses may see, that all the accounts which the Island of Fernandina has made of what Diego Velasquez has done, and the favours which they asked for him, are on account of the Indians he has given to the procurators, and not because the communities are satisfied or wish such things; rather would they desire that those procurators were punished. The above being notorious to all the inhabitants and householders of this town of Vera Cruz, they assembled with the procurator of this council, and have asked and required us, by their requirements, signed with their names, that, in the name of all, we should beg Your Majesties not to provide the said Diego Velasquez with the said, or any other, commission, but rather to order him to give his residencia,⁴⁵ and to deprive him of the charge of the Island of Fernandina. By taking his residencia, the above statements would be shown to be true, for which we beseech Your Majesties to name a judge and inquisitor, in order to make an investigation of all which we have related to Your Royal Highnesses, not only about the Island of Cuba, but also elsewhere; for our intention is to prove things from which Your Majesties may judge if it be justice or conscience that he should have royal charges in these parts, or in the others where he at present resides.

In the same manner, the procurator, and the inhabitants and householders of this town, have asked us in the said petition that we should supplicate Your Majesty in their name to provide a warrant and Royal Provision to be given in favour of Fernando Cortes, Captain, and Superior Justice of Your Royal Highnesses, in order that he may govern us with justice, until this country shall be conquered and pacified, and for such time as may appear best to Your Majesties, and be best for your service; for they recognise in him such a person as is fit for it. Which petition and requirement we send with these, our procurators, to Your Majesties, and we all humbly supplicate Your Royal Highnesses, that you will grant not only this, but all the other favours, which in the name of this council and town may be petitioned by the said procurators, and that you will regard us as your most loyal vassals, such as we have been and always will be. The gold, and silver, and jewels, and valuables, and the rodelas, and the wearing apparel, which we send by the procurators to Your Royal Highnesses, and which, over and above the one-fifth which belongs to Your Majesty, Captain Fernando Cortes, and this council, pray you to accept, go with this memorial, signed by them and by the said procurators, as Your Royal Highnesses may see from it.⁴⁶

45) This was done by means of a commission, with full powers to inquire into all administrative acts of a governor, and to receive and decide upon all complaints against him. Upon the arrival of the commissioners, the governor and his officials resigned their authority and badges of office into their hands, pending the outcome of the investigation. The residencia was not of itself an indignity, nor did it necessarily imply a want of confidence in the governor, but it was the most effective check the home government had upon the colonial officials.

46) The first treasure sent to Spain contained the following curious objects:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

The first attack, of which Cortes makes no mention was made at Catoche, just before dawn, March 6th. The Indians fought with great fury, in spite of the fire-arms which they heard for the first time, and were repulsed only with difficulty, after they had wounded fifteen Spaniards. Bernal Diaz relates that fifteen Indians were killed, and two were captured, who were afterwards baptised Christians, under the name of Melchor, and Julian, by the chaplain Fray Alonzo Gonzalez. The Spaniards looted the temples and houses of their idols and golden ornaments. The Indians at Champoton repeated inquiringly the words "Castelan? Castelan?" and, by gestures, asked if the strangers came from the East. Orozco y Berra (vol. iv., cap. i.,) says that they connected the arrival of the unknown guests with the prophecy of Kukulcan (Quetzalcoatl), foretelling the coming of bearded white men from the land of the rising sun, and also that they had

A gold necklace composed of seven pieces, with 185 small emeralds set in it, and 232 gems, like rubies, from which hung 27 small bells of gold, and some pearls.

Another necklace of four pieces of gold, with 102 red gems, like rubies, 172 emeralds, 10 fine pearls, set in it, and 26 little golden bells pendant.

Two wheels, one of gold representing the sun, the other of silver bearing the image of the moon, 28 hands in circumference, and bearing various figures of animals, and other devices, beautifully worked in relief.

A head-dress of wood, decorated with gold and gems, with 25 golden bells pendant; instead of a plume it had a green bird, whose eyes, beak, and feet, were of gold.

A gold bracelet; a small sceptre with two rings of gold, set with pearls at the ends.

Four tridents, tied with feathers of different colours, and pearl points tied with gold thread.

Several deerskin shoes, sewn with gold thread, and having soles of brilliant blue and white stones.

A shield of wood and leather, decorated with hanging bells of gold, and having gold plates in the centre, carved with the figure of the god of war, surrounded by four heads of a lion, a tiger, an eagle, and an owl, represented with their hair and feathers.

Several skins, tanned with the hair and feathers on them.

Twenty-four curious and beautiful golden shields, decorated with feathers and small pearls, four others of feathers and silver.

Four fish, two ducks, and other birds, made of gold.

Two sea-shells, imitated in gold, and a large crocodile, girt with golden threads.

A large mirror, and several small ones, of gold.

Several head-dresses, and crowns of feathers and gold, ornamented with pearls and gems.

From the Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz, on the tenth July, 1519.

Several large plumes of beautiful feathers, of various colours, spangled with gold and small pearls.

Several fans; some of gold and feathers, others of feathers alone, but all very rich.

A variety of cotton robes; some all white, others chequered white and black, or red, green, yellow, and blue, the outside being shaggy, and the inside smooth, without colour.

A number of coats, handkerchiefs, bedcovers, tapestries, and carpets of cotton stuffs.

There were several Mexican books, written in hieroglyphics, on their paper, which was about the consistency of light pasteboard. Peter Martyr describes them as folding tablets, and says of the writing, "Sunt characteres a nostris valde dissimilis, Egypteas fere forntas cemulantur" (De Insults nuper inventis).

Gomara says the paper was made of cotton, and a kind of gum, or paste; sometimes also of aloe leaves; Peter Martyr describes it as made of fine crushed bark, kneaded together with a gum.

knowledge of Spaniards, from the time of the wreck of Valdivia's men, whom they had probably helped to sacrifice and eat.

The Spaniards passed an anxious night, listening to the noisy preparations of the Indians for battle, and in consulting vainly to discover some escape. At dawn, a hand-to-hand fight was fiercely waged, the Indians showing no fear of fire-arms, and driving the retreating Spaniards into the sea. Fifty Spaniards were killed, and one, Alonzo Bote, and a Portuguese, were captured alive. Bernal Diaz says that every soldier but one had from one to four wounds, for which the only dressing was fat taken from the dead Indians; he himself had three and Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba had twelve wounds. The name of Mala Pelea was given the place to commemorate this disaster.

The Spaniards found here the crosses which excited such interest and speculation that later a whole literature grew up to explain them. Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba had also seen crosses in Cozumel (Bernal Diaz, cap. iii., Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. viii.; Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. Hi., Las Casas, *Hist. Apolog.*, cap. cxxv.).

The crosses found in various parts of Mexico were of several kinds. Those discovered in the western coast provinces, show a Buddhistic type, while those in the eastern parts are like either the simple Latin or Greek shapes. The cross at Metztilan had the Tau form, while the famous one at Palenque presents no features by which it may be accurately classified, and has been thought to be an astronomical sign, or an emblem of the four winds. That the cross was an object of cult amongst the Indians is certain, though there is much disagreement amongst authorities as to its origin, age, and significance. Bernal Diaz says that if it was of Christian origin and meaning, the natives had forgotten them, and Oviedo, who even regarded the existence of these crosses as a fable, maintained that if they did exist, and the Indians ever had known why they venerated them, they had long since lost, their knowledge. (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. viii.). Gomara described the cross seen at Cozumel as the rain-god, and said that quails were sacrificed before it (Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. liv.).

The cross was an instrument of punishment among the Egyptians, Persians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans, as also among Buddhist peoples. Hardly an ancient religion is found in which some form of cross does not appear as a symbol. Among the Aryan races, two crossed sticks were the emblem of the sacred fire, produced by friction called pramatha, from which comes the name Prometheus, of Vedic origin. The Tan borne by Isis, symbolised the rainy season (hence fertility) in Abyssinia, and, in the Egyptian cult, was the emblem of fecundation, (phallus of Osiris). Among the Jews, the cross had no sacred character, but was on the contrary, the vilest instrument of capital punishment.

APPENDIX II.

This "making a requirement" was at once a naive and arrogant formality by which the Spaniards sought to give legal sanction to their high-handed invasion and claims on the Indians' submission. By a bull dated May 4, 1493, Alexander VI. gave in donation to the Spanish sovereigns all lands which might be discovered in the new world, defined by a line drawn one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. A convention was afterwards signed between Spain and Portugal at Tordesillas, removing the line seventy leagues further westward.

Martin V. had made a similar grant to the Portuguese in the East Indies in 1420, which was afterwards confirmed by Nicholas V. and Calixtus III. Orozco y Berra observes that, whatever may be thought to-day of such a concession, it is certain that it gave an undoubted right to the sovereigns thus favoured, which nobody, whether nation, king, or philosopher, disputed at that time. Pope Alexander's bull had the condition attached, that the natives of the countries discovered should be Christianised.

Such, therefore, was the high authority on which the "requirement" was based. The form of this document was invented, and drawn up, by Dr. Palacios Rubios, a jurisconsult, and member of the Royal Council, for the use of Pedrarias de Avila, coming afterwards to serve in the other colonies.

The requirement began thus: "On the part of the King Fernando, and of the Queen Dona Juana, his daughter. Queen of Castile, Leon, etc., rulers of the barbarous natives: we their servants notify and make it known, to you, as best we can, that the living and eternal God, our Lord, created the heavens and the earth, and a man and a woman, of whom you, and we, and all men in the world are descendants, as well as all who shall come after us. However, because of the multitude of generations issuing from these, in the five thousand years since the creation of the world, it was necessary that some should go one way, and some another, and that they should be divided into many kingdoms and provinces, as they could not maintain themselves in one. God, our Lord gave the charge of all these people to one called St. Peter, that he should be lord and superior over all men in the world, and that all should obey him, and that he should be the head of all the human race, and should love all men of whatsoever land, religion, and belief; and He gave him the world for his kingdom ordering his seat to be placed in Rome, as the place best suited for ruling the world; but he was permitted also to establish his seat in any other part of the world, and to judge and govern all peoples. Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and of whatsoever other sect or creed they might be" etc. (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., p. 86.).

The provisions of the bull giving the dominion over America to the Spanish sovereigns then followed.

The notary or clerk who accompanied the expedition read this unique document, indifferent to the fact that the Indians could not comprehend a word, even were they near enough to hear, and sometimes the reading would take place with no Indians at all present. All scruples were satisfied by this formality, and, if submission did not follow, the commander dealt with the natives as with obdurate rebels against the royal authority.

The way for the conquest was already prepared, and the Aztec historians, as well as the earliest Spanish authorities, record that, for a number of years, the belief that the hour of the Empire's dissolution was at hand had been steadily gaining ground, promoted by several events which were regarded as supernatural warnings of the approaching downfall. The lake of Texcoco had in 1510 risen suddenly, and inundated the city, without any visible cause or accompanying earthquake or tempest; one of the towers of the great teocalli was destroyed in 1511 by a mysterious conflagration, which resisted all efforts to extinguish it; comets, strange lights in the skies, accompanied by shooting stars, and weird noises, were all interpreted by the astrologers as portents of gloomy presage. The miraculous resurrection, three days after her death of Montezuma's sister, the Princess Papantzin who brought him a prophetic warning from her tomb, is reported at length by Clavigero (vol. i., p. 289). Legal proofs of this event, which occurred in 1509, were afterwards forwarded to the Spanish court. The princess is said to have lived many years, and to have been the first person to receive Christian baptism which she did in Tlatelolco, in 1524, being henceforth known as Dona Ana Papantzin, Her life became a model of Christian virtue. Whatever may have been the exact nature of this occurrence, the reported miracle doubtless rests upon some fact which was interpreted by the Mexicans as supernatural.

APPENDIX III.

The messengers carried also the first letter of Cortes, which has never since been found. It could not have differed essentially from the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz, as the one was intended to confirm the other. Bernal Diaz says that Cortes's letter made no mention of the discoveries of Cordoba, and Grijalba, and that he wished all such to be suppressed in the collective letter, though he was satisfied with its references to himself. After assisting at a mass, said by Fray Bartolome de Olmedo, the two envoys sailed on July 16, 1519, and they took with them the royal fifth of all the gold, besides the other treasures which Cortes had induced the men to surrender, in order to make up an imposing gift to the Emperor. By Bernal Diaz, the sailing date is once given as the 16th of July, and in another place as the 6th; Gomara gives the 26th. They were enjoined to sail by the channel of the Bahamas, and to avoid Cuba, but they disobeyed this warning, and stopped several days at Marien, where Montejo had a property near

by. They renewed their supplies at this place, and showed some of the treasure to a servant, besides which, Montejo also wrote to a former overseer of his, Juan de Reja, who had meanwhile passed into Diego Velasquez's service, and as through him the governor learned of what was happening, he promptly dispatched a vessel to overhaul the messengers, and bring them back; but he was too late. The envoys landed, early in October, 1512, but Benito Martin, a friend and agent of Velasquez's, was already advised of their coming, and lodged a complaint with the Casa de Contractacion in Seville, in which he described Cortes as a rebel against his superior's authority, and asked for the arrest of the envoys, and the sequestration of the letters, and the treasure. He found a ready ally in Rodriguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, who was omnipotent as President of the Royal Council for the Indies, a warm friend and supporter of Velasquez's, with whose family his own was about to be connected by a marriage.

Peter Martyr, who was then at Court, and noted every circumstance of interest, mentions the arrival of the two envoys in December as "recent," which might mean that he had only recently heard of it. All authorities agree that they got a rough reception from the Bishop of Burgos, and saw the Emperor only in March, 1520, after many difficulties. This audience was at Tordesillas, where His Majesty was then paying a visit to his mother, Dona Juana, before proceeding to Santiago de Compostella. Bernal Diaz would seem to be the original authority for the erroneous statement that Charles V. was in Flanders at this time, which has been repeated by many later historians. Charles had arrived in Spain in Nov. 1517. Peter Martyr, however, says that the Emperor had then already seen the gold and presents from Mexico, which confirms another authority, who states that while they were stopped by the Bishop in Seville, Martin Cortes, the father of Fernando, and an official of the Royal Council, who was friendly, one Nunez contrived to forward duplicates of the despatches to the Emperor, and a memorial describing the Bishop of Burgos's behaviour, and the sequestration of the treasures. The Emperor was well impressed by the letters, and ordered the gifts to be sent on to him. He was, however, so absorbed with business of importance, prior to quitting the country for Germany to assume the imperial crown, that he left without giving a decision. The envoys followed him to La Coruna and there exists, in the archives of Simancas, the deposition given under oath before Dr. Carbajal, member of the Royal Council for the Indies, by Francisco Fernandez Puertocarrero, dated, Coruna, April 30, 1520, copied by Prescott, Appendix VII. The memorial of Benito Martin is found, according to Prescott, in the collection of MSS., made by Don Vargas Ponce, sometime president of the Academy of History.

APPENDIX IV.

Human sacrifices were very general among all the Mexican tribes, at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, and the description here given of the horrible temple rites is in no way exaggerated, but is indeed rather meagre. The practice is traced, by some historians, to the tribe of the Mexi, which descended from Tenoch, son of Iztacmixcoatl, the progenitor of the Nahoia family, but, with what justice, does not clearly appear, as this people may have received it from some tribe or race preceding, or allied, to them. Prisoners taken in war were the most highly prized victims, but failing these, or for the celebration of minor festivals, slaves were easily bought, or were offered by their owners for the purpose. Small infants were also commonly sold by their mothers, and instances of free-born men offering themselves as victims, for one motive or another, were not unknown. The victims were frequently drugged, in such wise that they went unconsciously, or even willingly to the altar. If a great festival, requiring many, and choice, victims, fell in a time of peace, war would be undertaken upon any frivolous pretext, in order to procure the desired offerings.

The rites were carefully prescribed, and were of the most solemn description. Different kinds of sacrificial stones were used for different classes of victims; the usual one called techcatlis described by Velades (Rhetorica Christiana) as "*Mensa quadrata magna non et splendida habent singula latera longitudinem trium. ulnarum non absiniilis lapideis illis quae inter Romana monumenta ad hunc servantur.*"

This table-shaped stone was about waist high, and stood as an inverted pyramid. Six priests officiated, five of whom held the arms, legs, and head, of the victim, who was stretched upon the stone in such wise

as to throw his chest well forward. These five had their faces and bodies painted black, with a white line around the mouth; their hair was bound up with a leather band, and ornamented with tufts of coloured papers; their vestment was a white dalmatic, striped with black.

The sixth priest was the celebrant whose vestment varied according to the feast, or the deity, to be propitiated. His head was adorned with coloured plumes, and in his ears were gold enjorments, set with green stones, while a blue stone was set in his under lip. Pronouncing the words of the ritual, he plunged a sharp knife, made of silex, into the victim's breast, and, quickly thrusting his hand into the opening, tore out the beating heart, which he first elevated, and then deposited at the feet of the image of the god. Sometimes the heart was placed in a vase, and left standing on the altar, or it might be buried, or preserved with divers ceremonies, as a relic, or it might be eaten by the priests; the fresh blood was smeared on the lips of the idols. If the victim were a prisoner taken in battle, his head was given to the priests, to be kept as a trophy, the entrails were fed to the dogs, and the other parts of the body were cooked with maize, and offered in small pieces to the guests invited to partake by the giver of the sacrificial feast.

The warrior who had captured the victim in battle could not eat of the latter's flesh, as a sort of spiritual relationship was held to exist between them, not dissimilar to that of a sponsor and his god-child in Christian baptism, or even closer, for the flesh of the victim was considered also as the very flesh of the captor. The eating of this human body was not an act of gluttonous cannibalism alone, but was believed to have mystic significance, the flesh having undergone some mysterious transmutation, by virtue of the sacrificial rite, and to be really consecrated; it was spoken of also, as the true body of the deity, to whom it was offered, and, also, as the "food of soul." None but chiefs, and distinguished persons, specially designated, were permitted to partake of the sacramental feast, which was celebrated with much ceremony and gravity. If the victim were a slave, the rites were similar, but simpler. Orozco y Berra, in the first, and the third volumes of his authoritative work, gives the fullest, and most interesting information on human sacrifices amongst the Mexicans.

SECOND LETTER

Sent to his Sacred Majesty, the Emperor of Our Realm, by the Captain-General of New Spain, called Don Fernando Cortes, in which he gives an account of the countries and innumerable provinces which he has discovered in Yucatan, from the year 1519 to the present time, and has subjected to the Crown of His Royal Majesty. He makes special relation of a very great, and very rich, province called Culua, in which there are many great cities, and marvellous edifices, having much commerce and wealth. Amongst these there is one more marvellous and richer than all the others, called Temixtitan, which by marvellous art has been built on a great lake; of which city and province, a very great lord, called Montezuma, is king; in which, things, frightful to be heard, were suffered by the Captain, and the Spaniards. He describes at length the vast dominion of the said Montezuma, and its customs and ceremonies, and how he is served.

Very Great and Powerful, and Very Catholic Prince, Most Invincible Emperor, Our Lord. In a ship, which I despatched from this Your Sacred Majesty's New Spain, on the sixteenth of July 1519, I sent to Your Royal Highness a very long and particular account of everything which had happened from the time of my arrival here until that time; this said account was taken by Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, procurators of the Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz, which I had founded in the name of Your Royal Highness. Having had no opportunity since then, not only for the want of ships, and being myself occupied in the conquest and pacification of this country, but also because nothing has been heard of the said ships and the procurators, I have related nothing more to Your Majesty concerning what has since been done. God knows the pain which this has caused me, for I have washed that Your Highness should understand the affairs of this country, which is so great and important, since, as I have already said in my other account, it is no less worthy to warrant your assuming anew the title of Emperor, than is Germany, of which, by the grace of God, Your Sacred Majesty already possesses the title.

It would entail going on indefinitely, were I to attempt to tell Your Highness all the particulars, and everything relating to these parts and new kingdoms, and everything in them worthy to be told; I beg Your Sacred Majesty to hold me pardoned, if I do not give so full an account to Your Highness as I ought, because neither my ability, nor my opportunity at this time, favour my doing so. I shall, nevertheless, endeavour to tell Your Highness the truth in the best manner possible, and what, for the present, is necessary that Your Majesty should know; and I must likewise crave Your Highness's pardon if I do not recount all that is necessary, the precise when and how, and if I should not specify some names, not only of cities and towns, but also of provinces which, giving themselves for your subjects and vassals, have offered their allegiance to Your Majesty. This I beg, because, in a certain recent misfortune, of which I will hereafter in this writing give a full account to Your Highness, I have lost all my papers, and the official agreements, which I had made with the natives of this country, besides many other things.

In my other account. Most Excellent Prince, I told Your Majesty of all the cities and towns which until then had offered themselves to your royal service, and which I held subjugated and conquered for you. I also mentioned that I had information of a great lord called Montezuma,⁴⁷ of whom the natives of this

47) Mutezuma, Motezuma, Motecuhzoma are some of the various forms used, but, amongst the several spellings of the Aztec sovereign's name, it seems simpler to adopt the one sanctioned by the best English and American usage — Montezuma.

Montezuma Xocoyotzin was one of the six sons of the King Axayacatl (a. d. 1469-81), and was unanimously chosen by the electors to succeed his uncle, Ahuizotl, from amongst the eligible princes, who, in that instance, were his own five

country had told me, and who lived, according to their computation of distances, about ninety or a hundred leagues from the coast and port where I had disembarked; and that, confiding in the greatness of God, and relying on the power of Your Highness's Royal name, I had decided to go and see him, wherever he might be. I even remember that I offered, so far as this lord was concerned, to accomplish the impossible, for I vowed to Your Royal Highness, that I would have him prisoner, or dead, or subject to the Royal Crown of Your Majesty.

With this purpose and determination, I left the city of Cempoal,⁴⁸ which I had named Seville, on the sixteenth of August, with fifteen horsemen, and three hundred foot soldiers, all equipped for war, as best I was able, and as time permitted. I left in the town of Vera Cruz, two horsemen, and one hundred and fifty men, engaged in building a fort, which I have now almost finished, and I left all that province of Cempoal, and all the neighbouring mountain regions near the said town, which contained some fifty thousand warriors, and fifty towns and forts, all well pacified, and secure, and very devoted as loyal vassals of Your Majesty, such as they have been, and are, until now. According to my information, they were subjects of that lord, Montezuma, by force, and since a short time only, and, when they learned from me of Your Highness's great and royal power, they declared they wished to become vassals of Your Royal Majesty, and my friends, and they prayed me to protect them against that great lord, who held them subject by force and tyranny, and took away their sons, to kill and sacrifice them to their idols; and making many other complaints against him. Thus, they are, and have continued, very, firm and loyal in the service of Your Highness, and I believe they will always remain so, not only to escape from his tyranny, but also because they have always been well treated and favoured by me. For the greater security of those who remained at Vera Cruz I brought some of their principal men, and some of their people with me, who have been not a little useful to me on the road.

I believe I have already written to Your Majesty, in my first account, that some of my company, who had been servants and friends of Diego Velasquez, were vexed by what I had accomplished in the service of Your Highness, and some of them even wanted to rebel, and desert me in the country; especially four Spaniards who were called Juan Escudero, Diego Cermeno, a pilot, Gonzalo de Ungria, also a pilot, and Alonzo Penate. These, as they voluntarily confessed, had determined to seize a brigantine, then in the port, with a certain quantity of bread and meat, to kill the master of it, and return to the island of Fernandina, that they might report to Diego Velasquez that I was sending to Your Royal Highness the ship, which I sent with what it contained, and the course it would take. This was to enable the said Diego Velasquez to

brothers, and the seven sons of the deceased emperor. Montezuma II assumed the appellation of "Xocoyotzin" upon his accession, signifying "younger," to distinguish him from the elder Montezuma, Ilhuicamina. Prescott gives his age as twenty-three at the time of election, but I prefer to follow the authority of the Tezozomoc MS., given in Orozco y Berra, which states that he was born in 1486 and was hence thirty-four years old.

His early career was that of a successful soldier, from which he passed into the priesthood, rising to the grade of a pontiff. At that time he was held in great veneration by the people, as one who received revelations from the gods, and his strict life was a model to his fellows. It is related that, when the news of his election to the imperial throne was brought to him, he was found sweeping the steps of the temple whose altars he served. His temperament was theocratic; he ruled sternly, and ill-brooked opposition, or even counsel, but he was princely in recompensing faithful service. He had embellished his capital, but the liberality which built an aqueduct, a hospital, and new temples in the city, cost the subject provinces dear, and Montezuma being both despotic and a heavy tax-levier, was more feared than loved by his people and allies. Loving order, he understood the science of government, but his finer qualities were marred by his inordinate pride, and most of all by the ferocious superstition which finally lost him his throne and his life. The policy he adopted with Cortes was fatal, and shows us the pitiful figure of the monarch struggling, not against the power of an invading force, but taken in the coils of his own superstition, and reduced to a humble suppliant, offering rich bribes to the man he could have annihilated. The treasures he thus incautiously exposed, argued the existence of still greater in reserve, and whetted the Spaniard's craving for more.

An account of Montezuma's death will be found in a later note.

- 48) Cempoal. Found with many variations of spelling such as Cenipoal, Cempoalla, Zempoala, etc. The town was situated between the two rivers Chatcalacac and Actopan, a little more than a league from the sea. It was a well built town in the midst of a fertile country, four leagues from Vera Cruz; and still preserves its Indian name. A Spanish lad of twelve was left at Cempoal to learn the language.

put ships on guard, for the purpose of capturing it, as he did when he afterwards came to know it, for, as I was informed, he sent a caravel after the said ship, which would have been captured, if it had not already passed. And they likewise confessed, that other persons shared the same wish to warn the said Diego Velasquez. Having seen the confessions of these delinquents, I punished them according to justice, and as it seemed to me the needs of the times, and the interests of Your Royal Highness's service demanded.

Besides those, who acted thus because they were servants and friends of Diego Velasquez, there were others who wanted to leave on seeing how large and populous the country was, while the Spaniards were so few. Believing that, if I left the ships there, they would revolt with them, and, all those of like mind deserting, I would be left almost alone, by which the great service which I had rendered to God and Your Highness in this country would be undone, I determined, on the pretext that they were unseaworthy, to have the said ships beached.⁴⁹ Thus, everybody lost hope of ever leaving the country, and I set out on my march, securely, without fear that, when I turned my back, the people whom I had left in the town would fail me.

Eight or ten days after having beached the ships, and when I had gone to the city of Cempoal, which is about four leagues distant, whence to continue my march, they brought me news in that town, that four ships were running along the coast, and that the captain, whom I had left there, had gone out to them in a boat. I had been told that they belonged to Francisco de Garay,⁵⁰ Lieutenant, and Governor of the Island of Jamaica, and had come to make discoveries. My captain had told them, that I had already settled the country in the name of Your Highness, and had laid out a town about a league from where the said ships were, where they could go and make their arrival known to me, and there make any repairs they might need. He said he would conduct them in his barque to the port, pointing out to them where it was. They had answered him, that they had already seen the port, having passed in front of it, and that they would do as he said, so he had returned with the barque, but the ships had not followed him nor come to the port.

49) The destruction of the ships is one of the most dramatic episodes in the eventful history of the conquest, and Cortes, in reporting it to the Emperor, assumes exclusively the credit of the heroic decision and its execution, but throughout his narrative he is chary of ever mentioning anybody but himself. Gomara naturally gives the same account and Prescott accepts his version, as do other reputable historians. Bernal Diaz, who figures always as the great objector and corrector, contradicts this account very positively, and says that the destruction of the ships was decided upon after a general discussion, and that Cortes was unwilling to accept any responsibility either for their demolition or for their cost if there should later arise a necessity to pay for them to their rightful owners. He refutes with emphatic scorn Gomara's assertion that Cortes feared to tell the soldiers of his intention to push into the interior in search of the great Montezuma, exclaiming: "What sort of Spaniards are we, not to want to push ahead, but to stop where we had no hardships or fighting!" The *Relacion* of Andres de Tapia (who was also an eye-witness) agrees with Bernal Diaz. Puertocarrero replied in La Coruna in the same sense as his companion Montejo (April 29, 1520), stating that the proposal to destroy all but three of the ships came from the captains of them, who declared them to be unseaworthy, and even the three to be of doubtful value. Puertocarrero and Montejo sailed, as has been said, on July 16th, with the treasure and the letters which were dated July 10th, so that the discovery of the conspiracy, and the punishment of its authors, and the destruction of the ships, all took place in those six days. Clavigero believes that Cortes induced some of the pilots to scuttle one or two of the ships, and to then come to him representing the others as unseaworthy from being three months in port.

Senor Orozco y Berra is doubtless right in believing that the idea of destroying the ships originated with Cortes, who adroitly suggested it in such wise, and with such arguments, that it came back to him as a spontaneous proposal from the others, prompted, or at least supported by the opinions of the pilots and ship-captains that the vessels were unsound. Such artifice was not alien to his diplomacy, for he usually contrived that he should appear to interpret the popular will as well as to serve the royal interests in all his undertakings.

50) Francisco de Garay sailed with Columbus on his second voyage. Las Casas speaks of his great wealth, and says that he had five thousand Indians solely to look after his pigs. He went to Spain as procurator for San Domingo, and returned as Lieut-Governor of Jamaica. When the news of the Cordoba and Grijalba expeditions became the excitement of the day, Garay sent out an exploring party under command of Diego de Camargo. This discovered the Panuco region, and, continuing thence about one hundred leagues towards Florida, finally returned to Jamaica. The Emperor Charles V. granted him faculties for further enterprises, and the title of adelantado of the new countries he discovered. Garay was one of the most cruel oppressors of the Indians and it was said of him that he came, not to populate, but to depopulate, Jamaica. This expedition, of which Cortes writes, was composed of four ships carrying two hundred and seventy men, with horses and cannon, and had sailed from Jamaica towards the close of 1518, under command of Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda.

They had still sailed along the coast, and, as they had not entered the port, he did not know what object they had in view. Within an hour after hearing what the said captain made known to me, I left for Vera Cruz, where I learned that the ships were anchored about three leagues down the coast, and that no one had landed. I then went along the coast with some people, to reconnoitre, and, when I was about one league from the ships, I met three men from them, amongst whom there was one who called himself a notary public, who told me he had brought the other two as witnesses to a certain notification and requirement with which he said their captain had ordered him to serve me on his behalf, and which he had brought with him. They desired to make it known to me, that he had discovered that country, and wished to settle in it, for which reason he required me to define the boundaries with him, as he wished to make his settlement down the coast five leagues below Nautical,⁵¹ which is a city now called Almeria, twelve leagues from Vera Cruz. I answered that their captain should come with his ships to the port of Vera Cruz, where we could talk, and I would learn his intentions, and, if his ships and people needed anything, I would help them with what I could. Inasmuch as he said that he had come in the service of Your Sacred Majesty, I only desired that occasion should be given me to serve Your Highness, and, in helping him, I believed that I would do this. They replied, that neither the captain, nor any of his people, would on any account land anywhere that I might be.

Believing that they must have done some harm in the country, inasmuch as they were afraid to come before me, when night came on I hid myself near the coast, opposite to where the said ships were anchored. There I remained concealed until the next day about noon, expecting the captain or his pilot to come on shore, from whom I would learn what they had been doing, and where they had been, intending, that if they had done any harm in the country, to send them to Your Sacred Majesty; but neither they nor anyone else ever landed. Seeing that they did not come, I made some of my Spaniards put on the clothes of those who had come to make me the requirements, and directed them to go to the beach, and signal to those on board the ships. As soon as these were observed by those on board, a barque, carrying some ten or twelve men, armed with arquebuses and muskets, came towards the land. The Spaniards who were calling from the shore retired from the beach to some bushes near by, as if to take shelter in their shade, and thus four landed, two men with arquebuses, and two with muskets. These were surrounded, and taken prisoners by the people whom I had placed on the beach. One of the captives, the master of the ship, tried to fire his weapon, and would have killed my captain of Vera Cruz, but that, by Our Lord's will, the fuse did not burn. Those who had remained in the boat, put to sea, but before they could reach their ships, sail had been set, without waiting, or troubling to hear anything about them.

I learned from my prisoners, how they had arrived at a river,⁵² which is some thirty leagues down the coast, after passing Almeria, and had had a good reception there from the natives, and had traded for some provisions, and seen some gold which the Indians wore, although it was scarce, that they had obtained by trading, as much as three thousand castellanos⁵³ worth of gold, and that they had not landed, but had seen certain towns on the banks of the river so near, that they could distinguish them well from the ships, and that there were no buildings of stone, the houses being of thatch, but very high and well built. All this I knew more fully afterwards, through that great lord Montezuma, and from certain interpreters from that country whom he had about him.

I took these men, and an Indian whom they had brought in their ships from the said river, and sent them, with other messengers of the said Montezuma, to the lord of that river, called Panuco, to win him to Your Sacred Majesty's service, With them, he sent me back a chief who, it was said, was chief of a town, who brought me on behalf of his lord certain stuffs, and stones, and feathers, telling me that he and all his people would be very happy to become vassals of Your Majesty, and my friends. I in turn presented them with some things from Spain, which so satisfied him, that, when some other ships of the said Francisco de Garay arrived (of which I will make relation to Your Highness hereafter), the said Panuco sent me word

51) The present Nautla in the state of Vera Cruz; Pineda named it Almeria.

52) The Panuco.

53) The casicellano was equivalent to \$1, 167.

that those ships were in another river, some five or six days' journey from that place, asking that I should tell him whether those who had come in them belonged to me, so that he might give them whatever they needed, and that he already had sent some women and chickens and other provisions. I marched, Very Powerful Lord, three days through the country and lordship of Cempoal, where I was well received, and entertained by the natives, and, on the fourth day, I arrived in the province called Sienchimalen,⁵⁴ where there is a very strong town ably fortified. It is situated on the side of a steep mountain slope, and is approached by a single pass of steps, by which it is impossible to enter except on foot, and even thus with great difficulty, if the natives wished to defend it.

In the plains, there are many hamlets and villages, with five, three, and two hundred families, which will furnish altogether some five or six thousand warriors; and they are subject to the rule of Montezuma. Here, they received me very well, and courteously gave me the necessary provisions for my march, saying that they knew very well I was going to see Montezuma their lord, and that I might rest assured he was my friend, for he had ordered them, in every case, to give me a good reception, as by so doing they would render him a service. I thanked them for their courtesy, saying that Your Majesty already knew of Montezuma, and had ordered me to visit him.

I next crossed a pass, which is at the end of this province, and to which we gave the name of Puerto del Nombre de Dios,⁵⁵ on account of its being the first we have traversed in this country. So steep, and so high, is it, that in all Spain there is none so difficult. I passed with entire safety, and without any opposition, and, on the descent of the said pass, there are other hamlets belonging to a town and fort, called Ceycocracan,⁵⁶ which also belongs to Montezuma. Here we were as well received as we had been at Sienchimalen, and the people repeated what the others had told us of Montezuma's good will, and I satisfied them in the same manner.

Thence I travelled three days through a desert, which, on account of its sterility, and want of water, and the very great cold which prevails, is uninhabitable; where God knows all the trouble which the men suffered from hunger and thirst, especially from tempests of hail and rain which overtook us, making me fear that many people would die of cold; and certain Indians from the Island of Fernandina did die, because they were ill-clad. At the end of these three days, we traversed another pass,⁵⁷ although not so steep as the first one, on the top of which was a small tower like an oratory, where were kept certain idols, and around the tower were more than a thousand loads of cut wood, very well piled up, so we named it the Paso de la Lena. On the descent of the said pass, between some very rough mountain chains, there is a very populous valley, the people of which seem to be poor.

After having marched about three leagues through the settlement without seeing anything of them, I arrived at a somewhat more level place, where it seemed the chief of that valley lived, and which had the largest and best built houses we had till then seen in this country, for they were of hewn stone, quite new, and had very large and beautiful rooms, and many well-arranged apartments. This valley and its people are called Caltanmi.⁵⁸ I was very well received, and lodged by the chief and his people. After having spoken to him on the part of Your Majesty, and told him the cause of my coming to these parts, I asked him if he also was a vassal of Montezuma's, or if he belonged to some other dominion. He, wondering at what I asked him, answered me, "And who is not a vassal of Montezuma's?" as much as to say that he was the sovereign of the world. I then replied, and told him about the vast power and jurisdiction of Your Majesty, and of all the many and greater lords than Montezuma who were vassals of Your Highness, even considering it as no small privilege to be so, as would Montezuma, and all the natives of these parts,

54) Xochimilco was the correct name; it is now called Xico.

55) Now called Paso del Obispo.

56) Another name which is spelled according to the caprice of each writer; its proper name was Ixhuacan, now spelled Ishuacan, and the tower is some ten leagues from Xalapa.

57) Identified, with probability, as the Sierra del Agua.

58) The name of the valley was Caltanmic, and that of the town, Xocotla; its chief, Olintel, was so enormous that he had to be supported when he walked. The Spaniards named him the "trembler." There was a strong Mexican garrison at Xocotla, as it was a fortified place on the frontiers of hostile Tlascalala.

likewise have to be; and thus I required him to be because he would then be much honoured and favoured, while on the contrary if he were unwilling to obey he would be punished. In recognition of his vassalage, I asked him to give me some gold to be sent to Your Majesty, when he answered that he had gold, but would not give it unless Montezuma commanded him to do so, but that, if the latter did so order, then he would give the gold, and his person, and all that he possessed. In order not to scandalise him, nor to hinder my designs and progress, I dissembled with him the best I could, saying that very soon Montezuma would order him to give the gold and everything he had.

The two other chiefs who had lands in this valley came to see me here, one of whom lived four leagues below, and the other two leagues above, and they gave me certain collars of gold of little weight or value, and seven or eight female slaves.

After stopping four or five days there, I left them very contented, and went to the city of the other chief, two leagues, as I said, up the valley which place is called Yztacmastitan.⁵⁹ This lordship has an extension of three or four leagues, one house after another along the valley, and on the banks of a small river which flows through it. The house of the chief stands on a very high hill, protected by a better fort than can be found in half Spain, well surrounded with walls, and barbicans, and moats, and, on the top of this hill, there is a town of about five or six thousand inhabitants, with very large houses, whose people are somewhat richer than those of the lower valley. Here I was also very well received, and its chief told me that he likewise was a vassal of Montezuma. I stayed in his house three days, not only for the purpose of resting the people from the hardship they had endured in the desert, but also to wait for four messengers, natives of Cempoal, who had come with me, and whom I had sent from Caltanmi to a very large province called Tascalteca,⁶⁰ which they told me was very near there, as in truth it was. They had also told me, that the natives of this province were their friends, and very deadly enemies of Montezuma, and that they wished me to confederate with them, as they were a large and powerful people (whose country was bounded on all sides by that of the said Montezuma, with whom they were in continual warfare), and would be glad to help me if the said Montezuma should oppose me. These messengers did not return during all the time that I remained in that valley, which was in all eight days. I asked the others, who had come with me from Cempoal, how it was that the messengers did not return, and they answered that it was a great distance, and that they could not get back so quickly. Seeing that their return was delayed, and that the chiefs of Cempoal were so positive about the friendship and fidelity of the people of that province, I set out for it.

At the exit of the said valley, I found a great wall of dry stones, about nine feet high, which crossed the whole valley from one mountain to the other; it was twenty feet thick, and had a stone parapet, a foot and a half broad on the top so that one could fight from above. The single entrance was about ten paces broad, and in this entrance one wall doubled over the other, in the form of a ravelin, narrowly contracted within

59) Ixtacmaxtitlan, in the present state of Puebla. For convenience sake the town was removed from the hill-top in 1601 and built on its present site lower down.

60) Tlascalala was a republic composed of four federated states, each ruled by its chief, while federal affairs and legislation were undertaken by the Senate, which was composed of the nobles of all four states, and their over-lords. The city was likewise divided into four districts, in which people of the separate tribes lived, each under its own chief. As the country was hemmed in on all sides by the Aztec Empire, there was no commerce, and the chief pursuit was agriculture. The Tlascalans were a brave, hardy, and war-like people, well advanced in military science, and having something very like a feudal system of chivalry, in that the different chiefs or lords had each his own standard and crest, and the soldiers were uniformed in their leaders' colours and owed him allegiance; Xicotencatl's device was a white heron on a rock. There were also orders of knighthood conferred for bravery. Their important part in the conquest is noticed elsewhere, and will also appear in the course of Cortes's own narration. One of his first desires was to force Christianity upon them, but Fray Bartolome de Olmedo wisely restrained his untimely zeal, and, beyond explaining the Christian doctrines, no constraint was attempted. The Tlascalans conceded that the Christian God must very likely be a good one, and they were ready to admit him to a place in their own pantheon, something after the manner of the Emperor Hadrian and other Romans. The four chiefs ruling the confederation at that time were Xicotencatl, lord of Titzatlan. Maxixcatzin, lord of Ocotelolco, Tlehuexolotzin, lord of Tepeticpac, and Citlalpopocatzin, lord of Quiahuitzlan. (Clavigero, *Storia Antica*, lib. viii.) (Vide, Camarga, *Hist. Tlascalala*; and Torquemada, lib. 3-16.)

about forty paces, in such wise that the entrance was curved instead of being straight.⁶¹ Having inquired the object of that wall they told me that it was built because they were on the frontier of that province of Tascalteca, whose people were Montezuma's enemies, and constantly at war with him.

The natives of this valley besought me, that, inasmuch as I was going to see Montezuma their lord, not to pass through the country of these his enemies, who perchance might be ill-disposed towards me, and do me some mischief, whereas they would guide me always through the land of the said Montezuma without going out of it, and that in it I would always be well received. The Cempoalans, however, advised me not to do this, but to go through Tascalteca, for what these people were telling me, was for the purpose of cutting me off from the amity of that province; they told me that all Montezuma's people were bad and treacherous, and would ensnare me in places whence I could never escape. As I had more confidence in the Cempoalans than in the others, I took their advice, and chose the road to Tascalteca, conducting my people with the best caution I could.

Accompanied by about six horsemen, I rode ahead about half a league or more, little thinking of what afterwards happened, but to reconnoitre the country, so that if anything should befall I might perceive it in time to take measures, and prepare my people. After having gone four leagues, and while ascending the hill, two horsemen who went ahead saw certain Indians, wearing the feathers they are accustomed to in war, armed with their swords, and lances, and rodelas, who took to flight when they perceived the horsemen. At the same time I came up, and had them called to return without fear. I advanced to where there were about fifteen Indians, who, massing themselves, began to attack us with their swords, calling to their other people who were in the valley, and fighting with us in such wise that they killed two horses, and wounded three others and two horsemen. In the midst of this, others came up, numbering about four to five thousand. Meantime, eight other horsemen, besides those whose horses were killed, joined me, charging on them until the other Spaniards, to whom I had sent a summons by a horseman, arrived. We did them some harm, in the charges we made, killing fifty or sixty of them, without suffering any hurt ourselves, although they fought with great courage and daring; but, as we were all on horseback, we could charge them, and fall back in safety. When they saw our reinforcements approaching, they retreated, because they were so few, and left us the field.

After they were gone certain messengers came, who said they were the lords of the said province, and with them came two of the messengers whom I had sent. These explained that the said chiefs did not know anything of what those others had done, as they belonged to independent communities, and had acted without their consent, and they were very sorry for it, and would pay for the horses they had killed, and they wished to be my friends, and that I could go on freely, for I would be well received by them[in hora buena, viz., in a good hour], I answered that I was very thankful to them, and that I would consider them as my friends, and would advance as they advised.

That night, one league beyond where this happened, I was obliged to sleep in a dry river bed[baranca], not only because it was late, but also because my people were tired. I stayed there as well guarded as possible, stationing my sentinels and scouts, both on horseback and on foot, and at daybreak I left, carrying my van-guard and rear-guard well organised, and my scouts on ahead.

Arriving at a very small village just at sunrise, the two other messengers came with lamentations saying that they had been bound, and would have been killed, but that they had escaped in the night. At not two stone's-throws distance a great number of Indians appeared well armed, and with much shouting began to attack us, discharging many darts and arrows at us. When I undertook to make my requirements in due form, through the interpreters whom I had brought with me, and before a notary public, the more diligent I was to admonish and require them to keep the peace, just so much the more diligent were they in

61) Bernal Diaz contradicts Cortes's statement that this wall was built of dry stones, and states that the stones were so firmly united by such strong bitumen that it required pick axes to separate them. Clavigero, in his notice on the remains of military architecture in Mexico (lib. vii. Sec. xxvi.), gives faith to Bernal Diaz who professed to have carefully studied the construction, though he brusquely characterises the old soldier as an idiot (sic) for not distinguishing between bitumen and the mortar used by the Mexicans. Lest the ingenious construction of the aperture be not clearly enough explained by Cortes, the accompanying drawing will show its character.

committing hostilities upon us, and, seeing that neither requirements nor protests were of any avail, we began to defend ourselves as best we could, and thus they kept us fighting, until we found ourselves in the midst of an hundred thousand warriors, who surrounded us on all sides. This went on all day long, until about an hour before sunset, when they retired. In this fight I did them a good deal of harm with about half a dozen cannon, and five or six muskets, forty archers, and thirteen horsemen, who had been left to me, without our receiving any hurt from them, except the labour and fatigue of fighting and hunger. And it truly appeared that it was God who battled for us, because amongst such a multitude of people, so courageous, and skilled in fighting, and with so many kinds of offensive arms,⁶² we came out unhurt.

That night I fortified myself in a small tower of their idols, which stood on a small hill, and afterwards, at daybreak, I left two hundred men and all the artillery in the camp. As I was the attacking party I went out towards evening with the horsemen, and a hundred foot soldiers, and four hundred Indians whom I had brought from Cempoal, and three hundred from Yztacmastitan. Before the enemy had time to assemble, I set fire to five or six small places of about a hundred houses each, and brought away about four hundred prisoners, both men and women, fighting my way back to my camp without their doing me any harm. At daybreak the following morning, more than a hundred and forty-nine thousand men, covering all the country, attacked our camp so determinedly that some of them penetrated into it, rushing about, and thrusting with their swords at the Spaniards. We mustered against them, and Our Lord was pleased so to aid us, that, in about four hours, we managed that they should no more molest us in our camp, although they still kept up some attacks; thus we kept fighting until it grew to be late, when they retired.

The next day I again went out before daybreak, in another direction, without having been observed by the enemy, taking with me the horsemen, a hundred foot-soldiers, and the friendly Indians. I burned more than a hundred villages, one of which had more than three thousand houses, where the villagers fought with me, though there were no other people there. As we carried the banner of the Holy Cross,⁶³ and were fighting for our Faith, and in the service of Your Sacred Majesty, to Your Royal good fortune God gave us such a victory that we slew many people without our own sustaining any injury. A little after mid-day when the strong force of the people was gathered from all parts, we had returned victorious to our camp.

Messengers came from the chiefs the next day, saying that they wished to become vassals of Your Highness and my friends, beseeching me to pardon their past fault; and they brought me provisions, and certain feather-work which they use, and esteem and prize. I answered that they had behaved badly, but that I was satisfied to be their friend, and pardon them for all they had done.

The next day there came about fifty Indians, who, it seemed, were men of some consequence amongst them, saying that they had brought us food, and they went about inspecting the entrances and exits of our camp, and some huts in which we were living. The Cempoalans came and told me to watch them, because they were bad men who had come to spy and see what damage they could do us, and that I might rest assured they had come for no other purpose. With some dissimulation, I had one of them taken, without being observed by the others, and leading him and the interpreters apart, frightened him so that he should tell me the truth. He confessed to me that Sintengal,⁶⁴ the captain-general of this province, was behind one of the hills opposite the camp, with a great number of people, ready to fall upon us that night. for they said

62) One of their most formidable weapons was the maquahuitl, commonly referred to by the Spaniards as a sword. It was a stout stick or club, about three and a half feet long, set with a double row of blades made of the stone called itzli, as sharp as razors. The warrior carried this terrible weapon attached to his wrist by a thong, and instances of a horse being disembowelled, or even decapitated at a single blow, are given by many early writers. The blades or itzli were quickly dulled, but, even then, such a weapon wielded by a strong man was a fearsome thing.

Their darts, which are so frequently mentioned, were short lances, whose points were tipped with bone or copper, or simply hardened in the fire. Clavigero identifies them with the Roman *Jaculum* or *Telum Amentatum*, and says they were the weapons most feared by the Spaniards. As marksmen, the Mexican bowmen were marvellously quick and accurate; their arrows were also pointed with bone, but, singularly enough, there is no mention throughout the conquest of poison being used on them.

63) The banner was of black silk bearing the arms of Charles V., and on both sides a red cross surrounded by blue and white rays. The legend was as follows: *Amici sequamur Crucem et si nos fidem habemus vere in hoc signo viceremus.*

that they had tried by day against us, and had gained no advantage, and now they wished to try by night, when their people would fear neither our horses, our cannon, nor our swords; and they had been sent in order to examine our camp, and those points where they could attack us, and how they could burn the straw huts. I at once had another of the said Indians taken, and also asked him, and he confessed the same as the other in the same words, so I took another five or six, and they all agreed in their statements. Seeing this I had all the fifty taken, and cut off their hands, and returned them to their chief, ordering them to say to him, that, by day or night or at any or all times he might come, he would see who we were. I then had my camp fortified as best I could, and posted the people as seemed most suitable, and we rested thus on our guard until sunset.

When it was growing late, our opponents began to descend into two valleys, thinking they were surrounding us secretly, and to get nearer to us for carrying out their intentions. As I was on my guard, however, I saw them, and it seemed to me that it would be very dangerous to allow them to approach near the camp, because at night they could not see the damage I should do them from my side, and they would approach fearlessly, and also because in not seeing them some of the Spaniards might be somewhat negligent in fighting. I also feared that they might set fire to my camp, which should it happen would be most disastrous, and none of us could escape; hence I determined to go out and meet them with all the horsemen and cut them to pieces, thus preventing their approach. And so it happened, that when they discovered we were coming with horses to attack them, without stopping or shouting, they fled into some fields of maize, with which the country was almost covered, and lightened themselves of some provisions which they were carrying with them, for the feast they intended to celebrate, if this time they destroyed us entirely. They left us in security that night. After this occurrence, I remained several days without leaving camp, except in the neighbourhood, to repel the approach of some Indians who gathered to jeer at us, and provoke some skirmishes.

When we had somewhat rested, I made a sally one night, after having inspected the first watch of the guard, taking a hundred foot, the friendly Indians, and the horsemen; and about a league from our camp five horses and mares fell, unable to go on, so I sent them back. Although those who accompanied me, said that I ought to return, as this was an evil omen, I still pushed ahead, confiding in God's supremacy above everything. Before daybreak I fell upon two towns, in which I slaughtered many people, but I did not want to burn the houses, so as to avoid attracting the attention of other people who were very near. When day dawned I fell upon another large town, which contained according to a count, which I ordered to be taken, more than twenty thousand houses, and, as I had surprised them, I found them unarmed, and the women, and children, running naked through the streets; and we did them some harm. Seeing they could offer no resistance, a certain number of the inhabitants came to beseech me not to do them further injury, for they desired to become vassals of Your Highness, and my friends, and they recognised that they were at fault in not having trusted me, but that henceforth I would see that they would always do what I commanded them in the name of Your Royal Highness, as your very true vassals. Immediately there came to me more than four thousand of them, suing for peace, and they took us out to a fountain where they gave us good food.

Thus I left them pacified, and returned to our camp, where I found the people who had remained there much frightened, believing I might have been in some danger, as they had seen the horses and mares returning the night before. When they heard afterwards of the victory which God had been pleased to give us, and how I had left those towns at peace, they were very glad, for I certify to Your Majesty, that there was no one amongst us who was not very fearful at penetrating so far into this country, and amongst so many people, where we were so entirely without hope of help from anywhere.

64) Xicotencatl, son of the lord of Titzatlan, was a brave and able commander. He bore the same name as his father, which has led some writers to merge the two into one person, and others to confuse their deeds. The father was a very old man, though he was probably not one hundred and forty years old, as some have stated, when he met Cortes he asked to be allowed to feel his face, for he was blind.

Indeed I had already heard with my own ears, privately, as well as publicly, that I was a Pedro Carbonero,⁶⁵ who had got them into this difficulty from which they could never get out. And even more, I heard it said in one of the huts of certain companions (I being in a place where they could not see me), that if I had gone mad, and was going whence I could never escape, they need not do the same, but should rather return to the sea-coast, and that if I wished to return with them, very well, but if not, to leave me. This was often required of me, but I would encourage them, telling them to look to it that they were the vassals of Your Highness, and that Spaniards were never found lacking anywhere, and that we were in a position to win the greatest kingdoms and dominions in the world for Your Majesty. I told them, moreover, that we were only doing what we were obliged to do as Christians, by fighting against the enemies of our faith, and that we would gain the glory of the other world, while in this we would obtain the highest praise and honour, such as till our time no generation had won; and that they must perceive that we had God on our side, for Whom nothing was impossible, as they might recognise in the victories which we had obtained, where so many of our enemy had been slaughtered, but none of us. I told them other things of the same kind which seemed fitting, and with these, and the royal favour of Your Highness, they recovered their spirits, and I won them to my purpose, and to do as I wished, which was to complete the undertaking I had begun.

The following day, Sicutengal, Captain General of this province, came to see me at ten o'clock, with about fifty of its chiefs, praying me on his part, and on that of Magiscatzin,⁶⁶ who was the principal person in all this province, and on behalf of many other lords, that I would admit them to the royal service of Your Majesty and to my friendship, and would pardon them the past errors, because they had not understood who we were. He said that they had exerted all their forces, not only by day, but also by night, to escape being subjected to anyone, since at no time had this province ever been so, nor had they ever had, nor did they have, any master; on the contrary, they had always lived free and independent, since immemorial times, and had always defended themselves against the great power of Montezuma, of his father, and grandfather, who held that country subjected, but had never been able to hold them in subjection, though they had them surrounded on all sides, so that no one could go out of the country. He said also that they ate no salt,⁶⁷ since there was none in their country, nor were they allowed to go to buy it anywhere else, nor did they wear any cotton clothing, because their country, on account of its cold, did not produce cotton, and they were deprived of many other things on account of being so shut off. They had endured it, and held it as better thus to be free, rather than be subjected to anyone; and they had wanted to do the same with me, for which reason, as several had already stated, they had tested their forces, and seeing clearly that neither these, nor their artifices, could avail them anything, had decided that, rather than die, and have their houses, and women, and children destroyed, they would become vassals of Your Highness.

I satisfied them, saying that they must recognise that they were to blame for the injury they had sustained, for I had come to their country, thinking that I came to the country of my friends, for the Cempoalans had assured me that they were, and wished to be so; and that I had sent my messengers ahead of me to let them know that I was coming and wished their friendship, and that without replying to me (coming in all security), they had attacked me on the road, killed my two horses, and wounded others. Moreover, after having fought, with me, they had sent their messengers, saying that what had happened had been without their license or consent, and that certain communities had set themselves to do it without their participation, and that they had reprovved them for it, and desired my friendship. Believing this to be

65) An old proverb which said: "Pierre le Charbonnier savait bien ou il etait, mats il ignorait le moyen d'en sortir": pointing at foolish people who were always plunging into difficulties from which they never knew how to emerge.

66) Maxiscatzin, lord of the state of Ocotelolco, in the republic of Tlascalala, and commander in chief of the united armies.

67) Called by the Indians "tequesquit." It is made from the saltpetre, which was largely found in the neighbourhood of Ixtapalapan and Ixtapaluca (Ixtabl meaning saltpetre), and formed an important article of commerce, which however did not reach the Tlascalans on account of the permanent state of hostilities. As they were also cut off from the sea, salt had been for fifty years an almost unknown luxury amongst them; cotton which was a product of the tierra caliente was for the same reason denied them.

true, I had told them that I was pleased, and that they would surely see me next day in their homes as in the houses of friends; and that likewise they had again attacked me on the road, and fought with me all day until night overtook us, notwithstanding that they had been required by me to keep the peace. I reminded them of all the other things they had done to oppose me, and many others which I shall leave unmentioned, so as not to weary Your Highness. Finally they submitted and acknowledged themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Majesty, offering their persons and property for your royal service; and such they did, and have done until to-day, and will always do, as Your Majesty will hereafter see.

I remained six or seven days without leaving that place and camp, because I did not dare to trust them. They besought me to come to a large city, where all the chiefs of the province lived, and even the chiefs themselves came to beseech me to come into the city, as I would be well received there, and better provided with everything necessary than in the camp. For they were ashamed that I should be so ill-lodged, as they considered me their friend, and they and I were vassals of Your Highness. In response to their prayers, I came to the city, which is about six leagues distant from the dwelling place and camp I had occupied, and is so large and admirable that, although much of what I might say I shall omit, the little which I shall say is almost incredible; for it is much larger than Granada, and very much stronger, having very good buildings, and it contains a great many more people than Granada did when it was taken, and is much better supplied with provisions, such as bread, birds, game, and river-fish, and other good eatables and vegetables. There is a market in this city, in which every day, above thirty thousand souls sell and buy, without counting many other small markets in different parts of the city. Everything is to be found in this market in which they trade, and could need, not only provisions, but also clothing and shoes. There are jewellery shops, for gold, and silver, and stones, and other valuables of feather-work, as well arranged as can be found in any of the squares or market-places of the world; there is also as good earthenware and crockery as the best in Spain. They also sell wood and coals, and herbs to eat, and for medicinal purposes. There are houses like barbers' shops, where they wash their heads and shave themselves; there are also baths. Finally there prevail good order and politeness, for they are a people full of intelligence and understanding, and such that the best in Africa does not equal them. This province contains many extensive and beautiful valleys, well tilled and sown, and none are uncultivated. The province is ninety leagues in circumference, and, as far as I have been able to judge about the form of government, it is almost like that of Venice, or Genoa, or Pisa, because there is no one supreme ruler. There are many lords all living in this city, and the people who are tillers of the soil are their vassals, though each one has his lands to himself, some more than others. In undertaking wars, they all gather together, and thus assembled they decide and plan them. It is believed that they must have some system of justice for punishing the wicked, because one of the natives of this province stole some gold from a Spaniard, and I told this to that Magiscatzin, the greatest lord among them. After making their investigation, they pursued him to a city which is near there, called Churultecal, whence they brought him prisoner, and delivered him to me with the gold, telling me that I might chastise him. I thanked them for the diligence they took in this, but told them that, inasmuch as I was in their country, they might chastise him according to their custom, and that I did not wish to meddle with the punishment of their people while I was in their country. They thanked me for this, and took him with a public crier, who proclaimed his offence, leading him through the great market place, where they put him at the foot of a sort of theatre, and with a loud voice again published his offence. And all having seen him, they beat him on the head with sticks until they killed him. We have seen many others in the prisons, who, it is said, were confined there for thefts, and other offences they had committed. According to the visitation which I ordered to be made, this province has five hundred thousand householders, besides those of another small province, called Guazincango, which joins it, whose people live as these do, without a rightful sovereign, and are no less vassals of Your Highness than these Tascaltecas.

Being, Most Catholic Lord, in our camp in the country while I was at warfare with this province, there came to me six lords from amongst the principal vassals of Montezuma, accompanied by about two hundred retainers, telling me that they came on the part of Montezuma to say that he wished to be a vassal

of Your Highness, and my friend. He sent word that I should say what I wanted him to give to Your Highness as an annual tribute, of gold, silver, stones, slaves, cotton, and wearing apparel, and other possessions, and that he would give it all, if only I would not come to his country, because it was very sterile, and destitute of provisions, and he would be sorry if I or my people suffered want. He sent me by them about a thousand dollars of gold, and many pieces of cotton clothing, such as they wear. They remained with me during the war and until the end of it, and well saw what the Spaniards were able to do. They knew of the treaties which were made with this province, and the allegiance given by the chiefs of all the country to the service of Your Sacred Majesty. At which, as it appeared, they showed themselves not much pleased, for they worked in many ways to embroil me with this people, saying that nothing they had told me was true, nor was the friendship they had sworn sincere, and that they formed it to secure me, in order to commit treason when they could with safety. The inhabitants of this province on the other hand, many times advised me not to trust those vassals of Montezuma, because they were traitors who carried on all their affairs with treacheries and tricks, and it was thus they had subjected all the country; and that they as my sincere friends and persons who had known them for a long time, warned me against them. I was not a little pleased to see this discord and want of conformity between the two parties, because it appeared to me to strengthen my design, and later I would find means to subjugate them; that common saying "De monte" etc., might be repeated, and I was even reminded of a scriptural authority which says "Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur." So I treated with the one, and the other, and privately I thanked both for the advice they gave me, giving to each the credit for more friendship, than to the other.

I had been in the city twenty days or more, when those lords, Montezuma's messengers, who had always remained with me, told me that I ought to go to a city about six leagues from this Tascaltecal, called Churultecal,⁶⁸ as its natives were friends of Montezuma's, their sovereign. They said that we might there learn his pleasure, whether it was that I should go to his country, and that some of them would go to speak with him, and tell him what I had told them and return with his answer.

Although they knew that I had there some of his messengers, who had come to speak with me, I told them that I would go, and would leave on a certain day which I made known to them. When it became known to the Tascaltecas what they and I had agreed upon, and how I consented to go with them to that city, the rulers came to me, greatly afflicted, and told me that I must not go on any account, because it had been plotted to kill me and my men in that city. For this purpose, they said, Montezuma had sent fifty thousand men from his country (some part of which joins with that city), whom they kept in garrison, two leagues from the city, and that they had blocked up the customary high road, and had prepared a new one with many pits, in which sharp stakes and wood were placed, covered over in such a manner that the horses would fall, and be lamed; many streets were barricaded, and quantities of stones were collected on the housetops, so that, when we entered the city they might attack us with safety, and accomplish their purpose. They told me, that, if I wanted to confirm all they said, I might judge from the fact that the chiefs of that city had never come to see me, nor to speak with me, though they were so near to this city, while those of Guazincango who lived farther off had come, and if I sent for them I would see they would not come. I thanked them for their advice, and begged them to furnish me persons who would go on my part and call the chiefs. They did so, and I sent to invite them to come and see me, because I wished to tell them certain things on the part of Your Highness, and to explain to them the cause of my coming to this country.

68) Cholula, sixty leagues distant from the city of Mexico, was the sacred city of Anahuac, the Jerusalem, or Mecca, of the nations, where stood (and stands) the greatest pyramid in Mexico, of whose construction there is no authentic record. The form of government there was theocratic, and the priests chose a captain-general to command the army, while the civil affairs were administered by a council composed of six nobles.

The Cholula pyramid, now so covered with earth, and overgrown with shrubs and trees, that its artificial character and architectural lines are no longer discernible, measures at the length of its base 1423 feet, or twice the length of Cheops; the square of the base covers about forty-four acres, and the flat area on the summit a little more than one acre. The chief deity worshipped at Cholula was the mysterious "fair god" Quetzalcoatl (see Appendix III., at the close of this Letter). Bernal Diaz declared that Cholula reminded him of Valladolid because of its many lofty towers.

These messengers went, and delivered my message to the chiefs of Churultecal, and two or three persons of inferior rank returned with them, and told me that they had come on the part of those chiefs who were ill and could not come, but that I might tell them what I desired. The people of this city told me that all this was a mockery, and that those messengers were of mean condition, and in no wise should I leave without the chiefs of that city first coming hither. I told those messengers that an embassy from such a high Prince as Your Sacred Majesty could not be given to such persons as they were, and that even their chiefs were unworthy to hear it. They should, nevertheless, appear within three days before me to give their obedience to Your Highness, and to offer themselves as your vassals, with the understanding that, if they did not come within the time fixed, I should fall upon them, and destroy them, and proceed against them as against rebels who refused to submit to Your Majesty's authority. I sent them an order, signed with my name and that of a notary public, with a full explanation of the Royal Person of Your Sacred Majesty, and of my arrival, telling them how all these parts, and many other greater countries, and dominions, belonged to Your Highness, and how those who desired to be your vassals would be honoured and favoured, and how on the contrary those who rebelled would be punished, according to justice.⁶⁹

The next day, almost all of the chiefs of that city came, and told me that, if they had not come before, it was because the people of this province were their enemies, and that they did not dare to enter their country because they did not consider themselves safe; and that they were sure that they had told me some things respecting them, but I must not give any credence to them, because they spoke as enemies, and not according to facts. They said also that I should go to their city, where I would discover the falsehoods their enemies had been telling, and the truth of what they themselves assured me; and that from thenceforth they gave and acknowledged themselves as vassals of Your Sacred Majesty, and that they would always remain such, serving and contributing in everything as they were commanded on the part of Your Highness. It was thus set down by a notary public, through the interpreters whom I had.

I still determined to go with them, not only to avoid showing any weakness, but also because from there I thought to treat affairs with Montezuma, as they bounded upon his country, as I have already said, and there was unimpeded intercourse between the two countries.

When the Tascaltecas saw my determination, they were much grieved, and told me repeatedly that I erred, but inasmuch as they had given themselves as vassals to Your Sacred Majesty, and my friends, they wished to go with me, and help me in any emergency.⁷⁰ Although I forbade them, and prayed them not to go inasmuch as there was no necessity for it, still as many as about a hundred thousand men, well furnished for warfare, accompanied me to within about two leagues from the city, when after many importunities, they returned, though some five or six thousand of them still remained with me.

I slept in a dry river bed about two leagues distant, to disperse the people, fearing they might cause some scandal in the city, and also because it was already late, and I did not wish to enter the city at a late hour. The next morning, the citizens came out to receive me on the road, with many trumpets,⁷¹ and

69) Cortes's unflinching conviction was that he was an instrument of divine justice, and he acted the part consistently, determined that others should so regard him. He started from the dogmatic assumption that the new world belonged to Spain by right of Pope Alexander's bull of donation; that its inhabitants were therefore just as much the lawful subjects of the Crown as were the natives of Castile, or Granada, and that for them to refuse obedience was rebellion. The native chiefs in resisting his pretensions, and defending their countries, became, according to his reasoning, instigators of revolt and must be dealt with as such. Most of all, the people were practisers of idolatry, in peril of eternal damnation, whom it was a chief part of his mission to rescue, and bring into the knowledge of the Faith. He held himself to be merciful, in that he invariably invited their obedience, by explaining what a privilege it was to be ruled by such a mighty sovereign as the Emperor, and sought to effect their conversion by expounding the doctrines of the Catholic religion. Once this choice was put plainly before them, and they had refused to accept the dual blessings of vassalage and conversion, they became in his eyes contumacious rebels, and conscious heretics. He had the Spanish XVI. century standards as to how all such were to be treated. He followed, in this case, the usual solemn formality of causing a letter to be drawn up by a notary; that the Cholulan priests could not understand a word of it did not detract from the validity of the proceeding.

70) The real purpose of the Tascalans was to embroil Cortes with the Cholulans, and, with the help of the invincible Spaniards, to crush their ancient enemy.

71) These trumpets were made of wood and canes, and were well played, giving forth very sonorous notes.

drums, and also many priests from their mosques, clothed in their vestments, and chanting in the fashion they are accustomed to do in the said mosques.⁷² With this solemnity they brought us into the city, where they housed us in a very good dwelling place, where all the people of my company dwelt to their satisfaction; and they brought us some food, though not very generously. Along the road we encountered many signs, such as the natives of this province had foretold us, for we found the high road blocked up, and another opened, and some pits, although not many, and some of the city streets were closed, and many stones were piled on the house tops. They thus obliged us to be cautious, and on our guard.

I found there certain messengers from Montezuma, who came to speak with those others who were with me, but to me they said nothing, because, in order to inform their master, they had come to learn what those who were with me had done and agreed with me. These latter messengers departed, therefore, as soon as they had spoken with the first, and even the chief of those who had formerly been with me also left.

During the three days which I remained there I was ill provided for, and every day was worse, and the lords and chiefs of the city came rarely to see and speak to me. I was somewhat perplexed by this, but the interpreter whom I have, an Indian woman⁷³ of this country whom I obtained in Putunchan, the great river I have already mentioned in the first letter to Your Majesty, was told by another woman native of this city, that many of Montezuma's people had gathered close by, and that those of the city had sent away their wives, and children, and all their goods, intending to fall upon us and kill us all; and that, if she wished to escape, she should go with her, as she would hide her. The female interpreter told it to that Geronimo de Aguilar, the interpreter whom I obtained in Yucatan, and of whom I have written to Your Highness, who reported it to me. I captured one of the natives of the said city, who was walking about there, and took him secretly apart so that no one saw it, and questioned him; and he confirmed all that the Indian woman and the natives of Tascaltecal had told me. As well on account of this information as from the signs I had observed, I determined to anticipate them, rather than be surprised, so I had some of the lords of the city called, saying that I wished to speak with them, and I shut them in a chamber by themselves. In the meantime I had our people prepared, so that, at the firing of a musket, they should fall on a crowd of Indians who were near to our quarters, and many others who were inside them. It was done in this wise, that, after I had taken these lords, and left them bound in the chamber, I mounted a horse, and ordered the musket to be fired, and we did such execution that, in two hours, more than three thousand persons had perished.

In order that Your Majesty may see how well prepared they were, before I went out of our quarters, they had occupied all the streets, and stationed all their men, but, as we took them by surprise, they were easily overcome, especially as the chiefs were wanting, for I had already taken them prisoners. I ordered fire to be set to some towers and strong houses, where they defended themselves, and assaulted us; and thus I scoured the city fighting during five hours, leaving our dwelling place which was very strong, well guarded, until I had forced all the people out of the city at various points, in which those five thousand natives of Tascaltecal and the four hundred of Cempoal gave me good assistance.⁷⁴

72) The Spaniards commonly used the word "mosque" to designate any non-Christian place of worship.

73) See Appendix I., close of Letter.

74) This massacre is one of the bloodiest in Mexican history, and concerning it the greatest controversy has raged. Las Casas leads in judging Cortes most severely, and says that it was a part of his policy, as indeed it was of the Spaniards everywhere, to strike terror into the natives by a wholesale slaughter. Bernal Diaz defends Cortes and says his course was justified later, when, in the investigation made by the friars who came for that purpose to Cholula, they learned from the chiefs and other Cholulans that there had really been a concerted plot to destroy the Spaniards in their city. A contrary theory is, that the Tascalans invented the fiction of a plot expressly to provoke a massacre of their Cholulan enemies; if this be true, Dona Marina was the only instrument for accomplishing their purpose. She told Cortes that a Cholulan woman of position, whose friendship she had cultivated, had warned her of the Spaniards' doom, and urged her to take shelter in her own house, and thus save herself. Granted that Cortes was, with reason, fearful of treachery, his only safety lay in forestalling the plotters, but this it seems might have been done by securing the chiefs, and Montezuma's envoys, who were the suspected instigators, and even making an example of them. Nothing can excuse the wholesale massacre of a defenceless population taken in a trap; such excessive measures overstepped by far the needs of the situation. If the

On my return to our quarters. I spoke with those captive lords, and asked them why they wished to kill me treacherously. They answered that it was not their fault, as those of Culua, who were vassals of Montezuma, had put them up to it, and that Montezuma had stationed in such and such a place, (which as we learned afterwards was a league and a half distant), a garrison of fifty thousand men to accomplish it. But they now had learned how they had been deceived, and if I would set one or two of them at liberty, they would gather the people of the city, and return to it with all the women, and children, and chattels; and they prayed me to pardon them the error they had committed, assuring me that, from henceforth, no one should deceive them, and that they would be faithful and loyal vassals of Your Highness and my friends. After having spoken at length to them about their error, I liberated two of them, and the next day the whole city was filled with men, women, and children, and as safe as if nothing of what had passed had ever happened. Immediately afterwards I liberated all the other chiefs and lords whom I had made prisoners, they promising that they would serve Your Majesty very loyally.

During the fifteen or twenty days I remained there, the city and country were completely pacified and re-peopled, so that it seemed nobody was lacking; and their market place and the affairs of the city were as they ordinarily were; and I made those of this city of Churultecal friends with those of Tascaltecal, for they used to be so formerly,⁷⁵ and it was but a short time since that Montezuma had won them over to his allegiance, and made them enemies of the others.

This city of Churultecal is situated in a plain, and has up to twenty thousand houses in the body of the city, and as many more in the outskirts. It is an independent state, and has its recognised boundaries, and they do not obey any chiefs, but govern themselves like the Tascaltecas. The people are better clothed in some ways than the Tascaltecas, because their honoured citizens all wear albornoques⁷⁶ above their other clothing, though they differ from those of Africa in having pockets, but in the making, and stuff and borders, they are very similar. They have all been, and are since the recent occurrence, very faithful vassals to Your Majesty, and very obedient in all that I required and commanded of them in Your Royal name; and I believe that henceforth they will remain so. This city has very fertile fields, for they have much land, and the greater part is irrigated; and the city seen from the outside is more beautiful than the cities of Spain, because it is very level, and contains many towers, for I certify to Your Highness that I counted from a mosque four hundred and odd towers in the city, and all belonged to mosques. It is the best adapted for Spaniards to live in of any I have seen since leaving the port, as it has some uncultivated lands and water for the purpose of raising cattle, such as have no others we have seen so far. For, such is the multitude of people who live in these parts, that there is not a palm of land which is not cultivated, and even then there are many places in which they suffer for want of bread, and there are many poor who beg amongst the rich in the streets, and at the market places, just as the poor do in Spain, and other civilised countries.

I spoke, to those messengers of Montezuma who remained with me, about the treachery which had been plotted against me in the city, and how the lords of it affirmed that it had been done by the counsel of Montezuma. I said that it did not seem to me that it was a deed for such a great lord as he was, who had sent me such honourable persons as his messengers, saying he was my friend, while on the other hand he devised plans for injuring me by means of strangers, so that he might cast off the responsibility if things did not turn out as he thought. But since it was thus, and he did not keep his word, nor did he speak the truth to me, I now intended to alter my plans; for until now I had come with the intention of seeing and speaking with him, and of having him for a friend, and holding many conversations, and in the hope of peace. Now, however, I would go to his country with war, doing him all the harm I could as an enemy,

commander's intention was as Las Casas describes, he succeeded, for the news of the tragedy quickly spread, and threw Montezuma into a panic of helpless fear.

75) Tlascala and Cholula had fought as allies against the triple alliance of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, but Montezuma had profited by a subsequent dissension between them to aggravate the quarrel which thus led to a war, the Mexicans aiding the Cholulans. This cost the latter their independence, as Montezuma established his sway over them. They were reputed to be false, and their very name had come to be synonymous with treachery. (Orozco y Berra, Tom. iv., p. 239.)

76) The Moorish burnous.

though this I regretted very much, as I had always wanted him for a friend that I might counsel with him respecting what I was to do in this country.

They answered me, that as they had been with me many days, they knew nothing concerning that plot, except what they had heard in the city after the occurrence, and they could not believe that it was done by the order and counsel of Montezuma; and they besought me, before I determined to abandon his friendship and to make war as I said, that I should inform myself of the truth, and permit one of them, who would promptly return, to go and speak with Montezuma, as from this city to the place where he resides is twenty leagues. I told them I agreed to this, and let one of them go, who after six days returned, together with the first who had gone, and they brought me ten plates of gold, and fifteen hundred pieces of stuff, and many provisions of chickens and panicap,⁷⁷ which is a beverage they drink; and they told me that Montezuma was much grieved over the disturbance that had happened, and which had been arranged in Churultecal. They said that I must believe that it had not been by his counsel and order, for he assured me it was not so, and that, though the people who were there in garrison were of a truth his, they had moved without his commands, induced by the natives of Churultecal, who bordered on two of his provinces, one of which was called Acancigo, and the other Izzucan.⁷⁸ They said that there existed a certain alliance of neighbourhood between them, for helping each other, and it was thus they had come there, and not by his orders; but in the future I should learn from his deeds, that what he had told me was true, though he still besought me not to seek to come to his country, because it was sterile, and we would suffer privations, and that from wherever I might be, I could send to ask him for whatever I wanted, and he would send it very promptly. I answered that my visit to his country could not be renounced, because I would have to send a full account of him and of it to Your Majesty, and that I was persuaded of the truth of what he had sent to tell me; that inasmuch as I could not forego seeing him, I hoped he would approve of it, and not plan any opposition, because it would be greatly to his injury, and would grieve me very much.

From the time he saw it was my determination to visit him and his country, he sent me word to say that I might come, and very welcome; that he would await me in that great city where he was, and he sent me many of his people to accompany me, as I was already near his country. These persons sought to induce me to go by a certain road, where they must have prepared some attack upon me, as it afterwards appeared, and as was seen by many Spaniards whom I afterwards sent to reconnoitre the country. There were so many bridges, and difficult passes on that road, that, if I had gone by it, they might very easily have accomplished their intentions, but as God has always taken care to guide, even from your childhood, the royal affairs of Your Sacred Majesty, and as I and those of my company went in your royal service. He showed us another road, which, although somewhat steep, was not as dangerous as that by which they wished to take us.

About eight leagues from this city of Churultecal, there are two very high and marvellous mountains,⁷⁹ for at the end of August they were so covered with snow that we could distinguish nothing else on their tops but what seemed snow, and from the highest one, a great volume of smoke, as thick as a house, continually comes forth, not only by day, but also by night, rising to the clouds as straight as a pillar, and it appears to come out with such force, that although on the top of the mountain a strong wind prevails, it does not turn it. As I have always wished to give a very detailed account of this country to Your Highness,

77) There is no such word or drink, and this name may be here due to an error in writing or copying; it has been taken by some commentators to mean pan y cacao (bread and cocoa). Gayangos suggests that it may be the sugared drink called Atole.

78) Two towns in the present state of Puebla.

79) Popocatepetl. Signifying in the Mexican language "smoking mountain." Humboldt gives its height as 5400 metres. Together with Ixtaccihuatl (the white woman) this volcano was venerated as a god, the Indians considering them as man and wife; their feast days were celebrated both in the city and in grottoes in the mountains. The crater of Popocatepetl was thought to be an abode of the tormented spirits of wicked kings. The greatest eruption of which there is any record took place in 1353; the mountain was in a period of activity in 1519 which lasted till 1528. Another eruption occurred in 1533, but the one which caused the most serious apprehension was on Feb. 24, 1664, when a huge piece of the crater fell in and showers of ashes

I wanted to know about this mystery, which seemed somewhat marvellous, so I sent ten of my companions, who seemed adapted for such an enterprise, accompanied by some natives of the country to guide them, charging them to climb the said mountains, and learn the secret of that smoke, whence and how it came. They went, and strove, and did all that was possible to scale it, but never were able to do so on account of the quantity of snow which lay on the mountain, and the clouds of ashes which are blown about on it, and also because they could not endure the great cold which prevails there. They nearly reached the top, however, and so high was it, that, when they were up there, the smoke began to come out, and they say it came with such an impetus and noise as if the entire mountain was about to sink; so they descended, and brought with them a considerable quantity of snow and icicles, which seemed a strange thing to see in these parts, for according to the opinion of the pilots, they belong to the tropics. They say especially that this country is situated in the twentieth degree, which is parallel to the island of Hispaniola, where the heat is continually very great. rained in the streets of Puebla, where the windows were broken, and roofs of houses collapsed. I visited the crater in 1884, when it resembled the basin of a dried-up lake, from which came puffs of whitish smoke-like steam, rising from small fissures here and there, while over all there was a strong smell of sulphur. Diego de Ordaz, who led the Spaniards in making the first known ascent of the mountain, had conceded to him on his return to Spain, the privilege of quartering a smoking volcano in his arms.

While going to see this mountain, they came upon a road, and asked the natives who went with them whither it lead; and these answered to Culua,⁸⁰ and that it was a good road, and that the other by which the Culuan wished to take us was not good. The Spaniards followed it until they reached the top of the Sierras, between which the road passes, and from there they beheld the plains of Culua, and the city of Temixtitan,⁸¹ and the lakes which are in the said province, of which I will hereafter make relation to Your Highness. They came back very glad at having discovered so good a road, and God knows how happy I was about it.

After these Spaniards, who had gone to visit the mountains, returned, and I had informed myself accurately, not only from them, but also from the natives, respecting the road which they had discovered, I spoke to those messengers of Montezuma who were to guide me to his country, and told them, as it was shorter that I wished to go by that road, instead of the one they had proposed. They answered that I said truly that it was shorter, and more level, and the reason they had not suggested it, was because by it we should have to pass one or two days' journey through the country of Guasucingo, whose people were their enemies, and therefore we would not find all the necessaries, as when going through the land of Montezuma; but, if I wished to go that way, they would arrange that provisions should be brought up to the road from the other side.

So we started, with some fears that those people might persist in playing some trick upon us, but as we had already announced that we would Departure take that road, it did not seem well to me to leave it, and to change, lest they might suspect a want of courage had caused it. The day I left the city of Churultecal, I marched four leagues to some hamlets of the city of Guasucingo,⁸² where I was well received by the natives, who gave me some female slaves, and wearing apparel, and certain small pieces of gold. This last in all was but little, because these people did not have much, as they belong to the league and alliance of the Tascaltecas, and they are shut in by Montezuma, and surrounded by his country in such a manner that they can have no commerce with any other province except their own, and therefore, they live very poorly.

The following day I mounted the pass between the two mountains of which I have spoken, and, descending it, we beheld one of the provinces, of the country of the said Montezuma, called Chalco,⁸³

80) Colhua, another name for Mexico, also spelled Culua.

81) See Appendix II., close of Letter.

82) Spelled in various ways. Guajocingo, or Huejocingo, in the state of Puebla.

83) The province of Chalco had been conquered by the Mexicans only after much bloodshed, and was held in subjection by force; hence its people were not loyal subjects to be counted upon in time of need. They were the first to profit by the Spaniards' arrival in the valley to throw off their allegiance. Cortes promised them relief, and assured them that he had

where, about two leagues before we reached the town, I found a very good dwelling place, which had been recently built, and was so large that all my company and myself were very commodiously lodged in it; this although I had with me more than four thousand Indians, of these provinces of Tascaltecal, Guasucingo, Churultecal, and Cempoal, for whom there were ample provisions of food. Here great fires of plenty of wood were burned in all the rooms, for the cold was very bitter, as we were surrounded by two mountains both covered with snow.

Certain persons came to speak to me here who seemed to be chiefs, amongst whom was one who, I was told, was brother to Montezuma. He brought me about three thousand dollars of gold, and told me in Montezuma's name that the latter sent that to me, and prayed me to go back, and not insist on coming to his city, as the country was scarce of food, and the roads leading there were bad; and, as it was all on the water, I could enter it only in canoes. He also enumerated many other inconveniences to prevent me going. They said I had only to say what I wanted, for Montezuma their sovereign would order it to be given to me, and would likewise agree to give me annually certum quid, which would be taken to the coast, or wherever I wished. I received them very well and gave them some Spanish articles, such as they esteem very much, especially to him who was said to be a brother of Montezuma's. I replied to his embassy, that, if it was in my hands to return, I would do so in order to please Montezuma, but that I had come to this country by order of Your Majesty, and that the principal thing, of which you had ordered me to give an account, was Montezuma, and his great city, of whom, and of which. Your Majesty had possessed information since a long time. I said also that they should tell him from me, that I prayed him to approve my going to see him, because no injury would result from it to his person and country, but rather that he should, receive good; and if after I had seen him he did not wish to have me in his company, then I would return; and that we could better decide between ourselves, how he should serve Your Highness, than through third persons, even were they those in whom we had full confidence. With this answer they departed.

Judging from appearances which we observed, and the preparation which had been made in this dwelling place of which I have spoken, the Indians expected to attack us that night, and perceiving this, I took such precaution that they, noting it, changed their plan, and secretly sent away that night a number of people who had gathered in the woods, as was seen by our watchmen and scouts.

At daybreak I set out for a town, called Amaqueruca,⁸⁴ which is two leagues from here, in the province of Chalco, which in its principal town, and the villages within two leagues of it, has some twenty thousand inhabitants. We were lodged in some very good houses, belonging to the chief of the said town, and many persons who seemed to be of high rank came to speak to me, telling me that Montezuma, their sovereign lord, had sent them to await me here, and to see that I was provided with everything necessary. The lord of this place gave me some forty female slaves, and three thousand castellanos. During the two days I was there, they provided us amply with all necessary food.

The next day, accompanied by those chiefs who had come on the part of Montezuma to wait for me, I left, and slept four leagues farther on, in a small town, almost half of it on the water of a great lake, where they lodged us very well; and on the land side there is a chain of very rugged and stony mountains. Here likewise they would have been very willing to try their forces with us, except, as it appeared, they wanted to do so with safety, and by surprising us in the night. But, as I was so well informed, I anticipated their intention, and kept such a guard that night, that of their spies who came, some in canoes by water, and others by descending from the mountains, to see if there was any possibility of carrying out their wishes, some fifteen or twenty were taken by our men, and killed. Thus, few returned to give the information they had come to secure; and finding us always so well prepared they decided to change their tactics, and treat us well.

The next morning, just as I was ready to leave the town, there arrived some ten or twelve chiefs, as I learned afterwards, and among them a great lord, a youth of about five and twenty years, to whom all

come to redress their wrongs and establish justice.

84) Amecamecan, now called Amecameca; it lies at the foot of Popocatepetl, some two leagues from Tlalmanalco.

showed great attention. so much so, that, after he had descended from a litter in which he had come, all the others began clearing the road of the stones and straw before him. Approaching, he told me he came on the part of Montezuma, his sovereign lord, and that the latter besought me to pardon him if he did not come in person to see me, and receive me, as he was indisposed, but that his city was already near, and, inasmuch as I was still determined to go to him, we would meet there, when I should learn from him his disposition towards Your Highness's service. It was added that he still besought me, if it were possible, not to go thither, as I would have much trouble and privation to endure, and that he was much ashamed not to be able to provide there as he desired. With this, they fell on their knees, protesting so much, that it only remained to say that they would defend the road by force if I still insisted in going on. I satisfied, and calmed them with the best words possible, saying that my going thither would do them no harm, but bring them many advantages; and so, after giving them some presents, they took their leave.

I departed immediately after them, accompanied by many people who seemed to be of much importance, as it afterwards appeared, and I continued along the road by the shore of that great lake. A league from my last stopping place, I saw in this lake, two musket-shots distant from the shore, a small city which might have had one or two thousand inhabitants, and which was all afloat on the water; having many towers as it seemed but no entrance. About a league from there, we reached a great causeway, as broad as a horseman's lance, extending within the lake about two-thirds of a league. This led to the city,⁸⁵ which though small, was the most beautiful we had yet seen, not only on account of the well decorated houses and towers, but also because of the excellent construction of its foundations in the water.

In this city, which has about two thousand inhabitants, we were very well received, and they gave us excellent food. The lord and chiefs of it came to speak with me, and prayed me to remain, and sleep there; however, Montezuma's messengers who were with me told me not to stop, but to go on to another city, called Iztapalapan,⁸⁶ about three leagues distant, belonging to a brother of Montezuma; so I did this. The exit from the said city where we dined, whose name at present does not occur to my memory, is by another causeway, a long league in length, which extends to the mainland.

Having arrived at this city of Iztapalapan, the chief of it came out to receive me, as well as one from another great city, called Calnaalcan,⁸⁷ which is near, being perhaps three leagues distant, and these were accompanied by many other chiefs who were waiting for me; and they gave me three or four thousand castellanos, some female slaves, and wearing apparel, receiving me very well. This city of Iztapalapan has some twelve or fifteen thousand households, and stands on the shore of a great salt lake, half of it in the water, and the other half on land. Its chief has some new houses, which, though still unfinished, are as good as the best in Spain; I say as large and well constructed, not only in the stone work, but also in the wood work, and all arrangements for every kind of household service, all except the relief work, and other rich details, which are used in Spanish houses, but are not found here. There are both upper and lower rooms, and very refreshing gardens, with many trees and sweet scented flowers, bathing places of fresh water, well constructed, with steps leading down to the bottom. He has also a large garden round his house, in which there is a terrace with many beautiful corridors and rooms, and, within the garden, is a great pool of fresh water, very well built with sides of handsome masonry, around which runs an open walk with well laid tile pavements, so broad that four persons can walk abreast on it, and four hundred

85) The town of Cuitlahuac, now called Tlahua, on the lake of Texcoco. The Spaniards called it Venezuela (little Venice). Clavigero insists that, after leaving Cuitlahuac for Iztapalapan, the two discontented brothers of the King of Texcoco, Ixtlilochitl and Coanacochtzin, met Cortes, and offered their alliance, explaining their grievances against their brother Cacamatzin, the reigning King, and Montezuma their uncle; and that Cortes went on their invitation to Texcoco. As neither Cortes nor Bernal Diaz mentions what would have been an important and interesting divergence from their route, and both account for almost every hour of the time, by recording their daily movements, the visit to Texcoco seems more than doubtful. The interview with the two princes might easily have taken place on the road.

86) Iztapalapan, seven miles from Mexico, preserves its ancient name, though the lake has long since receded, leaving it high and dry. The city had between 12, 000 and 15, 000 houses, and was ruled by Cuitlahuatzin, a brother of Montezuma. The chief glory of Iztapalapan was its botanical and zoological garden, with reservoirs full of all kinds of fish, such as no town in Europe possessed at that time.

87) Coyohuacan.

paces square, making, in all, sixteen hundred paces. On the other side of this promenade, towards the wall of the garden, it is all surrounded by a lattice work of canes, behind which are arbours, planted with fragrant shrubs. The pool contains many fish, and water fowl, such as ducks, cranes, and other kinds of water birds, in such numbers that the water is covered with them.

The next day after I had arrived in this city, I left, and having gone half a league, I reached another causeway, leading out into the lake a distance of two leagues to the great city of Temixtitan, which stands in the midst of the said lake. This causeway is two lances broad, and so well built that eight horsemen can ride abreast; and, within these two leagues, there are three cities, on one and the other side of the said highway, one called Mesicalingo, founded for the greater part within the said lake, and the other two, called Niciaca, and Huchilohuchico,⁸⁸ on the other shore of it, with many of their houses on the water.

The first of these cities may have three thousand families, the second more than six thousand, and the third four or five thousand. In all of them, there are very good edifices, of houses and towers, especially the residences of the lords and chief persons, and the mosques or oratories, where they keep their idols. These cities have a great trade in salt, which they make from the water of the lake, and from the crust of the land which is bathed by the lake, and which they boil in a certain manner, making loaves of salt, which they sell to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood.

I followed the said causeway for about half a league before I came to the city proper of Temixtitan. I found at the junction of another causeway, which joins this one from the mainland, another strong fortification, with two towers, surrounded by walls, twelve feet high with castellated tops. This commands the two roads, and has only two gates, by one of which they enter, and from the other they come out. About one thousand of the principal citizens came out to meet me, and speak to me, all richly dressed alike according to their fashion; and when they had come, each one in approaching me, and before speaking, would use a ceremony which is very common amongst them, putting his hand on the ground, and afterwards kissing it, so that I was kept waiting almost an hour, until each had performed his ceremony. There is a wooden bridge, ten paces broad, in the very outskirts of the city, across an opening in the causeway, where the water may flow in and out as it rises and falls. This bridge is also for defence, for they remove and replace the long broad wooden beams, of which the bridge is made, whenever they wish; and there are many of these bridges in the city, as Your Highness will see in the account which I shall make of its affairs.

Having passed this bridge, we were received by that lord, Montezuma, with about two hundred chiefs, all barefooted, and dressed in a kind of livery, very rich, according to their custom, and some more so than others. They approached in two processions near the walls of the street, which is very broad, and straight, and beautiful, and very uniform from one end to the other, being about two thirds of a league long, and having, on both sides, very large houses, both dwelling places, and mosques. Montezuma came in the middle of the street, with two lords, one on the right side, and the other on the left, one of whom was the same great lord, who, as I said, came in that litter to speak with me, and the other was the brother of Montezuma, lord of that city Iztapalapan, whence I had come that day. All were dressed in the same manner, except that Montezuma was shod, and the other lords were barefooted. Each supported him below his arms, and as we approached each other, I descended from my horse, and was about to embrace him, but the two lords in attendance prevented me, with their hands, that I might not touch him, and they, and he also, made the ceremony of kissing the ground. This done, he ordered his brother who came with him, to remain with me, and take me by the arm, and the other attendant walked a little ahead of us. After he had spoken to me, all the other lords, who formed the two processions, also saluted me, one after the other, and then returned to the procession. When I approached to speak to Montezuma, I took off a collar of pearls and glass diamonds, that I wore, and put it on his neck, and, after we had gone through some of the streets, one of his servants came with two collars, wrapped in a cloth, which were made of coloured shells. These they esteem very much; and from each of the collars hung eight golden shrimps executed with great perfection and a span long. When he received them, he turned towards me, and put them on my

88) Huithilohuchico — Huitzilopochco — is the present Cherubusco.

neck, and again went on through the streets, as I have already indicated, until we came to a large and handsome house, which he had prepared for our reception. There he took me by the hand, and led me into a spacious room, in front of the court where we had entered, where he made me sit on a very rich platform, which had been ordered to be made for him, and told me to wait there; and then he went away.

After a little while, when all the people of my company were distributed to their quarters, he returned with many valuables of gold and silver work, and five or six thousand pieces of rich cotton stuffs, woven, and embroidered in divers ways. After he had given them to me, he sat down on another platform, which they immediately prepared near the one where I was seated, and being seated he spoke in the following manner:

“We have known for a long time, from the chronicles of our forefathers, that neither I, nor those who inhabit this country, are descendants from the aborigines of it,⁸⁹ but from strangers who came to it from very distant parts; and we also hold, that our race was brought to these parts by a lord, whose vassals they all were, and who returned to his native country. After a long time he came back, but it was so long, that those who remained here were married with the native women of the country, and had many descendants, and had built towns where they were living; when, therefore, he wished to take them away with him, they would not go, nor still less receive him as their ruler, so he departed.⁹⁰ And we have always held that those who descended from him would come to subjugate this country and us, as his vassals; and according to the direction from which you say you come, which is where the sun rises, and from what you tell us of your great lord, or king, who has sent you here, we believe, and hold for certain, that he is our rightful sovereign, especially as you tell us that since many days he has had news of us. Hence you may be sure, that we shall obey you, and hold you as the representative of this great lord of whom you speak, and that in this there will be no lack or deception; and throughout the whole country you may command at your will (I speak of what I possess in my dominions), because you will be obeyed, and recognised, and all we possess is at your disposal.

“Since you are in your rightful place, and in your own homes, rejoice and rest, free from all the trouble of the journey, and wars which you have had, for I am well aware of all that has happened to you, between Puntuchan and here, and I know very well, that the people of Cempoal, and Tascaltecal, have told you many evil things respecting me. Do not believe more than you see with your own eyes, especially from those who are my enemies, and were my vassals, yet rebelled against me on your coming (as they say), in order to help you. I know they have told you also that I have houses, with walls of gold, and that the furniture of my halls, and other things of my service, were also of gold, and that I am, or make myself, a god, and many other things. The houses you have seen are of lime and stone and earth.” And then he held up his robes, and showing me his body he said to me, “Look at me, and see that I am flesh and bones, the same as you, and everybody, and that I am mortal, and tangible.” And touching his arms and body with his hands, “Look how they have lied to you! It is true indeed that I have some things of gold, which have been left to me by my forefathers. All that I possess, you may have whenever you wish.

“I shall now go to other houses where I live; but you will be provided here with everything necessary for you and your people, and you shall suffer no annoyance, for you are in your own house and country.”

I answered to all he said, certifying that which seemed to be suitable, especially in confirming his belief that it was Your Majesty whom they were expecting. After this, he took his leave, and, when he had gone, we were well provided with chickens, and bread, and fruits, and other necessities, especially such as were required for the service of our quarters. Thus I passed six days well provided with everything necessary, and visited by many of the lords.

I have already mentioned at the beginning, Most Catholic Lord, that when I started from the city of Vera Cruz, in search of this lord, Montezuma, I left there a hundred and fifty men, to build that fort which I had begun, and I likewise stated, that I had left many villages and forts in the neighbourhood of that town, under the royal dominion of Your Highness, and the natives as very loyal vassals of Your Majesty.

89) See Appendix III. at close of Letter.

90) See Appendix IV. at close of Letter.

While I was in the city of Churultecal, I received letters from the captain, whom I had left in my place at Vera Cruz, informing me that Quauhpopoca,⁹¹ lord of the city called Almeria, had sent messengers to him, saying, that if he had not yet offered to become a vassal of Your Highness, nor had appeared to give his obedience, with all his lands, as he was obliged to do, it was because he had to cross an enemy's country, and that, fearing to be molested by them, he had deferred coming; but to send him four Spaniards to accompany him, because, they, through whose country he had to pass, knowing for what purpose he was coming, would not then dare molest him, and he would immediately come. The captain, believing that what the said Qualpopoca had sent to say was true, as many others had done the same, had despatched him the four Spaniards, but, after he got them in his power, he tried to kill them, in such a way as would make it appear that he had not done it. After he had killed two of them, however, the other two, wounded, escaped to the forests. The captain had then attacked the city of Almeria, with fifty Spaniards, two horsemen, two field pieces, and about eight thousand friendly Indians. He fought with the inhabitants of the said city, and slaughtered many of them, driving out the rest, and burnt, and destroyed it, because the Indians accompanying him were their enemies, and had put much diligence into it. Qualpopoca, the lord of the city, together with the other chiefs, who had come thither to assist him, escaped by taking flight.

The captain was informed by some of the prisoners, taken amongst the defenders of the city, that Qualpopoca had killed the said Spaniards, whom we had sent, because Montezuma had ordered him, and his other vassals, that, as soon as I left the town of Vera Cruz, they should attack those vassals who had rebelled against him, and offered themselves to the service of Your Highness; and that he should use every means he could to kill the Spaniards I had left there, so that they could not aid nor favour them. This was the reason they had done what they had.

Six days having passed, Most Invincible Prince, after I had arrived in the city of Temixtitan, and, having seen something of it, although little in proportion to the amount there is to be seen and noted, it appeared to me, even from what I had seen of it and the country, that it would be conducive to Your Royal Highness's service, and to our security, that Montezuma should be in my power, and not at his entire liberty, so that he might not relax his intention and disposition to serve Your Highness. I thought this, especially because we Spaniards are somewhat touchy and importunate, and, if he should happen to become angry, he could do us such injury with his great power, that there would remain no recollection of us; and also because, having him in my power, all the other countries who were subject to him, would come to the knowledge and service of Your Majesty, as afterwards happened.

I determined to seize him, and confine him in my quarters, which are very strong; and, thinking over all the forms and ways in which I could accomplish this, without provoking any scandal or commotion upon his arrest, I remembered what my captain at Vera Cruz had written about the occurrence in the city of Almeria, as I have related, and how it had become known, that all that had happened there had taken place by Montezuma's command. I stationed sufficient guards in the cross streets, and went to the palace of Montezuma, as I had at other times gone to see him; and, after conversing with him lightly on pleasant subjects, and after he had given me some valuables in gold, and one of his daughters, and some daughters of other lords to some of my companions, I told him that I had learned what had happened in the city of Nautecal, or Almeria, and about the Spaniards whom they had killed there, and that Qualpopoca gave as his excuse, that all he had done had been by Montezuma's order, and that, as his vassal, he could not have done otherwise. I said that, because I did not believe Qualpopoca's excuse of his fault, it seemed to me that he ought to send for him, and the other chiefs who had helped him in the murder of the Spaniards, so that the truth might be known, and they be punished, and Your Majesty might clearly perceive his good

91) Quauhpopoca commanded the garrisons at Nauhtla (named Almeria by the Spaniards) and Tochpan, which is the present town of Tuxpan.

If Quauhpopoca acted by his sovereign's orders, he merely did his duty, and merited no punishment from Cortes, but if, on the other hand, he acted on his own initiative, then Montezuma was free from blame and should not have been degraded by the imposition of chains. Cortes's action is indefensible; his intention doubtless was to convince the emperor that there was no depth of humiliation to which he might not be brought, and to prove to the people that to kill a Spaniard was the greatest of crimes, sure to be followed by the direst punishment.

disposition. Otherwise the reports of those wicked men might provoke Your Highness to anger against him, from which, instead of the favours Your Highness would now grant him, evil would result; for I was convinced that the truth was contrary to what they declared. He immediately sent for certain of his people, to whom he gave a small stone figure, like a seal, which he wore tied to his arm, ordering them to go to the city of Almeria, which is about sixty or seventy leagues from that of Muxtitan[Mexico], and bring the said Qualpopoca: to ascertain what others had taken part in the murder of the Spaniards, and to bring them likewise; and, if they resisted, to bring them as prisoners, and, if they should resist imprisonment, to call upon certain tribes in the neighborhood, which he then named, to seize them by force of arms; but on no account to return without them.

These men immediately left, and, after they had gone, I told Montezuma that I was very grateful to him for the diligence he had used in the imprisonment of those men, for I must render an account to Your Royal Highness for those murdered Spaniards. To enable me to give this, it now only remained that he should stop in my quarters, until the truth was established, and it was known that he was blameless. I earnestly prayed him not to feel pained at this, because he would not be kept a prisoner, but would have entire liberty; that I would place no impediment to his service and authority in his dominions, and that he might choose any room he pleased in the palace where I was, where he should remain at his pleasure, well assured that he should suffer no annoyance or unpleasantness, but rather that, in addition to his own attendants, my companions would also obey his commands. We had much conversation and argument about this, which would be too lengthy to write, and even too prolix to recount to Your Highness, as well as of little bearing on the case, hence I will not say more than that finally he agreed to come with me, and immediately gave orders to prepare the apartment he wished to occupy, which was well fitted up, and put in order. This having been done, many lords came, and having taken off their vestments, which they carried under their arms, barefooted they brought the litter, not much adorned, and, weeping, they placed him on it, in profound silence. Thus we went to my quarters without causing any commotion in the city, although some had begun, but, when Montezuma heard of it, he ordered it to be stopped, and thus all was as completely quiet as though nothing had happened; and this continued all the time I kept Montezuma prisoner, for he lived at his entire pleasure, and with all his service, just as he had it in his own palace, which was great and marvellous, as I will hereafter say. And I, and those of my company, did everything we could to please him.

Some fifteen or twenty days having passed since his imprisonment, those who had been sent for Qualpopoca, and the others who had killed the Spaniards, returned, bringing the said Qualpopoca, and one of his sons, and with them fifteen other persons whom they said had taken part in the murders. Qualpopoca was carried in a litter, very much in the style of a lord, as he in reality was. They were delivered to me, and I kept them under guard in prison, and afterwards when they confessed that they had killed the Spaniards, I had them interrogated as to whether they were vassals of Montezuma. Qualpopoca answered, asking if there existed any other lord of whom he might be vassal, as much as to say there was no other. I likewise asked them if what had been done there was by Montezuma's order; and they answered, "No, " although afterwards, when the sentence, that they should be burned, was carried into execution, all with one voice said it was true that Montezuma had ordered them to do it, and that they had obeyed his command. So they were burned publicly, in one of the squares, without occasioning any commotion, and the day when they were burned, as soon as they confessed that Montezuma commanded them to kill the Spaniards, I ordered him to be put in chains, which frightened him not a little.

After I had spoken to him, I removed the irons the same day, and he remained very satisfied, and ever afterwards I endeavoured to please him, and keep him satisfied as far as possible; especially did I always say publicly to all the natives of the country, nobles as well as others, who came to see him, that Your Majesty had been pleased that Montezuma should continue to exercise authority, recognising the suzerainty of Your Highness, and that Your Highness would be well pleased by their obeying him, and regarding him as their lord, as they had before I came to the country. So good was my treatment of him, and the satisfaction he felt, that sometimes, and frequently, I offered him his liberty, praying him to return

to his palace; but he told me each time that he was contented there, and that he did not wish to go, because nothing that he wished was wanting, more than in his own palace, whereas it might happen that, if he went back, the lords of the country, his vassals, would importune him to do things, in spite of himself, which would be contrary to his own wish, and to Your Highness's service. He added, that he was determined to serve Your Majesty in all that was possible, and up till now he had told them what he wanted done, and was content where he was, for, should anyone attempt to make suggestions to him now, he could excuse himself by answering that he was not free, and thus evade them. He often asked permission to go and enjoy himself, and pass the time in certain pleasure houses, both out of the city and in it, and I never denied him this. He often would, with five or six Spaniards go to enjoy himself one or two leagues out of the city, returning very gladly to the quarters where I kept him; and, whenever he went out, he would present many valuables, and clothing, as well to the Spaniards who went with him, as to the natives, who always accompanied him to at least the number of three thousand men, most of them nobles and persons of distinction; and, as he always gave them many banquets and feasts, they who went with him were always contented.

When I afterwards understood perfectly, that he was wholly devoted to the service of Your Royal Highness, I prayed him, so that I might give a better account to Your Majesty of this country, to show me the mines from which he obtained gold, and he answered with perfect good will that he would gladly do so. He immediately sent certain of his servants, distributing them two by two over four provinces, from which he said he got the gold; and he asked me to send Spaniards with them, to see how it was taken out. So, for each of his own people, I sent two Spaniards, and some went to a province, called Cuzula, eighty leagues from the great city of Temixtitan, the natives of which are his vassals, and there they were shown three rivers, from each of which they brought me specimens of gold of very good quality, although it was taken out with mean tools, as they had only those with which the Indians extract it. On the road, they passed through three provinces, according to what the Spaniards said, of fine land, and many hamlets and cities, and towns, very populous, and containing buildings equal to any in Spain. They told me especially of a house and fort, greater, and stronger, and better built, than the castle of Burgos, and that the people of this province, called Tamazulapa, were better dressed than any others we have seen, and, as it seemed to them, more intelligent. Others went to another province called Malinaltepeque, another seventy leagues from the said great city, and more towards the sea-coast; and they brought me likewise specimens of gold from a great river there.

The others went to a country, called Teniz,⁹² farther up this river, belonging to a people of a different language from that of Culua, and the ruler of that country is called Coatelicamat. His country lies in a very high rugged mountain chain, and is not subject to Montezuma; the people of that province are very warlike, fighting with lances, twenty or thirty palms long, and, because they are not vassals of Montezuma, the messengers who accompanied the Spaniards did not dare to enter that country, without first notifying the chief and asking his permission. They told him they had come with the Spaniards to see the gold mines in his country, and besought him, on my part, and that of Montezuma, their lord, to permit it. Coatelicamat answered, that he was very willing the Spaniards should come into his country, and see the mines, and whatever else they wished, but that the Culuans, who were subject to Montezuma, must not come, because they were his enemies. The Spaniards were somewhat perplexed, as to whether they should go alone, or not; those who accompanied them told them not to go, as they would be killed, and that it was in order to kill them that Coatelicamat would not permit the Culuans to accompany them. At last they determined to go alone, and the lord and his people received them very well, and showed them seven or eight mines where they took out gold; and in their presence the Indians took some, out of which they brought me specimens. Coatelicamat sent me certain messengers with the Spaniards, offering himself and his country for the service of Your Majesty; and he sent me certain valuables of gold, and such wearing apparel as they have.

92) Tenich

The others went to another province, called Tuchitepec,⁹³ which is almost in a direct line towards the sea, twelve leagues beyond the province of Malinaltepec where, as I have already said, gold had been found. Two other rivers were shown them there, where gold is also found.

As there is in those parts, according to what the Spaniards who went there informed me, every facility for making plantations, and procuring gold, I begged Montezuma to establish a plantation for Your Majesty in that province of Malinaltepec, which seems the best adapted, and he put such diligence into it, that, within two months after I had spoken to him, sixty fanegas⁹⁴ of maize, and ten of beans had been sown, and two thousand plants of cacap,⁹⁵ which bears a fruit somewhat like almonds. This fruit they sell ground, and esteem so highly, that it is used instead of money all over the country, and with it everything can be bought in the market places and elsewhere. He built four good houses, in one of which, besides the living apartments, they made a water tank, and put five hundred ducks in it; these are much esteemed, because they pluck their feathers every year, and use them for making wearing apparel. And they placed fifteen hundred chickens in it, not to speak of other farm stock, which the Spaniards judged to be worth twenty thousand dollars of gold. I also prayed Montezuma to tell me if on the sea-coast there was any river or bay where ships could enter safely, and he answered me that he did not know, but that he would have the coast drawn for me, with its bays and rivers, and that I might send the Spaniards to see them, and that he would give me people to guide and take them; and thus we did.

Another day they brought me a cloth, on which the whole coast was drawn, showing a river, larger than the others, flowing into the sea; this seemed to be amongst the mountain chains called Sanmin,⁹⁶ which form such a bay, that the pilots heretofore believed it divided the province called Mazamalco. Montezuma told me I might choose whom I wished to send, and he would provide means for seeing and learning everything. I immediately named ten men, amongst them some pilots and persons acquainted with the sea. Furnished with the provisions he gave us, they left, and explored the whole coast, from the port of Chalchilmeca,⁹⁷ which is called San Juan, where I first disembarked.

They covered about sixty odd leagues, but nowhere found a river or bay where ships could enter, although there are many very large ones on the said coast; they took soundings of all from the canoes, and finally reached the said province of Cuacalco,⁹⁸ where was the river shown on the chart. The chief of that province, called Tuchintecla, received them very well and gave them canoes to explore the river. They found the shallowest part at its mouth, two and a half fathoms in depth, and, twelve leagues up the river, the greatest depth they found was five or six fathoms; from their observations they judged it has about the same depth for thirty leagues up from its mouth. On its banks, are many large towns, with an innumerable population, and all the province is level, and rich and abundant in produce. The people of this province are not vassals or subjects of Montezuma, but rather his enemies. The lord of it sent word, when the Spaniards arrived, that the Culuan must not enter his country because they were his enemies, but, when the Spaniards returned home with this account, he sent certain messengers with them, who brought me valuables of gold, tiger-skins, feather-work, stones, and stuffs. These told me, on his part, that Tuchintecla had known of us for a long time, because his friends of Puntunchan (which is the river of Grijalba), had told him that I had passed there, and had fought with them when they did not admit me to their town, and how afterwards they became friends of mine, and vassals of Your Majesty. The messengers said that Tuchintecla, likewise, offered himself to Your Royal Highness, with all his country, and he prayed me to consider him as my friend, on conditions that the Culuan should not enter his country, though I might see everything in it, which might be useful to Your Royal Highness, of which he would give whatever I might direct every year.

93) Xuchitepec.

94) Hanega, also called fanega, a dry measure corresponding approximately to the bushel.

95) Cacao from which chocolate is obtained.

96) Coatzacoalco was the name of the river; the place described is between the sierras of San Martin and Sant Anton, hence the name Sanmin may be a careless or an intentional contraction of San Martin.

97) Chalchihucuecan was the Indian name for San Juan da Ulua, the port of Vera Cruz.

98) Coatzacoalco.

When I learned, from the Spaniards who visited that province, of its adaptability for settlement, and of the harbour they had found, I rejoiced greatly; for, ever since I came to this country, I have sought to find a harbour on its coast, where I might find a settlement. I had never succeeded, however; nor is one to be found on the whole coast, from the river of San Antonio, which is next the Grijalba to that of Panuco which is down the coast, where certain Spaniards settled by order of Francisco de Garay, as I shall hereafter recount to Your Highness.

To assure myself still more about that province and harbour, and of the good will of the natives, and of everything else necessary for a settlement, I again sent certain of my experienced people to ascertain all these matters. They went with the messengers, whom that chief Tuchintecla had sent to me, taking some things for him which I gave them. Upon their arrival, they were well received by him; and they again examined and sounded the harbour and river to see whether a town might be founded. They afterwards brought me a long and exact description, saying that there was everything necessary for a settlement, and that the chief of the province was very content, strongly desiring to serve Your Highness. When this account came, I immediately dispatched a captain, with one hundred and fifty men, to lay out, and build a town, and construct a port; for the chief of that province had offered to do this as well as everything else that might be necessary or commanded by me; and he even built six houses on the site chosen for the town, and said that he was very pleased we should come there to settle, and remain in his country.

In the past chapters, Most Powerful Lord, I have said that, at the time of my coming to the great city of Temixtitan, a great lord had come, on behalf of Montezuma, to meet me on the road, who, as I learned afterwards, was a near relative of the latter's, and had dominions called Haculuacan,⁹⁹ adjoining those of Montezuma. The capital of these is a very great city on this salt lake, six leagues by canoe, and ten by land, from this city of Temixtitan. The city is called Tezcoco,¹⁰⁰ and it may have about thirty thousand households. There are in it, Sire, very wonderful houses, and mosques, and very large, and well built, oratories; it has also extensive market places. Besides this city, he possesses two others, one, called Ocurman,¹⁰¹ at three leagues from Tezcoco, and the other, called Otumpa, six leagues distant, each

99) Acolhuacan.

100) Texcoco, capital of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, stood at the N. E. extremity of the lake of the same name. It rivalled Mexico in size and importance, was the centre of Nahuatl culture, and has been described as the "Athens" of the Aztecs. The triple alliance of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlacopan (Tacuba) formed the core of the Aztec Empire, where centred the civilisation of Anahuac. The Kings of Texcoco and Tlacopan recognised the King of Mexico as their over-lord in war, and in the affairs of the central administration, but in all other respects these sovereigns were equal, absolute, and independent, in their respective kingdoms. Texcoco was older than Mexico, and Nezahualcoyotl, the greatest of its rulers, bore the title of Aculhua Tectitl, which Mexican historians define as equivalent to Caesar. This King once declared war upon Mexico over a trifling question of etiquette, sacked the capital, and exacted a heavy indemnity. The kingdom was divided into seventy-five principalities or lordships, something after the feudal system in Europe during the Middle Ages. The last king, before the arrival of the Spaniards, had been Nezahualpilli, a ruler of superior ability, one of the greatest princes in Mexican history, who left one hundred and forty-five children, of whom there were four sons eligible for the succession. The electors, under pressure of Montezuma, chose the eldest, with the result that the youngest, Ixtlilxochitl, contested the election, and plunged the country into civil strife from which it emerged divided, and in this weakened and distracted state Cortes found it upon his arrival. The ambitious Ixtlilxochitl, discontented with the portion he had received, was a permanent pretender to his brother's crown, and he secretly sent an embassy to Cortes at Cempoal asking his help, and offering his own alliance. This afforded Cortes an early insight into the internal dissensions of the empire, by which he so readily and ably profited. (Ixtlilxochitl. Hist. Chichimeca.) Texcoco rapidly diminished both in population and importance after the conquest, and Thomas Gage, who visited it in 1626, found a village containing one hundred Spaniards and three hundred Indians, reduced to poverty. Great havoc had been wrought by the wanton destruction of the magnificent forests of giant cedar trees in the neighbourhood. Panfilo de Narvaez accused Cortes of using seven thousand cedar beams in the construction of his palace alone. (Voyage de Thomas Gage, Tom. i. cap. xiii).

101) Near by Acolman stand the pyramids of Teotihuacan which Cortes nowhere mentions, though it seems impossible he should not have seen them. Of the two large pyramids, the greater was called Tonatiuh Ytzaqual, or House of the Sun, and the lesser, Metztli Ytzaqual, House of the Moon. The first is 680 feet long at the base and 180 feet high; the second is much smaller at the base and 34 feet lower. Other small pyramidal mounds, about thirty feet high were arranged in regular lines or streets, leading up to the large pyramids, and were dedicated to the stars. As this plain bore the Toltec name Micoatl, or Way of the Dead, it has also been thought that the whole group formed a necropolis. Siguenza assigns them

containing between three and four thousand householders. This province and lordship of Haculuacan has many other villages and hamlets, and very good lands and farms. It joins on one side with the province of Tascaltecal, of which I have already spoken to Your Majesty.

This lord, called Cacamazin,¹⁰² rebelled, after the imprisonment of Montezuma, as well against the service of Your Highness, to which he had offered himself, as against Montezuma. Although he was required many times to obey the royal mandates of Your Majesty, he never complied, for, besides my sending to require him, Montezuma also sent to summon him, but he answered that, if anything was wanted of him, they should come to his country, and that there he would show what he was worth, and the service he was obliged to render. According to my information, he had gathered a multitude of warriors well prepared for action. As I was unable to win him, either by warnings or requirements, I spoke to Montezuma, and asked his advice as to what we ought to do, for the rebellion should not remain unchastised. He answered, that to seize him by force, would expose us to much danger, as he was a great lord, and had many forces and people, and could not be taken without great risk of many people perishing. He had, however, many chiefs from the country of Cacamazin who lived with him and whom he paid and he would speak with them, so that they might win over some of Cacamazin's people, and being assured that they would favour our party, we could take him with safety.

Montezuma came to an understanding with those persons, who induced Cacamazin to meet them in the city of Tezcuco, for the purpose of deliberating on certain matters of state, for, as chiefs, they were grieved that he was doing certain things that might ruin him. Thus, they assembled in a very beautiful palace of Cacamazin's on the borders of the lake, so constructed that canoes can pass under it, going in and out. They had secretly prepared certain canoes, with forces in readiness, in case the said Cacamazin should resist his imprisonment, and, while in this consultation, the chiefs seized him, before his people suspected anything, and brought him across the lake to the great city, which I have already said is six leagues from there. When they arrived, they placed him in a litter, as was customary, and required by his rank, and brought him to me, and I ordered chains to be put on him, and held him in very safe keeping.

Acting on the advice of Montezuma, in the name of Your Majesty, I placed his son, whose name is Cucuzcacin,¹⁰³ in his lordship, and I ordered that all the tribes and lords of the said province and lordship should obey him as ruler, until Your Highness should order otherwise. Thus it was done thenceforward, and all obeyed and served him as lord, the same as the said Cacamazin; and he was obedient in everything I commanded in Your Majesty's name.

A few days after the imprisonment of Cacamazin, Montezuma held a meeting of all the lords of the city and the neighbouring countries; and, when all were assembled, he sent to ask me to join them, and, when I arrived, he spoke in this manner: "My brothers and friends, you know that, for a long time you, and your fathers, and grandfathers, have been, and are, subjects and vassals of my forefathers and myself, and that you have always been well treated by them, and by me, and that you have likewise done what good subjects are obliged to do towards their rightful sovereign. I also believe that you have kept in mind, from

construction to the Olmechs, though most authorities believe they were built later, by the Toltecs. When I visited them in 1884 they were then so overgrown with vegetation, and in such a state of progressive dilapidation, that their total destruction seemed assured, unless prompt measures were taken for their preservation. (Humboldt, *Vues des Cordilleres*. Chamay, *Ancient Cities of the New World*.)

102) While Cacamatzin was kept in Montezuma's capital, his brother had been killed by the Spaniards, and a tribute levied on Texcoco, with such methods that it differed only in name from pillage. When the King contrived to escape from Mexico, he assembled other princes of the neighbourhood in Texcoco, among whom were his brothers Coanococh and Ixtlilxochitl, to whom he proposed that a stand should be at once made against the invaders. Premature wranglings over the division of the fruits of their expected victories broke up this council, not only without any practical decision having been reached, but with sharpened animosity between the three rival brothers. Montezuma's part in the treachery, which Cortes naively describes, was despicable. Coanococh and Ixtlilxochitl were among the conspirators who betrayed the King.

Cacamatzin, when brought into Montezuma's presence to hear his exhortations to make peace with the Spaniards, upbraided the Emperor for his cowardice and treachery. His death will be noticed in a later note.

103) Cuicuitzcatzin: a younger brother who was baptised and became known as Don Carlos.

your forefathers, that we are not natives of this country, and that they came to it from another, very far off, that they were brought here by a sovereign, whose vassals they all were, who left them in it, but who returned after a long time; that he found our forefathers already settled and established in this country, and married to the women, and having a great increase of sons, so that they did not choose to return with him, nor much less to receive him as their sovereign; and that he departed, saying that he would return, or send such a force that they would be compelled to submit. You also know, that we have always expected him, and, according to what the Captain has told us of that King and Lord who has sent him here, and according to the direction whence he says he comes, I hold it to be certain, and you must also hold it thus, that his sovereign is the one we have been expecting especially as the Captain says that they have had information there respecting us.

“Since our predecessors did not act justly towards their sovereign lord, let us do so, and let us give thanks to our gods, because that which they looked for has come to pass in our times. I heartily pray you, inasmuch as all this is well known to you, that, as you have obeyed me as your sovereign, henceforward you will regard and obey this great king, because he is your rightful sovereign, and, in his place, you must hold this, his Captain; also that all the tributes and services, which until now you have paid to me, you do give to him, because I also shall pay tribute, and serve in all that he may command me. In so doing, you will do your duty as you are obliged to do, and you will, moreover, in doing this, give me much pleasure.”

All this he told them, weeping the greatest tears, and the greatest sighs, a man can give vent to; and all those lords who had heard him were likewise weeping so much, that, during a considerable time, they were unable to answer. And I assure Your Sacred Majesty, that there was not one among the Spaniards who heard this discourse who did not feel great compassion.

After they had somewhat restrained their tears, they answered, that they regarded him as their sovereign, and they promised to do all that he ordered them to do, and that for this, and for the reason he had given them, they would do it gladly; that henceforth, for all time, they gave themselves as vassals of Your Highness and henceforth they, all together, and each one singly, would promise, and did promise, to comply with all that should be commanded them in the royal name of Your Majesty, as good and loyal vassals ought to do; and that they would concur with their tributes and services, which heretofore they had given to the said Montezuma, and with everything else which might be commanded in the name of Your Highness. All this passed before a notary public, who at my request recorded it in due form, in the presence of many Spaniards for witnesses.

This decision and offer of the said lords, for the royal service of Your Majesty having been completed, I spoke to Montezuma one day, and told him that Your Highness was in need of gold, on account of certain works ordered to be made, and I besought him to send some of his people, and I would also send some Spaniards, to the provinces and houses of those lords who had there submitted themselves, to pray them to assist Your Majesty with some part of what they had. Besides Your Highness's need, this would testify that they began to render service, and Your Highness would the more esteem their good will towards your service; and I told him that he also should give me from his treasures, as I wished to send them to Your Majesty, as I had done with the other things. He asked me afterwards to choose the Spaniards whom I wished to send, and two by two, and five by five, he distributed them through many provinces and cities, whose names I do not remember, as the papers have been lost, and also because they were many and divers; and moreover some of them were at eighty and one hundred leagues from the said great city of Temixtitan. He sent some of his people with them ordering them to go to the lords of those provinces and cities, and tell them that I had commanded each one of them to contribute a certain measure of gold which he gave them. Thus it was done, and all those lords to whom he sent gave very compliantly, as had been asked, not only in valuables, but also in bars and sheets of gold, besides all the jewels of gold, and silver, and the feather-work, and the stones, and the many other things of value which I assigned and allotted to Your Sacred Majesty, amounting to the sum of one hundred thousand ducats and more. These, besides their value, are such, and so marvellous, that for the sake of their novelty and strangeness they have no

price, nor is it probable that all the princes ever heard of in the world, possess such treasures. Let not what I say appear fabulous to Your Majesty, because, in truth, all the things created on land, as well as in the sea, of which Montezuma had ever heard, were imitated in gold, most naturally, as well as in silver, and in precious stones, and feather work, with such perfection that they seemed almost real. He gave me a large number of these for Your Highness, besides others, he ordered to be made in gold, for which I furnished him the designs, such as images, crucifixes, medals, jewelry of small value, and many other of our things which I made them copy. In the same manner, Your Highness obtained, as the one-fifth of the silver which was received, one hundred and odd marks, which I made the natives cast in large and small plates, porringers, cups, and spoons, which they executed as perfectly as we could make them comprehend.

Besides these, Montezuma gave me a large quantity of stuffs, which considering it was cotton, and not silk, was such that there could not be woven anything similar in the whole world, for texture, colours, and handiwork. Amongst these, were many marvellous dresses for men and women, bed clothing, with which that made of silk could not be compared, and other stuffs such as tapestry, suitable for drawing-rooms and churches. There were also blankets and rugs, for beds both of feather-work, and of cotton in divers colours, also very marvellous, and many other things so curious and numerous I do not know how to specify them to Your Majesty. He also gave me a dozen cerbatanas,¹⁰⁴ with which he shoots, and of their perfection I likewise know not what to say to Your Highness; for they were decorated with very excellent paintings of perfect hues, in which there were figures of many different kinds of birds, animals, flowers, and divers other objects, and the mouthpieces and extremities were bordered with gold, a span deep, as was also the middle, all beautifully worked. He gave me a pouch of gold net-work for the balls, which he told me he would give me also of gold. He gave me also some turquoises[sic] of gold, and many other things, whose number is almost infinite.¹⁰⁵

To give an account, Very Powerful Lord, of the greatness, and the strange and marvellous things of this great city of Temixtitlan to Your Royal Excellency, and of all the dominions and splendour of Montezuma its sovereign; of all the rites and customs which these people practise, and of the order prevailing in the government, not only of this city, but also of others belonging to this lord, much time and many very expert narrators would be required. I shall never be able to say one-hundredth part of what might be told respecting them, but, nevertheless, as far as I am able, I shall speak of some of the things I have seen, which although badly described, I know very well will cause so much wonder, that they will hardly be believed, because even we, who see them here with our own eyes, are unable to comprehend their reality. Your Majesty may be assured, that, if there be anything wanting in my relation, it will be rather in falling short, than by overdrawing, not only in this, but in all other matters of which I shall give an account to Your Highness; but it seems to me only just towards my Prince and Sovereign to tell him very clearly the truth, without interpolating matters which diminish or exaggerate it.

Before beginning to describe this great city, and the others which I mentioned in the other chapter, it appears to me that to understand them better I should describe Mexico, which is where this great city, some others of which I have spoken, and the principal seat of Montezuma's dominion are. This province is circular, and completely surrounded by high and rugged mountains. Its plain is perhaps seventy leagues in circumference, in which there are two lakes,¹⁰⁶ occupying almost all of it, for a canoe travels fifty leagues within their borders, and one of these lakes is of fresh water, and the other larger one is salt. The lakes are divided from one another on one side by a small chain of very high hills, in the middle of one end of this plain, except for a strait between these hills and the high mountains; the strait is about a bow shot across. Communication between one lake and the other, and between the cities, and the other towns round about, is by means of canoes, with no need of going by land. The large salt lake rises and falls in its

104) Long tubes or pipes.

105) It had been decided at the outset, by common accord, that, after deducting the royal fifth of all spoils and profits of whatsoever nature, which went to the crown, one fifth of the remainder should be the portion of Cortes. All the rest was to be divided among the members of the expedition, those who remained in garrison at Vera Cruz sharing equally with those who started on the march to Mexico. (Doc. Ined., tom. XXVI., p. 5-16, tom. XXVII., p. 37. Bernal Diaz cap. cv.)

106) The lakes of Chalco and Texcoco, the first being of fresh, and the second, of salt water.

tides like the sea; its waters, whenever it rises, falling into the fresh-water lake as rapidly as though it were a great river; and when it ebbs, the fresh water then runs into the salt lake.

This great city of Temixtitan is built on the salt lake, and from the mainland to the city is a distance of two leagues, from any side from which you enter. It has four approaches by means of artificial causeways, two cavalry lances in width. The city is as large as Seville or Cordoba. Its streets (I speak of the principal ones) are very broad and straight, some of these, and all the others, are one half land, and the other half water on which they go about in canoes. All the streets have openings at regular intervals, to let the water flow from one to the other, and at all of these openings, some of which are very broad, there are bridges, very large, strong, and well constructed, so that, over many, ten horsemen can ride abreast. Perceiving that, if the inhabitants wished to practise any treachery against us, they had plenty of opportunity, because the said city being built as I have described, they might, by raising the bridges at the exits and entrances, starve us without our being able to reach land, as soon as I entered the city, I made great haste to build four brigantines, which I had completed in a short time, capable whenever we might wish, of taking three hundred men and the horses to land.

The city has many squares where markets are held and trading is carried on. There is one square, twice as large as that of Salamanca, all surrounded by arcades, where there are daily more than sixty thousand souls, buying and selling, and where are found all the kinds of merchandise produced in these countries, including food products, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, zinc, stone, bones, shells, and feathers. Stones are sold, hewn and unhewn, adobe bricks, wood, both in the rough and manufactured in various ways. There is a street for game, where they sell every sort of bird, such as chickens, partridges, quails, wild ducks, fly-catchers, widgeons, turtle-doves, pigeons, reed-birds, parrots, owls, eaglets, owlets, falcons, sparrow-hawks and kestrels, and they sell the skins of some of these birds of prey with their feathers, heads, beaks, and claws. They sell rabbits, hares, and small dogs which they castrate, and raise for the purpose of eating.

There is a street set apart for the sale of herbs, where can be found every sort of root and medical herb which grows in the country. There are houses like apothecary shops, where prepared medicines are sold, as well as liquids, ointments, and plasters. There are places like our barber's shops, where they wash and shave their heads. There are houses where they supply food and drink for payment. There are men, such as in Castile are called porters, who carry burdens. There is much wood, charcoal, braziers made of earthenware, and mats of divers kinds for beds, and others, very thin, used as cushions, and for carpeting halls, and bed-rooms. There are all sorts of vegetables, and especially onions, leeks, garlic, borage, nasturtium, water-cresses, sorrel, thistles, and artichokes. There are many kinds of fruits, amongst others cherries, and prunes, like the Spanish ones. They sell bees-honey and wax, and honey made of corn stalks, which is as sweet and syrup-like as that of sugar, also honey of a plant called maguey,¹⁰⁷ which is better than most; from these same plants they make sugar and wine, which they also sell.

They also sell skeins of different kinds of spun cotton, in all colours, so that it seems quite like one of the silk markets of Granada, although it is on a greater scale; also as many different colours for painters as can be found in Spain and of as excellent hues. They sell deer skins with all the hair tanned on them, and of different colours; much earthenware, exceedingly good, many sorts of pots, large and small, pitchers, large tiles, an infinite variety of vases, all of very singular clay, and most of them glazed and painted. They sell maize, both in the grain and made into bread, which is very superior in its quality to that of the other islands and mainland; pies of birds, and fish, also much fish, fresh, salted, cooked, and raw; eggs of hens, and geese, and other birds in great quantity, and cakes made of eggs.

107) The whitish, slippery, fermented liquor called pulque is extracted from the maguey and is still the popular drink in Mexico: as it must be drunk fresh, special pulque trains daily carry supplies to towns along the railway lines. Flavoured with pineapple, strawberry, and other fresh fruit juices, and well iced, it is a very good drink, wholesome, and only intoxicating if drunk immoderately. The manufacture and sale of the fiery spirit, mescal, also drawn from the maguey, are under careful restrictions and it is as destructive as absinthe.

Finally, besides those things I have mentioned, they sell in the city markets everything else which is found in the whole country and which, on account of the profusion and number, do not occur to my memory, and which also I do not tell of, because I do not know their names.

Each kind of merchandise is sold in its respective street, and they do not mix their kinds of merchandise of any species; thus they preserve perfect order. Everything is sold by a kind of measure, and, until now, we have not seen anything sold by weight.

There is in this square a very large building, like a Court of Justice, where there are always ten or twelve persons, sitting as judges, and delivering their decisions upon all cases which arise in the markets. There are other persons in the same square who go about continually among the people, observing what is sold, and the measures used in selling, and they have been seen to break some which were false.

This great city contains many mosques, or houses for idols, very beautiful edifices situated in the different precincts of it; in the principal ones of which are the religious orders of their sect, for whom, besides the houses in which they keep their idols, there are very good habitations provided. All these priests dress in black, and never cut or comb their hair from the time they enter the religious order until they leave it; and the sons of all the principal families, both of chiefs as well as noble citizens, are in these religious orders and habits from the age of seven or eight years till they are taken away for the purpose of marriage. This happens more frequently with the first-born, who inherit the property, than with the others. They have no access to women, nor are any allowed to enter the religious houses; they abstain from eating certain dishes, and more so at certain times of the year than at others.

Amongst these mosques, there is one principal one, and no human tongue is able to describe its greatness and details, because it is so large that within its circuit, which is surrounded by a high wall, a village of five hundred houses could easily be built. Within, and all around it, are very handsome buildings, in which there are large rooms and galleries, where the religious who live there are lodged. There are as many as forty very high and well-built towers, the largest having fifty steps to reach the top; the principal one is higher than the tower of the chief church in Seville.¹⁰⁸ They are so well built, both in their masonry, and their wood work, that they could not be better made nor constructed anywhere; for all the masonry inside the chapels, where they keep their idols, is carved with figures, and the wood work is all wrought with designs of monsters, and other shapes. All these towers are places of burial for the chiefs, and each one of their chapels is dedicated to the idol to which they have a particular devotion. Within this great mosque, there are three halls wherein stand the principal idols of marvellous grandeur in size, and much decorated with carved figures, both of stone and wood; and within these halls there are other chapels, entered by very small doors, and which have no light, and nobody but the religious are admitted to them. Within these are the images and figures of the idols, although, as I have said, there are many outside.

The principal idols in which they have the most faith and belief I overturned from their seats, and rolled down the stairs, and I had those chapels, where they kept them, cleansed, for they were full of blood from the sacrifices; and I set up images of Our Lady, and other Saints in them, which grieved Montezuma, and the natives not a little. At first they told me not to do it, for, if it became known throughout the town, the people would rise against me, as they believed that these idols gave them all their temporal goods, and, in allowing them to be ill-treated, they would be angered, and give nothing, and would take away all the fruits of the soil, and cause the people to die of want. I made them understand by the interpreters how deceived they were in putting their hope in idols, made of unclean things by their own hands, and I told them that they should know there was but one God, the Universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens, and earth, and all things else, and them, and us, who was without beginning, and immortal; that they should adore, and believe in Him, and not in any creature, or thing. I told them all I knew of these matters, so as to win them from their idolatries, and bring them to a knowledge of God, Our Lord; and all of them, especially Montezuma, answered that they had already told me they were not natives of this country, and that it was a long time since their forefathers had come to it, therefore they might err in some

108) See Appendix V., close of Letter.

points of their belief, as it was so long since they left their native land, whilst I, who had recently arrived, should know better than they what they should believe, and hold; and if I would tell them, and explain to them, they would do what I told them, as being for the best. Montezuma and many chiefs of the city remained with me until the idols were taken away and the chapels cleansed, and the images put up, and they all wore happy faces. I forbade them to sacrifice human beings to the idols, as they were accustomed to do, for besides its being very hateful to God, Your Majesty had also prohibited it by your laws, and commanded that those who killed should be put to death. Henceforth they abolished it, and, in all the time I remained in the city, never again were they seen to sacrifice any human creature.

The figures of the idols, in which those people believe, exceed in size the body of a large man. They are made of a mass of all the seeds and vegetables which they eat, ground up and mixed with one another, and kneaded with the hearts' blood of human beings, whose breasts are opened when alive, the hearts being removed, and, with the blood which comes out, is kneaded the flour, making the quantity necessary to construct a great statue. When these are finished the priests offer them more hearts, which have likewise been sacrificed, and besmear the faces with the blood. The idols are dedicated to different things, as was the custom of the heathen who anciently honoured their gods. Thus, to obtain favours in war these people have one idol, for harvests another, and for everything in which they desire any good, they have idols whom they honour and serve.

There are many large and handsome houses in this city, and the reason for this is that all the lords of the country, vassals of Montezuma, inhabit their houses in the city a certain part of the year; moreover there are many rich citizens, who likewise have very good houses. Besides having very good and large dwelling places, all these people have very beautiful flower gardens of divers kinds, as well in the upper, as in the lower dwellings.

Along one of the causeways which lead to the city, there are two conduits of masonry each two paces broad, and five feet deep,¹⁰⁹ through one of which a volume of very good fresh water, the bulk of a man's body, flows into the heart of the city, from which all supply themselves, and drink. The other which is empty brings the water, when they wish to clean the first conduit, for, while one is being cleaned, the water flows through the other. Conduits as large round as an ox's body bring the fresh water across the bridges, thus avoiding the channels by which the salt-water flows, and in this manner the whole city is supplied, and everybody has water to drink. Canoes peddle the water through all the streets, and the way they take it from the conduits is this: the canoes stop under the bridges where the conduits cross, where men are stationed on the top who are paid to fill them. At the different entrances to the city, and wherever the canoes are unloaded, which is where the greatest quantity of provisions enter the city, there are guards, in huts to collect a cerium quid of everything that comes in. I do not know whether this goes to the sovereign, or to the city, because up till now I have not been able to ascertain, but I believe it is for the sovereign, for, in other market places of other provinces, that contribution has been seen to be paid to the ruler. There are to be found daily in the markets and public places of the city many workmen, and masters of all trades, waiting to be hired.

The people of this city had better manners, and more luxury in their dressing and service, than those of other provinces and cities, for the reason that the sovereign, Montezuma, always resided there, and all the nobles, his vassals, frequented the city, so better manners, and more ceremony prevailed. But to avoid being prolix in describing the things of the city (though I would fain continue), I will not say more than that, in the service and manners of its people, their fashion of living was almost the same as in Spain, with just as much harmony and order; and considering that these people were barbarous, so cut off from the knowledge of God, and other civilised peoples, it is admirable to see to what they attained in every respect. As far as the service surrounding Montezuma is concerned, and the admirable attributes of his greatness and state, there is so much to write that I assure Your Highness I do not know where to begin, so as to finish what I would say of any part respecting it. For, as I have already said, what greater grandeur can there be, than that a barbarian monarch, like him, should have imitations in gold, silver, stones, and

109) An estado was a man's height, or about five and one-half feet.

feather-work, of all the things existing under heaven in his dominion? — gold, and silver, things, so like to nature, that there is not a silversmith in the world who could do it better; and, respecting the stones, there is no imagination which can divine the instruments with which they were so perfectly executed; and respecting the feather-work, neither in wax, nor in embroidery, could nature be so marvellously imitated.

So far, the extent of Montezuma's kingdom is not known, but everywhere within two hundred leagues on this and the other side of this capital, wherever he sent, his messengers were not disregarded,¹¹⁰ although there were some provinces in the midst of these countries with which he was at war. From what has been learned, and from what I understand from him, I judge that his territories were as large as Spain; for he sent messengers from here to Puntunchan, at sixty leagues distance, beyond the river of Grijalba, ordering the natives of a city, called Cumatan¹¹¹ to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty; and that is a distance of two hundred and thirty leagues from the great city. This I know for I have made the Spaniards go a distance of more than a hundred and fifty in that direction.

All the other lords of this country and province, especially those of the neighbourhood, resided as I have already said, a greater part of the year in the capital, and all, or at least most of them, had their first-born sons in the service of Montezuma. There were fortified places in the dominions of these lords, and Montezuma sent his own people amongst them as governors, and collectors of the taxes and rents which he received from each province. These men kept an account of what each province was obliged to give, by means of characters and figures, written on the paper they make, showing what each province was obliged to pay according to the quality of its land. In this manner, produce from all the said provinces came into his possession.

He was so feared by the present, as well as the absent, that there was never prince in the world more so. He had many pleasure houses, within and without the city, each as well constructed, to serve for its particular kind of pastime, as could be described or desired for so great a lord. Within the city, he had residences such and so marvellous that it seems to me almost impossible to speak of their excellence and grandeur. So I limit myself to saying that there is nothing comparable with them in Spain.

He had a house, a little inferior to this one, where there was a beautiful garden, with arbors overhanging it, of which the marbles and tiles were of jasper, beautifully worked. In this house there were apartments for two great princes, and all their servants. It had ten pools of water, in which were kept all the many and divers breeds of waterfowl found in these parts, all domesticated; for the sea-birds, too, there were pools of salt water, and, for those of the rivers and lakes, there was fresh water, which for the sake of cleanliness, they renewed at certain times by means of pipes. To each kind of bird they gave the food which suited its habits in its free state, so that to those which ate fish they gave it; and, likewise, worms, maize, and smaller seeds were supplied as required by the different birds. I assure Your Highness that all those birds which ate only fish received each day two hundred and fifty pounds, caught in the salt lakes. Three hundred men had the charge of these birds, for their sole employment. There were others who were occupied only in curing the birds which were ailing. Over each pool for these birds, there were beautifully decorated galleries, and corridors, where Montezuma came to amuse himself by watching them. There was an apartment in this house in which were men, women, and children, white of face, body, hair, and eyelashes from the day of their birth. There was another very beautiful house, with a large court, paved with flags, in the pattern of a chess board.

There were also houses about nine feet in height, and about six paces square; one half of each was covered with a roofing of square tiles, and the other half, which was open, had a stout lattice of wood. Each of these houses contained a bird of prey, representing all the sorts known in Spain, from the kestrel to the eagle, besides many other kinds, which had never been seen there; and there were great numbers of each of these kinds. Across the tops of these houses there was a perch, and another one out beyond the lattice, so that the birds might use the one at night and when it was raining, and the other to sun

110) Humboldt estimates its extension at 20, 000 square leagues, and as comprising in his time, the intendencies of Vera Cruz, Mexico, Oaxaca, and Valladolid.

111) Given in Archbishop Lorenzana's edition as Jumathlan, a town between the provinces of Oaxaca and Chiapa.

themselves, and take the air. All these birds were fed daily on chickens, with no other food. There were certain large rooms in this palace, fitted with great cages, very well constructed, and joined with heavy timbers, in all or most of which were kept lions, tigers, foxes, and every kind of cat in considerable numbers. These were also fed on chickens. Three hundred other men had charge of these animals and birds.

There was another house where many monstrous men and women lived, amongst whom there were dwarfs, hunchbacks, and deformed; and each manner of monster had a room apart, and they also had persons to take charge of them. I do not mention the other diverting things Montezuma had in this city, because they were so many, and so various.

His service was organised as follows: at dawn every day, six hundred lords, and men of rank, came to his palace. Some of these sat down, and others walked about in the halls and corridors of the palace, talking and passing the time, but without entering the room where he was; the servants and retainers who accompanied them filled two or three great courts, and the street, which was very large. They remained in attendance until night. When they served food to Montezuma, they likewise served all those lords with like profusion, and their servants and followers also received their rations. The larder and the wine cellar were open daily to all who wished to eat or drink.

The way they served the meals is this: three or four hundred youths carried in countless dishes, for, every time he wished to dine or sup, they brought him all the different dishes, not only meats, but also fish, and fruits, and herbs, to be found in the land; and as the climate is cold they brought, under each plate and dish, a brazier of coals, so that the food should not get cold. They placed all the dishes together in a great room where he dined, which was almost filled; its floors were all very well covered and very clean, and he sat on a small cushion of leather, beautifully made. Whilst he was eating, there were five or six elder lords standing a short distance from him, to whom he offered from the dishes he was eating. One of the servants waited to bring and remove the dishes for him, which were passed by others, who stood further off as the service required. At the beginning and end of each meal, they always brought him water for his hands, and the towel, once used, he never used again; nor were the plates and service in which a dish was served ever brought again; and it was the same with the braziers.

He dressed himself four times every day, in four different kinds of clothing, all new, and never would he be dressed with the same again. All the lords who entered his palace came barefooted, and, when those whom he had summoned appeared before him, it was with their heads bent, and their eyes on the ground, in humble posture; and, when they spoke to him, they did not look him in the face, because of respect and reverence. I know they did this out of respect, for certain lords reproved the Spaniards, saying, that when these latter spoke to me, they would behave with a lofty demeanour, looking me in the face, which seemed to them disrespectful and shameless. When Montezuma went out, which happened rarely, all those who accompanied him and those whom he met in the street, turned their faces aside, and in no wise looked at him, and all the rest prostrated themselves until he had passed. One of the lords, who carried three long thin rods, always went before him, and I believe this was done to give notice of his approach. When he descended from his litter, he took one of those rods in his hand, and carried it as far as he went. The ceremonies which this sovereign used in his service were so many, and of such different kinds, that more space than I have at present would be required to relate them, and even a better memory to retain them; for I believe none of the Sultans, or any infidel sovereign of whom we have had information until now, has ever had such ceremonial in his court.

I have been occupied in this capital in what seemed to conduce to the service of Your Sacred Majesty, and in pacifying and winning over to it many provinces, thickly peopled countries, very great cities, towns, and forts; and in discovering mines, and learning and inquiring into many of the secrets of Montezuma's dominions, as well as of others which border on them, of which he had information. These are so many and so marvellous, that they are almost incredible. In this, I have been assisted, with as much good will and satisfaction on the part of Montezuma and the natives, as if they, *ab initio*, had recognised Your Sacred Majesty as their king and rightful sovereign; and with no less good will have they done all I

commanded them in your royal name. In all these things mentioned, and in others no less useful to the service of Your Highness, I spent from the eighth of November, 1519, to the beginning of May this present year.

While all was quiet and tranquil in this city, and many Spaniards were distributed through divers parts, pacifying the people in the country, I greatly desired that ships might arrive, with the answer to the account I had sent to Your Majesty, so that I might forward what I now send, together with all the gold and jewels I had collected for Your Highness. At that time there came certain natives, vassals of Montezuma, who live on the coast, telling me that, near the mountain chain of San Martin, which is on the said coast, before reaching the port and bay of San Juan, eighteen ships had arrived; and that they did not know whose they were, because, as soon as they espied them on the sea, they came to let me know. Following the said Indians, there came also a native of the island of Fernandina, who brought me a letter from a Spaniard, whom I had stationed on the coast. This I had done that he might give information about me, and about that town near the port, to any ships that might arrive, so that they might not be lost. In this letter he said that, "on such a day, a single ship had arrived off the harbour of San Juan," and that he had examined all the coast as far as the eye could reach, but had discovered no other, and therefore believed it to be the ship I had sent to Your Majesty, since it was time for this to return. In order to satisfy himself more fully, he said that he would stay, waiting for the arrival of the said ship in port, so as to get information which he would immediately bring me.

Having read this letter, I despatched two Spaniards one by one road, and the other by another, so that they might miss no messenger coming from the ship. I directed them to go to the said port, and ascertain how many ships had arrived, from whence they came, and what they brought, and to return as quickly as possible to tell me, I likewise sent another to the city of Vera Cruz, to announce what I had learned about those ships, so that they might get information there, and let me know; and another went to the Captain (whom I had sent with a hundred and fifty men, to form a settlement at the port of Quacucalco), to whom I wrote, that, as I had learned that certain ships had arrived at the port, he should stop wherever that messenger might meet him, and not proceed any further, until I should write to him again. It afterwards appeared, however, that he already knew of the arrival of the ships when he received my letter.

Fifteen days elapsed after the departure of the messengers, and as I had no news or answers from them, I was not a little alarmed. When these fifteen days had passed, other Indians, also vassals of Montezuma, arrived, from whom I learned that the said ships had already anchored in the port of San Juan, and the people had disembarked; that they had brought about eighty horses, eight hundred men, and ten or twelve pieces of artillery. All of this report was pictured on paper of the country, to be shown to Montezuma. The messengers also told me, that the Spaniard I had stationed on the coast, and the other messengers I had sent, were with the said people, and had told these Indians that the captain of those people would not allow them to return, and for them to tell me this. Having heard this, I determined to send a religious, whom I had brought in my company, bearing a letter of mine, and another from the alcalde and the municipal officers of the city of Vera Cruz who were with me, addressed to the captain and people who had arrived at that port. In these letters we informed him very fully of all that had happened to me in this country; that I held many cities and ports conquered and pacified, subject to the royal service of Your Majesty; that I had taken the principal lord of all these regions prisoner, and that I was in the capital. We wrote all about its character, and the gold and jewels I had obtained for Your Highness, and how I had given an account to Your Majesty of the country. I asked them to let me know who they were, and if they were rightful subjects of the kingdom and lordships of Your Highness, to write to me whether they had come to this country by a royal mandate to settle permanently, or intended to advance or return; adding that, if they needed anything, I would have them provided with everything possible. I said also that, if they came from any place outside the dominions and kingdoms of Your Highness, to likewise let me know, for if they needed anything I would also supply it, if I could. If they refused to inform me, I required them on the part of Your Majesty to leave your countries, and not to land in them, with the threat that, if they

persisted, I would march against them with all the force I had, both Spaniards and natives, and would take them, and kill them as foreign invaders of the kingdoms and dominions of my king and sovereign.

Within five or six days after the religious had gone with the despatch, twenty Spaniards, whom I had left in the city of Vera Cruz, arrived in the city of Temixtitan, and brought me a cleric and two other laymen whom they had taken in the said city. From them I learned, that the armada and people in the port belonged to Diego Velasquez, and had come by his orders, under a certain Panfilo de Narvaez,¹¹² a householder of the island of Fernandina, as their captain; that they brought eighty horses, many pieces of artillery, and eight hundred soldiers, among which latter were eighty musketeers, and a hundred and twenty bowmen; that Narvaez came with a commission as Captain-General, and Lieutenant-Governor of all these parts, by appointment of Diego Velasquez, with faculties from Your Majesty for all this; that the messengers I had sent, and the man I had stationed on the coast were with Panfilo de Narvaez, who would not allow them to return, and that he had information himself from them about my founding that town twelve leagues from the said port, and of the people who were in it, as well as about the people I had sent to Quacucalco, thirty leagues from the port, in a province called Tuchtepeque, I learned also that Narvaez knew of everything I had done in the country in the service of Your Highness; about the cities and towns I had pacified and about the great city of Temixtitan; about the gold and jewels we had obtained in the country, and all else that had happened to me. Narvaez had sent these men to Vera Cruz, to try to win over the inhabitants to his design that they should rebel against me. They brought me more than a hundred letters which Narvaez and his companions sent to people in Vera Cruz, telling them to credit what the cleric and the others with him would say in his name, promising them in the name of Diego Velasquez, that, if they would do so, they should be rewarded, but that those who acted to the contrary would be very severely treated. Many other things contained in the said letters were reported by the cleric and those who came with him.

Almost simultaneously, there arrived one of the Spaniards who had gone to Quacucalco, bringing letters from his captain, one Velasquez de Leon, who informed me that the expedition in the port was under Panfilo de Narvaez, who came in the name of Diego Velasquez. This Leon forwarded me a letter which Narvaez had sent him by an Indian for he was a relative of Diego Velasquez, and brother-in-law of Narvaez), telling him how he had learned from my messengers that Leon was there with those people, and bidding him come back immediately with them, because, by so acting, he would fulfil his obligations towards his relative; that he believed I held him by force, and other similar things which Narvaez wrote to him. The captain being more devoted to Your Majesty's service, not only declined to accept what Narvaez told him in his letter, but, after having sent the letter to me, immediately left to join me with all his forces. Afterwards I informed myself from that cleric, and the two who accompanied him, respecting many things concerning the intentions of Diego Velasquez and Narvaez; how they had despatched that armada and force against me, because, instead of to Diego Velasquez, I had sent to Your Majesty the description of this country, and the presents; and how they came with evil designs to kill me, and many of my company whom they had already designated. I ascertained likewise that the licentiate Figueroa, the judge residing in the island of Hispaniola, and Your Highness's judges and officials there, when they learned that Diego Velasquez was preparing this armada, and his intention in so doing, had perceived the harm and injury which would result to Your Majesty by their coming, and had sent one of the said judges, the licentiate, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon,¹¹³ with powers to require and order Diego Velasquez not to despatch the

112) Panfilo de Narvaez, a native of Valladolid, first settled in Jamaica, afterwards taking part in the conquest of Cuba, as captain of thirty bowmen, when he won the friendship of Diego Velasquez, who made him one of his chief captains. Las Casas describes him as well behaved, and brave but imprudent, but Bernal Diaz's opinion of him was less pleasing as he calls him vain, presumptuous, foolish, and proud, but admits his bravery. He was forty years old when he came to Mexico to arrest Cortes and send him back to Cuba. He brought with him the curse of small-pox, which was thus introduced into Mexico by a negro of his crew.

113) The audiencia of San Domingo, foreseeing the scandal which was inevitable from such an expedition against Cortes, sent Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon to Cuba with full powers to stop the preparations, and prohibit the sailing. Ayllon followed Diego Velasquez to the port of Trinidad where he had gone, and there learned that Narvaez was at Xagua, some fourteen

armada. Upon his arrival, he found Diego Velasquez and all those armed people at the point of the island of Fernandina, ready to sail, and he required them, and those composing the armada, not to depart, because Your Highness would be badly served, and he threatened them with many penalties, notwithstanding which, and in spite of all the licentiate required and ordered, Velasquez still sent the armada. The licentiate, Ayllon, had come with them thinking to prevent the harm which would follow from the arrival of it, for it was notorious to him, and to everybody, that the armada came with evil intentions.

I sent this cleric to Narvaez with a letter of mine, in which I told him I had learned from the cleric, and those who came with him, that he was captain of the armada, and that I was glad it was he, as I had thought otherwise seeing that my messengers had not returned. I said, however, that, as he knew I was in this country in Your Highness's service, I marvelled that he did not write to me, or send me some messenger announcing his arrival, for he knew that I would be rejoiced at it, not only because of our old friendship, but also because he had come to serve Your Highness, which was what I most desired. Instead of which, I said, he had sent corruptors and letters of seduction to those under me in Your Majesty's service, inciting them to rebel against me, and join him, as if we were infidels the one, and Christians the other, vassals of Your Highness the one, and traitors the other. I asked him as a favour that from hence forward he would not use these means with me, but first let me know the cause of his coming. I said I had been told that he called himself Captain-General, and Lieutenant-Governor for Diego Velasquez, and that he had so proclaimed himself by the public crier, publishing it in the country, and had named alcaldes and municipal officers, and had executed justice, all of which was against the good service of Your Highness, and against all your laws; that this was so because this country belonging to Your Majesty, and being peopled by your vassals, and having tribunals and municipal bodies in it, he should not appropriate to himself the said offices without first having received them, inasmuch as to exercise them he should bring provisions from Your Majesty; that, if he had brought any such, I asked as a favour, and required him to present them to me, and to the municipal authorities of Vera Cruz, as they would be obeyed by those authorities, and by me, as letters and provisions of our King and rightful Sovereign, and complied with as far as it would profit to the service of Your Majesty; and that I was in that city, where I held the monarch prisoner, and had a great sum of gold and valuables, belonging not only to Your Highness, but also to my company and myself, which I did not dare to leave, since I feared that, if I left the city, the people might rebel, and such a quantity of gold and jewels, and such a city, would be lost which meant the loss of the whole country. I likewise gave a letter to the said cleric for the licentiate Ayllon, who, as I afterwards learned, had been sent away, with two ships as a prisoner, by Narvaez before the cleric arrived.

On the day the cleric left, I received a messenger from the citizens of Vera Cruz, who informed me, that all the natives had risen in favour of Narvaez, especially those of the city of Cempoal and their party, and that none would come to work in the said town and port, nor do anything else, because they said that Narvaez had told them that I was a traitor, and that he had come to take me and all my company prisoners, and to make us leave the country. As Narvaez's people were many, and mine few, and he had brought many horses, and much artillery, and I had little, they wished to be on the winning side. The messengers informed me also that they had learned from the Indians, that Narvaez would occupy the city of Cempoal,

leagues distant, ready to join the others of the fleet who were at Guaniguanico. He also discovered that most of the able-bodied men in the colony had enlisted, and that the island would be left with few defenders in case of trouble with the natives; he went therefore to Xagua, and notified Narvaez not to sail, but to go to Guaniguanico, where he intended to dissuade the governor from the undertaking. Though Velasquez appeared at first to yield, he ended by repudiating the authority of the audiencia, though he consented to give pacific instructions to Narvaez as to his manner of dealing with Cortes. Ayllon decided, at the last moment, to go himself with the armada, and prevent trouble between the rival commanders if possible. Narvaez however was heedless of the notary's protests at San Juan de Ulua, and finally rid himself of his importunities by sending him back to Cuba on one ship, and his secretary and the alguacil on another. Thus, three months after his departure on his mission, Ayllon landed at San Nicolas in San Domingo, making his way as best he could on foot across the island to report his ill success to the audiencia. This flouting of the audiencia cost Diego Velasquez any trivmiph he might otherwise have hoped to gain over Cortes, and Narvaez's summary violence towards a representative of the government bears out Bernal Diaz's estimate of his character.

knowing how near it was to their city, and they believed from what they were informed of the said Narvaez's bad intentions towards all, that he would from that place attack them, aided by the Cempoalans. They let me know that they were leaving the town, rather than fight with them, and to avoid scandal they would go up the mountain to the house of a chief, vassal of Your Highness, and our friend, where they would remain until I sent them directions what to do.

As I saw the great mischief which was spreading, and that the country was rebelling on account of Narvaez, it appeared to me that, by going to him myself, all might be appeased, because the Indians would not dare to rebel on seeing me, and also because I thought to make some sort of arrangement with Narvaez for stopping the great evil at the outset. I thereupon started the same day, leaving the fort well provided with maize and water, and a garrison of five hundred men, with some cannon. Taking the others (some seventy men), I pursued my road, accompanied by some of Montezuma's principal people.

Before I left, I made some explanation telling him "to look to the fact that he was a vassal of Your Highness, and that now he would receive the favours from Your Majesty for the services which he had rendered to you; that I entrusted to him those Spaniards, who would take care of all the gold and valuables which he had given me, or ordered me to give Your Highness; that I was longing to see the people who had arrived, and to learn who they were, as I did not yet know, but that I believed they were bad people and not vassals of Your Highness. He promised to provide those left behind with everything necessary and to take great care of all I left there, belonging to Your Majesty, and that his people who went with me would guide me by a road without quitting his country, and would provide me with everything I needed. He prayed me also, that, if these were bad people, to let him know, and he would immediately raise many warriors to attack them, and drive them out of the country. I thanked him for all this, and assured him that Your Majesty would order many favours to be shown him, and I gave many jewels and stuffs to him, to his son, and to many other lords who were with him at the time.

In the city, called Churultecal, I met, returning with all his people, Juan Velasquez, the captain, whom, as I have said, I had sent to Quacucalco. Separating those who were indisposed, whom I sent to the city, I pursued my road with him and the others. Fifteen leagues beyond the city of Churultecal, I encountered that religious father[Fray Olmedo] of my company, whom I had sent to the port to learn what sort of people had come in the armada. He brought me a letter from Narvaez, in which the latter wrote me that he brought certain powers to hold this country for Diego Velasquez, and that I should immediately come to him to obey and submit to them, and that he had established a town with alcaldes and municipal officers. From the same religious, I learned that the licentiate Ayllon, as well as his notary and alguacil, had been taken, and sent away in two ships; that he himself had been approached there by parties, to win over some of my company to Narvaez; and how they had boasted before him, and certain Indians who accompanied him, of their forces, both of foot and cavalry, and had fired the artillery from the ships and on land in order to frighten them, saying to the religious, "See! how can you defend yourselves against us if you don't do as we wish you to do?" He told me also that he had seen with Narvaez one of the native lords of this country, vassal of the said Montezuma, and governor of all his country along the coast; and he learned that he had spoken to Narvaez on the part of Montezuma, giving him jewels of gold, and that Narvaez had also given him certain trifles; and that Narvaez had sent from there certain messengers to Montezuma, saying, that he would deliver him, for he had come to take me and all my company, and then leave the country, and that he wished no gold, but that, myself, and those who were with me, once prisoners, he intended to depart, and leave the country and the natives in their full liberty. Finally I learned that his intention was to possess himself of the country by his own authority, without asking recognition from anyone; and that if I and those of my company refused to accept him as captain, or justice in the name of Diego Velasquez, he would come against us, and capture us by force, and that for this purpose he had confederated with the natives, especially with Montezuma, by means of his messengers.

When I saw how manifest was the harm which would result from the aforesaid proceedings against Your Majesty, especially as I was told of the great force he had brought, and Diego Velasquez's mandate that, as soon as he seized us, he should hang me, and others who were designated, I did not hesitate to

approach nearer to him, believing that I might make him understand the great disservice which would result to Your Highness, and dissuade him from his evil intention and malicious disposition towards us.

I continued my way, and fifteen leagues before arriving at the city of Cempoal, where Narvaez was camped, there approached me the chaplain sent to me by the citizens of Vera Cruz, by whom I had written to Narvaez, and the licentiate Ayllon: he was accompanied by another cleric, and a certain Andres de Duero.¹¹⁴ householder of the Island of Fernandina, who had also come with Narvaez. They told me, on the part of Narvaez, in answer to my letter, that I might still obey and recognise him as my captain, and that I must yield the country to him, otherwise I should be punished, as Narvaez brought great forces with him, and I had very few, for besides the many Spaniards he had brought, most of the natives were in his favour; and that, if I would deliver the country to him, he would give me all the ships and provisions I desired, and would allow me to go away with them, and all those who wished to leave with me, taking everything I desired without any hindrance from him. One of the clerics told me that Diego Velasquez had authorised this offer, and had given his instructions to Narvaez and the two clerics jointly, so that, in this matter, they could make all the concessions I wished. I answered, that I did not perceive any warrants of Your Highness, directing me to deliver the country to them, and that if Narvaez brought any he should present them before me and the Municipal Council of Vera Cruz, according to Spanish law and custom, when I would be ready to obey and comply with them; but that, until then, I would not do as he said for any interest or concession, for I, and those who were with me, would rather die in defence of the country, which we had won and held pacified and sure for Your Majesty, than turn traitors, or forfeit our loyalty to our king. They advanced many other propositions to win me over to their project, but none would I accept without having seen the warrants of Your Highness authorising me so to do; and these they could not produce

In conclusion, these clerics, Andres de Duero, and myself, agreed that Narvaez and myself, with as many others, should meet with perfect surety on both sides, with when he would satisfy me of the warrants if he had brought any, and I would give my answer. I, on my part, sent him a safe conduct, signed, and he also sent me another, signed with his name, which as it seemed to me he had no thought of observing; for he had planned that, during the visit, some way or other should be found to kill me suddenly, and two of the ten who were to come with him had been designated to do this, while the rest were to fight with my attendants. They said, as a reason for this, that, once I was dead, their business could be finished; and in truth it would have been, if God, who in such cases intervenes, had not succoured me by a certain warning, which one of those concerned in the treachery had sent me together with their safe conduct.

Knowing all this, I wrote a letter to Narvaez, and another to the three commissioners, telling them that I had discovered their treacherous intention, and would not go as had been agreed. I immediately sent them certain requisitions and mandates, by which I required Narvaez to make known to me any warrants he brought from Your Highness, and that, until he had done so, he should not, under certain penalties I imposed, call himself captain or justice, or meddle with any duties pertaining to the said offices. In like manner, by the same mandate I commanded all the persons who were with him not to regard nor obey him as captain or justice, and summoned them, within a certain time designated, to appear before me, that I might instruct them what was proper to do in Your Highness's service. I gave notice that, if they did otherwise, I should proceed against them as perfidious traitors and wicked vassals who had rebelled against their king, and sought to usurp his country and dominions, to deliver them to persons to whom they did not belong, and who had no claim nor right to them; and also in the execution of this order, that if they did not appear before me, or obey my mandate, I would proceed against them, and imprison them according to the law, Narvaez's answer was to imprison the notary who delivered the mandate, and the persons accompanying him, and to take from them certain Indians who accompanied them, who were all detained till another messenger arrived whom I sent to inquire after them. Before them he made a display of force, and threatened them, and also myself, if I did not deliver the country to him.

114) A secretary of Diego Velasquez.

Seeing that I could by no means prevent this great calamity and evil, and that the natives of the country were revolting, and rising day by day, recommending myself to God, and disregarding all injury that might follow, considering that if I died in the service of my king, and in the defence and upholding of his countries against usurpation, more than sufficient glory would cover me and my company, I gave my mandate to Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, to seize the persons of Narvaez, and those who called themselves alcaldes and municipal officers. I placed eighty men under his orders, to make the arrest, while I, with the remaining hundred and seventy (as in all we were two hundred and fifty men), followed on foot, without artillery or horses, so as to aid him if Narvaez and his companions should resist. On the same day, the alguacil mayor and I, with the rest of the people, arrived near the city of Cempoal, where Narvaez and his people were quartered. He learned of our coming, and came out, with eighty horsemen, and five hundred foot-soldiers, leaving the rest of his force in his quarters, which were in the great mosque of that strongly fortified city. Having marched to within almost a league of where we were, and not finding us, he believed he had been deceived, so he returned to his quarters, holding all his people in readiness, and placing two sentinels almost a league outside the town.

As I wished to avoid all scandal, it seemed to me that there would be less if I went by night, unperceived if possible, directly to the quarters of Narvaez, which I and my men knew very well, and there seized him. For, once he was a prisoner, no trouble would arise, for the others wished to submit to justice, especially as most of them had been forced to come by Diego Velasquez, fearing that, unless they did, he might take away their slaves in the island of Fernandina. Thus it happened, on the feast of Pentecost, a little after midnight, I attacked the quarters. I had encountered the sentinels Narvaez had placed, and my vanguard captured one of them, from whom I informed myself of their position, but the other escaped; and in order that he should not arrive before me and give notice of my coming, I hastened as much as possible. The sentinel arrived, however, almost half an hour before me, and, when I approached, Narvaez and all his men were already armed, and had saddled their horses, and were well prepared, with two hundred men guarding each quarter. We moved so quietly, that, when they heard us, and seized arms, I was already inside the courtyard of his quarters, where all the people were gathered. They had taken possession of three or four strong towers which were in it, and all the other strong positions; and in one of the towers, where Narvaez was lodged, he had placed nineteen guns on the stairs. We reached the top of the tower so quickly, that they had not time to put fire to more than one of the pieces, which by God's will did not go off, or do us any harm. Thus we mounted the tower to the place where Narvaez slept, where about fifty men who were with him fought with the alguacil mayor and his force; and although required many times to yield themselves to Your Highness, surrendered only when fire was set to the tower. While the alguacil mayor was capturing Narvaez, I, with those who had stayed with me, defended the entrance of the tower against the rest who sought to come to his aid; and I ordered the artillery to be taken, and fortified myself with it. Thus, with no more loss than two men, who were killed by the discharge of a gun, all those we wished to take were made prisoners within an hour. After the rest had been disarmed, they promised to be obedient to the laws of Your Majesty, declaring that till then they had been deceived, as they had been told that Narvaez brought warrants from Your Highness, and that I had risen in rebellion in this country, and was a traitor to Your Majesty, together with many other similar things.

As all now understood the truth, and the bad intentions and wicked disposition of Diego Velasquez and of Narvaez came to light, they rejoiced very greatly that God should have ordained and provided such an ending. For I assure Your Majesty, that, if God had not mysteriously intervened, and had Narvaez been victorious it would have been the greatest injury which for a long time past Spaniards had done to one another.

Narvaez would have fulfilled his intention, as Diego Velasquez commanded him, which was to hang me, and many others of my company, so that no one should recount what had happened. And, according to what I learn from the Indians, they had perceived, that, if Narvaez were to capture me, as he had told them, it could not be without loss to himself and his people, nor without many of us perishing; so that they

meanwhile could kill those whom I had left in Temixtitan, which, indeed, they attempted to do. Afterwards they intended to join forces, and attack those who remained here, and free their country, so that not even a memory of the Spaniards should survive. Your Highness may be assured that if they had achieved all this, and succeeded in their designs, this country, which has now been conquered and pacified, would not have been recovered within twenty years.

As so many people could not be maintained together in this city, both because of its being nearly destroyed, and because it had been plundered by Narvaez, and abandoned by its inhabitants, two days after Narvaez had been taken prisoner, I sent two captains, with two hundred men each, one to go to the town and port of Cucicacalco, which as I have told Your Highness, I had founded, and the other to that river which the people from Francisco de Garay's ships said they had seen, for I now hold them securely. I likewise sent two hundred other men to the city of Vera Cruz, where I ordered Narvaez's ships to go. I remained with the rest of the people in Cempoal, to provide whatever Your Majesty's service required. I also sent a messenger to the city of Temixtitan, by whom I made known to the Spaniards I left there what had happened to me.

These messengers returned within twelve days, bringing me letters from the alcalde¹¹⁵ there, telling me that the Indians had assaulted the fort on all sides, and set fire to it in many parts; that they had sunk mines, and that our people had been in much trouble and danger; and that, if Montezuma did not the order the war to cease, they would yet perish, for they were closely surrounded, though there was no fighting, and no one could go two paces outside the fort. In the fight, the Indians had captured a great part of the provisions I had left them, and had burned my four brigantines. My men were in extreme need, and begged me for the love of God to come to their succour in all possible haste. Seeing the extremity in which these Spaniards were, and that if I did not rescue them, besides the Indians killing them, and taking all the gold, and silver, and valuables, which I had obtained in the country, belonging to Your Majesty and also to me and the Spaniards, the noblest and greatest city recently discovered in the world would be lost, and with it all else that had been gained, for it was the capital to which all gave obedience. I immediately sent messengers to the captains whom I had sent off with expeditions, telling them what had been written me from the capital, and directing them to return immediately from wherever they were found, and to come by the shortest route to the province of Tlascaltecal, where I, with the people, and all the artillery in my power, and the seventy horsemen, would unite with them. When we joined forces, and made a review, there were found to be seventy horsemen, and five hundred foot soldiers.

I started in all haste with these troops for the capital, and the whole length of the road there never appeared anybody from Montezuma to receive me, as was customary, and all the country had risen, and was almost deserted, which aroused evil suspicions lest the Spaniards whom I had left in the city were dead, and the natives had gathered to await me at some pass, where they would take me at a disadvantage. Thus, fearful, I advanced with the utmost precaution until I reached the city of Tescanac,¹¹⁶ which, as I have already recounted to Your Majesty, is on the shore of that great lake. I inquired of some of the natives there about the Spaniards who had remained in the great city, and was told that they were alive. I asked them to bring me a canoe, as I wished to send a Spaniard to obtain information, and said that while he was gone, one of the natives of the said city, who seemed to be a chief, must remain with me, because none of the lords and chiefs whom I knew appeared. The chief sent for the canoe, and dispatched certain Indians with the Spaniards whom I was sending, while he remained with me; but while this Spaniard was embarking to go to the city of Temixtitan, he saw another canoe coming across the lake, and waited in port until it arrived. In it came one of the Spaniards who had remained in the city, from whom I learned that they were all alive, except five or six whom the Indians had killed, and that the others were still besieged, and were not allowed to come out of the fort, nor did the Indians provide them with anything needful except on payment, and at a heavy price. Afterwards, however, when they heard of my coming, they had behaved somewhat better towards them, Montezuma saying that he waited only for my arrival, in

115) See Appendix VI., close of letter.

116) Texcoco.

order that they might again be free of the city as they used to be. Montezuma also dispatched a messenger to me with the said Spaniard, by whom he sent me word that he believed I already knew what had happened in that city, and that as he thought I might be angry on account of it, and inclined to vengeance, he besought me to put aside my anger because he was as much grieved as I, and that nothing had been done by his wish or consent. He sent me news of many other things, to appease the anger he supposed I felt for what had happened, desiring me to come to the city and saying that whatever I ordered would be complied with no less than before. I sent him word to say that I was not angry with him in any way, as his good will was well known to me, and that I would do as he desired.

The next day, which was the eve of St. John Baptist,¹¹⁷ I left, and slept on the road, three leagues from the capital, and on St. John's Day, after having heard Mass, I entered about noon, and saw few people about the city. Some of the gates at the cross streets and entrances to the streets had been removed, which I did not like, although I thought that it had been done from fear, and that my arrival would reassure them. I marched directly to the fort, in which, and in the principal mosque adjoining, all my people were quartered; and those within the fort received us with as much joy as if we had given them anew their lives, which they had already looked upon as lost, and we rejoiced all that day and night, believing that peace had been restored.

The next day after Mass I sent a messenger to Vera Cruz, to give them the good news that the Christians were alive, and that I was safe in the city. The messenger returned within half an hour, with his head all bruised and broken, calling out that the Indians in the city were in array of battle, and had raised all the bridges; and, immediately after him, such a great multitude fell upon us from all sides, that neither the roofs nor the houses could be seen for the crowd, which came on with the greatest shoutings, and most frightful yells which could be conceived in the world. With their slings, they threw so many stones into the fortress, that it seemed as if they rained from the heavens, while arrows and missiles were so thick, that all the buildings and courts were so full of them we could hardly move about. I sallied forth against them on two or three sides, where they fought us very valiantly, and in one place, where a captain had gone out with two hundred men, they killed four, and wounded him and many others, before he could retreat. On the other side, where I was engaged, they wounded me, and many other Spaniards. We killed few of them, for they retreated to the other side of the bridges, and from the roofs and terraces did us much injury with stones. Some terraces we captured and set on fire; but they were so many and so strong, and so filled with people, well supplied with stones and other kinds of weapons, that we were not strong enough to take them all, nor to defend ourselves against their attack at their pleasure. They attacked the fort so violently, and set fire to it in so many places, that on one side a great part was destroyed without our being able to prevent it, until we stopped it by breaking the walls, and pulling down a part which put out the fire. Had it not been for the strong guard of musketeers and archers with some field pieces I placed there, they would have scaled that part without our being able to resist them. Thus we fought all that day until night was well advanced, and even throughout the night they kept up their cries and yells. During the night, I had those breaches caused by the fire repaired, and all the rest of the fort which seemed weak to me; and I distributed the watch and the guards, for on the next day we would have to fight stoutly; and I cared for more than eighty wounded.

At dawn the following day, the enemy opened the battle more stoutly than the day before, there being such a number of them that the artillery had no need to aim but just to shoot into the masses of Indians. Although the artillery did much damage, for thirteen arquebuses were playing, besides muskets and archery which were also doing service it seemed as if they did not feel it, for when one discharge would sweep away ten or twelve men, more would immediately fill their places, as if it had done no harm at all. Leaving the necessary guard, such as could be spared, in the fort, I again made a sortie, and captured some bridges, and burnt some houses, killing many of the defenders; but they were so numerous that, although we did them a good deal of damage, we made very little impression on them. We had to fight all day long, while they fought by hours, because they relieved one another, and even thus they had more than enough

117) Day before St. John's Day, which fell on Sunday, June 23.

men. That day, they also wounded some fifty or sixty Spaniards, although none of them died; and I fought until nightfall, retiring only from sheer fatigue into the fort. Seeing the great damage the enemy did us, and how they wounded and killed us at will, and that, although we did much injury amongst them, it was hardly perceptible on account of their number, we spent that whole night and the next day in making three engines of wood, each accommodating twenty men, so that they could not hurt us throwing stones from the roofs, for the engines were covered with planks. Inside there were archers and musketeers, and others armed with pikes, pickaxes and bars of iron for making breaches in the houses, and knocking down the barricades which the Indians had made in the streets. While these machines were being made, the combat with our adversaries did not cease, for whenever we went out of the fort, they would strive to enter, being repulsed only with great difficulty, Montezuma, who with one of his sons and many other chiefs who had been captured at the beginning, was still a prisoner, asked to be carried to the roof of the fort where he could speak to the captains and the people, and cause the war to cease. I had him taken thither, and when he reached the parapet on the top of the fort, intending to speak to the people who were fighting there, one of his own subjects struck him on the head with a stone, with such force that within three days he died. I then had him taken out, dead as he was, by two of the Indian prisoners, who bore him away to his people; but I do not know what they did with him, except that the war did not cease, but went on more stoutly and more fiercely every day.¹¹⁸

That same day, they called me to the place where they had wounded Montezuma, saying that certain captains wished to speak to me. I went, and there passed many arguments between us, I beseeching them not to fight with me because there was no reason for it, as they must perceive the benefits they had received from me, and how they had been well treated by me. Their answer was that I must depart and leave them their country, and then the war would cease, and that otherwise I might be sure that they would either die, or finish us. It appears they did this to draw me out of the fort, "so that they might, at their pleasure, trap me between the bridges, while in the act of leaving the city. I answered that they must not think I begged for peace from fear of them, but because I was grieved at the damage I had done them and would still have to do them; and also for the destruction of such a beautiful city. Still they answered that they would not cease to make war upon me until I left the city.

After having completed the engines, I sallied out the next day to capture certain roofs and bridges, carrying the engines before us, followed by four pieces of artillery, many archers and shield bearers, and more than three thousand natives of Tascaltecal who had come with me and helped the Spaniards. When we reached one of the bridges, we placed the engines and scaling ladders against the walls of the terraces, in order to scale them; but the defenders of the said bridges and terraces were so numerous, and threw so many and such large stones at us from above, that they injured the engines and killed some of the Spaniards, and wounded many without our being able to advance one pace, although we struggled for it, fighting from morning till noon, when we returned to the fort with infinite sorrow. Their courage was increased so much by this, that they attacked us almost at the very doors, and occupied the great temple; about five hundred who appeared to me to be notable persons, ascended the highest and principal tower, carrying up a large supply of bread and water and other stores. Most of them had very long lances with very broad points, all longer and broader than ours, and not less sharpened¹¹⁹ and from there they did great injury to the people in the fort, for they were very near it. Two or three times the Spaniards attacked the tower and attempted to mount it, but, as it was very high, and the ascent very steep, being a hundred and odd steps, and those above were well supplied with stones and other arms, and favoured by the fact that we could not capture the neighbouring terraces, every time the Spaniards attempted to ascend they were rolled back beaten, and many were wounded. Others of the enemy who saw this from other parts took fresh courage, so that they attacked the fort fiercely.

Observing that if they succeeded in holding that tower, besides doing us much injury from it, they also gained fresh courage to attack us, I sallied out from the fort, although my left hand was maimed by a

118) Appendix VII., death of Montezuma.

119) Obsidian, a hard black stone capable of taking an edge as keen as a razor.

wound which I had received on the first day. I advanced to the tower with some Spaniards who followed me, and easily succeeded in surrounding the base, although those who surrounded it were not idle, as they had to fight the adversaries on all sides, who, for the purpose of helping their own men, came in increased numbers. And I began to ascend the tower, followed by some Spaniards, but they defended the ascent very stubbornly, throwing down three or four of my followers. With the help of God, and His Glorious Mother (for whose house that tower had been set aside, her image being placed in it), we reached the top, where we fought them so stoutly that they were forced to jump down on some terraces about a pace broad which extended round it. This tower had three or four of these terraces about sixteen feet one above the other. Some of the enemy fell all the way down, and, in addition to the injuries they received in the fall, were immediately killed by the Spaniards who surrounded the base of the tower. Those who remained on the terrace fought so valiantly, that we were more than three hours in completely dispatching them; and not one escaped. Your Sacred Majesty may believe that we captured this tower only because God had clipped their wings; because twenty of them were sufficient to resist the ascent of a thousand men even though they fought very valiantly till death. I had the tower set on fire, as well as others in the mosque, from which they had already taken away and carried off the images we had placed in them.¹²⁰

Some of their pride was taken out of them by our obtaining this advantage, so that they fell back a little on all sides, and I afterwards returned to the roof, and spoke to the captains who had talked with me before, and who were somewhat dismayed by what they had seen. They immediately appeared, and I told them to look about and see that they could not hold out anywhere, and that every day we did them great harm and killed many, and that we were forced to burn and destroy their city, for I would not stop till there was nothing left of it or them. They answered, that they saw very well that they had sustained much damage from us, and that many of them had perished, but that they were already all fully determined to die, or be rid of us, and that I might behold how all these streets and squares and terraces were filled with people, who were so numerous that they had made their calculations that, if twenty-five thousand of them perished for every one of ours, they would finish with us first, for we were few and they were many. They told me all the high roads leading to the entrances to the city had been destroyed (as, in fact, they had destroyed all save one), and that we had no way of escape save by water; and that they knew very well that, as we had few provisions and little fresh water, we could not hold out much longer, for we would die by hunger, even if they did not kill us. In truth they were right, for, though we had no other enemy save starvation and the want of provisions, these would suffice to kill us in a short time. We exchanged many other arguments, each sustaining his own side.

When night set in, I sallied forth with certain Spaniards, and, as we took them by surprise, we captured a street from them, burning more than three hundred houses. I quickly returned by another street, while the people had assembled in that one, in which I also burned many houses; especially some terraces which overlooked the fort, from which they did us much damage. They were greatly frightened by what we had done that night; and during the same night I ordered the engines, which had been damaged the day before, to be repaired.

In order to follow up the victory God had given us, I sallied forth at daybreak into the same street where we had been routed the day before, where I found not less resistance than on the former occasion. As our lives and honour were at stake, and that street led to the only sound causeway extending to the mainland (though, before reaching it, we had to pass by eight very large and deep bridges, and in all the street there were many quite high terraces and towers) we set our determination and spirit in it, so that, God helping us, we gained four of them that day, and burned all the terraces, and houses, and towers, to the last of the bridges. They had, however, during the night before, made a number of very strong barricades of adobes and clay at all the bridges, so that the discharges of arrows from the crossbows could do them no harm. We filled in the bridges with the adobes and earth from the enclosures, and with a quantity of stones and wood from the houses we had burned, although this work was not done without danger, and many

120) The cathedral of Mexico stands on this site, and the statue of the Blessed Virgin which Cortes first placed in the Aztec temple is said to be the one now venerated in the Church of los Remedios near Tacuba.

Spaniards were wounded. That night I took many precautions to guard those bridges so that they might not return and retake them.

The next morning I again sallied forth, and God gave us likewise such good fortune and victory, although innumerable people defended the bridges, and many strong barricades which they had made during the night before, yet we captured them all, and filled them up. At the same time certain horsemen followed victoriously in pursuit of the fugitives as far as the mainland. While I was engaged in repairing the bridges, and in having them filled up, I was called in great haste, being told that the Indians who attacked the fort were suing for peace, and that certain chiefs and captains of them were awaiting me. Leaving my people and certain field-pieces there, I, with two or three horsemen, went to see what the chiefs wanted. They said, that, if I would assure them that they would not be punished for what had occurred, they would raise the siege, re-establish the bridges, restore the causeways, and serve Your Majesty as they had before. They besought me to have brought there one of their people, a religious whom I had made a prisoner, and who was similar to a superior of their religion. He came, and spoke with them, and made an agreement between them and me; and, as it appeared, and according to what they had said, they immediately sent messengers to the captains and people who were in outside camps, telling them that the attack on the fort should cease, as well as all other hostilities. Thus we took our leave and I entered the fort to eat.

When I was about to begin, some one came hastily, to say that the Indians had regained the bridges which we had captured that day, and had killed some Spaniards. God only knows how much disturbance this caused me, for I was thinking that we had assured a passage for our retreat. I mounted my horse with all possible haste, and rode through the length of the street, with some other horsemen following me, and, without halting anywhere, I again dashed through the Indians, and recaptured the bridges, pursuing the enemy to the mainland. As the foot soldiers were very tired, and wounded, and dismayed, none of them followed me, and this left me in a very dangerous situation after I had passed the bridges. When I sought to return, I found them retaken, and more deeply dug out than when we had filled them up, and from one side to the other all the causeway was full of people, not only on land, but also in canoes on the water, who goaded us, and stoned us in such a manner, that, if God had not interposed to save us it would have been impossible to escape; indeed it was even already announced in the city that I was dead. When I reached the last bridge nearest the city, I found all the horsemen who had gone with me fallen in it, and one horse loose, so that I could not pass, but was obliged to return alone in face of my enemies. I forced something of a passage, so that the horses passed, and after this, I found the bridge free, though I crossed with much trouble, for I had to jump the horse from one side to the other, almost six feet, but, as I and he were armoured, they did us no serious hurt beyond slight body wounds. Thus victory was theirs that night, for they had captured the said four bridges.

Leaving a guard over the other four, I went to the fort, and had a wooden bridge constructed which forty men could carry, and, seeing our great danger, and the great damage we daily received from the Indians, and fearing also that they might destroy that causeway as they had the others, when we would all inevitably perish, and because many of my company entreated me many times to depart, and because all, or nearly all, were wounded so badly that they could no longer fight, I determined to leave that same night. I collected in a room all the gold and jewels belonging to Your Majesty that could be carried, and I delivered it in parcels to the officials of Your Highness, whom I designated in your royal name, beseeching and requiring the alcaldes, and municipal authorities, and all the people who were there, to help me take it away. I gave one of my mares for this purpose, on which they loaded as much as she could carry; and I designated certain Spaniards, not only from my servants, but also of the others, to accompany the said gold and mare, and the rest of the officials, alcaldes, municipal officers, and myself, gave and distributed the remainder to the Spaniards to carry away.

Having abandoned the fort, and much treasure, belonging not only to Your Highness, but also to the Spaniards and myself, I set forth as secretly as possible, taking with me a son and two daughters of Montezuma, Cacamazin, the lord of Aculuacan, and another of his brothers, whom I had put in his place,

and some other chiefs of the provinces and cities whom I held as prisoners. When we reached the bridges which the Indians had removed we laid down the bridge which I carried with little trouble at the first crossing, for there was none to offer resistance save certain watchmen who shouted so loudly, that, before we came to the second, an infinite multitude of the enemy had risen against us, battling on every side both on water and land. I crossed rapidly with five horsemen and five hundred foot-soldiers, with whom I passed all the other broken bridges swimming until I reached the mainland. Leaving those people there, I returned to the others and found that they were fighting stoutly; but the injury our people received was beyond calculation, not only the Spaniards, but also the Tascaltecas who were with us, being nearly all killed. Though the Spaniards killed many natives, many of the Spaniards and horses were killed, likewise, and all the gold, and jewels, and many other things which we carried, and all the artillery, were lost.

When the survivors were collected, I pushed them on ahead, while I, with three or four horsemen and about twenty foot-soldiers who ventured to remain with me, took the rear-guard, fighting the Indians until we arrived at a city, called Tacuba, at the end of that causeway. God only knows how much trouble and danger I endured, because every time I faced about against our adversaries, I came back full of arrows, and darts, and stones, for as there was water on both sides, they could assail us with impunity and fearlessly. When we attacked those on land they would leap into the water, thus receiving very little hurt, except that some who in the skirmish interfered with each other and fell, were killed. With great trouble and fatigue, I conducted my remaining people to the city of Tacuba without being killed myself, nor having any Spaniard or Indian wounded, except one horseman who had gone with me to the rear. Those who went in the vanguard did not have less fighting than those on the flanks, although the strongest force was the one at our backs where the people of the city pursued us.

When I reached the city of Tacuba, I found all the people in a panic in the square, not knowing where to go, so I made great haste to get them out into the country, before more of the inhabitants should gather in the said city and capture the roofs, from which they could do us great injury. The vanguard said they did not know the way, so I sent them to the rear, and took the lead myself until we had got clear of the city, where I awaited them at some farms. When the rear-guard came up, I learned that they had sustained some injury, and that some of the Spaniards and Indians had been killed, and that much gold had been lost and left on the road, where the Indians gathered it up. I held the Indians in check there until all the people had passed on, so that the foot-soldiers might take the hill, on which there stood a strong tower and buildings. These they captured without sustaining any injury, for I did not leave my place, nor allow the enemy to advance, until they had secured the hill. God only knows the trouble and fatigue we sustained, for no horse of the twenty-four was left which could still run, nor any horseman who could raise his arms, nor a sound foot-soldier who could move. When we reached the buildings, we fortified ourselves in them, and the enemy surrounded us and besieged us until night, not leaving us an hour's rest. We found that over one hundred and fifty Spaniards were killed in this fight, forty-five mares and horses, and more than two thousand of the Indians who had aided the Spaniards; amongst the latter, they killed the son and daughters of Montezuma, and all the other chiefs whom we carried prisoners.

At midnight, believing we were not observed, we left the said lodgings very silently, leaving many fires burning in it, not knowing any road, nor where we were going. except that an Indian of Tascaltecal told us he would guide us to his country if they did not stop us on the way. There were some watchmen very near who heard us, and alarmed many towns round about, from which numbers of people gathered and pursued us until daybreak. At that time five horsemen who rode ahead as scouts met some bands of people along the road, and killed some of them; these were routed under the belief that more horsemen and foot-soldiers were coming up. When I saw that our enemies were gathering from all sides, I got into order our people who were still fit for service, making squadrons, and placing them in the vanguard, rear-guard, and on the flanks, with the wounded in the centre, and I likewise distributed the horsemen. Thus we continued all that day, fighting on all sides, so that during the whole night and day we did not advance more than three leagues. When night came on Our Lord was pleased to show us a tower and good lodging place on a hill, where we again fortified ourselves, and during that night they left us in peace, although at dawn we had

some disturbance from a false alarm caused by our own fears of the multitude which kept coming in pursuit of us.

The next morning, one hour after daybreak, I departed in the order already mentioned, taking my vanguard and rear-guard in good order; and on all sides we were followed by the enemy, yelling, and raising the whole country, which is thickly populated. The horsemen, although we were few attacked them, but did little harm amongst them, because, the ground being rough, they would retreat to the hills. In this manner, we marched that day along some lakes,¹²¹ till we reached a populous town, where we thought to have some skirmish with the townspeople. When we arrived there, they abandoned it, and went to some other towns thereabouts in the neighbourhood. I rested there that day and the next, not only because both the wounded and the sound ones of my people were very weary and exhausted with hunger and thirst, and the horses likewise were well tired out, but also because we found there some maize which we ate and carried away with us on the road, boiled and roasted. We left the next day, always pursued by our adversaries, who attacked us on the vanguard and rear-guard with many yells. We continued our march, guided by the Indian of Tascaltecal, during which we suffered much trouble and fatigue, for many times we lost our way. When it was already late, we reached a plain, where there were some small houses in which we lodged that night, suffering great want of food.

Early next morning we began our march, and, before we reached the road, our enemies still followed our rear-guard. Constantly skirmishing with them, we arrived at a large town, two leagues distant, where there were some Indians stationed on the top of a small hill to the right. Believing that we might capture them, as they were near the road, and also discover if there were just behind the hill, any more than those who were visible, I started round the said hill with five horsemen and twelve foot-soldiers, and behind it there was a great city¹²² of many people with whom we engaged fiercely. On account of the rocky country, and the great number of their people, and our small numbers, we had to retire to the town where our people were. I came out of this, very badly wounded in the head by two sling stones, and after binding up the wounds I made the Spaniards leave the town, because it did not seem to me a safe camp for us; and we marched thus with great numbers of Indians pursuing us, fighting so stoutly that they wounded four or five Spaniards and as many horses. They killed us a horse, also, and God only knows how great was its value to us, and what pain we suffered at its death, because, after God, our only security was the horses; but we consoled ourselves with its meat, and ate it without leaving even the skin, so great was our want; for, since leaving the capital, we had nothing to eat but roasted and boiled corn, and not always enough of that, and, in addition, some herbs which we gathered in the country.

Seeing that the enemy increased every day, and grew stronger, and that we were becoming weaker, that night I ordered the wounded and sick, whom we carried behind us on our horses, to provide themselves with crutches and other contrivances for supporting themselves, so that the horses and sound Spaniards would be free to fight. From what happened to us the next day, it seemed that the Holy Ghost had inspired me with this thought, for, after we had left this camp in the morning, and marched about a league and a half, so great a multitude of Indians came out to encounter me, that all about us we could not see the ground, so completely was it covered by them. They attacked us on all sides so violently that we could not distinguish each other, for being so pressed and entangled with them. Certainly we believed that to be our last day, so great was the force of the Indians and so feeble the resistance they encountered in us; for we were already exhausted, and almost all of us wounded and fainting from hunger. But Our Lord was pleased to show His great power and mercy to us, for, with all our weakness, we broke their great pride

121) The lakes of Zumpango, Xaltocan, and San Cristobal.

122) Otumba. Prescott observes that even Bernal Diaz, who was somewhat sceptical on other occasions, admits the apparition of St. James mounted on a white charger at Otumba. Voltaire comments as follows: "Ceux qui ont fait des revelations de ces itranges evenemens les ont voulu relever par des miracles qui ne servent en effet qu'a les rabaisser. Le vrai miracle fut la coruiuite de Cortez." Possibly, but it is by the faith which we were promised should move mountains that such heroic deeds are accomplished, and the material apparition required to satisfy a Voltaire would be but a poor thing compared to the reality of the Spanish conqueror's faith in the presence and guidance of his patron saints. As well doubt the Pucelle's belief in her "Voices."

and haughtiness, in that many of their prominent and important persons perished, for they were so many that they hindered one another, and were unable either to fight or to fly. We spent a great part of the day in this struggle, until it pleased God that one of those persons, who must have been an important chief, fell, for with his death all the battle ceased. After this, we continued our way more easily, although some of them still harassed us until we reached a small house in the plain, where we lodged that night and on the open ground. From there we first descried certain mountains of the province of Tascaltecal, at which not a little joy filled our hearts, because we recognised the country, and knew our way, although we were not quite positive of finding the natives faithful and friendly; for we feared that, seeing us so reduced, they might wish to put an end to our lives, in order to recover the liberty which they had formerly enjoyed. This thought and suspicion cast us into an affliction which equalled that which we felt whilst fighting with the Culuan.

The next morning at daybreak, we began to march by a very level road which led directly to the said province of Tascaltecal upon which only a few of our adversaries followed, although very near were many large towns; from some hills in our rear, though, from a distance, they still continued yelling at us. On this day, which was Sunday, July 8th, we left all the country of Culua, and entered the province of Tascaltecal, at a village of some three or four thousand households, called Gualipan,¹²³ where the natives received us very well, and somewhat relieved our great hunger and weariness, although for much of the provision which they gave us they asked payment, and would only accept gold. This we were obliged in our great necessity to give.

We remained three days in this town, and Magiscatzin, and Sicutengal, and all the chiefs of the said province and some of those of Quasucingo, came to see and speak to me, showing much grief for what had happened to us, and endeavouring to console me, reminding me that they had often told me that the Culuan were traitors against whom I should be on my guard, but that I would not believe it. Inasmuch as I had escaped alive, they said I ought to rejoice, for they would aid me until death to obtain satisfaction for the injury the Culuan had done me. They added that they felt obliged to do this as vassals of Your Highness, besides which they also suffered because of the many sons and brothers who had perished in my company, and on account of other injuries which in past times they had received, so I might be sure they would be my true and steadfast friends until death. As I now came wounded and almost all of my company exhausted, they wanted us to go into the city, four leagues from this town, where we might rest, and they would care for us and restore us. I was very grateful to them, and accepted their invitation, and gave them some few things from the valuables which had escaped, at which they were well contented; and I went with them to the said city, where I likewise had a good reception. Magiscatzin brought me a bedstead of finely finished wood, with some bed-clothing, such as they used, for me to sleep in, for we brought none; and he helped everybody with all that he had and could.

When I quit this city for Temixtitan, I had left here certain sick persons and some of my servants with silver and wearing apparel belonging to me, and certain other household things and provisions, in order to march forward unencumbered lest anything should happen to us, and all the documents and agreements which I had made with the natives of these parts should be lost. All the clothing of the Spaniards who came with me had likewise been left, as they only took away what they wore, and their bedding. I learned that another servant of mine had come from Vera Cruz, bringing provisions and things for me. He had been accompanied by horsemen and forty-five foot-soldiers, and had likewise taken with him the others whom I had left there. He carried all the silver and clothing, my own as well as that of my companions, with seven thousand dollars of melted gold, which I had left there in two chests, without counting other valuables, and other fourteen thousand dollars of gold in pieces, which had been given, in the province of Tuchtepeque, to that captain whom I had sent to build the town of Quacucalco. He carried also many other things which were worth more than thirty thousand dollars of gold. This I learned, and also that the Indians of Culua had killed them all on the road, and taken their treasure. I likewise learned that they had killed, on the roads, many other Spaniards who were coming to the city of Temixtitan, believing that I was

123) Hueyothlipan.

there at peace. and that the roads were as secure as I had before held them. I assure Your Majesty that all of us were plunged into such sadness by this news that it could hardly have been worse, because the loss of these Spaniards and the treasure recalled the deaths and losses of the Spaniards who had been killed in the city, at the bridges, and on the road; and especially as it roused much suspicion in me that, in like manner, the people of Vera Cruz might have been attacked, and that those whom we considered our friends might have rebelled, upon hearing of our defeat. To learn the truth, I immediately dispatched messengers accompanied by Indians to guide them, whom I ordered to avoid the high road until they arrived at Vera Cruz, and to let me know promptly what had happened there. It pleased Our Lord that they should find the Spaniards very well, and the natives perfectly faithful. It was a great relief to learn this after our losses and griefs, though it was very bad news for them to hear of our disaster and rout.

I remained twenty days in this province of Tascaltecal, healing my wounds which with the poor care on the road had become much worse, especially the wound on my head; and I also had all the wounded of my company cared for. Some of them died, not only from their wounds, but also on account of our past troubles; others remained maimed in their arms, and others lame in their legs, for their wounds were very bad, and for curing them there was very little means. I myself lost two fingers of my left hand.

Seeing that many of ours were dead, and that those who survived were wounded, and disheartened by the dangers and troubles through which they had passed, and fearing others still ahead, my men entreated me many times to go to Vera Cruz; for there we could fortify ourselves before those natives, whom we still considered our friends, seeing our rout and diminished numbers, could join with our enemies, and, taking the passes over which we had to cross, attack us on the one side, and our people at Vera Cruz on the other. Being there together, and having ships we would be stronger and better able to defend ourselves, in case they should attack before we summoned aid from the Islands. I, however, remembered that Fortune is always on the side of the daring, and that we were Christians, confiding in the very great mercy of God, who would never permit us to perish; and I considered that to show so little courage before the natives, especially our friends, might cause them to abandon us the sooner, and turn against us; that this great and noble country, at peace and on the point of being secured under Your Majesty, would be lost. The war must be continued, to bring about the pacification of this country as it was before, and I determined on no account to go to the sea-port, but rather, disregarding all difficulty and danger which might offer, I said that I would not abandon this country; for besides its being disgraceful to me and very dangerous to all, we would act treasonably towards Your Majesty, and I was determined to return against the enemy from all possible points, and to take the offensive against them in every way I could.

After stopping twenty days in this province, although I was not yet well of my wounds, and those of my company were still somewhat weak, I left for another, called Tepeaca, which belonged to the league and confederation of Culua, our enemy. I had been informed that the inhabitants there had killed ten or twelve Spaniards who were on their way by the road which passes there, from Vera Cruz to the capital. The said province of Tepeaca borders with those of Tascaltecal and Churutecal, for it is very large. As we were entering that province, many natives came out to attack us, defending the road, as best they could, by fortifying themselves in strong and dangerous positions. To avoid prolixity, I do not give an account of all the particulars of this war; I will only say that, after the requirements had been made on the part of Your Majesty, that they should make peace, and they had refused to submit, we fought with them several times; and, with the help of God, and the royal good fortune of Your Highness, we always scattered them, and killed many, without their killing one of us in the whole course of the said war, or wounding one solitary Spaniard. Although, as I have said, this province is very large, I pacified many cities and provinces subject to it in about twenty days, and the lords and chiefs of it came and offered themselves as vassals to Your Majesty. Moreover I expelled many Culuanes, who had come to this province to help the natives in making war upon us, and to hinder them by fair means or foul from becoming our friends. Thus I had to busy myself up till now in this matter which is not yet altogether finished, for there are still some cities and towns to be pacified, which by the help of Our Lord will shortly be, like these others, subject to the royal dominion of Your Majesty.

In a certain part of this province, where they killed those ten Spaniards, the natives were always very active in the war, and very rebellious, and had to be reduced by force of arms. I made a number slaves, of whom I gave a fifth part to the officials of Your Majesty. I did this especially as, in addition to their having killed the said Spaniards, and rebelled against the service of Your Highness, they eat human flesh, a fact so notorious that I do not send proofs of it to Your Majesty. I was also moved to make the said slaves in order to strike terror into the Culuanes, and also because there are many who will never mend themselves until great and severe punishment is inflicted upon them. We entered upon this war with the aid of the natives of Tascaltecal, and Churultecal, and Quasucingo, by which our friendship has been well confirmed; and we are convinced that they will always serve Your Highness as loyal vassals.

While conducting this war in the province of Tepeaca, I received letters from Vera Cruz, telling me that two ships had arrived in that port, belonging to Francisco de Garay who it appears had again sent more people to that great river which I described to Your Highness, and that the natives there had fought with them, killing seventeen or eighteen Christians, and wounding many others. They had likewise killed seven horses, and the remaining Spaniards who returned to the ships had escaped by their good legs. The captains and all of them had arrived very much shattered and wounded, and my lieutenant had received them very kindly and taken care of them. That they might convalesce the better, he had sent some of the said Spaniards to the country of a friendly chief near there, where they were well attended to and provided for. All this grieved us as much as our own past troubles, but perchance this rout would not have happened to them if they had united with me at first, as I have already recounted to Your Highness; for I was then well informed about everything in these parts, and they would have had such advice from me that what had happened could not have occurred, especially as the lord of that river and country, called Panuco, had given himself as a vassal to Your Majesty. In recognition of his allegiance he had sent me certain gifts by his messenger to the city of Temixtitan, as I have already stated. I have written to Vera Cruz, that if the captain of Francisco de Garay desires to leave, to lend him assistance, and help him to dispatch his ships.

After having pacified and subjugated to the royal service of Your Highness all of this province which has been pacified. Your Majesty's officials and I conferred many times respecting the measures to be taken for its security. Seeing that the natives had first given themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and then rebelled and killed the Spaniards, and that they were on the road and pass where the traffic of all the sea-ports had to pass towards the interior, we considered that, if it were left to itself as before, the natives of this country, and also of Culua who were very near, would again try to seduce them into rebellion, from which would follow much harm and impediment to the pacification of these parts, and to the service of Your Highness; and the said traffic would cease, especially as on the road to the coast there are two very steep and rough passes, which confine with the said province, where the natives could defend themselves with little difficulty. For this, as well as for other reasons and weighty causes, it seemed to us that, to prevent the aforesaid evils, a town should be founded in the best part of the said province of Tepeaca, where the necessary conditions could be found for the colonists. And for the purpose of carrying this out, I, in the name of Your Majesty, gave the said town the name of Segura de la Frontera,¹²⁴ and I named alcaldes and municipal and other officers as is customary; and, for the better security of the householders of this town, materials are being brought to build a fort on the place I designated; as materials hereabouts are of good quality, all possible haste shall be employed. While writing this account, messengers came to me from the chief of the city, called Guacachula,¹²⁵ about five leagues from this province, and situated at the entrance of a pass leading to the province of Mexico. They told me, on behalf of the said chief, that several days before they had intended to come to me to tender the obedience they owed to Your Majesty, as your vassals, and I must not consider them culpable, believing their failure to do so was voluntary. They told me that some captains of Culua were lodged in their city, and that in it and about a league

124) The city was founded early in September, 1520, on the hillside, in a position both strategically and commercially advantageous; fortifications were built and strict laws against gambling, blaspheming, etc., were enacted. The present town is called Tepeaca, and stands on the plain.

125) Huaquechula: another republic: also spelled Guaquechula.

distant were thirty thousand men in garrison, guarding that pass, to prevent our crossing it, and also to prevent the natives of their city and other neighbouring provinces from serving Your Majesty, and becoming our friends; and they said they would have come to offer themselves to Your Royal service, had those men not prevented them. They let me know this that I might remedy it, because, besides the obstruction it was to those who were well disposed, the people of the city and neighbourhood suffered much injury, as they were taxed and ill-treated by the many armed warriors who took their women and chattels. If I would help them, they said they would obey any orders I gave them.

After thanking them for their information and offer, I immediately gave them thirteen horsemen, two hundred foot-soldiers, and some thirty thousand Indian allies, to accompany them.¹²⁶ It was agreed that they should lead them by roads where they would not be seen, and, when they approached near the city, its chiefs, and inhabitants, and other vassals and confederates, should be notified, and should surround the quarters where the captains were, to capture and kill them before their men could help them, so that, when the latter did appear, the Spaniards would already be in the city waiting to fight and rout them. They and the Spaniards marched by the city of Churultecal and through some parts of the province of Quasucingo, which borders on the territory of Guacachula within four leagues of it; and, in a town of the said province of Quasucingo, it is said that they told the Spaniards that the natives of that province were leagued with the Guacachulans and Culuans to entice the Spaniards with this project to the said city, where they could kill them. As the fright, with which the Culuans in their city and country had inspired them, had not yet altogether abated, this information alarmed the Spaniards; and the captain whom I had sent with them made an investigation, and took prisoner all those chiefs of Quasucingo who were with them, and the messengers from the city of Guacachula, and returned with them to the city of Churultecal, four leagues from there. Thence, together with the proofs he had obtained, he sent to me all the prisoners, attended by horsemen and foot-soldiers. The captain also wrote me that our people were frightened because the enterprise seemed very difficult. On the arrival of the prisoners I spoke to them by my interpreter, and, having used all diligence to learn the truth, it appeared that the captain had misjudged them so I immediately set them free and satisfied them, protesting that I believed them loyal vassals of Your Sacred Majesty, and that I would go myself to destroy the Culuans. To avoid showing any timidity or hesitancy to the natives, both friends and enemies, it seemed that I ought not to abandon the proposed expedition. To relieve the fears of some of the Spaniards, I determined to suspend other business, and the dispatch for Your Majesty which I was writing, and thus I set out that same hour with all possible haste, arriving the same day at the city of Churultecal (which is eight leagues from this city) where I found the Spaniards, who still affirmed their conviction of the treachery.

The next day, I slept in the town of Quasucingo, where the chiefs had been arrested. Having agreed with the messengers of Guacachula as to where and how we should enter their city, I started the next day, one hour before daybreak, arriving near it about ten o'clock in the morning. About half a league distant from it, certain messengers of the city met me on the road to tell me that everything was well planned and ready, and that the Culuans knew nothing of our coming, because the natives of the said city had captured certain of their spies, who were on the road, and also some others whom the Cullan captains had stationed on the walls and towers of the city to overlook the country. All our adversaries were thus off their guard, believing they were protected by their watchmen and spies; hence I might advance undiscovered. I therefore made haste to reach the city unseen, for we were marching over a plain where we might easily be observed.

It appeared that as soon as the townspeople perceived us, and saw how near we were, they immediately surrounded the quarters of the captains, and began to attack the others scattered throughout the city. When I arrived within a bow shot of the city, as many as forty prisoners were brought to me, and I made the more haste to enter. There was a great uproar in all the streets of the city. Fighting with the adversaries, and guided by the inhabitants, I reached the captains' quarters which I found surrounded by more than three thousand men striving to enter the gate. They had taken possession of the upper stories and terraces,

¹²⁶) Diego de Ordaz and Alonso de Avila were in charge of this expedition which took the road by Cholula.

but the captains fought so well and so steadily that they could not force an entrance; although the Culuan were few, they fought like valiant men, and besides the building was strong. When I arrived, we entered with so many natives that it was impossible to prevent the defenders being killed forthwith; for I wished to take some alive, in order to get information about matters in the capital, and to learn who was sovereign after the death of Montezuma, and about other things. I could only rescue one more dead than alive, who informed me as I shall relate hereafter. They killed many who were quartered in the city, and the survivors, learning of my coming, began to fly towards the garrison, but many of them were likewise killed in the pursuit. This tumult was so quickly heard and understood by the men of the garrison, who were on a certain elevation, commanding the city and the surrounding plain, that those who were escaping from the city encountered the others who were coming to its relief to see what had happened. The latter were altogether more than thirty thousand men, and the most brilliant troops we had yet seen, for they wore many ornaments of gold, and silver, and feathers, and, as the city was large, they began to set fire to it in the quarter where they entered. This became quickly known to the inhabitants, and I sallied forth with only horsemen, for the foot-soldiers were already very tired. We broke through the enemy, who retreated to a position which we took from them, following them up and overtaking many of them on a very rough slope, so that when we gained the top neither the enemy nor ourselves were able to advance or retreat. Many fell dead, without a wound, stifled by the heat, and two horses were exhausted, one of which died. We did much damage, for many of our Indian allies came up, and, as they arrived fresh and the adversaries were almost dead, they killed many, so that in a very short time the field was cleared of the living, and covered with the dead. We reached the barracks and huts which they had recently made in the field, and which were in three divisions each of which appeared like a good-sized village. In addition to their warriors, they had a great display of servants, and provisions, and camp supplies, there having been, as I learned afterwards, some notable persons in it. All was despoiled and burned by our Indian friends, who, I assure Your Majesty, had gathered to the number of one hundred thousand men. Having by this victory expelled all the enemy from the country, and driven them beyond some bridges and narrow passes, we returned to the city, where we were well received, and quartered by the inhabitants; and we rested in that city three days, being in great need of repose.

At this time, the natives of a large city, called Ocupatuyo (which is on the top of these sierras, two leagues from the enemy's camp, and also at the foot of the mountain chain, where I said the smoke comes out), came to offer themselves to the service of Your Majesty. They said that their chief had gone away with the Culuan when we pursued them, believing that we would not stop before reaching his city, but that they had desired my friendship for many days, wishing to come and offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, although their chief would not allow it nor consent to it, in spite of their having entreated his permission. They said that now they wished to serve Your Highness, and that the brother of the said chief, who had shared their opinion and intentions was likewise still of the same mind. They prayed me that I would approve his succession to the lordship, and that although the other might return, I would not consent to his being received as their chief; if so neither would they receive him. I told them that, as they had been of the league and confederation of Culua, and had rebelled against the service of Your Majesty, they deserved severe punishment, and that I had thought to execute it upon their persons and property; but, inasmuch as they had come, saying their chief was the cause of their rebellion and uprising, I, in the name of Your Majesty, pardoned their past error, and received and admitted them to Your Royal service. I warned them that if they committed a similar error again they would be punished and chastised, but if they proved loyal vassals of Your Royal Highness, I would favour and help them in Your Royal name; and they promised to do this.

This city of Guacachula is situated in a plain, bounded on one side by very high and rugged hills, and on the other by two rivers about two bow shots apart, each of which flows through very deep and large ravines. There are, consequently, very few entrances to the city, and those which exist are so rough to ascend and descend, that it can hardly be accomplished on horseback. The entire city is surrounded by a very strong wall of stone and mortar, the outside being about twenty feet high, while from the inside it is

about on the same level with the ground. There is a battlement along the wall three feet high, to protect them in fighting, and they have four entrances, broad enough for a man to enter on horseback. At each of these entrances, there are three or four curves in the wall, doubling one over the other, and above these turnings there is also a battlement on the walls, from which they can fight. They keep a great quantity of all sorts of large and small stones all along this wall which they use in fighting. This city may have some five or six thousand households, and in the surrounding hamlets subject to them as many others or more. It is very extensive, and within the city are many gardens of fruits and aromatic herbs, as is their custom.

After resting three days in this said city, we went to another, called Izzucan, four leagues distant from Guacachula, because I was informed that there were many Culuanes in garrison there also, and that the people of the said city, and of other towns and places dependent on them, were, and showed themselves to be, very partial to the Culuanes because their chief was a blood relation of Montezuma. So many of the natives, vassals of Your Majesty, accompanied me that they almost covered the country and the mountains as far as we could see, and in truth there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand men; and we arrived at the said town of Izzunca at ten o'clock, finding it deserted by women and young people, but there were about five or six thousand well-armed warriors in it. When the Spaniards appeared before it, they attempted some defence of their city, but they shortly abandoned it, because from the side to which we were guided for entering we found a practical entrance. We pursued them through the city, forcing them to jump over the crenellated top of the wall into a river which surrounds it on the other side, whose bridges being destroyed we were somewhat delayed in crossing it; and we followed in pursuit of them about a league and a half, in which distance I believe few escaped. Returning to the city, I sent two of its natives who had been taken prisoner to speak to the principal persons of the city, for the chief of it had also gone with the Culuanes of the garrison, so as to induce them to return to their city; and I promised them in the name of Your Majesty that, being loyal vassals of Your Highness from henceforth, they would be well treated by me, and their rebellion and past error forgiven. These natives left, and three days later some of the principal persons came and asked pardon for their error, saying that they could not have acted otherwise, because they had done what their chief commanded them, but that they promised from henceforth, inasmuch as their chief had gone and left them, to serve Your Majesty well and loyally. I reassured them, telling them to return to their homes, and to bring back their wives and children who were in other places and towns of their allies; and I told them likewise to tell the inhabitants of those towns to come to me and I would pardon them the past, for they would not like that I should be obliged to come to them, as then they would sustain much damage, which would greatly grieve me. Thus it was done, and within two days that city of Izzucan was again populated; and its dependencies came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and all that province remained very secure, and, with those of Guacachula, our friends and allies.

A certain difference arose as to whom the province of this city of Izzucan belonged in the absence of the chief who had gone to Mexico. The former rightful chief of this province had been put to death by Montezuma, who, in his place put the present ruler, whom he had married to one of his own nieces; and a dispute had arisen as to the right of succession between a bastard son of the murdered chief and the son of his legitimate daughter, who had married the chief of Guacachula. It was agreed amongst them, that the lordship should be inherited by that son of the chief of Guacachula who descended by the legitimate line from the old chief, for, although the other was a son, he could not inherit my presence they gave obedience to that boy, who was about ten years old; and, not being of an age to govern them, they decided that the bastard uncle should act with three other chiefs, one of Guacachula, and two of Izzucan, who should be governors of the country and should have control of the boy until he should be of an age to rule.

This city of Izzucan may have some three or four thousand households, and its streets and markets are well laid out. It has one hundred mosques and strong oratories with their towers, all of which we burnt. It stands on a plain at the foot of a medium-sized hill, where they have a very good fort, and, on the other side towards the plain, it is surrounded by a deep river which flows near the wall, which is thus surrounded by the deep ravine of the river. Over the ravine they have made a battlement, about six feet in

height, which extends all round the city, and all along the wall they had placed many stones. The valley is circular, and very fertile in fruits and cotton, which latter is not produced on the heights because of the cold, and it belongs to tierra caliente because it is well protected by the mountain ranges. The whole valley is irrigated by well constructed aqueducts.

I remained in this city until I could leave it well peopled and pacified. There likewise came to it, to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty the chief of the city called Guajocingo, and the lord of another city, ten leagues distant from that of Izzucan, on the frontier of Mexico. There came also people from eight of the towns of the province of Coastoaca.¹²⁷ This is one of those mentioned in previous chapters, where the Spaniards, whom I had sent to seek gold in the provinces of Zuzula¹²⁸ and Tamazula¹²⁹ (for they joined each other) had said that there because he was a bastard. Thus it was settled, and in were very great towns and houses, well built of the best masonry, such as we had not seen in any of these parts. This province of Coastoaca is forty leagues from that of Izzucan. The natives of the said eight towns offered themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and said that four others in the same province would come very soon. They asked me to excuse them if they had not dared to do so before for fear of the Culuans, but said that they never had taken up arms against me, nor had they participated in the killing of any Spaniards, and that always since offering themselves to the service of Your Highness they had been good and loyal subjects in their hearts, but had not dared to manifest it out of fear of the Culuans. Thus Your Highness may be very sure that. Our Lord favouring Your Royal good fortune, we shall within a short time regain what was lost, or the greater part of it; because every day many provinces and cities, who before were subject to Montezuma, come to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty; for they see that those who do so are well received and treated by me, and that those who do otherwise are destroyed one after another.

From prisoners taken in the city of Guacachula, especially from that wounded man, I learned very fully about the affairs of the capital of Temixtitlan, and how, after the death of Montezuma, a brother of his, lord of the city of Iztapalapa, called Cuetravacin,¹³⁰ had succeeded to the lordship, because the son of Montezuma, who should have inherited the sovereignty was killed at the bridges and of his two other living sons one is said to be mad, and the other palsied. They said that for these reasons and because he had made war against us, the brother had inherited, and was regarded as a very valiant and prudent man. I likewise learned how they were fortifying, not only the city, but other places in the dominion, and how they were preparing walls, barricades, trenches, and all kinds of arms; and I learned especially that they

127) Oaxaca.

128) Zozolla.

129) Tamazollan.

130) After the death of Montezuma, Cuitlahuaczin of Iztapalapan, who had been in chief command of the rising against the Spaniards, assumed the chieftainship and three months later (Aztec calendar) he was appointed emperor. He married Montezuma's daughter, the Princess Tecuichpo. His coronation was celebrated with the customary solemnities. The prisoners taken on the Sorrowful Night, both Spaniards and Tlascalans, serving as victims for the sacrifices. The newly elected sovereign had to cope with a situation bristling with difficulties — dissensions within, insubordination in the tributary provinces, the enemy without, and finally and most terrible of all, the small-pox, which raged throughout the country. To this dread pest, called by the Aztecs, Teozahuatl — Cuitlahuac fell a victim, and after a brief reign of eighty days, died on Nov. 25, 1520. During this period he had exerted every effort to unite all the forces of Mexico against the common enemy, sending embassies to friends and foes alike, urging that old differences be buried for the moment, and that all should make common cause to expel or destroy the strangers. He found a supporter in Xicotencatl, who, like himself had never believed in the semi-divine character of the teules, or gods as the Spaniards were commonly termed, but had from the first distrusted them, and counselled their destruction. Maxixcatzin withstood Xicotencatl in the Tlascalcan Senate when the embassy from Mexico appeared proposing an alliance; in the acrimonious dispute which ensued, the old Senator struck the young General, and knocked him down the steps of the rostrum. Maxixcatzin prevailed over the divided opinions, and the ambassadors withdrew hurriedly to report their failure to their sovereign. Cortes was informed of these negotiations, and visited Maxixcatzin to thank him for holding the Republic to the Spanish Alliance. As will be seen in a note to the Third Letter, Xicotencatl's sentiments towards the Spaniards never changed. His foresight was keener than that of his countrymen, and he discerned that the white men were far more formidable enemies than the Mexicans, but the lust for present revenge prevailed over considerations of future independence. Xicotencatl was unsupported, and, in the end, he paid with his life the price of his invincible aversion.

were making long lances, like pikes, for the horses, and we have even seen some of these with which they were fighting in the province of Tepeaca, and in the hamlets and buildings where the Culuans were quartered at Guacachula, we likewise found many of them. I learned many other things which I omit in order not to weary Your Highness. I sent four ships to the island of Hispaniola, that they might return quickly with horses and people for our assistance; and I likewise sent to buy four others, so that they might bring from the island of Hispaniola, and the city of San Domingo, horses and horsemen, bows, and powder, because this is what we most need in these parts. Foot soldiers armed with shields are of little service, on account of the great number of people, and their having so great and such strong cities and forts. I therefore wrote to the licentiate Rodrigo de Figueroa, and to Your Highness's officials in the said island, asking them to favour and assist me as much as possible, as it was of such importance to Your Highness's services, and the security of our lives, since, on the arrival of this help, I intended to return against the capital and its country; and I believe, as I have already told Your Majesty, that it will again in a short time return to the condition in which I had it before, and that the past losses will be made good. Meanwhile, I am engaged in building twelve brigantines to launch on the lake, and already they are making the decking and other parts of them, because they have to be carried overland, so that on their arrival they may be joined and completed in a short time. Nails are also being made for them, and the pitch, sails, tow, oars, and other things, which are necessary are being got ready. I assure Your Majesty that, until I achieve this end, I shall take no rest, nor shall I cease to strive in every possible way and manner for it, disregarding all the danger, and trouble, and cost, which may come upon me.

Two or three days ago, I learnt by a letter from my lieutenant at Vera Cruz, that a small caravel had arrived in that port with about thirty seamen and landsmen, who said they were seeking the people whom Francisco de Garay had sent to this country. Of these latter I have written to Your Majesty that they arrived in such want of provisions that, if they had not found succour there, they would have died from hunger and thirst. I learned from them how they had reached the river Panuco, remaining anchored there thirty days without seeing any people along all the river or in the country, from which it is believed that that country has been deserted on account of what had happened there. The people of the said caravel likewise said that two or three other ships of the said Francisco de Garay would follow immediately behind them with people and horses, and that they believed they had already passed down the coast. It seemed to me, then, that it was not in compliance with Your Highness's service that these ships and people should be lost through going in ignorance of the affairs of the country, as the natives might do them more harm than they had the first ones. The said caravel should be sent to seek those two ships, in order to notify them of what had happened, and to bring them to the port of the said city, where the captain sent by Francisco de Garay was waiting for them. And God grant that he finds them in time before they go ashore, because, as the natives were already on the look-out, and the Spaniards were ignorant, I fear they may sustain much harm, and that it would not serve God Our Lord and Your Highness, for it would enrage those dogs[the Indians] all the more, and inspire them with more courage and daring against those who might come hereafter.

I said in one of the preceding chapters, that I had learned that, after the death of Montezuma, his brother, called Cuetravacin, who had been raised as lord, was preparing many kinds of arms, and fortifying himself in the capital, and in other cities near the lake. And a short time since, I have likewise learned that the said Cuetravacin has sent his messengers to all the countries, provinces, cities, subject to the said sovereignty, to promise his vassals that he has graciously remitted during one year all tributes and taxes which they are obliged to pay him, on condition that they would use every means to make a very cruel war on all Christians, either killing them or expelling them from the country; and that they were to do in like manner to all natives who were our friends or allies. Although I have trust in Our Lord that they will not be able to carry out their intention, I am in extreme need of help and aid, because the Indians, our friends, come daily from many cities, towns, and hamlets, to ask for help against their enemies and ours, the Culuans, who make war on them because they hold to our friendship and alliance, and I am not able to

help everywhere as I would wish. But, as I say, may it please Our Lord to augment our few forces, and to send, not only His own help, but also that which I have sent to ask from Hispaniola.

From what I have seen and understood concerning the similarity between this country and Spain, in its fertility, its size, its climate, and in many other features of it, it seemed to me the most suitable name for this country would be New Spain of the Ocean Sea, and thus in the name of Your Majesty I have christened it. I humbly supplicate Your Highness to approve of this and order that it be so called.

I have written to Your Majesty, although badly expressed, the truth of all that has happened in these parts and whatever it was most necessary Your Highness should know, and, by my other letter which goes with this present, I send to supplicate Your Royal Excellency to send a trustworthy person to make an enquiry and investigation of everything, for the purpose of informing Your Sacred Majesty of all. In this dispatch I also again very humbly supplicate the same, for I shall consider it a very particular favour, as giving entire credit to what I write.

Very High and Most Excellent Prince, may God, Our Lord, preserve the life and the very royal person and the very powerful state of Your Sacred Majesty, and augment it for long time with increase of many greater kingdoms and dominions, according as your royal heart may desire. From the town of Segura de la Frontera, of this New Spain, on the 30th October, 1520. Your Sacred Majesty's very humble servant and vassal, who kisses the very royal feet and hands of Your Highness.

Fernan Cortes.

NOTE.¹³¹ — After this, the news arrived on the first of the month of March past from the said New Spain, of how the Spaniards had taken by force the great city of Temixtitan, in which more Indians had perished than did Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem when it was taken by Vespasian, and in it there was likewise a greater number of people than in the said Holy City. They found little treasure because the natives had thrown and submerged it in the waters; they took only two hundred thousand dollars, and the Spaniards remained well fortified in the said city, which at present has about fifteen hundred foot soldiers, and five hundred horsemen, and they have more than one hundred thousand friendly natives in their camp. These are great and strange things, and it is without doubt another world, and the sole desire to see it causes envy to us who are outside its borders. The news which we hold to be worthy of belief is up to the beginning of April, 1522. This present letter of relation was printed in the very noble and very loyal city of Seville by Jacob Cromberger, a German, on the 8th of November, 1522.

131) This postscriptum was obviously not written by Cortes, but by some one who read his letter; it was added before the receipt of his third letter, and was printed with the first edition in 1522.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

MARINA

With these few casual words, Cortes refers to the existence of one of the chief characters in the splendid drama of the conquest — his Indian mistress Marina, without whose aid the success of the Spaniards is hardly thinkable. He mentions her once again in his Fifth Letter, but she appears in his narrative only under the vague figure of “the interpreter whom I had with me.”

There are almost as many different accounts of Marina's birth and childhood as there were writers to compose them, but all agree that she was of noble lineage, which Herrera says was evident from her superior bearing and manners.

Senor Garcia Icazbalceta in Note 37 to the second of the Dialogos de Cervantes, gives us a critical study of Marina. The conclusions of this learned writer admit the version given by Bernal Diaz, in spite of the fact that this contradicts those of his contemporaries. Las Casas and Gomara, the latter of whom must have had his information from his patron Cortes, himself. Clavigero adopted Bernal Diaz as his authority, as did also Solis. Prescott noticed the differences among the early writers, but refrained from pronouncing in favour of any one of them. All these authorities, however, were anterior to Garcia Icazbalceta. It would be impossible for any student of history to-day to neglect his valuable work in Mexican archives, or to ignore his conclusions, which may be safely followed and especially in this instance, in which they are sustained on the narrative of Bernal Diaz. Orozco y Berra has also eliminated some of the conflicting statements concerning Marina by an ingenious dissertation on the habitual confusion of the spelling of Mexican names by the Spaniards, and particularly by those writers who, never having been in Mexico, were passably ignorant of Indian nomenclature and Mexican geography, and took their information second-hand, often from illiterate or inaccurate persons.

Marina was the daughter of the lord of Painalla, in the province of Coatzacoalco. Her mother married a second time, and, upon the birth of a son, she agreed with her husband to dispose of her daughter, in order that the son might inherit their property. This plan was effected by giving the young girl to some Indians of Xicalango, and publishing her death, the body of a slave's child being substituted to deceive the people. The Xicalango Indians sold the girl to others in Tabasco, and thus she came to be among the twenty slaves presented to Cortes by the cacique of that province. Marina, in the distribution of these women, fell to the share of Puertocarrero. When Jeronimo de Aguilar joined Cortes, it was found that he could speak to Marina in Maya, which closely resembled the language of Tabasco, and, as her mother tongue was the Mexican, it came about that, in treating with envoys from the interior and during the march through Tlascala and Cholula to the capital, Cortes spoke in Spanish to Aguilar who spoke in Maya to Marina who spoke with the Mexicans in their own tongue.

Her family name was Tenepal, and her Indian name was Malinal, derived from Malinalli, which is the sign of the twelfth day of the Mexican month; thus her Christian name in baptism, which was Marina, was really derived from, or suggested by, her Indian name, and as the Indians could not pronounce the letter r there was practically no change of name, save that in her new and important position they gave her the tzin, which was a title of respect, and henceforth she was called Malintzin. The Spaniards corrupted this

into Malinche. Cortes came to be universally known as Captain Malintzin or simply Maliutzin, and to thousands of Indians, he had no other name than that of this slave girl (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. v.).

Dona Marina, as the Spaniards called her, was quick at learning Spanish, which her intimate relations with Cortes facilitated, or, as Prescott poetically puts it, "because it was the language of love." Perhaps it was on her side, but there is little evidence to show that it was on his. Marina was cherished because she was useful, not because she was beloved, and the circumstances forced her into intimate relations with Cortes, which were also favoured by her beauty and her superior wit. *Aussi bien celle-ci qu'une autre* was doubtless his view of the sentimental side of his relations with her.

After Puertocarrero's departure with the despatches and treasure, Marina reverted definitely to Cortes. Once the expedition had left the coast provinces, she became more and more indispensable, as Aguilar spoke no Mexican and the Maya language was not intelligible to the Mexicans. As soon as she had sufficiently mastered Castilian to be able to dispense with Aguilar as an intermediary between herself and Cortes, her position became a dominant one and she held the fate of the Spaniards in her hand. But most of all was she supreme over her own people and dispensed peace or war at her pleasure; for she alone could shape the results of the negotiations and treaties between Cortes and the caciques. Thus, an unforeseen turn in Fortune's wheel raised this princess from the degradation of slavery into which an unnatural mother had delivered her, and landed her in the Spaniards' camp, where she became the mistress of a nation's destinies. She showed herself so able, that Bernal Diaz affirms that they all held her to be like no other woman on earth, and that they had never detected the smallest feminine weakness in her; she alone of all the women was saved from the tragedy of the Sorrowful Night, and she saved herself. There is no way of knowing how faithfully and disinterestedly she played her part of interpreter; certainly she gave herself absolutely to Cortes, and her devotion to the Spaniards never faltered, but who shall say that she also did justice in her presentation of the Indians' claims and interests in the negotiations she directed? Authorities differ as to the number of children born to Cortes and Dona Marina; the eldest son, Don Martin, afterwards became a Knight of Santiago, and the existence of at least one daughter seems to be sufficiently certain. In October, 1524, Marina was married to Juan Xaramillo, described as an hidalgo. Bernal Diaz says that the bridegroom was ignorant of Marina's past, which makes one wonder where he came from, and Gomara's explanation that he was drunk at the time sounds more plausible. On the expedition to Yucatan there was a dramatic encounter between Dona Marina and her perfidious mother and the younger half-brother in whose interest she had been sacrificed. The recognition seems to have been instantaneous and mutual; the mother, fearing vengeance, threw herself at her daughter's feet, begging forgiveness, which was accorded, with the philosophic assurance that when she had so treated her child, she did not know what she was doing (as indeed it appeared), and that she thanked God for the boon of the Christian religion and the happiness of having given her master a son and the joy of possessing an excellent husband in Juan Xaramillo. Dona Marina's Christian morality betrayed its recent adoption and weak growth at this point. She loaded her relatives with gifts and sent them home rejoicing. Bernal Diaz was reminded by this incident of the meeting between Joseph and his brethren in Egypt. Xaramillo became an alcalde in Mexico, and in 1528 a grant of land was given to him and his wife near Chapultepec. Prescott describes Marina as returning to her native place, where an estate was given her, but Icazbalceta says she ended her days in Mexico, rich and respected; Orozco y Berra concedes that she was rich, but doubts that she was respected. A curious painting represents Cortes with Marina standing beside him at the execution of a Cholulan servant of Andres de Tapia, who was condemned to be torn to pieces by fierce dogs; she piously holds a rosary in her hand as she watches the brutal spectacle, which took place in 1537. Dona Marina still lived therefore in 1537, but the date of her death is not recorded (Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.* lib. xxxiii., cap. i.; Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indians*, lib. iii., cap. cxxi.; Clavigero, tom. iii., [p. 12; Bernal Diaz, cap. xxxvii., Garcia Icazbalceta, *Dialogos de Cervantes*; Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. v.).

APPENDIX II.

MEXICO-TENOCHTITLAN

The migratory period of the Aztecs in the valley of Anahuac came to its close with the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in 1325. The name Mexico signifies habitation of the god of war, Mexitli — otherwise known as Huitzilopochtli. The name Tenochtitlan signifies a cactus on a rock and was given to the new city because the choice of the site was decided by the augurs beholding, perched upon a cactus plant which grew on a rock, an eagle with a serpent in its talons. The emblem of the cactus and the eagle holding a serpent became the national standard of Mexico, and is displayed in the coat of arms of the present Republic.

The two islands of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco stood in the salt waters of the lake of Texcoco, separated from one another by a narrow channel of water, and in the beginning, Tlatelolco had its separate chief; but in the reign of Axayacatl, the last king of Tlatelolco, called Moquihuitz, was overthrown, and the islands afterwards became united by bridges and formed one city, with a single ruler. The city was joined to the main land by three great causeways, so solidly built of earth and stone, and having draw-bridges to span the canals which crossed them, as to excite the admiration of the Spaniards. The northern causeway, from the Tlatelolco quarter, extended for three miles to Tepejaca, where stands the present shrine of Guadalupe; the causeway reaching to Tlacopan (Tacuba) was two miles long, and the southern road, by which the Spaniards entered, extended for seven miles to Itztapalapan, with a division at the small fortress of Xoloc, where one branch diverged to Coyohuacan and hence caused Cortes to mention four causeways, which strictly speaking was correct. Robertson erroneously speaks of a causeway leading to Texcoco. While the width of these splendid roads varied, Clavigero says that all were wide enough for ten horsemen to ride abreast (vol. iii., lib. ix.). To the minute description of the city given in the letter of Cortes, it seems unnecessary to add anything; he says nothing, however, about the number of inhabitants, which all the earlier authorities practically agree in numbering at 60, 000 households — by an obvious error the Anonymous Conqueror speaks of 60, 000 people, which should, of course, be families. Zuazo, Gomara, Motolinia, Peter Martyr, Clavigero, and others, give this estimate, hence it may be safely stated, that the city's population was not less than 300, 000 souls; though Orozco y Berra, while admitting these figures, observes that considering the actual area and the large spaces occupied by palaces and public buildings, the people must have been a good deal crowded.

Very contradictory appreciations of the beauty of the Aztec capital, the grandeur of its buildings, and the merit of its architecture, have been given by different writers. Prescott's marvellous picture of the ancient city is familiar to all students of Mexican history, and hardly less well known and rivalling the American historian's delightful pages, are the chapters of Sir Arthur Helps, praised by Ruskin for their "beautiful quiet English," in which he compares Mexico to Thebes, Nineveh, and Babylon, among the great cities of antiquity, and to Constantinople, Venice, and Granada, among those of modern times, not hesitating to declare that it was "at that time the fairest in the world and has never since been equalled" (Hernan. Cortes, p. 108). The distinguished Mexican scholar Senor Alaman (*Disertaciones*, tom. i., p. 184) expresses his conviction that the city of Mexico contained no buildings of beauty or merit; that, aside from the royal palaces, the rest of the houses were adobe huts, amongst which rose the squat, truncated pyramids of the temples, unlovely to behold, decorated with rude sculptures of serpents and other horrible figures, and having heaps of human skulls piled in their court yards. He sustains this dreary appreciation by the argument that there would otherwise have remained some fragments of former architectural magnificence, whereas there is absolutely nothing. These eminent writers seem unwilling to allow that Tenochtitlan may have been a wonderfully beautiful city and at the same time have possessed few imposing buildings and no remarkable architecture. The descriptions of Mr. Prescott and Sir Arthur Helps are masterpieces of word-painting which charm us, but they are based upon early descriptions in which impeachable importance is given to architectural features of the city. It is, as Senor Alaman remarks, incredible that not a fragment of column or capital, statue or architrave should have been saved to attest

the existence of great architectural monuments, even though 150,000 men were diligently engaged for two months in destroying the buildings, filling up canals with the debris and that finally, when the city came to be rebuilt, many idols and other larger fragments of temples were used in the foundations of the cathedral, which rose on the site of the great teocalli. Palaces, such as Montezuma's is described by the Spaniards, may be vast in extent, with beautiful courts, fountains, gardens, and audience halls, they may be luxurious and filled with curious and beautiful objects, but they add little to the picturesque or imposing appearance of a capital; the temples were sufficiently numerous, but none save the great temple seem to have been lofty, and even the principal teocalli had but 114 steps, so that its height was only remarkable by comparison with the great stretch of low flat-roofed houses about it. Cortes describes the destruction of the city, day by day, which he sincerely deplored as necessary to subdue it, but he does not mention any one building which he sought to save, as he must infallibly have done, had he been burning an Alhambra or a Doge's Palace or been forced to blow up a Santa Sophia. It seems impossible that any one should seriously pretend that the waters of Texcoco's lake mirrored such facades as are reflected in the canals of Venice, or that there was a Rialto among the bridges, so hotly contested by the Spaniards. Orozco y Berra wisely reproves the comparison which Alaman draws between Mexico and Rome as notoriously misplaced. But, between the dazzling word pictures of Prescott and Helps on the one hand, and on the other Alaman's depressing sketch of a squalid town of hovels, inhabited by bloodthirsty cannibals, there is still room for a beautiful city in which dwelt a sovereign, amidst surroundings of interesting splendour.

Even without conscious intention to mislead, it was inevitable that the Spaniards should fall into exaggeration in describing the city of Mexico; first, because they necessarily used the same terms to portray what they saw as they would have used in describing Rome, Paris, or Constantinople; second, because the contrast between such Indian towns as they had seen and the capital was undoubtedly very great, and their long years of rough life, perilous voyages, and the absence at times even of shelter from the elements, made any large town with some system of order, with houses having court-yards, gardens and embroidered hangings, seem worthy to be compared with great cities elsewhere seen and dimly remembered; and lastly because Mexico was unquestionably a very beautiful city. It could hardly have been otherwise in such a situation, and the Spaniards, not stopping to analyse wherein its charms lay, fell into the easy error of attributing them to architectural excellence and grandeur, which were really wanting.

Solis adopts the conquerors' style, without having their excuse and, were he writing of the Courts of Leo X., or Louis XIV., he could hardly use other language than he does in describing Montezuma and his household.

The very ignorance and naivete of the conquerors are good warrants for the truth of much that they wrote, for as they were illiterate men (even Cortes had but a scanty store of learning, gathered during his brief course of two careless years at Salamanca) without sufficient knowledge to invent descriptions of the Mexican laws, customs, religion, and institutions, the facts which they state, and in which they agree, are indubitable. The Aztec Empire possessed some highly developed institutions; to mention but one, there was the system of couriers or the post, which kept up daily and rapid communication between the capital and the provinces, and that at a time when no country in Europe possessed anything equalling it.

Their religion was established with a regular hierarchy, and a calendar of festivals, which were observed with a really admirable ritual, marred only by the barbarity of certain rites; their deities were gloomy and ferocious, fear was the motive of worship, human sacrifice the only means of placating the gods, and thus religion, which should soften and humanise manners and elevate character, was engulfed in a dreadful superstition, which held the nation in a state of permanent degradation, with the result that the most civilised amongst the Indians of North America were at the same time the most barbarous. The perfect ordering of this system impressed the Spaniards, while its awful rites horrified them.

Their state was well ordered, and, in many respects, governed according to wise and enlightened standards, and that their civilisation was of no mean order is proven by the following factors in it:

I. The rights of private property were recognised and respected; its transfer was effected by sale or inheritance.

II. All free men were land owners, either by absolute possession or by usufruct derived from holding some public office in the state, and these composed the nobility: others held land in community, parcels being allotted to a given number of families, whose members worked them in common and shared their produce equitably.

III. Taxes were levied according to an established system and were paid in kind, thus filling the government store-houses with vast accumulations of all the products of the Empire.

IV. Justice was administered by regularly appointed judges, who interpreted the laws and exercised jurisdiction in different districts.

V. Markets were held as Cortes describes.

VI. The streets were regularly cleaned, lighted by fires at night, and patrolled by police; public sanitary arrangements were provided, and the city was probably more spacious, cleaner, and healthier than any European towns of that time.

VII. Public charity provided hospitals for the sick and aged.

VIII. Separate arts and trades flourished, and the metal-workers, lapidaries, weavers, etc., learned their trades by a regular system of instruction and apprenticeship pretty much as in the guilds of Europe.

IX. The great public-works, such as the causeways, aqueducts, canals with locks, and bridges, were admirably constructed, and, in the neighbourhood of the capital at least, were numerous.

X. There was a fair knowledge of the medicinal and curative properties of herbs, barks, roots, and plants, though, if the medicine men were skilled in the use of poisons, it seems strange that they did not rid themselves of the hungry invaders at some of the feasts which were constantly offered them.

XI. In the arts, the lapidaries, feather-workers, and silversmiths produced the best work. Mexican paintings, judged as works of art, are crude and primitive enough, but their real value and interest lie in the fact that they are chronicles in picture writing, of which, unfortunately, too few have been preserved; ideas were rarely and imperfectly represented by this method, which was only serviceable for recording material facts. Music was the least developed of all the arts.

XII. Their solar system was more correct than that of the Greeks and Romans. The year was divided into eighteen months, of twenty days each, with five complementary days added, which were holidays, but were considered unlucky, especially as birthdays. For full information on the Mexican calendar, solar system, and astronomical science, the student is referred to Orozco y Berra. *Hist. Antiqua*, lib. iv., where these subjects are lucidly explained.

XIII. There were regularly graduated social classes, the lowest being composed of peasant-serfs called *Mayeques* who were bound to the land; above them came ascending grades until we reach the Emperor at the top of all.

Three features characteristic of the feudal system everywhere are found: A. An overlord or Emperor, supreme in the central government, whose standard all followed in war and whose authority and person were regarded as semi-divine. B. Practically independent nobles or chiefs of tribes, levying their own taxes holding peoples and cities in subjection, transmitting their titles by right of inheritance and ready to contend with the Emperor himself on questions of etiquette, and precedence. Many of these were his kinsmen and all were allied amongst themselves, thus forming an aristocracy of rank and power. C. A people reduced to practical serfage.

Sumptuary laws prescribed the dress of the different orders, and the regulations governing court dress for different occasions were rigidly enforced; all removed their sandals in the emperor's presence, and even the greatest nobles covered their ornaments with a plain mantle when they appeared before him. The Aztec language was extremely polite and contained not only titles, but many ceremonious phrases of respect and expressions of courtesy and deference.

The crown descended in the same family, but a council of six electors, chosen during the lifetime of the sovereign, met immediately after his death and elected a successor from among the eligible princes of the royal family.

Alongside these indications of an advanced civilisation are found several others which show a nation still in its infancy:

I. They did not know the use of wax or oil for lighting purpose.

II. They used no milk.

III. They had no coinage: cacao nuts were commonly used as a standard of value and also gold dust put up in quills, but usually commodities were exchanged. Sahagun mentions a sort of coin which the Mexicans called *quahtli* or eagle, but he does not describe it. Montezuma paid his losses at play with the Spaniards in chips of gold, each of the value of fifty ducats; this piece was called *tejuelo*, but it does not certainly appear to have been a coin.

IV. There was no system of phonetic writing.

V. They kept no domestic animals save rabbits, chickens, and little dogs, all of which they ate; and they had no beasts of burden.

VI. Their only cereal was maize.

VII. They knew neither iron, nor tin, nor lead, though the mountains were full of them, and their only hard metal was copper.

Even from the summary and incomplete indications here given, it is seen that the Aztec state possessed many excellent institutions and elements of an advanced civilisation, and, despite the co-existence of certain limitations which have led some to doubt the development claimed for them, our interest in the origin and history of the mysterious races of Anahuac is stimulated to wonder and admiration for what we do know of their empire, and to boundless regret for the disappearance of all, save the few vestiges which remain to excite a curiosity they are inadequate to appease.

It is not required to endow Mexico with "the glory that was Greece or the grandeur that was Rome" in order to admit that it was beautiful.

APPENDIX III.

ORIGINS OF MEXICAN CIVILISATION

The different tribes or nations of Anahuac came, according to their several traditions, from the north-west, in a series of migrations, but of their original starting point they preserved no clear record. M. de Guigne presents proofs to show that the Chinese visited Mexico as early as 458 a. d.; Horn (*de originibus Americanis*, 1699), Scherer (*Recherches Hist.*), Humboldt (*Essai Polit.*) and other authorities, without a dissentient voice, assign an Asiatic origin to the Toltecs and other Mexican peoples. That Mexico received settlers from other parts of the world seems also certain. Aristotle (*De Admirandis in natura*) relates that Carthaginian sailors passed the Pillars of Hercules, and, after sailing sixty days to the west, reached a beautiful and fertile country, and that so many began to go thither that the Senate of Carthage passed a law suppressing such emigration, to prevent the depopulation of the city. The theory of the submerged Atlantis, and the arguments on which it rests, are too well known to require explanation.

The efforts to graft Mexican civilisation on to an Asiatic or African stock have not been entirely successful, for, while there undoubtedly exist points of striking similarity, these seem to be counterbalanced by still more important divergencies. The paucity of positive data or even coherent traditions has left a wide field open to speculation, of which many learned and ingenious seekers have availed themselves to the fullest extent, but without achieving results commensurate with their labours. Without attempting a thorough search into the racial origin of the tribes which Cortes found in the valley of Mexico, it may be briefly stated that the best evidence before us points to Yucatan as the centre of the highest American civilisation, from whence a knowledge of law, arts, and manufactures, and the influence

of an organised religious system, spread northwards. The splendid ruins of Yucatan and Central America attest the existence of a race of people, which, whatever its origin, was isolated from European and Asiatic influence alike since an epoch which it is impossible to fix, but which was certainly very remote. This race — the Maya — possessed a civilisation, *sui generis*, and entirely unique on the North American continent, the focus of which had already shifted to the high valley of Mexico long before the Spaniards first visited the country in the sixteenth century leaving the ancient cities of Uxmal, Palenque, Utatlan, and the others in the southern region, in ruins. What devastating influences produced this movement in an entire people is not known, and the length of time occupied by it, is problematical, though it must have extended over centuries, ebbing and flowing intermittently. The conflicting traditions as to the direction from which tribes, law-givers, and priests arrived in Anahuac are doubtless owing to distinct movements at different times of the southern peoples in their wandering search for a new and permanent abiding place. These early migrations from south to north, were succeeded during the period commonly termed the Middle Ages, by a counter movement, and the descendants of the first Maya emigrants began to return southwards, conquering or absorbing the different peoples they encountered. Although some of the peoples had preserved much of the culture bequeathed them by their forefathers, there was no uniform civilisation existing among them, save in the case of the Toltecs, who seem still to have been in the full enjoyment of their Maya heritage.

The Toltecs left their country, called Huehuetlalpallan, in the vague north-west, in the year 554 a. d., and, after one hundred and four years of migratory life, they founded the city of Tollantzinco in 648, whence they again moved in 667 to Tula, or Tollan, from which date, their monarchy, which lasted three hundred and eighty-four years, is reckoned (Clavigero, vol. iv.). According to Torquemada, the Chichimecas followed within nine years after the extinction of the Toltec sovereignty, but Clavigero's calculation shows the improbability of this, for several reasons, the most convincing of which is the incredible chronology of their kings. Torquemada says that Xolotl reigned 113 years, his son lived to be 170, and his grandson 104 years old, while another king, Tezozomoc reigned 180 years! It is obvious that the Chichimeca period must either be shortened, or the number of kings increased. After the Chichimecas came the six tribes of Tlascalala, Xochimilco, Acolhua (Texcoco), Tepanec, Chalco, and Tlahuichco, closely followed by the Colhuans or Mexicans, who first arrived at Tula in 1196, and, after several shorter migrations, finally founded Mexico-Tenochtitlan in 1325, as is related in Appendix II. of this letter. The last tribe to come was that of the Otomies in 1420. Boturini believed that the tribes of Xicalango and the Olemchs antedated the Toltecs, but says that no records or picture-writings explaining their origin were discoverable in his time. From the foundation of Mexico in 1325, the form of government was aristocratic till 1352, when according to Torquemada's interpretation of their picture-writings, the first King Acamapatzin, eighth predecessor of Montezuma II., was elected, and reigned for thirty-seven years.

The Aztec civilisation, which attained its highest development in Tenochtitlan and Texcoco, never reached the level of the Maya culture, nor did its cities contain any such admirable buildings as those whose ruins still delight and mystify the traveller in Yucatan and Central America. Outside its few centres of learning and luxury, the numerous tribes under Montezuma's rule were dwellers in caves, living by the chase and in no way sharing in the benefits of the Aztec polity. In morals and manners, the Aztecs were inferior to the Toltecs, and though they adopted and continued the civilisation of their predecessors, they were devoid of their intellectual and artistic qualities, and turned their attention more to war and commerce as the surest means for riveting their supremacy on their neighbours. When Cortes arrived, Texcoco and Tlacopan, though still calling themselves independent, and ruled by sovereigns who held themselves co-equal with Montezuma, were rapidly sinking into a condition of vassalage. The Aztec religion was likewise of a militant order; it was polytheistic and readily admitted the gods of conquered or allied nations into its pantheon. Upon the milder cult of the older religious systems they had adopted, these devotees of the war-god speedily grafted their own horrible practices of human sacrifices, which augmented in number and ferocity until the temples became veritable charnel houses. With such a

barbarous religious system draining their very life's blood, and a relentless despotism daily encroaching on their liberties, it is small wonder that Cortes was hailed as a liberator by the subject peoples of Mexico.

In the third chapter of his *Historia Antigua*, Don Manuel Orozco y Berra examines what he terms the two schools, the religious and the philosophical, whose teachings concerning the origin and early history of the Mexicans are based upon the interpretation of the ancient and authentic Mexican painting, now preserved in the National Museum in Mexico, and which came into the possession of the historian Ixtlilxochitl from his royal ancestors of Texcoco. The religious reading of this unique Chronicle (it is always Orozco y Berra who is my authority) sought to harmonise its chronology, and certain primitive events in the national history, with the biblical story, and all the early writers of this school, Carlos de Sigüenza, Gemelli Careri, Clavigero, Veytia, and others, found in it an account of the creation, the flood, the tower of Babel, the dispersion of the nations, and other incidents of the mosaic records.

The philosophical school, of which Humboldt was the chief, following other lines, arrived, however, at a similar result, and connected the foundation of Mexico with the cessation of the deluge, and thus the problem of the origin of American races and animals was solved.

Don Fernando Ramirez, some time Curator of the Mexican National Museum, by showing the interpretation of both these schools to be mere illusions, demolished their conclusions, and interpreted the picture as merely representing the wanderings of the Mexicans in the valley itself, covering an area of about nine miles and a period of hardly more than 443 years, calculating from 1325 back to 882, a. d., the earliest chronological sign in the painting; while the water represented, is not the flood of but the neighbouring lake of Chalco.

The complex question of the relation in which the Maya and Toltec civilisations stood to one another has not yet found a generally accepted solution. Working in the light which anthropology, ethnology, archaeology, and kindred modern sciences afford, many valuable facts have been recently discovered and the investigations still proceeding, yearly contribute highly specialised knowledge to the sum of what the early Spanish writers amassed but failed to scientifically classify. But with all this, the path through the American historical labyrinth remains a tortuous one: whether the Toltecs preceded the Mayas and brought into Yucatan the high civilisation of which noble remains attest the existence, or whether this civilisation was of Maya origin and afterwards spread towards the north, influencing the Toltecs, are questions on which various opinions are held by modern investigators. I incline to accept the latter theory, but while such learned authorities are still at variance, it were presumption for a mere student of early American history to present conclusions.

In this brief summary of such a large subject, I have sought to furnish the general reader with an intelligible explanation of the origins and history of the civilisation which Cortes beheld when first he visited Mexico.

APPENDIX IV.

QUETZALCOATL

Montezuma here refers to Quetzalcoatl who figures, under different names in different times and places, as a mortal man, as a deified legislator, and as a primitive divinity, so that it is difficult to separate the mythical in his history from the real. He was known in Yucatan under the name of Kukulcan, the meaning of which is identical with Questzalli and Cohuatl — a plumed serpent.

Quetzalcoatl was a Toltec deity, and was venerated as the god of the air, especially identified with the east wind, which brought the fertilising rains. As the teachings and prophecies attributed to him potently influenced the attitude of the Mexicans towards the Spaniards, on their arrival in the country, it is necessary to consider both his mythical and historical character. In the native mythology, Quetzalcoatl personified the principle of good in contradistinction to the principle of evil, under the figure of Tezcatlipoca. The story of his residence among the peoples of Anahuac relates that he arrived at Tollan

(Tula) the capital of the Toltecs, as chief of a band of strangers, from unknown parts, and that he was well received by the natives to whom he taught the arts of agriculture, metal working, architecture, and mechanics. He introduced also the new religious virtues of chastity, trust in one God, the love of peace, and the practice of charity and penance. He also brought the Toltec calendar to the state of perfection in which it was found amongst the Aztecs. He wore a white tunic on which were black or red crosses, which sounds something like a pallium. He was large of person, white faced, and wore his black hair and beard long. Exercising the high priesthood, he initiated the golden age of the Toltecs, during which the cotton grew in various colours, red, blue, orange, and purple, maize crops were over-abundant, the canes grew as large round as tree trunks, and pumpkins so big that a man's arms could not encircle one; nobody was ever hungry, animals were all tame, and the birds sang wonderfully. Sahagun catalogues him as the eighth king of the Toltecs. This halcyon period was brought to an end by the machinations of the evil spirit Tezcatlipoca who descended to earth on a spider's web, and, taking the form of a venerable sage, tempted, Quetzalcoatl beyond his strength, and made him drunk on pulque, during which orgies the god violated his vows of chastity. This fall shook the faith of his people and the legend recounts further, that, in a war brought on by the same evil-spirit, the Toltecs were worsted. A universal famine followed upon the war, only to be succeeded by a terrible pestilence. Signs and portents foretold the destruction of the race, and Quetzalcoatl burned his house, buried his treasures in a secret place, and, despite the opposition of his adherents, left, called as he declared, by his master, to the mystic land of Tlapallan. His progress through the country was attended by prodigies and miracles until he reached Cholula, where he rested for twenty years, teaching the people, and pontificating in their great temple. But the enemy, hearing of this, prepared again to make war on the friends of Quetzalcoatl, who, to prevent this disaster, left with four disciples for the sea-coast. Here according to some versions, the waves parted, allowing him to pass, and according to others, he made himself a raft of serpents, and, spreading his mantle for a sail, was wafted away to the unknown east. Another legend describes him as causing his funeral pyre to be erected, from which his heart ascended into the skies, where it figures as the planet Venus.

The belief in his prophecy, that he or his representatives would one day return to re-establish and render triumphant his religious teachings, was wide-spread, and furnishes something of a parallel to the Messianic hope prevalent amongst the Jews, or to the expectation of a second visible coming of Christ on which the early Christians counted. He was to return as an avenger, and hence his coming was dreaded by the Aztecs, who believed in it so firmly that they carried on a cult to propitiate him, though their religious practices did violence to his humaner teachings.

The mysterious disappearance of the Toltecs from Anahuac may have been caused by the war, famine, and pestilence, of this legend, and the remnant of the people may have made an exodus with their priestly leader, leaving their city to the victors, and thus might be explained the sudden disappearance of that people. While the material benefits which Quetzalcoatl brought to the Toltecs and Cholulans were readily enough assimilated, it is probable that his religious teachings were not widely diffused or properly understood by the mass of the people, and after his departure they rapidly became mixed with ancient superstitions. Christian doctrines became denaturalised and blended with pagan traditions, thus losing their significance and efficacy. The original, national cult of the Toltecs reasserted itself with the addition of some beliefs and ritual forms. The passage through Mexico of a few Christians under the leadership of one possessing the superior character and intelligence attributed to Quetzalcoatl would suffice to introduce new moral and religious ideas, and produce great changes in the beliefs of the more cultivated people; for the indubitable unity of all mankind is essentially a unity of spirit, which draws together widely diversified races, whose physical features are dissimilar, and whose customs are alien to one another.

Religion springs from an inherent aspiration, common to human nature everywhere, towards a knowledge of, and union with, what is divine and eternal. The development of this instinct carries humanity through the same phases according to laws governing religious evolution, which are universal. Asia, Africa, and ancient Europe, have produced religious systems, each with its myths, rites of sacrifice, practices of penance, vigils, ceremonial observances, and consecrated priests, and the conclusion seems

obvious that within human nature itself are found the springs from which these various independent systems — identical in their intention but so different in their moral value — originate. Man is potential to respond to the demands of his own being, whether in the physical and material, or in the moral and spiritual order, and, although the organisation and development observed in primitive religions many differ widely in different quarters of the globe, yet wherever mankind dwells in community, religious development stands on the same foundation and proceeds according to the same fundamental law.

It need therefore in reality be no more astonishing that the Maya race and its descendants should have evolved a completely organised religious system, with an impressive ritual and a well-ordered calendar of ecclesiastical festivals, independently of any previous communication with the old world, than that they were found to have a knowledge of spinning, weaving, and metal working, and an effective system of civil government. All due allowance being made however for such considerations, the beliefs and practices of the Mexicans, which were so like Christian ones as to exclude the hypothesis of mere chance, were numerous and striking.

Duran says of their triune idol that “being one,” he is adored under three names, and having three names, he is adored as one almost as we believe in the most Holy Trinity. The persons of this trinity were Totec the lord of the majesty and fear; Xipe, the man despised and persecuted, and Tlatlahquitzcatl, the mirror of splendour. Children were baptized between three and twelve years — signifying a new birth — by pouring on of water to cleanse them from the taint of inherited sin; and auricular confession was practised for the forgiveness of sin committed, penances being imposed. Even their revolting human sacrifices seem to have been a degraded and materialised interpretation of our Lord’s words of consecration when instituting the Eucharistic sacrifice, for the flesh of the victim was eaten reverently, while sacramental words were pronounced calling it the food of the soul and the very flesh of the god to whom the sacrifice was being offered. Holy water was used in many ceremonies, and especially at the crowning of kings. At stated times, a sort of passion play was performed in which a man was bound to a cross and killed with arrows. All these, and many other ceremonies bearing a striking analogy to Christian rites, much impressed the Spaniards, especially the friars, who composed a voluminous literature on the subject. Sometimes, indeed, theories were built up on rather frail foundations of fact, and conclusions were reached by undue straining of the imagination rather than by the exercise of critical research. The Indians frequently misled their new teachers, giving such interpretation of their rites as they thought would be most acceptable, when not themselves ignorant of the real significance of their symbols and ceremonies; as, indeed, many poorly instructed Christians to-day could not explain intelligibly, to an inquiring visitor from Mars, the meaning of emblems and practices with which they are, nevertheless, familiar. But with every such allowance, there still remains a sufficient number of authenticated and perfectly understood doctrines and observances in the ancient Mexican cult, to argue convincingly their Christian origin; hence many writers have identified Quetzalcoatl with some unknown Christian missionary priest — possibly an Oriental bishop — while others have even thought he was the apostle St. Thomas. This startling opinion has not lacked eloquent defenders, but it is excluded from serious consideration by the fact that St. Thomas lived in the first century, and Quetzalcoatl in the tenth, without adducing others which conclusively disprove it.

The identity of Quetzalcoatl remains an unsolved mystery, and, after his departure, it became merged into that of mythical divinities, with a plumed serpent for his emblem. The confused notions which the Mexicans preserved concerning his life, his acts and miracles, and his final disappearance, and their interweaving of other legends of their more beneficent deities with his imperfectly transmitted doctrines, and the distorted facts in his personal history are no more extraordinary than many of the popular tales from lives of the saints, and other wonder stories which are cherished from generation to generation by ignorant and imaginative people everywhere. Unless some heretofore undiscovered treasure house of lost records delivers the key to the early history of the Toltecs, there seems little hope that our imperfect knowledge concerning him will receive any important additions. The systematic destruction of the picture writings of the ancient Mexicans, and particularly of everything connected with their religion, which was

carried on for years with misguided zeal by the Spaniards, cut off the source from which fuller information might have been hoped. Much and very severe criticism has fallen upon the ecclesiastics — notably Bishop Zumarraga — by whom this sad destruction was accomplished, and the not unnatural vexation, with which historians view what now seems to have been a work of ignorant and unnecessary fanaticism, has lent undue vehemence to the blame assigned to these well-intentioned iconoclasts. The destruction is undoubtedly most regrettable, but, in strict justice, it must be admitted that the extent of the loss which American history sustained is entirely problematical, for we do not certainly know that the destroyed records contained anything which has not been learned from others which were preserved, and from the Indians themselves at the time of the conquest. On the other hand our debt to the friars is very great, for to them alone is it owing that anything at all survived the Spanish conquest. They alone, amidst the hordes of gold-greedy colonists who scoured the country in search of mines and slaves, established humane relations with the Indians, learned their language, studied their records, and while bringing them into schools to teach them Christianity, learned from them all that could be discovered concerning their own religion, history, and traditions. Franciscans such as Sahagun, Torquemada, Motolinia, Landa, and Lizana, Jesuits such as Acosta, Duran, and later Clavigero — to mention some of the more notable amongst many workers — are the fathers of American history, to whose labours is due the preservation of an enormous mass of information — all we possess in fact — which would otherwise have perished irrevocably.

It may be safely assumed that little or nothing of importance which the Indians themselves knew escaped the researches which these and other men of their order conducted with patience and intelligence. Those among the early ecclesiastics in whom the critical faculty was wanting made good this lack by their diligence, amassing the materials which served later writers, to whom fell the task of assorting the confused historical lumber they had collected. It appears that the Mexicans knew surprisingly little about their own history, and that their trustworthy traditions did not carry them very far back. The Indians of Yucatan, in the time of Diego Landa, were unable to decipher the inscriptions on the ruined temples, and only the most vague and improbable legends concerning the buildings of their ancient cities survived amongst them. It does not seem, therefore, unreasonable to temper our impatience towards Bishop Zumarraga's act of vandalism by the reflection that the destroyed records would have probably furnished no link between the civilisation of Anahuac and that of Yucatan and Central America.

Authorities consulted on Quetzalcoatl, Sahagun, lib. iii., cap. v. -xiv.; Torquemada, lib. iii., cap. vii.; Motolinia in *Icazbalceta* pp. 10, 30, 65; Mendieta, p. 82-98; Clavigero, tom. ii., p. 11-14; Servanda Teresa de Mier in *Bustatnanie*; Orozco y Berra, tom. i., cap. iv., tom. ii., cap. iii.; Brasseur de Bourbourg, lib. ii., cap. iv., lib. iii., cap. ii. Chamay, *Ancient Cities*; *Bulletins of Bureau of American Ethnology*.

APPENDIX V.

THE TEMPLE

This statement is obviously inaccurate; Cortes has just said that fifty steps led to the summit of the chief teocalli which would allow for a very modest elevation, whereas the Giralda Tower of Seville Cathedral was built 300 years before Mexico was discovered and was then 185 feet high. Neither was it during this first visit to the temple of Tlatelolco in Montezuma's company that the idols were overthrown; that event happened in the teocalli of the great temple on another occasion when Montezuma was not present. Most writers — including Prescott — misled by Cortes, have confused the two visits and the two different temples, but Bernal Diaz makes it perfectly clear that the first visit was to the temple adjoining the market place in the Tlatelolco quarter of the city. This temple was even loftier than the principal one, and the arrangements in both were essentially the same (Orozco y Berra, lib. ii., cap. iv.; *Icazbalceta*, *Dialogos de Cervantes*, p. 201). The great teocalli of the chief temple was completed in the form in which the Spaniards beheld it by Montezuma's grandfather, Ahuitzotl, in 1487, when the solemn dedication was

celebrated by the sacrifice of a vast number of human victims, estimated by Torquemada at 72, 344 (*Monarchia Indiana*, lib. ii., cap. lxiii.), by Ixtlilxochitl at 80, 000 (*Historia Chicimeca*), but more credibly fixed by the Tellerian and Vatican Codices at the still respectable figure of 20, 000. Pretexts for wars with various tribes were invented in order to procure the victims for this ghastly hecatomb, and the ceremony of incessant slaughter occupied two days.

The exact form and dimensions of the temple are not positively known, but it is probable that the pyramid was an oblong, measuring something over three hundred feet in length at its base and rising in graduated terraces to a height of something less than one hundred feet. Bernal Diaz (*Hist. Verdad.*, cap. viii.,) says that he counted the steps, which numbered one hundred and fourteen, and this tallies almost exactly with the statement of Andres Tapia (*Relacion*, p. 582,) that he counted one hundred and thirteen steps. Bernal Diaz also measured the pyramids at Cholula and Texcoco in the same way, and counted one hundred and twenty steps on the former, and one hundred and seventeen on the latter, hence, if he was accurate, the great pyramid of Mexico was not the loftiest in the empire. Not one of the Spaniards who saw this edifice seems to have observed it critically, or to have left a complete architectural description of it to posterity. They were all more impressed with the horrors they witnessed in it and their dreadful significance than with the architectural details; all agree that it was a most awesome place, in which dark, gruesome chambers, smelling like a slaughter house, contained hideous idols, smeared with human blood. In these dim recesses, demoniacal priests, clad in black robes, with grotesquely painted faces, framed in blood-clotted locks, celebrated their inhuman rites, and offered smoking hearts on golden salvers to the monstrous deities there enthroned. The presiding figure of this theocratic charnel house was that of the god of war Huitzilopochtli — the humming bird to the left — and of his image Bernal Diaz gives a careful description. Its face was distorted and had terrible eyes; the body was covered with gold and jewels, and was wound about with the coils of golden serpents; in the right hand was held a bow, and in the left a bundle of arrows. Suspended from the idol's neck was a necklace of human heads and hearts made of gold and silver with precious stones set in them, and by its side stood the figure of a page, called Huitziton, bearing a lance and shield richly jewelled. This little statue of the page was carried by the priests in battle, and was also on certain occasions borne with much pomp through the streets. The honours of these altars were shared by Tezcatlipoca — Shining Mirror — who was called "the soul of the world." He was a god of law and severe judgment and was much dreaded. His statue was of black obsidian, and suspended from his plaited hair, which was confined in a golden net, was an ear made of gold, towards which mounted tongues of smoke symbolising ascending prayers. On the summit of the teocalli stood a great cylindrical drum tlapanhuehuatl, made of serpents' skins, which was beaten on certain solemn occasions, and as an alarum. It is said to have given forth a most sinister sound, which could be heard for miles. During the siege, the Spaniards had sad cause to shudder at its fearsome roll which announced the sacrifice of their captive comrades, whose white, naked bodies were even discernible in the dusky procession which moved, in the glare of torches and the sacred fires, up the terraces of the pyramid on its way to the stone of sacrifice. The area of the courtyard, some twelve hundred feet square, was paved with flat polished stones, which were so slippery the Spaniards' horses could hardly keep their footing. Four gates in the surrounding wall, called coatepantli, gave entrance to the courtyard, one facing each of the cardinal points, and over each gate there was kept a store of arms in readiness for attack or defence. Sahagun (*Hist. Nueva Espana*, tom, i., p. 197) enumerates seventy-eight different buildings inside the wall surrounding the courtyard; they comprised chapels, cells for priests, fountains for ablutions, quarters for students and attendants, and a number of smaller teocalli. This tallies with the description of Cortes and Bernal Diaz, and makes it evident that the entire group of buildings somewhat resembled the Kremlin at Moscow, or a vast cathedral close. In one of the temples the Spaniards estimated that a symmetrical pyramid of bones contained one hundred and thirty-six thousand human skulls. Amongst these temples there was one dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, circular in form and having its entrance built in imitation of a serpent's open mouth. Bernal Diaz says that this was a veritable hell, or abode of demons, in which they saw frightful

idols, cauldrons of water in which to prepare the flesh of the victims, which the priests ate, and furnishings like those of a butcher's stall; so that he never called the place other than "hell."

Human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised even in honour of the beneficent deity of the Toltecs, whose mild teachings, pure life, and aversion to war, persuade us that he must have been a Christian bishop. Nothing more conclusively proves that, in spite of their material prosperity, their extended empire, and a certain refinement in their social life, the Aztecs occupied a much lower moral and intellectual level than did their Toltec predecessors in Anahuac. From the Toltecs they had received the foundations of their civilisation; all that was good in their religion or true in their philosophy, all that was known amongst them of science, they received from that mysterious race whose only records are a few neglected and almost unknown ruins.

After the conquest, the great temple was razed to the ground. In its foundations were found a quantity of treasures, which had been placed there as offerings when the pyramid was first begun. The stone idols and carvings were for the most part built into the foundations of the Christian cathedral which stands upon its site.

Montezuma had readily assented, very soon after the arrival of the Spaniards, to the installation of a chapel in the Spanish quarters, and a room was consequently prepared, in which mass was said daily, as long as the supply of wine held out. The soldiers said their daily prayers before the cross and the sacred images, especially at the hour of the Ave Maria.

While seeking for the best place to erect the altar in this room, Alonso Yanez discovered a concealed door, which Cortes, who was informed of the discovery, ordered to be forced open. Beyond was a vast chamber containing the treasure of Axayacatl and other Aztec kings, forming a great heap of gold and jewels in the centre of the room, while all the walls were covered with splendid stuffs, thick feather-work, shields, and other objects of precious metals. After inspecting the fabulous collection, Cortes had the door sealed up again, and cautioned his followers not to betray their knowledge of its existence to the Mexicans (Bernal Diaz, cap. xciii.). Andres de Tapia's account (*Incazbalceta, Doc. Ined.*, tom, ii., p. 580) says that Cortes told Montezuma of his discovery, and that the emperor presented him with all the gold and jewels in that treasury.

After repeated conversations with Montezuma on religious subjects, none of which seemed to advance his conversion, the patience of Cortes gave out, and it was when the Spaniards had been about five months in the city that the destruction of the idols in the great teocalli took place. The scene in the temple is characteristic of the times and the man.

Human life was cheap in Cortes's eyes, and the cruelties inflicted on the natives in the furtherance of his designs show that it was not the inhumanity of the sacrifices which filled him with the most abhorrence. It was the sight of idolatry, of people given over to devil worship, that inflamed his Catholic blood, and there seems, on this occasion, to have been no friar Olmedo at hand to restrain him, as in Cholula. He first called the priests together and delivered a pious exhortation, explaining the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and other Christian beliefs, conjuring them to abandon the superstitions which imperilled their immortal souls, to purify the altars, and dedicate them to the true God and the saints. As the priests defended their own, the controversy enraged Cortes beyond control, and seizing an instrument he began smashing the idols right and left with such magnificent fury that Andres de Tapia declared that he seemed like a supernatural being. Montezuma was notified, and entreated him for prudence's sake to desist, as such profanation would provoke an uprising of the people. Cortes, however, was deaf to remonstrance, and the idols were cast out, the temple washed and put in order, two altars being set up, one to Our Lady and the other to Saint Christopher, with their respective statues upon them. Mass was thenceforth said there, and some of the Indians came to the ceremony, as they wanted rain and, their own gods being overthrown, they were willing to invoke the Spaniards' God. Cortes declared they should have rain, and, with the most confident faith, ordered prayers and a procession to obtain this blessing; although the procession set forth under a cloudless sky, it returned after Mass in such a

downpour that the people waded ankle deep in the streets. Malintzin's religion was vindicated (*Andres de Tapia Relacion*, p. 584-6).

APPENDIX VI.

MASSACRE OF THE MEXICAN NOBLES

This was Pedro de Alvarado. Simultaneously four messengers arrived from Montezuma to complain that the captain had ordered an unprovoked attack upon the Mexicans during a religious festival, and that the latter had merely defended themselves as best they could. The feast of Toxcatl fell upon the tenth of May, and only the highest and noblest adorned with their richest ornaments, but unarmed, took part in the ceremonial dance. Cortes had consented, before he left Mexico, to the usual celebration, with the proviso that there should be no human sacrifices, though very likely the priests reserved their intention to perform that part of the rites privately. The first contrariety arose from Alvarado's refusal to allow the statue of Huitzilopochtli to be restored to its former place, from which it had been ejected to make room for the altars to the Blessed Virgin and St. Christopher. The Tlascalans next excited his suspicions that the festival was merely a pretext to collect a large multitude in the city, the real object being to fall upon the diminished garrison and exterminate it. On the day of the feast, Alvarado and others saw certain idols, decked out for the procession, standing in the court of the temple, and also three youths in new robes and with shaven heads, which indicated that they were destined for sacrifice. Alvarado seized the intended victims, and, by putting them to worse tortures than those of the sacrificial stone, under which one of them died, he obtained such testimony as he wanted from the other two, who were mere lads, to prove that a general revolt was planned. What these poor creatures could be supposed to know of such conspiracies does not appear, but Alvarado was satisfied, and, arming his men, he left some in charge of Montezuma, with orders to kill the nobles who were with him, and repaired with the others to the great teocalli, where six hundred nobles and priests were dancing, while some three thousand others assisted as spectators. The appearance of the Spaniards caused no interruption, but, at a given signal, they drew their weapons and fell upon the defenceless people, slaughtering them without quarter; the doors were guarded, so few escaped, but they gave the alarm and roused the city. Meanwhile the nobles of the court had been slain, and the Spaniards had fortified themselves inside their quarters. The exact place where the dance took place is uncertain, as neither Cortes nor Bernal Diaz mentions it; Acosta contradicting most of the early writers, argues that it must have been the court of the palace where Montezuma was. It nowhere appears, however, that Montezuma was present, and, as the dance was a religious rite, the temple court would seem more indicated for its celebration. Alvarado, who was wounded on the head by a stone, appeared before Montezuma crying: "See what your subjects have done!" but the Emperor answered that had he not begun the disturbance the Mexicans would have remained peaceable, adding, "You have undone yourself and me." Nor did Alvarado's explanations satisfy Cortes, who openly showed his anger upon his arrival.

Indeed, his conduct seems destitute of any reasonable excuse, and his efforts to exculpate himself at his trial were weak and confused; at best he had but the word of a captive, an intended victim, and that wrung from him under torture. Replying to Art. IV., of the accusations against him he alleged, (1) that it was common report in the city that, during Cortes's absence, the reduced garrison would be crushed; (2) on the morning of the festival he had seen a large number of sharp pointed sticks, with which the Mexicans openly boasted they would kill him and his men; (3) the admission of the captive victim, which was confirmed by a native of Texcoco; (4) that a skirmish had already taken place in the palace, in which he himself was wounded, and one Spaniard was killed, and that all would have shared the same fate. Torquemada adds the detail that huge cauldrons were prepared in which to cook the Spaniards. Las Casas advances the theory usual with him, that Alvarado wished to strike such a blow as would terrorise the Indians. Herrera admits that a revolt may have been brewing, but deprecates the wholesale massacre and the taking of jewels from the dead bodies. Clavigero scouts the idea of a conspiracy, and affirms that this

was an invention to shield Alvarado. Oviedo, Sahagun, and Fr. Duran, all exempt the Indians of rebellious intentions. Setting aside the weighty unanimity of these authorities on the question of the alleged conspiracy, Alvarado's conduct would still be without justification, even had there been an intention to attack him, for his proper course would have been to collect all the Spaniards and Tlascalans in his quarters, with sufficient provisions, hold Montezuma and the court nobles as hostages, notify Cortes by messenger, and stand strictly on the defensive until help or instructions came. The situation cannot be properly paralleled with that of Cortes in Cholula, for the conditions were entirely different. Alvarado was the most violent of all the Spanish captains, and his brutality culminated in this inhuman massacre, which drove the long suffering Mexicans to desperation; it destroyed the last illusion about the celestial origin and character of the white men, and brought on the tragedy of the Sorrowful Night, and the siege, with its long train of misery and destruction. From that day forward, the Mexicans were deaf to all overtures from the Spaniards; regardless of suffering, and indifferent to death, they sought only vengeance.

APPENDIX VII.

DEATH OF MONTEZUMA

Montezuma's assurance to the people that he was not held a prisoner, but lived with the Spaniards from choice, free to come and go at his pleasure, was so contrary to obvious facts, and his reproof to them for taking arms, as though they had been the aggressors, was so unjust, that he failed to secure the cessation of hostilities. On the contrary, he had hardly finished speaking when the young prince Quauhtemotzin, who was one of the leaders of the people, reviled him as a coward and the effeminate tool of the Spaniards, declaring that his subjects renounced obedience to one who had so degraded his royal dignity. With that he hurled a stone, and, in the volley of missiles which followed, one struck the Emperor on the head (*Codex Ramirez* in Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. x.; Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y. Moral de las Indias*, lib. vii., cap. xxvi.). Clavigero refuses to believe that Quauhtemotzin so insulted his royal uncle, but offers no reason for his disbelief. The Spaniards, who had been charged to protect Montezuma's person with their shields, were not quick enough, and it is said he was also wounded by arrows in the arm and in the leg. The wounds were not, however, serious, but the unfortunate monarch was evidently determined not to survive this supreme humiliation, and, refusing to allow his hurts to be properly dressed, he remained without food in a profoundly dejected condition. Herrera describes Cortes as showing the greatest concern, solicitously visiting the Emperor to comfort him, but it seems little likely that in the midst of his perilous occupations the commander found time to condole with his wounded captive, for Montezuma's tardy efforts for peace had failed completely, and, though Prescott says that the Aztecs "shocked at their own sacrilegious act . . . dispersed, panic-struck in different directions... so that not one of the multitudinous array remained in the great square," there seems to be no authority for believing that any such dramatic revulsion of feeling took place. Montezuma had fallen from his royalty and his high priesthood, to be a thing of scorn and loathing to his people, while his influence on the course of events was less than nil.

Montezuma Xocoyotzin ninth king of Mexico died on June 30, 1520, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, the eighteenth of his reign, and in the seventh month of his captivity.

His death was attributed, by the Spaniards, to the wound caused by the stone, which struck him on the head; by the Mexicans, it was on the contrary, asserted that he was put to death by Cortes. The *Codex Ramirez*, before quoted from the work of Orozco y Berra, states that Montezuma was found stabbed to death by the Spaniards, with the other chiefs who shared his captivity. Acosta accepts this as true, and Father Duran (cap. 76) says "They found him dead with chains upon his feet, and five dagger wounds in his breast, and with him many other of the chiefs and lords who were prisoners." Amongst the nobles were the kings of Tlacopan and Texcoco and the lord of Tlatelolco. Cacamatzin, according to Ixtlilxochitl was stabbed forty-five times, and he adds that Montezuma died from the wound in his head, "although his

vassals say that the Spaniards themselves killed him, and plunged a sword into his fundament" (aptid, Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. x.). The murder of the other chiefs was deemed necessary, as it was neither possible to be burdened with them in the flight from the city, nor was it wise to release them. Their bodies were thrown out of the Spanish quarters at a spot called Teayotl, because of a stone turtle which stood there, in the hope that their fate might discourage the people, and also give them occupation in preparing their funerals as required by custom (Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxiii.; Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. Chichitneca*). Cortes's account of the wounding and death of Montezuma was naturally followed by Gomara; Oviedo also copies his words, and says that he heard the same account viva voce from Pedro de Alvarado; Herrera asserts that the emperor's wound was not mortal (lib. x., cap. x.), but that he died because he refused all attendance and food; and Bernal Diaz, who relates the same story, adds the affecting detail that Cortes and all the captains and soldiers wept as though they had lost a father (*Verdadera Hist.*, cap. cxxvi.), which those may believe who can. Clavigero refers to the grief of the Spaniards, as described by Bernal Diaz, and says that, in view of the contradictory accounts, it seems impossible to know the truth adding, "I cannot believe that the Spaniards would take the life of a king to whom they owed so many benefits, and from whose death they would derive only evil." He does not say why he cannot believe this; Montezuma's influence was gone; another leader had been chosen by the nation in the person of the brave Quauhtemotzin, and when Cortes announced his death, offering to deliver his body for burial they cried out: "We want Montezuma neither living nor dead!" (Herrera, lib. x., cap. X.) Hence the fallen sovereign's presence was only an embarrassment to Cortes, who was planning to fight his way out of the city with as few encumbrances as possible — even the precious gold was being left behind. The moment the emperor became an obstacle, his doom was sealed, and there was nothing in the character or conduct of Cortes which warrants the belief that he was influenced by sentiments of compassion for the king he had degraded, while his disposal of Cacamatzin at that time, and of Quauhtamotzin later in Yucatan, revealed the absence of any scruples whatever. Prescott joins Clavigero in his generous assumption, and with a fine outburst of indignation finds it "hardly necessary to comment on the absurdity of this monstrous imputation." Such sentiments do credit to the magnanimity of these writers, for it is manifestly the nobler part to admit such a charge against Cortes, only when forced by irrefutable proofs, which in this case are not forthcoming. Orozco y. Berra, the results of whose exhaustive researches are expressed in calm, judicial language in his *Conquista de Mexico*, adopts the Indian version. Clavigero has perhaps said the most that generous impartiality will allow, when he states that "There reigns such variety among historians that it seems impossible to verify the truth." Torquemada (lib. iv., cap. Ixx.) records that Montezuma's body was taken to Copalco where it was cremated, according to the Aztec usage, though the solemnity was marred by the insults heaped by some of the by-standers upon the hapless corpse. Herrera was of the opinion, that the body was buried at Chapultepec, because the Spaniards heard great lamentations in that quarter, and because that was the place of royal sepulture, but the observation of Clavigero on this opinion, that there was no fixed place for burying the sovereigns and that Chapultepec, being some three miles distant from the Spanish quarters it was hardly likely they could have heard lamentations, seems to weaken this assumption.

Diego Munoz Camargo, the Tlascalcan historian, would seem to be the chief authority for the pious legend that Montezuma was baptised by his own desire just before he died, and that Cortes and Pedro de Alvarado were his godfathers. Gomara asserts that the Emperor had expressed his wish to become a Christian prior to Cortes's departure from Mexico to meet Narvaez, but that the ceremony was deferred until Easter so that it might be celebrated with more solemnity, and was afterwards forgotten amid the confusion of the changed circumstances. The silence of Cortes on a matter he would have been eager to report in his letters, seems alone sufficient to dispose of the assertion, and Torquemada, who would also have not been slow to enroll a royal convert, does not admit the story (*Monarchia Indiana*, lib. iv., cap. Ixx.). A most instructive dissertation on this subject is contained in an interesting study by Don Jose Fernando Ramirez entitled *Bautismo de Motecuhzoma II., Noveno Rey de Mexico*.

A pathetic figure is that of this Aztec king, gifted with some of the highest qualities of his race, venerated during a long and prosperous reign almost as a demi-god, only to be humbled to the very dust. The starting point of his downfall was his superstition, for had he listened to his generals rather than to his priests Cortes and his handful of adventurers would never have left the sea-coast alive. The misfortunes and humiliations of the last months of his life seem to have completely changed his character, so that from the time of his docile abdication at the bidding of Cortes, to the infamy of his appearance on the walls of the Spanish quarters to rebuke his long-suffering people, was but a step on the way to the nameless grave where his dishonoured form was finally laid.

Prescott's description of the scenes of Montezuma's death-bed, with Cortes present to whom he confided his daughters, is based upon Cortes's own narration made in the grant afterwards conceded to one of the daughters, Dona Isabel, when she married Alonzo Grado, who is described in the same document as an hidalgo of Alcantara (Prescott, lib. iv., cap. ii.)

It is to Cortes's credit that he recognised the debt of the Spanish crown to Montezuma, and that he procured the royal protection for his children.

THIRD LETTER

Sent by Fernando Cortes, Captain and Superior Justice of Yucatan, called the New Spain of the Ocean Sea, to the Very High and Most Potent and Invincible Lord, Don Carlos, August Emperor and King of Spain, Our Lord, concerning the things transpired and very worthy of admiration in the conquest and recovery of the very great and marvellous city of Temixtitan, and of the other provinces subject to it which had revolted. In which city and provinces the said Captain and Spaniards obtained great and signal victories, worthy of perpetual memory. Likewise, relation is made how the South Sea has been discovered; and many other and great provinces, very rich in mines of gold, and pearls, and precious stones, and information is even had that there are spices.

Very High and Most Powerful Prince, Very Catholic and Invincible Emperor, King and Lord. With Alonzo de Mendoza, native of Medellin, whom I sent from this New Spain on the fifth of March of the past year of 1521, I despatched a second account to Your Majesty of everything that had happened here; this I finished writing on the thirtieth of October of the year 1520, but on account of very contrary winds and the loss of three ships, one of which I had prepared to send with the said account to Your Majesty, and the two others to bring help from the island of Hispaniola, there was much delay in the said Mendoza's departure, as I more fully wrote by him to Your Majesty. In the closing part of that despatch I told Your Majesty how, after the Indians of Temixtitan had expelled us by force, I had marched against the province of Tepeaca, one of its vassals which had rebelled against us, and that, with the Spaniards who remained, and our friendly Indians, I had made war on them, and reduced them to the service of Your Majesty. I also said that the past treachery and the great sufferings and deaths of the Spaniards were so fresh in our hearts, that my determination was to return against the inhabitants of that capital, who had been the cause of all; that I had begun to build thirteen brigantines, with which to do them all the damage I could from the lake, if they persevered in their wicked intention; that while the said brigantines were being made, and we and the friendly Indians were preparing ourselves to return against the enemy, I had sent for reinforcements of people, and horses, and artillery, and arms, to the island of Hispaniola, where I had written regarding it to Your Majesty's officials who reside there, sending them monies for the necessary outlay and expenses. I also assured Your Majesty that, till we were victorious over the enemy, I would neither think of rest, nor would I cease to use all possible solicitude to accomplish it, disregarding whatever danger and hardship might overtake me; and that with this determination I was preparing to leave the said province of Tepeaca.

I likewise made known to Your Majesty how a caravel, belonging to Francisco de Garay, Lieutenant Governor of the island of Jamaica, had arrived in great distress at the port of Vera Cruz, carrying about thirty men, who said that two other ships had sailed for the river of Panuco, where the natives had routed one of Francisco de Garay's captains; and it was feared if these landed there, that they would suffer injury from the natives along the said river. I likewise wrote to Your Majesty that I had immediately determined to send another caravel in search of the said ships, to let them know what had happened.

After writing this, it pleased God that one of these ships should reach the port of Vera Cruz, on board of which there was a captain with about a hundred and twenty men. He learned there how Garay's former party had been routed. The captain who was routed assured them that they could not land at the river of Panuco without sustaining much harm from the Indians. While they still lay in the said port, with the determination to go to that river, a storm with violent wind arose which drove the ship out to sea, breaking

the cables, and driving it into a port, called San Juan, twelve leagues higher up the coast, where, after disembarking all the people, and seven or eight horses, and as many mares which they had brought, they beached the ship, which leaked badly. As soon as this was made known to me, I wrote to the captain immediately, telling him that I was much grieved at what had happened to him, and that I had sent orders to my lieutenant at Vera Cruz that he and his people should be given a very good reception and whatever they might need, and also to ascertain their plans; and that, if all or any of them wished to return in the ships which were lying there, he should give them permission and facilitate their departure. The captain and his men determined to remain, and join me, but we know nothing about the other ships thus far, and, as so long a time has already elapsed, we much doubt of their being saved; may God have taken them to a good port!

Being about to leave the province of Tepeaca, I learned that two provinces, called Cecatami and Xalazingo, subject to the lord of Temixtitan, had rebelled, and on the road from the city of Vera Cruz thither, which passes that way, they had killed some Spaniards. To render that road secure, and to administer chastisement to them in case they did not submit peaceably, I sent a captain with twenty horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers, ordering him, on the part of Your Majesty, to require the natives of those provinces to submit peaceably as vassals of Your Majesty, as they had done heretofore, and to use all possible moderation with them; but, if they would not receive him peaceably, to make war on them. I told him when he had done that, and quieted these two provinces, to return with his men to Tascaltecal, where I would wait for him. He left in the beginning of the month of December 1520, and pursued his road to those provinces which were about twenty leagues distant.

Having despatched this business, Very Powerful Lord, I left Segura de la Frontera, in the province of Tepeaca, at mid-December of that year, placing a captain with sixty men there because the natives besought me greatly to do so; and I sent all my people on foot to the city of Tascaltecal, where the brigantines were being built, which is nine or ten leagues from Tepeaca, while I with twenty horsemen went that day to sleep in the city of Cholula. The inhabitants desired my coming on account of the sickness of small-pox,¹³² which also affected the natives of these countries, and those of the islands. Many of their caciques having died from it, they desired that by my action, and with their approval, others should be appointed in their places. We were very well received by them on our arrival, and, having finished this business to their satisfaction in the manner I have stated, and having explained to them my purpose to make war on the province of Mexico and Temixtitan, I besought them, that, inasmuch as they were vassals of Your Majesty, they should stand firm in their friendship with us, as we would with them till death. I besought them also to aid me with people during the war, and to treat well the Spaniards who would be coming and going through their country, which as friends they were obliged to do. They promised to do this, and having stayed two or three days in their city, I left for Tascaltecal, a distance of six leagues, and, on my arrival there, all the Spaniards and those of the city met me with great rejoicing at my coming. The next day all the chiefs of the city and provinces came to speak to me, and told me how Magiscatcin, who was the principal lord of all of them, had died of that illness, the small-pox, and that they knew I would be much grieved by it as he was my great friend. His son, about twelve or thirteen years old, survived, to whom all the lordship of his father now belonged, and they prayed me to recognise him as his heir. And I in the name of Your Majesty did this, at which all of them remained very satisfied.

When I arrived in this city, I found that the master workmen and carpenters had used great diligence with the joining and planking of the brigantines, and that they had accomplished a very reasonable amount of work. I immediately arranged to send to Vera Cruz for all the iron and nails they had there, together with the sails and tackle and other needful things for them; and, as we had no pitch, I ordered certain Spaniards to make it in a neighbouring forest. All provisions for the brigantines were thus ordered to be ready in time, so that, please God, I might, on arriving in the province of Mexico and Temixtitan, send for them from there, a distance of sixteen leagues from the city of Tascaltecal. During the fifteen days I remained there, I did nothing but urge on the master workmen, and the preparation of arms for our march.

132) Said to have been introduced by a negro slave who came with Panfilo de Narvaez (Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. lxxx.).

Two days before Christmas, the captain, who had gone to the provinces of Cecatami and Xalazingo, arrived with the people on foot and horseback, and I learned how some of the natives had fought them, but that, at the end, some of their free will, and some by compulsion, had sued for peace. They brought me some lords of those provinces, whom, notwithstanding that they were entirely to blame for their rebellion and the death of the Christians, I pardoned, because they promised me that from henceforth they would be good and loyal vassals of Your Majesty. Thus, that undertaking was finished, in which Your Majesty was well served, not only in the pacification of those natives, but also in insuring the safety of all the Spaniards who will have to come and go through these provinces, to and from the city of Vera Cruz.

The second day after Christmas, I held a review in the city of Tascaltecal, and found forty horsemen and five hundred and fifty foot-soldiers, eighty of them cross-bowmen and musketeers, with eight or nine field-pieces, but very little powder. I divided the horsemen into four troops of ten each, and formed nine captaincies of sixty Spanish foot each. All being assembled for this review, I spoke to them as follows: They already knew that they and I had come to serve Your Sacred Majesty by settling in this country; and they likewise knew how all the natives of it had acknowledged themselves as vassals of, Your Majesty, and how they had persevered as such, receiving good deeds from us and we from them, until, without any cause, all the inhabitants of Culua including the people of the great city of Temixtitan, and those of all the other provinces subject to it, had revolted against Your Majesty; yet more, they had killed many of our relatives and friends, and had expelled us from their country. That they should remember how many dangers and hardships we had endured, and how it was profitable to the service of God and Your Catholic Majesty to return and recover what was left, inasmuch as we had just causes and good reasons on our side. One cause was because we fought for the spread of our Faith, and against barbarians; another was because we served Your Majesty; another was for the security of our lives; and another because we had many natives, our friends, to help us. All these were strong motives to animate our hearts; for the same reasons I told them to cheer up and be brave. In the name of Your Majesty, I had made certain ordinances for maintaining discipline and regulating the affairs of the war, which I then immediately published. I enjoined them to likewise comply with these, because much service would be rendered by so doing, to God, and Your Majesty. They all promised to do so and to comply with them, declaring they would very gladly die for our Faith and Your Majesty's service, or return to recover the loss, and revenge so great a treachery as had been done by the people of Temixtitan and their allies. I, in the name of Your Majesty, thanked them for it. After this we returned to our camp on the day after the review in good spirits.

The next day, which was the feast of St. John the Evangelist, I had all the chiefs of the province of Tascaltecal assembled, and told them that they already knew I was about to leave the next day to enter the country of our enemies; that they must see that the city of Temixtitan could not be captured without the brigantines which were being built, and that hence I prayed that they would furnish everything necessary to the workmen and the other Spaniards I left there, and would treat them well as they had always treated us. I said also that they should be prepared, if God should give us the victory, whenever I should send from the city of Tasaico¹³³ for the joinings, planks, and other materials for the brigantines, to send them. They promised to do so, and they also wished to send some warriors with me at once, declaring that when the brigantines started they would go with all their people, for they wished to die where I died, and to revenge themselves on the Culuans their mortal enemies.

Next day which was the twenty-eighth of December, the Feast of the Innocents, I left with all my people in good order, and we marched six leagues from Tascaltecal to a town called Tezmoluca,¹³⁴ belonging to the province of Guajocingo, whose natives have always kept the same friendship and alliance with us as the natives of Tascaltecal; and there we rested that night.

In my other account, Very Catholic Sire, I said that I had been informed that the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan were preparing many arms, constructing earth-works and fortifications, and gathering forces for resisting our entrance into the country; for they already knew that I intended to return against them. I

133) Texcoco.

134) Tezmulocan: present name is San Martin Tesselucan, in the state of Puebla.

was aware of this, and knowing how dextrous and crafty they were in matters of war, I many times pondered how we could surprise them; for they knew that we had information of three roads or entrances, by each of which we might advance into their country. I determined to enter by the road of Tezmoluca, because as its pass was the roughest and steepest of all, I felt sure that we would not encounter much resistance there, nor would they be so much on their guard.

The next day after the Feast of the Innocents, having heard Mass, and recommended ourselves to God, we left the town of Tezmoluca, I leading the vanguard, with ten horsemen, and sixty light foot-soldiers, all able men of war. We pursued our road, leading up to the pass with all possible order, and sleeping four leagues from Tezmoluca on the top of the pass which is already within the limits of Culua. Although great cold prevailed, we made ourselves comfortable that night with large quantities of wood we found there, and on the next morning, a Sunday, we set out to follow our road, descending the pass to the plain. I sent four horsemen and three or four foot soldiers to reconnoitre the country, and, on our march descending the pass, I ordered the horsemen to go ahead and after them the archers and musketeers, and thus the rest of the people in their order; because, however unprepared we might take the enemy, we were certain they would come to attack us on the road, having some trap or other device prepared to injure us. As the four horsemen and the four foot soldiers were advancing, they found the road obstructed by trees and branches cut and thrown over it, with many large, thick pines and cypresses, which seemed to have been but just cut down; and, thinking the road further on might not be so much obstructed, they continued ahead, but the further they proceeded the more obstructed by pines and cypresses they found it. The whole pass was well wooded, and had many dense shrubs, so they marched with much difficulty; and, seeing the road in that condition, they became much alarmed, fearing that behind each tree the enemy lurked. On account of the thick woods, the horses could be little used, and the further they proceeded the greater became their alarm.

When they had already gone some distance in this manner, one of the four horsemen said to the others, "Brothers, let us go no farther. If you agree, it would be better to return, and inform the captain of the obstacles we have found, and of the danger in which we are, as we cannot make any use of the horses; but if not, let us go ahead inasmuch as I have offered my life till death, as well as all of you, for accomplishing this march." The others replied that this counsel was very good, but it did not appear to them wise to return to me until they had seen the enemy or ascertained how far the road went. So they set out again, and, when they saw that it continued a long way, they halted, and sent one of the soldiers to tell me what they had seen.

When I came up with the vanguard and the horsemen, we pushed ahead on that bad road, recommending ourselves to God; and I sent to order those of the rear-guard to hurry up and not be alarmed, as we would soon reach level ground. When I joined the four horsemen, we advanced in spite of many obstacles and difficulties. After marching half a league, it pleased God we should come down to level ground, where I halted to await the people. These I told, when they arrived, that all should give thanks to Our Lord, Who had brought us safely thus far, whence we could first behold all the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan which are on the lakes and in their neighbourhood. Although we were glad at beholding them, we felt some sorrow, remembering the losses we had sustained, and we all vowed never to quit the country without victory, even if we died there. With this determination, we all advanced as merrily as if it were a pleasure party. The enemy having already observed us, instantly made many and great smoke signals all over the country, so I again exhorted and cautioned the Spaniards that they should behave as they had always done and as was expected of them, and that no one should stray aside but all should march in good order close together. Already the Indians began to yell at us from some hamlets and small towns, calling on the entire land for the people to assemble and attack us at some bridges and difficult places near by there. We made such haste, however, that we were already down in the plain before they could collect; and, marching thus, we met certain squadrons of Indians on the road in front of us, and I ordered fifteen horsemen to break through them, which they did without any loss to ourselves, killing some of them with their lances. We followed on our road towards the city of Tesaico[Texcoco], which is one of the greatest and finest to be found in all these parts, and, as the people on foot were

somewhat tired, and it was getting late, we slept in a town called Coatepeque (which we found deserted) which is subject to the city of Tesaico and three leagues distant from it.

That night we bore in mind that, as this city and its provinces, called Aculuacan, is very great, and contains many people, possibly more than a hundred and fifty thousand men were ready at the time to attack us, so I, with ten of the horsemen, took the watch and guard of the first quarter, and ordered the people to be well on the alert. The next day, which was Monday, the last of December, we followed our road in the usual order, and at a quarter of a league from the town of Coatepeque, while we were all advancing amidst perplexity, discussing with each other as to whether the Tesaicans would be hostile or friendly, rather believing that it would be the former, four principal Indians met us on the road bearing a banner of gold on a pole,¹³⁵ which weighed about four marks of gold, giving us to understand by this sign that they came peaceably; God only knows how much we desired peace, and how much we stood in need of it, being as we were so few and so cut off from help in the midst of the forces of our enemies. When I saw the four Indians, one of whom was known to me, I halted our people and met them. After we had greeted one another, they said they came on the part of the chief of that city and province, who is called Guanacacin.¹³⁶ They besought me, on his part, to do no injury to his country nor to permit any to be done; because the people of Temixtitan were to blame for the past injuries I had sustained and not they, and they wished to be Your Majesty's vassals and my friends, as they would always preserve our friendship; and they invited us to enter the city, where by their deeds, we should recognise their sincerity. I answered, after welcoming them through the interpreters, that I rejoiced in their peace and friendship, and that, though they excused themselves for the war waged on me in the city of Temixtitan, they also well knew that in certain of their subject towns, five or six leagues from the city of Tesaico, they had killed five horsemen, forty-five of my foot-soldiers, and more than three hundred Indians of Tascaltecal, and had taken much silver, gold, and other things from them; also that, inasmuch as they could not excuse themselves from this fault, the penalty would be the restoration of our property; and that on this condition, — although they well deserved death for having killed so many Christians, — I would make peace with them, since they offered it to me, but otherwise I would have to treat them with the utmost severity. They answered that the lord and chief of Temixtitan had taken all those things, but they would search for what they could, and return it to me. They asked me if I would come that day to the city, or would lodge in one of the two towns similar to suburbs, called Coatinchan and Guaxuta,¹³⁷ which extend unbrokenly for about a league and a half from it. The latter, as it transpired afterwards, was what they wished. I told them that I would not stop until I reached the city of Tesaico; and they said we would be welcome and they would go ahead and prepare quarters for the Spaniards and myself. On reaching these two towns, some of their chiefs came out to meet us and bring us food.

About noon, we reached the body of the city where they had prepared our quarters in a very large house, which had belonged to the father of Guanacacin, lord of the said city. Before we entered our quarters, I assembled our people, and proclaimed by the public crier that no one under penalty of death should leave the quarters without my permission. The building was so large that double the number of Spaniards could have lodged comfortably in it. I did this so that the natives of the city might be reassured and return to their homes, because it seemed to me that we did not see a tenth part of the people usually found in the city, nor any women and children; which was an alarming sign. On the day we entered the city, which was New Year's Eve, I disposed our quarters, and, still somewhat disquieted on account of the

135) This was the usual flag of truce. It was in the form of a square of netting. Cortes, with Israelitish rapidity, calculated its money value at four marks, and Bernal Diaz was equally quick at estimating it to be worth eighty dollars: eight ounces went the mark.

136) Coanacochtzin succeeded his brother Cacamatzin who was strangled by order of Cortes on the Sorrowful Night. He had long aspired to his brother's crown, and, with his younger brother Ixtlilxochitl, shared in the betrayal of Cacamatzin when he was seized in his palace at Texcoco and carried by boat to Mexico. Ixtlilxochitl had already met Cortes on the road from Tlascala to Tlepehuacan, bearing likewise his flag of truce, and offering his friendship and alliance.

137) Coatinchan and Huexothla. From Chiantla and Texcoco the villages and haciendas extended in an unbroken succession to Coatepec.

prisoners, those messengers of whom they spoke, and all the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan who remained in their country; and that I would not otherwise pardon them; and that they should return to their homes with their people, and then prove by their deeds that they were good vassals of Your Majesty. Although we exchanged many other arguments, they were unable to get anything else out of me, and returned to their country assuring me they would always do what I wished, and from henceforward they have always been, and are, loyal and obedient in Your Majesty's service.

In the other account, Very Fortunate and Most Excellent Prince, I told Your Majesty that, when they routed and expelled me from the city of Temixtitan, I took with me the son and two daughters of Montezuma, the lord of Tesaico, Cacamacin, his two brothers, and many other chiefs whom I held prisoners, and that all of them had been killed by the enemy (although they belonged to their own nation and some of them were their chiefs), except two brothers of Cacamacin, who by a happy chance were able to escape. When I reached the province of Tascaltecal, one of these two brothers, called Ipacsuchil,¹⁴⁰ otherwise called Cucascacin, whom I had already, in the name of Your Majesty and with the approval of Montezuma, appointed lord of the city of Tesaico and the province of Aculuacan, escaped, and returned to the city of Tesaico, where they had elected for chief another of his brothers called Guanacacin,¹⁴¹ whom I have above mentioned. It is said that he had Cucascacin, his brother, killed in the following manner: On his arrival in Tesaico, the guards seized him and informed Guanacacin their lord, who communicated the news to the lord of Temixtitan. As soon as the latter heard that the said Cucascacin had come back, he could not believe he had escaped from us, but suspected he must have gone there in our interest to furnish us some information; so he immediately sent order to Guanacacin to kill Cucascacin, his brother. Guanacacin obeyed without delay. The younger of the brothers still remained with me, and being quite a lad, our conversation made more impression upon him, and he became a Christian, taking the name of Don Fernando.¹⁴² When I left the province of Tascaltecal for Mexico and Temixtitan, I left him there with certain Spaniards, and I shall relate hereafter to Your Majesty what afterwards happened there.

The day after my return from Iztapalapa to the city of Tesaico, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval,¹⁴³ aguacil mayor of Your Majesty, in command of twenty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, musketeers, archers, and shield bearers, for two very necessary objects: first, to escort out of this province certain messengers I was sending to the city of Tascaltecal to learn in what state the thirteen brigantines, which were being made there, were, and for some other necessary things, as well for the people of Vera Cruz, as for my own company; and second, to make sure of that region, so that the Spaniards might come and go in safety; for at that time we could neither go out of the province of Aculuacan without passing through the enemy's country, nor could the Spaniards in Vera Cruz and other parts, come to us without much danger from the adversary. I ordered the aguacil mayor, after having conducted the messengers safely, to go to a province called Chalco,¹⁴⁴ bordering on this of Aculuacan; for I had proofs that the natives of that province, although belonging to the league of Culua, wished to become vassals of Your Majesty but did not dare, on account of a certain garrison the Culuans had placed near them.

The said captain left, taking with him all the Indians of Tascaltecal who had carried our baggage, and others who had come with us and had obtained some plunder in the war. The latter marched some distance ahead, as the Captain believed that, if the Spaniards brought up the rear, the enemy would not dare to

140) Cortes misses this name entirely; which is not to be wondered at as the boy was called Ahuaxpitatzin.

141) Meaning Coanacochtzin.

142) He is described, by the historian Ixtlilxochitl, as being as white as a Spaniard, tall, graceful, and of genial manners. He spoke Castilian fluently, and almost every evening after supper he spent much time in discussion with Cortes, who became very fond of him. This lad was placed on the throne of Texcoco, and Antonio de Villareal and Pedro Sanchez Farfan had charge of his education, while Prince Ixtlilxochitl, who had also been baptised under the name of Fernando, had command of Texcocan military operations.

143) Already mentioned as aguacil mayor of Vera Cruz; he was a fellow townsman of Cortes from Medellin and one of the bravest and most competent captains in Mexico, being also extremely popular with his men, and always faithful to his commander. In temperament, he was a happy contrast to Pedro de Alvarado. His death at an early age, which took place in 1528 at Palos, was a great grief to Cortes, who attended him in his last hours.

144) Chalco was tributary to Mexico but under a ruler of its own.

attack them; but the adversaries in the lake towns and along the coast, as soon as they saw them, attacked the rear of the Tascaltecs and captured, plundered, and even killed some of them. When the captain arrived with the horsemen and foot soldiers, he attacked them vigorously with lances, and killed many; those who escaped retreated to the water and the other towns near by. The Indians of Tascaltecal went back to their country with what remained to them, accompanied by the messengers I had sent. All these being placed in safety, Gonzalo de Sandoval continued his road to the province of Calco, which was very near at hand. Early next morning a large number of the enemy came out to attack him, and, both having formed on the field, our men opened the attack; the horsemen routed two squadrons in such wise that the others quickly abandoned the field, and our forces burned and killed amongst them.

This being accomplished, and that road cleared, the people of Calco came out to receive the Spaniards, all rejoicing together greatly. The chiefs said they wished to come and speak with me, so they left and came to sleep at Tesaico, where some of them appeared before me with two of the sons of the lord of Calco. They gave me about three hundred dollars of gold in pieces and told me how their father had died, and that, at the time of his death, he had told them that the greatest grief he took with him was not to see me before he died, for he had been expecting me a long time; and he had commanded them to come and see me as soon as I should come to this province, and to look upon me as their father. As soon as they had known of my coming to the city of Tesaico, they said that they had wished to come immediately to see me, but, out of fear of the Culuans, they had not dared; nor would they now have dared to come had the captain whom I had sent not arrived in their country; they added that, when they returned to it, I must give them many other Spaniards to conduct them in safety. They also told me that I well knew that never, either in war or otherwise, had they been against me, and that I also well knew that, when the Culuans were attacking our quarters in Temixtitan and the Spaniards whom I had left there while I went to meet Narvaez in Cempoal, there were two Spaniards in their country in charge of certain maize which I had sent them to collect; they had escorted these men to the province of Guaxocingo, for they knew that the people there were our friends, so that the Culuans might not kill them as they did all who were outside the quarters in Temixtitan. They told me this and other things, weeping, and I thanked them very much for their good disposition and deeds, promising them that I would always do everything they desired and that they should be well treated. Thus far they have always shown very good will, and have proved very obedient to all that is commanded them on the part of Your Majesty.

These sons of the lord of Calco and those who came with them told me one day that, as they wished to return to their country, they besought me to give them people who would conduct them in safety. Gonzalo de Sandoval, with certain horsemen and foot soldiers, escorted them, with orders after he had left them in their country, to go to the province of Tascaltecal and bring back with him certain Spaniards who were there, and Don Fernando, the brother of Cacamacin, whom I have mentioned before. Four or five days later the aguacil mayor returned with the Spaniards, bringing with him the said Don Fernando. A few days afterwards, I learned that, as he was a brother of the lords of this city, the sovereignty belonged to him, although there existed other brothers. For this reason, and because the province was without a ruler, inasmuch as his brother Guanacacin, the lord of it, had deserted it and gone to Temixtitan, and also because Don Fernando was a very good friend of the Christians, I, in Your Majesty's name, caused him to be acknowledged as ruler. The inhabitants of this city, although at that time there were very few left in it, elected him, and thenceforward obeyed him; many others who were absent, or who had fled, began to return to the city and province of Aculuacan, and they obeyed and served the said Don Fernando; and thenceforward the city began to be rebuilt and well populated.

Two days after this was done, the lords of Coatinchan and Guaxuta came, and told me they had positive information that all the power of Culua would come against me and the Spaniards, for the whole country was full of foes; and that they could not decide whether they should bring their wives and children where I was or if they should take them to the mountains; for they were very much afraid. I told them not to be at all afraid, but to stay in their homes without making any change, adding that I desired nothing so much as to meet the Culuans on the battle field. I advised them to be prepared, and to place their watchmen and

few people, and seeing these so uneasy, the thought struck us that they refrained from showing themselves and going about the city on account of fear, which somewhat quieted our apprehensions. Towards evening, certain Spaniards mounted some lofty terraces, from whence they could observe the whole town, and they saw that all the natives were abandoning it, some putting their effects in canoes (which they call *acales*) on the lake, and others going up into the hills. Although I immediately ordered their departure to be stopped, it was already so late that night overtook us, and, as they used such great haste, it was useless. Thus the chief of the city, whom I longed, as for my salvation, to have in my hands, escaped with many of the other chiefs to the city of Temixtitan, which by the lake is six leagues from there, taking away all their possessions. For this reason, and to save what they wanted, those messengers had come to see me as I have said above, so as to delay me somewhat, that upon entering the city I might do them no harm; and that night they thus abandoned not only us but also their city.

Three days thus elapsed in this city without any encounter with the Indians, for they neither dared to attack us, nor were we disposed to go out far searching for them, as my final intention was, that if ever they should wish to come seeking peace, to receive them, and to always require this of them. At this time the lords of Coatinchan, Guaxuta, and Autengo,¹³⁸ which are three of their large towns, and are, as I have said, incorporated and joined to the said city, came, weeping, to ask me to pardon them for having absented themselves from their country, saying that they had never fought with me, at least not of their own free will, and promising hereafter and henceforth to do all that I might command them in the name of Your Majesty.¹³⁹ I told them, through the interpreters, that they had already known the good treatment I had always shown them, and that, in leaving their country and the rest, they had done wrong; but, inasmuch as they promised to be our friends, they must inhabit their homes, and bring back their wives and children, and I would treat them according to their deeds. They went back, as it seemed to us, not very well content.

When the lord of Mexico and Temixtitan, and all the other lords of Culua (when this name of Culua is used it must be understood as meaning all the country and provinces of these parts subject to Temixtitan), knew that the lords of these provinces had offered themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, they sent them certain messengers to tell them that they had behaved very badly; and that, if they had done it from fear, they should realise that the Culuans were many, and had sufficient power to kill me and all the Spaniards and all the Indians of Tascaltecal, which indeed they would very soon accomplish; but that, if they had done it to save their lands, they should abandon them and come to Temixtitan, where they would receive larger and greater towns for their residence. The chiefs of Coatinchan and Guaxuta bound these messengers, and brought them to me; and they immediately confessed that they had come from the lords of Temixtitan, but that it had been to ask those chiefs to act as mediators, since they were my friends, in making peace between them and myself. But the men of Guaxuta and Coatinchan denied this saying, and added that the people of Mexico and Temixtitan desired nothing but war. Although I believed they spoke the truth, nevertheless, as I wished to entice the people of the great city into friendship with us, because on them depended peace or war with the other provinces which had revolted, I ordered those messengers to be liberated, and told them to have no fears, for I would send them again to Temixtitan. I prayed them to tell those lords that, although I had reason to do so, I did not want war with them, but rather to be friends as we had been before; and in order to assure them still more and to win them over to the service of Your Majesty, I sent them word that I well knew that the principal persons who had led them into the past war were already dead; that the past was the past, and that they ought not to provoke the destruction of their lands and cities, as I would be much distressed by it. With this I set the messengers free, and they went away, promising to bring me the answer. The lords of Coatinchan and Guaxuta and I remained better friends on account of this good action than before, and I pardoned them their past errors and thus they left well satisfied.

138) Now called Tenango Tepopula.

139) These people came begging forgiveness for their part in the former hostilities and offering assistance; thus one by one, the adjacent cities and tribes abandoned the capital to its fate.

Having been seven or eight days in the city of Tesaico without hostilities or any encounter, fortifying our quarters, and ordering everything necessary for our defence, and for attacking the enemy, and, seeing they did not attack me, I sallied out from the city with two hundred Spaniards, amongst whom were eighteen horsemen, thirty archers, ten musketeers, and three or four thousand friendly Indians. I followed the shore of the lake till we reached the city called Iztapalapa, which is two leagues by water from the great city of Temixtitan, and six from Tesaico; it contains about ten thousand households, and half, or even two-thirds, of it is built on the lake. Its lord, Montezuma's brother, whom the Indians, after the latter's death, had selected as sovereign, was the leading one in making war on us, and expelling us from the city. For this reason, as well as because I had learned that the people of Iztapalapa were very badly disposed towards us, I determined to march against them. When their people perceived me, about two leagues before arriving there, some warriors immediately appeared on land, and others in canoes on the lake; thus we advanced over those two leagues, skirmishing, both with those on land and with those on water, till we reached the said city. Almost two-thirds of a league outside the town, they had opened a causeway, which was like a dyke between the fresh and salt-water lakes, as Your Majesty may see from the map of the city of Temixtitan I have sent. When the dyke was opened the water of the salt lake began to rush with great impetus into that of the freshwater lake, although the two lakes are more than half a league apart; while we, not noticing the trap in our eagerness for victory, passed all right and continued our approach, until we entered, mixed up with the enemy, into the city. As they were already warned of our approach, all the houses on land were deserted, and all the people took refuge with their property in the houses on the lake, and those who fled also retreated to them, fighting us very stoutly. But Our Lord was pleased to so strengthen His own that we pursued them until we drove them into the water, sometimes breast high, and at other times swimming; and we captured many of the houses in the water. More than six thousand souls, men, women, and children of the inhabitants, perished, for our Indian allies, seeing the victory which God gave us, had the sole idea to kill right and left.

As night came on, I collected my people, and set fire to some of the houses; and, while they were burning, it seemed that Our Lord inspired me, and recalled to my mind the dyke I had seen on the road, and I figured to myself what a great danger it was. I determined to leave the city, it being already far into the night and quite dark. When I reached the water, which may have been about nine o'clock at night, it was so deep, and flowed with such impetus, that we passed it running full tilt, but some of our friendly Indians were drowned, and all the plunder that had been taken in the city was lost. I assure Your Majesty that, if we had not passed the water that night, or had waited three hours more, none of us would have escaped, because we should have been surrounded by water, without having an outlet anywhere. When day broke, we saw that the water of the one lake had filled that of the other and was running no more, and that all the salt lake was covered with canoes filled with warriors, expecting to take us there. I returned that day to Tesaico, fighting sometimes with those on the lake, though we could do them little harm, as they would immediately retreat in their canoes.

On arriving at Tesaico, I found the people I had left there all safe, and without having had any encounter; and they were very glad at our coming and our victory. The day after we arrived a Spaniard, who had been wounded, died, and he was the first white man the Indians had killed in this campaign. The next day, certain messengers, from the city of Otumba and four other cities near to it, which are four or five leagues from Tesaico, arrived in this city. They came to beg me to pardon them for any fault of theirs in the past war, because all the power of Mexico and Temixtitan gathered in Otumba when we retreated routed, believing they could finish us. The people of Otumba saw plainly that they could not clear themselves from blame, although they excused themselves, saying they had been commanded; but, to incline me the more towards leniency, they told me that the lords of Temixtitan had sent other messengers, asking them to adhere to their party and not to conclude any friendship with us, otherwise they would fall upon them and destroy them. They declared, however, that they would rather be vassals of Your Majesty, and obey my commands. I answered that they knew very well how blameworthy they were for what had happened, and, to secure my pardon and belief in their professions, they would first have to bring me, as

scouts over all the country, and, as soon as they saw or learned that the adversaries were advancing, to let me know. So they went away well admonished as to what I had commanded them. That night I prepared all our force, and placed many watchmen and scouts everywhere that was needful; and we never slept the whole night nor thought of anything but this. Thus we were expecting them during the whole night, believing what the chiefs of Guaxuta and Coatinchan had told us.

The next day, I learned that some of the enemy were moving about the borders of the lake, hoping to surprise and capture some of the Tascaltecan who were coming and going for the camp service. I also learned that they had confederated with two towns, subject to Tesaico, which are near the water, in order to do us all the mischief they could; and that they had fortified themselves, and prepared barricades, ditches, and other works necessary for their defence. Upon learning this, I took next day twelve horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers and two small field pieces, and went to the place where they were, about a league and a half from the city. On the way, I met certain of the enemy's spies and others who were advancing, so we charged them, capturing and killing some of them, and those who were left escaped to the water; we set fire to a part of those towns and returned to our quarters victorious and much pleased. The next day three chiefs of those towns came to ask pardon for what had passed, beseeching us not to destroy them, and promising me not to receive those of Temixtitan any more in their town. As they were persons of no importance, and vassals of Don Fernando, I pardoned them in Your Majesty's name.

The next day, there came to me certain of those Indians, with broken and bruised heads, telling me that the men of Mexico and Temixtitan had returned to their town, but, not meeting with the reception to which they were accustomed, had ill-treated the inhabitants and taken some of them prisoners, and that, if no defence had been offered, they would have captured everything. They prayed me to be on the alert, in case those of Temixtitan returned, so as to give them help; and with this they departed to their town.

The people whom I had left making the brigantines in the province of Tascaltecal were informed that a ship had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, in which had come thirty or forty Spaniards (besides the sailors), eight horses, cross-bows, muskets, and powder. As they did not know how we were progressing with the war, and had no sure way to reach us, they were anxious; and some of the Spaniards were waiting there, for they did not dare to come on, although they desired to bring me such good news. When one of my servants, whom I had left there, learned that some of them wished to try to reach me, he proclaimed, by the public crier, serious penalties for anyone who should leave there until I had sent orders to do so. But one of my lads, realising that nothing in the world would give me so much pleasure as to know of the arrival of that ship and the help it had brought, left by night, although the country was not safe, and came to Tesaico, where we were greatly amazed to see him arrive alive. We were very glad of the news, as we were in extreme need of relief.

The same day, Most Catholic Lord, certain good messengers from Calco arrived here in Tesaico, and told me that, on account of their having come to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, Mexico and Temixtitan were about to attack and destroy them, and were therefore assembled, and had prepared all their neighbours; hence they besought me to help and aid them in such great necessity, for, if I did not do so, they would find themselves in the greatest straits. I assure Your Majesty, as I wrote in my former account, that next to our own hardships and privations, the greatest uneasiness I felt was caused by not being able to aid and favour the friendly Indians who were molested and harassed by the Culuans for being vassals of Your Majesty. I and my companions would always go to the extent of our possibilities in this, as it seemed to us that in nothing could we further the service of Your Caesarean Majesty more than in favouring and aiding Your vassals. In the emergency in which these Calcans appealed to me, I was unable to do for them what I wished, and I told them I could not, as at this season I had wished to send for the brigantines and had prepared, for this purpose, all the people of the province of Tascaltecal, from whence they had to be brought in pieces, and I was obliged to send horsemen and foot soldiers for them. I told them, however, that as they already knew that the natives of Guajocingo, Churultecal, and Guacachula, were all vassals of Your Majesty and our friends, they should go to them and pray them in my name to give them aid and succour, as they lived very near to their country, and to obtain from them a

garrison with whom they might be safe till I could aid them. For the present, I said, I was unable to give them any other assistance.

Although they were not as well satisfied as if I had given them some Spaniards, they thanked me, and begged me to give them a letter of mine to ensure greater success; because between the people of Calco and those two provinces owing to their being of different parties, there had always existed some differences. While occupied in making these arrangements, certain messengers unexpectedly arrived from the said provinces of Guajocingo and Guacachula, who, in the Calcans' presence, told how the chiefs of those provinces had not seen or heard of me since I left the province of Tascaltecal, but, nevertheless, had always kept their watchmen on the hills and mountains which border their country and overlook Mexico and Temixtitan, in order that, if they saw many smokes, which are the signals of war, they might come to help me with their vassals and people; and, as they had recently seen more smoke than ever, they had come to know how I was and if I needed anything, so as to send me some warriors. I thanked them very much, and told them that, by Our Lord's blessing, the Spaniards and myself were well and had always been victorious over the enemy, and that, besides greatly rejoicing in their good will and presence, I rejoiced still more to form an alliance of friendship between them and the Calcans who were present; and I prayed them, as they were both vassals of Your Majesty, to become good friends and help one another against the Culuans who were wicked and perverse, especially now when the Calcans were in need of aid as the Culuans intended to attack them. Thus they became very good friends and confederates, and, after remaining there two days with me, both departed very happy and satisfied, and rendered one another mutual service.

Three days later, when we knew that the brigantines had been completed and the people who were to bring them were ready, I sent Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor with fifteen horsemen and two the hundred foot soldiers to escort them to me. I gave orders to destroy and raze a large town, subject to this of Tesaico, which borders on the confines of the province of Tascaltecal, because its natives had killed five horsemen and forty-five foot soldiers who were coming from Vera Cruz to Temixtitan when I was besieged there, ignorant at the time that such a great treachery had been practised against us. When we entered Tesaico this time, we found in their places of worship or mosques of the city the skins of five horses with their hoofs and shoes, as well tanned as they could have been in any part of the world. They had offered these to their idols in token of victory, together with much wearing apparel and other things belonging to the Spaniards. We found the blood of our brothers and companions spilled and sacrificed all about these towers and mosques, a thing which filled us with grief, for all our past tribulations were thus revived. The traitors of that and the other neighbouring towns had placed themselves in ambush on each side of a difficult pass in order to make sure of those Christians when they were descending a slope on foot, leading their horses behind so that they were unable to use them, and to execute upon them the greatest cruelty that has ever been done; for they took them in the midst killing some, while others, whom they captured alive, they brought to Tesaico and sacrificed, tearing out their hearts before the idols. That it happened thus, is proved by the fact that, when the alguacil mayor passed there, certain Spaniards who had accompanied him, found in a house of a village which is between Tesaico and the place where they captured and killed the Christians, a white wall on which the following words were written in charcoal: "Here the unhappy Juan Yuste was kept a prisoner."¹⁴⁵ A thing fit without doubt to break the heart of those who saw it. He was a gentleman, one of the five horsemen. When the alguacil mayor arrived at that town, the natives, conscious of their great guilt, fled, and the horsemen and Spanish foot soldiers and the friendly Indians pursued and killed many and captured many women and children who were declared slaves. However, moved by compassion, he did not kill and destroy all whom he might have, and before

145) Juan Yuste came originally with Panfilo de Narvaez, passing later into service under Cortes. He started with five horsemen and twenty-five foot to bring some gold from Vera Cruz, and at Tlascala he was joined by three hundred natives. Ignorant of the events which had followed upon Alvarado's massacre in Mexico, he and his party proceeded with entire confidence, and were surprised with the consequences Cortes describes.

he left there he even collected those who survived and restored them to their town, so it is now populated again and repentant of the past.

The alguacil mayor proceeded five or six leagues towards that town of Tascaltecal which is nearest to the borders of Culua, and there he met the Spaniards and the people who were to bring the brigantines. The day after he arrived they left there with the planks and cross timbers, all of which were carried in the most perfect order by eight thousand men; a marvellous sight to see, and it seems to me even to hear of, the bringing of thirteen small ships overland a distance of about eighteen leagues. I assure Your Majesty that from the vanguard to the rear was a distance of two leagues. When they set out, they took eight horsemen and a hundred Spaniards with the van, and more than ten thousand warriors on the flanks, having as captains Yutecad and Teutipil,¹⁴⁶ two chiefs amongst the nobles of the city of Tascaltecal. In the rear-guard, came another hundred odd Spaniards and eight horsemen, and another ten thousand warriors well armed, who had for captain, Chichimecatecle, one of the principal lords of that Province; there were also other captains the latter had brought with him. When they started out, Chichimecatecle escorted the van with the planking, and the other two captains brought up the rear with the joinings; but when they entered the country of Culua the masters of the brigantines ordered the joinings to be taken ahead and the plankings to remain behind; as the latter would cause the most hindrance should any disturbance happen, which would most likely occur in the front. Chichimecatecle, who brought the planking, and until now had led his warriors at the head of the vanguard, took this as an affront, and there was some trouble in pacifying him and making him remain in the rear-guard, because he wished to meet any danger that might present itself. When finally he did agree to this, he nevertheless did not want any Spaniards in the rear-guard, because he was a very brave man and wished to have the honours himself. These captains also brought two thousand Indians carrying provisions. In this order and agreement, they marched three days, and, on the fourth, they entered this city with much rejoicing and noise of kettle-drums when I went out to receive them. As I said above, the people were so spread out that from the entrance of the first until the last had arrived we spent six hours without the line of people being once broken.¹⁴⁷ After they had arrived, and I had thanked the chiefs for the good service they had done us, we assigned them their quarters and provided for them the best we could. They told me they wished to meet the Culuans and that I should see when I commanded it that they and their people were desirous of avenging themselves or dying with us; I told them to rest and that very soon I would give them plenty to do.

When those warriors of Tascaltecal, who were certainly for hereabouts very dashing men, had rested in Tesaico three or four days, I prepared twenty-five horsemen, three hundred foot soldiers, five hundred archers and musketeers, and six small field pieces, and, without telling anyone where we were going, I left

146) Aiutecatl and Teutipil.

147) History hardly records a greater tour de force than the construction, transport, and launching of these brigantines: the glory of the conception belongs to Cortes, but the merit of its execution was due to the Tlascalans. Martin Lopez, a ship-carpenter, was in charge of the work, assisted by a few other Spaniards, but the brunt of the work and the cost were borne by the Tlascalans.

Prescott recalls two instances of similar undertakings but on a smaller scale with less distance to cover: the first was during the siege of Taranto by Hannibal, and the second at the same place, seventeen centuries later under Gonsalvo de Cordoba. Balboa also built four small boats on the isthmus of Darien, two of which he succeeded in carrying to the coast and launching successfully. For magnitude of the undertaking, distance of transport, number of men engaged, with no beasts of burden to help them, and the importance of the issue at stake, the achievement of Cortes and the Tlascalans stands alone. The arrival of the convoy at Texcoco was rightly made the occasion of a triumphal entry, to the sound of music and salutes, while the crowds enthusiastically cheered for Castile and Tlascala. It was found necessary to build a canal in which to join the parts of the brigantines together, and from which to launch them safely on the waters of the lake. In the *Voyage de Thomas Gage*, the author, who travelled in Mexico in 1626, says that, as the tallow and oil required in the ship building were very scarce in Texcoco, they were obtained from the dead bodies of the Indians slain in the daily skirmishes. As the fat of dead Indians was found useful for dressing wounds, there is no reason why it should not do equally well as ship's tallow. Cortes had previously built two brigantines on the lake, bringing the cordage, sails, and iron, from the dismantled ships in Vera Cruz, just to show Montezuma what the "water houses" were like, but he had also counted on using them in case of need; they had, however, been destroyed during the fighting with Alvarado, while Cortes was absent.

the city at nine o'clock in the morning. With me were the captains already named, with more than thirty thousand in their divisions, well organised after their fashion. When it was getting late, we met a body of the enemy's warriors four leagues from the city, and our horsemen broke through them and scattered them and, as the warriors of Tascaltecal were very fleet, they followed, and we killed many of our adversaries; and that night we slept in the field, keeping strict watch.

The next morning, we continued our march, and still I had not given out where I intended to go, because I distrusted some of the people of Tesiaco who were with us, for as yet I had no confidence in them, fearing that they might give information to the people of Mexico and Temixtitan of what I intended to do. We arrived at a town called Xaltoca,¹⁴⁸ which is situated in the midst of the lake, and we found around it many trenches full of water and, as these surrounded the town, it was very strong because the horsemen could not enter. Our adversaries yelled a great deal, discharging darts and arrows at us, but the foot soldiers entered, although with some difficulty, and expelled them, and burnt a great part of the town. That night, we slept a league from there, and as day broke we continued our march, meeting the enemy who yelled at us from afar, as they are accustomed to do in war, a thing which is certainly frightful to hear, and, pursuing them, we reached a great and beautiful city, called Guaticlan;¹⁴⁹ finding it deserted, we lodged in it that night.

The next day, we advanced to another city, called Tenainca,¹⁵⁰ where we encountered no resistance, and without halting we went on to another, called Acapuzalco,¹⁵¹ both of which are on the borders of the lake; but neither did we stop there as I wished very much to reach another city near by, called Tacuba, which is very near to Temixtitan. When we were close to it, we found that there also they had made many trenches filled with water, and that the enemy was on the lookout. As soon as we saw them, we and our friends attacked them briskly, and entered the city, killing some and expelling the other inhabitants from it. As it was already late then, we did nothing else that night, but lodged in a house which was so large that we easily had room for everybody.

At daybreak, our friendly Indians began to pillage and set fire to the whole city except our quarters, and they put such diligence into it that a fourth part was burnt. This was done because, when we were routed the other time in Temixtitan and passed through this city, its inhabitants joined those of Temixtitan and fought us cruelly, killing many Spaniards.

Of the six days we remained in the city of Tacuba, none passed on which we had not some encounters and skirmishes with the enemy. The captains of the Tascaltecons, and some of their men, exchanged many challenges with those of Temixtitan, and they would fight most beautifully one with the other; and many arguments passed between them, with mutual threats and insults, which was undoubtedly a sight to see. During all this time, many of the Indians were killed, without any of our people being injured, though we often entered by the causeways and bridges of the city, where they had so many defences that they resisted us stoutly. Frequently they would pretend to give us a chance to enter, saying: "Come in and enjoy yourselves," and at other times they would say: "Do you think there is now another Montezuma, so that you can do as you please?" Once, while these speeches were passing, I placed myself, they being on the other side, near one of the bridges they had taken away, and signalled to our people to remain quiet; and they also, when they saw that I wished to speak to them, silenced their people. I then asked them, why they were so foolish as to court destruction? and, if there was amongst them any principal chief, to call him because I wished to speak to him. They answered that the whole multitude of warriors I saw there were chiefs so that I might say whatever I wished. As I did not make answer, they began to insult me. Someone of our men, I do not know who, then called to them that they would die of hunger, for we would not allow them to come out to seek for food; they retorted that they needed none, and that when they did they would eat us and the Tascaltecons. One of them took some loaves of maize bread and threw them

148) Xatlocan: a place near Zumpango surrounded by a lake of the same name: it was a dependency of Texcoco.

149) Cuauhtitlan, three leagues from Mexico.

150) Tenayucan.

151) Atzacapotzalco, barely one league from Mexico; called the town of Silversmiths as it was famous for its metal work.

towards us saying: "Take it and eat it if you are hungry for we are not"; and immediately they began to yell and attack us.

As my coming to this city of Tacuba had been principally in order to speak with those of Temixtitan, and to learn their intention, and as my being there profited nothing, I decided, at the end of six days, to return to Tesaica and hasten the construction of the brigantines, so as to surround the enemy by water and land. The day we left, we slept in the city of Goatitan, which I have mentioned above, nor did the enemy ever cease pursuing us, though the horsemen would turn against them from time to time, and thus some fell into our hands.

The next day, we set out, and, as our adversaries saw we were leaving, they thought it was from fear, and a great number gathered and began to pursue us. When I saw this, I ordered the foot soldiers to go ahead without stopping, and five horsemen to accompany them, as their rear-guard, while I remained with twenty others. Six of these I ordered to place themselves in ambush in one place, six in another, and five in another, while I, with three more, went to another place; and it was arranged that when the enemy had passed, believing that we were all marching ahead, as soon as they should hear me cry, "Senor Santiago!" they should rush out and attack from behind. When the time came, we appeared, and fell upon them with our spears, and the pursuit lasted in most beautiful style for about two leagues over a plain as smooth as the palms of our hands. Thus many perished at our hands and at those of the friendly Indians; and the others dropped behind and pursued us no further, while we marched on and overtook our people. That night we slept in a charming town called Aculman, two leagues from Tesaico, for which we left the next day, entering it at noon, and being very well received by the alguacil mayor whom I had left in command, and by all the people, who rejoiced at our coming; especially so because, since the day we left, they had never heard anything of us or of what had happened to us, and they had been anxious for news of us. The day after we arrived, the chiefs and captains of Tascaltecal, asking my permission, left for their country very well satisfied to receive a share of the spoils.

Two days after my return to Tesaico, certain Indian messengers came from the lords of Calco, and told me that they had been commanded to let me know, on their part, that the people of Mexico and Temixtitan were coming to destroy them, and asked me, as they had on other occasions, to send them some help. I immediately arranged to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, with twenty horsemen and three hundred foot soldiers, whom I charged to make all haste and on arriving to give all the favour and help possible to those vassals of Your Majesty, our friends. When he reached Calco, he found awaiting him a great many people, assembled, not only from that province, but also from Guajocingo and Guacachula; after ordering what was to be done, he left, taking his march towards a town called Guastepeque,¹⁵² where the Culuanes were in garrison and from which place they did harm to the Calcans. At a town on the road, many of our foes appeared, but our friends were many and had besides the advantage of the Spaniards and horsemen; and all united and charged upon them and drove them from the field, pursuing them with great slaughter. They rested for the night in that town before Guastepeque and the next day they left. Just as they were about to reach the town of Guastepeque, the Culuanes began to attack the Spaniards, who in a short time routed them, forcing them with great loss out of the town. The horsemen then dismounted in order to feed their horses and rest themselves. While thus off their guard, the enemy fell upon the square of the quarters, screaming and yelling most fiercely, discharging many stones and darts and arrows. The Spaniards took to their arms, and they and our friends rushed out against them and expelled them again, pursuing them for more than a league, and killing many. Very tired, they returned that night to Guastepeque where they rested for two days.

About this time the alguacil mayor learned that many hostile warriors had assembled in a town called Acapichtla,¹⁵³ so he determined to go thither and see if they would surrender peaceably upon his demand.

152) Huaxtepec.

153) Ayachapichtla: Sandoval was not disposed to attack because of his own extreme weariness, and the exhausted condition of his men and horses, but the captain Luis Marin counselled him on no account to withdraw, as upon the Chalcanes, who were watching only to see which side was the stronger in order to give their alliance to the victor, the moral effect would

This town was very strongly situated upon a hill where it could not be attacked by the horsemen. When the Spaniards arrived, the inhabitants, without waiting for anything, began to attack them, throwing stones on them from the heights; and, although many of our friends accompanied the alguacil mayor, they dared not attack the town, seeing its strength, nor engage their adversaries. The alguacil mayor, on seeing this, determined to take the heights of the town by assault or die, and, with the cry of "Senor Santiago!"¹⁵⁴ they began the ascent; and God was pleased to give them such valour that, in spite of the resistance it offered, they took it, but at the cost of many wounded. When the Indians, our friends, followed them, and the enemy recognised their defeat, there was such a slaughter by our people and a throwing of the foe from the heights, that those who were present affirmed that a small river near the town was so dyed with blood that for more than an hour they could not drink, although on account of the heat they were very much in want of water. Having concluded this, and leaving the two towns in peace, though well chastised for their refusal at the beginning, the alguacil mayor returned to Tesaico with all his people, and Your Catholic Majesty may believe that this was a most signal victory, where the Spaniards showed very remarkable valour.

When the people of Mexico and Temixtitan learned that the Spaniards and Calcans had done them such damage, they determined to send certain captains with a large force against them.¹⁵⁵ As soon as the Calcans learned this, they sent to beseech me to send them some aid with all haste, and I again promptly sent the alguacil mayor, with foot soldiers and horsemen; but when he arrived the Culucans and the Calcans had already met in the field and both had fought very stoutly. God was pleased, however, that the Calcans should triumph, and they killed many of their adversaries, and captured some forty of them, amongst whom was a Mexican captain and two other chiefs whom the Calcans delivered to the alguacil mayor to be brought to me. He sent me some of them and others he kept because, for the greater security of the Calcans he, with all the people, remained in one of their towns on the frontier of Mexico. Later, when there seemed to him no further need for his remaining, he returned to Tesaico and brought with him the other prisoners who had remained in his hands. Meanwhile we had many other encounters and skirmishes with the natives of Culua, which to avoid prolixity I do not specify.

As the road between Vera Cruz and this city of Tesaico was safe for travelling to and fro, the people of that city had news of us every day and we of them, which before was not possible. They sent me by a messenger some crossbows and muskets and powder which pleased us greatly; and two days after, they

be bad.

- 154) Santiago (St. James) was the patron Saint of Spain, and from the times of the Moorish wars his name had been their battle cry. Bernal Diaz naively relates that this battle was fought and won by the Indians of Tlascala and Chalco, the Spaniards being more interested in capturing Indian women and collecting booty than in slaying the enemy, adding also that the cruelties of the Indians were so shocking that the Spaniards tried to save the enemy from their own allies. Bernal Diaz attacks Gomara's account of the stream being red with blood, and says that, while some wounded Mexicans did make their way down to the water, in seeking to escape, and it may have been discoloured for the length of time required to say an "Ave Maria," it is untrue that anyone suffered from thirst on that account, as the town possessed several fountains of the finest water.
- 155) Bernal Diaz relates that Quauhtemotzin was so enraged when he heard of the defection of the Chalcans and of the hostilities against him, in which they had taken part with the Spaniards, that he despatched a force of twenty thousand warriors against them, which was transported across the lake in two thousand canoes. Sandoval had barely got back to Texcoco and had not even had time to make his report to the commander, when an express arrived from Chalco with the news that things were in a worse state than ever. Cortes, hastily assuming that Sandoval had returned too soon, leaving his mission only half accomplished, fell into a rage, and ordered Sandoval's instant return to Chalco, without hearing a word of what he had to say in explanation. Sandoval was so much hurt at this injustice that on his second return to Texcoco bringing the prisoners, he would have nothing to say to Cortes in spite of the latter's apologies and protests. The two men did afterwards make up this quarrel, and became as good friends as ever. There was also much grumbling over the partition of the slaves; first His Majesty's fifth was deducted, then the fifth belonging to Cortes, then the officers took their shares, so that by the time it came to allotting any to the soldiers there was not much of any value left. Bernal Diaz says that those who were in favour with Cortes, bought their slaves privately and had them branded, paying the price to him; many slaves also escaped or disappeared, but the soldiers were credited with their value, which was charged against them in the division of the spoils.

sent me another messenger by whom they made known that three ships¹⁵⁶ had arrived at the port bringing many people and horses, whom they would immediately send on to me, — aid which God miraculously sent us in proportion to our need.

I have always sought, Most Powerful Lord, to win the people of Temixtitlan to our friendship by every way and means I could; on the one hand because I did not wish them to provoke their own destruction, and on the other in order to rest from the hardships of all the past wars; but principally because I knew it would conduce to Your Majesty's service. Whenever I could lay hold of anyone from the city, I would send him back to it, admonishing and requiring the inhabitants to come to terms of peace.

On Holy Wednesday, which was the twenty-seventh of March of the year 1521, I had brought before me those chiefs of Temixtitlan who had been taken by the Calcans. I asked if any of them would go to the city and speak on my part to the lords of it, and ask them to stop fighting and give themselves as vassals of Your Majesty as they had before done; for I did not wish to destroy them but to be their friends. Although they took it badly, fearing they would be killed for bringing that message, two of the prisoners determined to go, and asked me for a letter, for, though they did not understand what was in it, they knew that amongst us it was customary, and that by taking it the people of the city would give them credence. I explained also through the interpreters what I wrote in the letter, which was what I had told them. So they left, and I ordered five horsemen to accompany them till they were in safety.

On Holy Saturday, the Calcans and some of their allies and friends sent to tell me that the Mexicans were marching against them, and they showed me on a large white cloth a drawing of all the towns which were to march, and the roads by which they were coming; and they besought me at all costs to send them help. I answered them that within four or five days I would send it, but if meanwhile they found themselves in straits they should let me know and I would aid them. On the third day of the Feast of the Resurrection, they came back to beg me to send help as quickly as possible as the enemy was advancing steadily. I told them I would and announced that for the following Friday twenty-five horsemen and three hundred foot-soldiers should be ready.

The Thursday before, certain messengers came to Tesaico from the provinces of Tazapan, Mascalingo, and Nautan,¹⁵⁷ and from other cities in their neighbourhood, telling me that they came to give themselves as vassals of Your Majesty and to be our friends, as they had never killed any Spaniards nor rebelled against Your Majesty's service. They brought me certain pieces of cotton cloth for which I thanked them, and promised them that if they were good, they would receive good treatment; so they went away very well content.

The Friday following, which was the fifth of April of the said year 1521, I left this city of Tesaico, with the thirty horsemen and three hundred footmen who had been equipped, leaving in it twenty other horsemen and three hundred footmen under the command of Gonzalo de Sandoval, the alguacil mayor. More than twenty thousand men of Tesaico went with me, and we marched in good order and slept in a town in Calco, called Talmanalco,¹⁵⁸ where we were well received and quartered. Since the Calcans became our friends, they have kept a strong fort and garrison there, for it is on the Culuan frontier. We arrived at Calco the next day at nine o'clock but did not stop, except to tell the chiefs of my intention to make a tour round the lakes, as I believed that after accomplishing this march, which was important, the thirteen brigantines would be found complete and ready to be launched. After speaking to the Calcans, I left at vespers that day, and reached one of their towns where more than forty thousand friendly warriors joined us, and there we slept that night. As the natives of the town told me that the Culuan were expecting me in the field, I ordered that at a quarter before daybreak everybody should be on foot and ready.

156) Bernal Diaz speaks of but one ship, on board which came Julian de Alderete, royal treasurer; also Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, a Franciscan, of whom further mention will be made, and many others. The welcome news was brought that Juan de Fonseca, the Bishop of Burgos, was out of favour with the Emperor.

157) Tozopan, Mexicalzingo, and Nautlan.

158) Tlamanalco: a little more than one league from Chalco.

After hearing mass, we began our march, I taking the vanguard with twenty horsemen, and leaving ten for the rear-guard; and in this order we crossed some very steep sierras. At two o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at a very steep hillock on the top of which there were many women and children, while its slopes were covered with warriors who at once began yelling loudly, sending up smoke signals, discharging their slings, and throwing stones and darts, so that in approaching them we sustained much injury. Although we saw they did not dare to wait for us on the field, it appeared to me that, even though our road led us elsewhere, it was cowardly to go on without giving them a lesson, lest also our friends should suspect we did it out of cowardice; and I began, therefore, to reconnoitre about the hillock. It was about a league in circumference and certainly was so strong that it seemed madness to assail it; but although I might have laid siege to it and obliged them to give themselves up from sheer want, I could not spare the time to do this. Being thus perplexed, I determined to assault its slopes at the places I had examined, and gave orders to Cristobal Corral, lieutenant of sixty foot soldiers whom I had always in my company, to attack them with his infantry and ascend its steepest sides with certain musketeers and archers to follow him; and to Rodriguez de Villafuerte and to Francisco Verdugo that they with their men and certain archers and musketeers should mount on another side; and to the captains Pedro Dircio and Andres de Monjaraz to assault it from another side with some few archers and musketeers; and that upon hearing a musket-shot all should resolve to mount, winning either victory or death.

Immediately on the discharge of the musket, they began the ascent, and won two slopes of the hillock from the adversaries, but were unable to get any higher because, such were the steepness and ruggedness of the rock that they could not sustain themselves neither with feet nor hands. The Indians with their hands hurled many rocks from above, and these in rolling broke into pieces which scattered, doing infinite damage; and the attack of our enemies was so fierce that they killed two Spaniards and wounded more than twenty, stopping our advance. Seeing that it was impossible to do more, and that such great numbers of foes were gathering to help those on the hillock that the country was covered with them, I ordered the captains to retreat; and, having descended, the horsemen charged those on the plain and drove them from the field, killing them with their lances during a pursuit which lasted for an hour and a half.

The people being many, the horsemen scattered from one part to another, and after having again assembled some told me that about a league further on they had seen another hillock with many people on it, but that it was not so strong; that on the plains near it were many people; and that there were to be found there two things which we did not find on this other, one was water and the other less strength in the position, so we might without danger capture the people. Although I much regretted not having obtained the victory, we left and slept that night near the other hillock, where we endured much hardship and privation; neither did we find any water, nor all that day had we or the horses drunk any; thus we passed that night hearing a great noise of kettledrums, trumpets, and yells from our enemies.

As soon as day dawned, certain captains and myself began to examine the hill, which seemed to us almost as strong as the other; but it had two high points on its summit which were easier to mount and which were defended by many warriors. My captains and I with other hidalgos who were there took our shields and went on foot towards it (for the horses had been taken to be watered about a league off), only for the purpose of seeing its strength and where it might be attacked; when the people saw us, although we said nothing to them, they followed us. When we reached the foot of the hillock, the men on the peaks, believing I intended to attack those in the centre, abandoned their positions to come to their help. Seeing this blunder, and that by taking the peaks they would be at a great disadvantage, I very quietly ordered a captain to mount quickly with his people and capture the steepest points which they had abandoned; and he succeeded. I, with the rest of my force, began to mount the hillock where most of the enemy was gathered; and it pleased God that I should capture the slope and that we should reach a height almost equal to that whence they fought, which result had appeared almost impossible without infinite danger. One of the captains had already planted his banner on the highest point, and from there he began to discharge muskets and cross-bows at the enemy, and they, seeing the injury they sustained, and that the battle was lost, made signs of surrender, laying down their arms. As my policy is always to convince these people

that I do not wish to injure them, no matter how blameworthy they may be, especially when they are willing to become vassals of Your Majesty; and as they are intelligent and understand this very well, I ordered the fighting to cease, and when they came to speak to me I received them very well. Observing how well they were treated, they made this known to those on the other hillock, who although they were victorious, decided to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty, and came to me asking pardon for the past.

I remained two days in this town near the hill, from where I sent the wounded to Tesaico. Starting again, I arrived at ten o'clock in the morning at Guastepeque, which I have already mentioned, where we lodged in the chief's house, situated in the most refreshing gardens ever seen. These gardens have a circuit of two leagues, and in their midst flows a very beautiful rivulet, and at intervals of two cross-bow shots are kiosks and very gay flower beds, and an infinite number of different fruit trees, many herbs, and fragrant flowers; certainly it is an admirable thing to see the charm and grandeur of this place. We reposed that day here, where the natives provided us all the pleasure and service they could. The next day we left, and at eight o'clock in the morning we arrived at a great town called Yautepeque, where many hostile warriors were awaiting us. When we first arrived, it seemed that they wanted to make us some sign of peace, either out of fear or to deceive us, but immediately afterward, without any further cause, they fled, abandoning their town. As I did not care to delay there, I pursued them with my thirty horsemen for about two leagues till I got them to another town called Gilutepeque,¹⁵⁹ where we killed many of them. We found the people in this town off their guard, because we got there ahead of their scouts, so some were killed, and many women and children were taken, and the rest fled. I remained there two days, believing the chief would give himself as vassal to Your Majesty, but as he never came I ordered fire to be set to the town when I departed. Before I left it, there came certain persons of the former town, called Yautepeque, praying me to pardon them and offering to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty. I received them willingly because they had already been well chastised.

On the same day I left, I came at nine o'clock in the morning within sight of a well-fortified town, called Coadnabaced,¹⁶⁰ within which was a large force of warriors. The town was so strong, and surrounded by so many hills and ravines some sixty feet in depth, that no horseman could enter it except by two ways, which were then unknown to us; and even to reach them we would have been obliged to make a circuit of about a league and a half. An entrance also could be effected by wooden bridges had they not removed them. The place was so secure and protected, that even had we been ten times as many they could have held it notwithstanding. Upon our approach, they discharged many darts, arrows, and stones at us; but while they were skirmishing with us in this manner, an Indian of Tascaltecal crossed unobserved by a very dangerous pass, and when the enemy suddenly saw him they believed the Spaniards were entering the same way, and thus in a panic they fled with the Indian behind them. Three or four lads,

159) Xiuhtepac.

160) Cuauhnahuac: the present Cuernavaca. This town, the ancient capital of the Tlahuica tribes, situated on an isolated sort of promontory at an elevation of over five thousand feet, and surrounded, save on one side, by a narrow but profound canon which was impassable, was defended by a strong garrison under Coatzin, its lord. The feat of the Tlascalcan, to which Cortes does scanty justice, was indeed remarkable, and is described by Bernal Diaz, who claims also to have followed on the heels of the intrepid warrior. Two immense trees growing on opposite sides of the ravine, inclined towards one another until their branches met; seeing this the bold Tlascalcan conceived the plan of crossing by this aerial bridge, and, with an agility worthy of his conception, he safely passed on the swaying boughs over the dizzy height, and slid down the tree trunk on the other side, while the garrison of Cuernavaca were fighting elsewhere, and unobservant of his achievement. About thirty Spaniards and a number of Tlascalans followed his example, three of whom lost their balance and fell into the stream below. Bernal Diaz says that it was a frightful undertaking, and that he himself became quite blind and giddy from the great height and danger. Indeed it was no small thing for a man, weighted with arms and armour, to essay such a feat, and if the credit of the invention belongs to the Tlascalcan, we cannot withhold our admiration from the thirty Spaniards who had the hardihood to follow him. Cuernavaca is the present capital of the State of Morelos, and is one of the most beautiful and interesting towns in Mexico, while its situation is hardly excelled in picturesqueness and grandeur by any other in the world. The palace, which Cortes afterwards built there, still stands, and a charming villa, with luxuriant gardens overhanging the great barranca which was built by a Spaniard, Laborda, in the XVIIIth century, became a favourite resort of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian during his brief and luckless reign.

servants of mine, and two from another company, when they saw the Indian cross, followed him, and also reached the other side. I led the horsemen along the sierra to find an entrance to the town, while the enemy incessantly discharged darts and arrows at us; for between them and us there was only a narrow ravine. While they were occupied in righting with us, they had not seen the five Spaniards, so our men took them suddenly from behind, stabbing and slashing at them, taking them completely by surprise, for they did not know that their own people had abandoned the pass by which the Spaniards and the Indians had crossed; so they became so frightened that they lost courage to fight, and the Spaniards killed them, till, perceiving how they had been tricked, they began to fly. Our foot soldiers were already in the town, and began to set fire to it while the enemy abandoned it; and thus escaping the latter reached the sierra although many of them perished, for the horsemen pursued and killed many.

After we discovered how to enter the town, which was about mid-day, we lodged ourselves in some houses in a garden, though we found the place almost all burnt. It was quite late when the chief and other notables, seeing they could not defend themselves in spite of their strong town, and fearing we might pursue and kill them in the hilly ground, decided to come and offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty; I received them as such, and they promised that henceforth they would always be our friends. These Indians and the others who came to give themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, after we had burnt and destroyed their houses and property, told us that the reason they were so tardy in seeking our friendship was because they thought that they would make good their fault by first allowing us to injure them, believing that this done we would not afterwards be so angry with them. We slept that night in the town, and the next morning marched through deserted and waterless pine forests, passing through a defile, suffering much from fatigue and want of water, so that some Indians who accompanied us perished from thirst. We stopped that night at some farms, seven leagues from the town.

At daybreak we resumed our march and came in sight of a large city, called Suchimilco,¹⁶¹ which is built on the fresh-water lake. As the Indians were notified of our coming, they had digged many ditches and canals and removed the bridges at all the entrances to the town, which is three or four leagues from Temixtitan. Within, there were many brave-looking people determined to defend themselves to the death. As soon as we arrived there and had collected all our people, disposing them in good order and discipline, I dismounted and advanced with certain foot soldiers towards a ditch which had been made, and on the other side of which were infinite warriors. When the fighting began at the ditch, the archers and musketeers did them much damage, so they abandoned it and the Spaniards threw themselves into the water and passed over to dry land. After half an hour's fighting, we captured the greater part of the city, and the defenders retired in their canoes on the waterways. They fought until nightfall, when some of them sued for peace, but others continued fighting; and so many times did they make overtures without fulfilling them, that finally we discovered they did this from two motives, first that they might carry off their property while we were discussing peace, and secondly to gain time until help should reach them from Mexico and Temixtitan. They killed two Spaniards who had got separated from the others to plunder and found themselves in their extremity beyond reach of assistance.

In the evening, the enemy was debating how to manage that we should not escape alive from their city, and a great number decided to attack us where we had entered; on seeing them advance so rapidly we were surprised to observe their strategy and agility. Six horsemen and myself, who were readier than the others charged amongst them and frightened by the horses they fled, we following them through the city, killing many, though we found ourselves in a great conflict because they were so daring that many of them ventured to face the horsemen with their swords and shields. While we were pell-mell amongst them and in a great confusion, the horse I rode fell through sheer fatigue, and as some of the adversaries saw me on foot they rushed upon me. While I defended myself against them with my lance, an Indian of Tascaltecal,¹⁶² when he saw me in danger, rushed to help me, and he and a servant of mine who joined him

161) The name Xochimilco signifies "field of flowers": the town was situated on the left bank of the lake of the same name.

162) Cortes searched in vain for this Indian who saved his life, but, as he could never be found dead or alive, he finally declared that he was persuaded that it was not an Indian but his holy patron St. Peter who had rescued him. Clavigero

helped me to raise the horse. In the midst of this, the Spaniards came up, and the enemy all deserted the field, and I with the other horsemen returned to the city, for we were very weary. Although it was almost night and time for rest, I commanded that all the raised bridges over the water should be filled up with stones and adobes, so that the horses could go and come from the city without obstacle; nor did I leave there till all those difficult crossings had been repaired. We passed that night using great vigilance and giving close attention to the watches.

The next day, all the natives of Mexico and Temixtitlan who already knew we were in Suchimilco planned an attack with great force by water and land, so as to surround us; for they believed we could not again escape from their hands. I mounted one of the towers of their idols to see how they would approach and where they would attack us, that I might give all necessary orders. After I had completed our preparations, there appeared on the water a large fleet of canoes which I believe exceeded two thousand; and in them there came more than twelve thousand warriors, in addition to whom there arrived such a multitude of people by land that they covered the whole country. Their captains came at their head, carrying our captured swords in their hands, and naming their provinces, crying, "Mexico! Mexico! Temixtitlan! Temixtitlan!" and shouting insults at us, and threatening to kill us with the swords they had taken from us before in the city of Temixtitlan. After I had settled where each captain was to be placed, and as on the mainland there was a great multitude of the enemy, I advanced to attack them with twenty horsemen, and five hundred men of Tascaltecal divided into three companies. I ordered them, as soon as they had scattered the enemy, to collect at the foot of a hill about a half a league from there, where many of the foe had also assembled. When we separated, each division pursued the enemy on its respective side, and, after having routed them and killed many with our swords, we retired to the foot of the hill; there I ordered certain foot soldiers, my servants, who had served me and were very agile, to try to mount the

pertinently notes that, in this battle as in many others, the Indians might easily have killed Cortes had they not determined to take him alive and sacrifice him. Bernal Diaz attributes the rescue of Cortes to a Castilian soldier, Cristobal de Olea, who led a body of Tascalans to his relief, but makes no mention of any one particular Tascalan. Cortes may, however, be supposed to know better, and he refers to Olea as "a servant of mine who helped raise the horse." "Olea received three frightful wounds from the deadly maquahuitl, a weapon which the Mexicans wielded with great address.

The fighting in and around Xochimilco lasted from the 15th of April until the morning of Friday the 20th, when the Spaniards arrived in Tlacopan (Tacuba), and, though Cortes says little about the events of those days, his men suffered considerably. While a small division was engaged in pillaging some storehouses near Xochimilco, the Mexicans attacked them; wounding a number and taking Juan de Lara, Alonso Hernandez, and two other soldiers of Andres de Monjaraz's company prisoners. These men were carried in triumph to Temixtitlan where, after being questioned by Quauhtemotzin, they were sacrificed and their arms and legs taken to be exhibited in the neighbouring provinces as a forecast of the fate awaiting the remainder of the white men (Bernal Diaz, cap. cxlv.).

Cortes wished to leave behind the spoils taken at Xochimilco rather than be cumbered with them, but yielded to the clamours of his men, who declared they were able to defend what they had taken. The arrival in Tlacopan was marked, as Cortes relates, by the capture of two more Spaniards, Francisco Martin Vendabal and Pedro Gallego, and the commander, on this occasion, made a rare display of feeling which led to the composition of a romance or ballad, long in popular vogue —

"En Tacuba esta Cortes

Con su escuadron esforzado,

Triste estaba y muy penoso,

Triste y con gran cuidado,

La una mano en la mejilia

Y la otra en el costado," etc.

Standing on a lofty teocalli, a group of the leaders, including Julian de Alderete and Fray Pedro Melgarejo, surveyed the country, with the great capital floating on the waters of its lake, and one Alonzo Perez, noting the pensive sadness of the commander's mien, begged him not to feel dejected, for losses and destruction were incident to warfare, but that of him it could never be said that like Nero he had watched the burning city, quoting the couplet —

"Mira Nero de Tarpeya

A Roma come de ardia."

Cortes answered, calling him to witness how often he had begged the Mexicans to make peace and save themselves, adding that his sadness was not for any one cause alone, but from thinking of all the hardships still to be endured in reconquering the city, which with God's help they must now undertake.

steepest part of the hill. I with the horsemen would then circle round behind, where it was more level, and we would take them in the middle. Thus it happened that, when the enemy saw the Spaniards climbing the hill, they turned, believing they could retreat at their ease, but instead they encountered us, who were about fifteen horsemen; and we fell upon them, as did likewise the warriors of Tascaltecal, so that in a very short time more than five hundred of them perished, and all the others escaped and fled towards the mountains. Six other horsemen planned to go up a very broad and level road, using their lances on the enemy. Half a league from Suchimilco they came upon a squadron of very dashing troops coming to help their countrymen, and routed them, killing some with their lances. When all the horsemen had assembled, we returned about ten o'clock to Suchimilco, finding at the entrance many Spaniards awaiting our return to know what had happened to us; and they told me they had been in great straits and had done their utmost to drive out the enemy, of whom a great number had perished. They gave me two of our swords they had retaken from them, and told me that the bowmen were out of arrows and could get no more. While hearing this, before we dismounted, a great body of the enemy appeared on a very broad causeway, yelling wildly, and promptly we fell upon them, driving them into the water which bordered the causeway on each side; thus we routed them, and, collecting our people, we returned very tired to the city, which I burned entirely except for the part where we lodged. Thus we stopped in the city three days, incessantly fighting, and finally we left having burnt and razed it to the ground. Certainly it was a sight worth beholding, as it had many towers of their idols built of stone and mortar; but, in order not to enlarge, I do not specify many other notable things concerning the city. The day I left, I went out to a square, which is on the mainland adjoining the city, where the natives held their markets, and I gave orders to ten horsemen to go ahead, and to another ten to march in the middle with the foot soldiers, while I took another ten in the rear; and when the people of Suchimilco saw us leaving, believing it was from fear of them, they attacked our rear, setting up fierce yells. Thereupon the ten horsemen and I returned and fell on them, pursuing them till we drove them into the water; after which they did not bother us any more, and we continued our march. At ten o'clock in the morning we arrived in the city of Cuyoacan two leagues from Suchimilco, as well as from the cities of Temixtitan, Culuacan, Uchilubuzco,¹⁶³ Iztapalapa, Cuitaguaca, and Mizqueque, all of which are situated on the water, the furthest being about a league and a half distant. We found it deserted, and lodged in the house of the chief, where we remained two days.

Since I was to lay siege to the great city of Temixtitan as soon as the brigantines were finished, I wished first to see the port of the city and the entrances and exits, and where the Spaniards might attack or be attacked. The day after we arrived, therefore, I took five horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers and went, by a causeway leading into the city of Temixtitan, to the lake which was very near, where we saw an infinite number of canoes on the water with countless warriors in them. We reached a barricade they had erected across the causeway, and the foot soldiers began to attack it; although it was very strong and a stout resistance was offered and ten Spaniards were wounded, we finally won it, killing many of the enemy, although the archers and musketeers exhausted their arrows and powder. From this place, we saw how the causeway led directly through the water until it entered the city of Temixtitan, a full league and a half distant, and that likewise on the other, which goes to Iztapalapa, there were crowds of innumerable people. When I had considered all that it was necessary to observe, for it was likely that a garrison of horsemen and foot soldiers would have to be established here in this city, I ordered our people to retire, and we returned to the town, burning their houses and the towers of their idols.

We departed next day from this city to go to Tacuba, which is two leagues from here, where we arrived at nine o'clock in the morning, using our lances in one place and another along the way, for the enemy came from off the lake to attack and jeer at the Indians who carried our baggage; finding themselves worsted, however, they let us proceed in peace. I have already said that my principal purpose was to make a circuit of all the lakes, in order to reconnoitre and inspect the country better, and also to give help to our friends, hence I did not care to stop in Tacuba. The people of Temixtitan, who were so near there that the

163) Huitzilopocho is the present Cherubusco. Cuitaguaca was Cuitlahuac and is now called Tlahua; the last town mentioned should be Mixquic.

city extends almost to the mainland of Tacuba, seeing that we went on, recovered much confidence and with great daring attacked the centre of our baggage-train; but as the horsemen were well stationed and the ground was all level thereabouts, we had great advantage over them, without risking any danger ourselves. As we were galloping from one side to the other, two of the several youths, my servants, who usually followed me, did not do so, but chanced to go aside where they were captured by the enemy, who, we believe, put them to a very cruel death, as was their custom. God knows how grieved I was by it, both because they were Christians, and also because they were brave men who had served Your Majesty well in this war. After leaving this city, we continued our march through other neighbouring towns, and rejoined our people, where I learned how the Indians had captured those youths. To avenge their death, and because the enemy followed us with the greatest insolence in the world, I, with twenty horsemen, concealed myself behind some houses, and, as the Indians saw the other ten with the people and baggage going ahead, they followed them fearlessly by another very broad and level road; thus, when we saw that they had passed somewhat, I shouted in the name of the Apostle Santiago and we fell upon them furiously. Before they could reach the canals near there, we killed more than a hundred splendid chiefs; after which they did not care to follow us any further. This day we slept two leagues beyond, in the city of Coatinchan, tired out and wet, as it had rained a great deal that afternoon; and we found it deserted. We set out the next day, using our lances from time to time on some Indians who came to yell at us, and we slept at a town, called Gilotepeque,¹⁶⁴ finding it also deserted. The next day, we went at twelve o'clock to a city, called Aculman,¹⁶⁵ belonging to the lordship of the city of Tesaico, where we slept that night and were well received by the Spaniards, who rejoiced at our coming as if it were their salvation; because after I had left them they had heard nothing of me till the day we arrived. They had suffered various alarms in the city, and the inhabitants had been daily saying to them that the men of Mexico and Temixtitlan would fall on them while I was absent. Thus, with God's help, this expedition was concluded, and it was a very great enterprise in which Your Majesty received great service, for many reasons, as I shall hereafter state.

When I came for the first time to the city of Temixtitlan, Very Powerful and Invincible Lord, I ordered, as I made known to Your Majesty in my other relation, that certain plantations should be established for Your Majesty in two or three of the most desirable provinces. I sent two Spaniards to one of them, called Chinantla,¹⁶⁶ which is not subject to the Culuans; in the others, which were, the Culuans killed those who were at the plantations when they made war on me in Temixtitlan, and took everything they had, which was a very considerable sum according to the estimates of this country. During almost a year I could learn nothing about the Spaniards who settled in Chinantla, nor, while all those provinces were in revolt, could they hear any thing from us. The natives of Chinantla, being vassals of Your Majesty and enemies of the Culuans, told those Christians that the Culuans had made fierce war upon us, and, as they believed few or none of us had come out alive, they would not allow the Spaniards to leave the country; and thus these two stayed there. One of them, who was a youth and a soldier, they made their captain, and at this time he went out with them to fight their enemies, over whom he and they were victorious most of the time. When it pleased God they should afterwards return, and reorganise, and obtain some victories over the enemy who had routed and expelled us from Temixtitlan, the people of Chinantla told those Christians that they knew there were Spaniards in the province of Tepeaca, and that, if they wished to learn the truth, they would risk sending two Indians who, although they had to pass through much hostile country, could travel at night and off the highway till they reached Tepeaca. The better man of the two Spaniards sent a letter by those two Indians, the tenor of which was as follows: "Noble Sirs, I have written Your Worships two or three letters, but I do not know if they have reached you or not as they have had no answer, so I doubt whether this will obtain one. I make it known to you, Sirs, that all the natives of this country of Culua are up in arms and have attacked us many times; but always (praise be to Our Lord for it) we have been

164) Citlatlapoc.

165) Acolman, where Cortes first learned that reinforcements had arrived from Vera Cruz.

166) Chinantla: the lance heads of black obsidian which are frequently mentioned were chiefly manufactured here, and were called by the same name. Chinantla now forms part of the state of Oaxaca.

victorious. We have also had daily war with the natives of Tuxtepeque, for they are allies of Culua. Those who have remained in the service of Their Highnesses as their vassals are seven towns of Tenez; and Nicolas and I have always stopped in Chinantla, which is the capital. I would like very much to know where the captain is, in order to write to him and make known what has happened here. If perchance you can write me where he is, and will send twenty or thirty Spaniards, I would go thither with two of the chiefs from here who wish to see and speak with the captain. It would be well for them to come now because it is the harvest time for Cacao, and the Culuan hinder it by making war. May the Lord guard the noble persons of Your Worships, according to your desire. From Chinantla, I know not what date of the month of April, of the year 1521. At the service of Your Worships, Hernando de Barrientos. ”

When the two Indians arrived with this letter in the province of Tepeaca, the captain, whom I had left there with certain Spaniards, sent it immediately to me at Tesaico; and we all rejoiced greatly at receiving it, because, though we had always confided in the friendship of Chinantla, sometimes the thought occurred to us that they might confederate with Culua and kill the two Spaniards. I immediately wrote, giving them an account of what had happened, and telling them to have hope, for, although they were surrounded on every side by enemies, by God’s pleasure, they would very soon find themselves free and able to come and go in safety.

After having made the circuit of the lakes, during which I gathered much important information for laying siege to Temixtitan by land and water, I stopped in Tesaico, strengthening myself as best I could with people and arms, hastening to get the brigantines finished and making a canal to take them to the lake; which canal was begun immediately after the planks and joinings of the brigantines had been brought, and extended from one side of our camp to the lake. From the place where the brigantines were being joined there was quite a half a league’s distance to the lake. More than eight thousand natives of Acolhuacan and Tesaico were employed daily for fifty days; for the channel of the canal was more than twelve feet deep and as many in width, all staked and walled. Thus, the water which flows through it would by its own force carry them to the lake, so that we could take the smaller vessels without danger, and with little labour to the water. It certainly was a very great work, worthy of admiration.

As soon as the brigantines were finished and put in the canal on the twenty-eighth of April¹⁶⁷ of the said year, I made a review of all my people and found eighty-six horsemen, a hundred and eighteen bowmen and musketeers, seven hundred and odd foot soldiers with swords and shields, three heavy iron guns, fifteen small bronze field pieces and ten cwt. of powder. Having finished the review, I charged and recommended all the Spaniards to obey and comply with the ordinances which I had made respecting the conduct of the war, and to be merry, and keep up their courage inasmuch as they saw how Our Lord was leading us to victory over our enemies; for they well knew that when we entered Tesaico we had brought only forty horsemen, but that God had helped us even more than we had thought, for a ship had arrived with horses, men, and arms, as they had seen; and I said principally that the fact that we were righting to promote the spread of our faith and for the reduction to Your Majesty’s service of so many revolted provinces, should fill them with courage and zeal to conquer or die. They all answered, demonstrating a willingness and desire for this; and we passed the day of the review in great rejoicing, longing to see ourselves already engaged in the siege and to bring this war to an end, on which the peace or further disturbance of these parts so much depended.

The next day, I sent messengers to the provinces of Tascaltecal, Guajucingo, and Churultecal, to let them know that the brigantines were ready, and that I and all my people were about to surround the great city of Temixtitan. Therefore I begged them, since they were notified by me and had already prepared their people, that as many of them as possible and as well armed as they could be, should set out and join me here in Tesaico, where I would wait ten days for them, and that they should by no means exceed that

167) The feast fell upon Sunday April 28th, and was chosen for the launching of the brigantines. All the Spaniards received the sacraments; Fray Olmedo said Mass at an altar erected near the lake and blessed the boats. Amidst salvos of artillery, strains of music from the Christian and Indian bands, and the enthusiastic cries of “Castillo! Tlascalala! ” from the crowds, the brigantines glided gracefully into the lake. A solemn Te Deum closed the ceremony.

time, because it would disarrange everything that had been planned. When the messengers arrived, the people of those provinces were already prepared and eager to meet the Culucans: those from Guajucingo and Churultecal came to Calco as I had ordered, for the siege was to be begun near that place. The captains of Tascaltecal arrived in Tesaico with very brilliant and well-armed forces, five or six days before the Feast of the Holy Ghost, which was the time I had designated to them. When I learned that day of their approach, I went out to meet them with great rejoicing, and they came so gladly and so well disciplined that things could not have been better. According to the account the captains made, there were more than fifty thousand warriors, who were well received by us and given quarters.

The second day after the Feast, I ordered all the foot soldiers and horsemen to assemble in the square of the city of Tesaico, that I might divide them and assign them to the captains, who were to lead them in three divisions to be stationed in three cities which are around Temixtitan. I made Pedro de Alvarado,¹⁶⁸ captain of one division, assigning him thirty horsemen, eighteen archers and musketeers, and one hundred and fifty foot soldiers with swords and shields, and more than twenty-five thousand warriors of Tascaltecal; these were to make their headquarters in Tacuba. I made Cristobal de Olid, captain of another division, to whom I assigned thirty horsemen, eighteen archers and musketeers, and a hundred and sixty foot-soldiers with swords and shields, and more than twenty thousand warriors of our allies; these were to make their headquarters in Cuyoacan. Of the third division, I made Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, captain, assigning him twenty-four horsemen, four musketeers, fifteen archers, and a hundred and fifty foot soldiers with swords and shields, fifty of whom were chosen among those I had brought in my company, and more than thirty thousand men of the people of Guajucingo, Churultecal, and Calco. This division was to go to the city of Iztapalapa for the purpose of destroying it, and afterwards to advance over a causeway in the lake, protected by the brigantines, in order to join with the garrison at Cuyoacan, so that after I entered the lake with the brigantines, the alguacil mayor might fix his headquarters wherever it seemed to him most convenient. For the thirteen brigantines with which I was to enter the lake, I left three

168) Pedro de Alvarado was one of four brothers all of whom fought under the command of Cortes; Jorge served afterwards in Guatemala, and died in Madrid in 1540; Gomez died in Peru, and Juan a bastard brother died at sea while going to Cuba to bring horses. Pedro was one of the most daring and cruel of the Spanish captains; two exploits gained him a conspicuous place in the annals of the conquest, the first being the massacre of the nobles during the religious dance in the great temple, which provoked such terrible consequences, and the second his renowned leap which still holds its place amongst the heroic feats of history under the name of El Salto de Alvarado, a street in Mexico near the spot of the alleged jump perpetuating the legend.

Bernal Diaz denies the fact, and bluntly explains that the story took its origin from a libellous refrain or pasquinade composed by a soldier who had a sharp faculty for such rhyming. This represented Alvarado as deserting his two hundred and fifty men during the retreat of the Noche Triste, saving himself by jumping his horse over a canal, and it passed, according to Diaz, into the common stock of camp stories and jokes. This desertion was one of the accusations presented in his trial (record published by D. Jose" Ramirez, Mex. 1847) to which Alvarado answered that he had held his men together as long as he could, but that it was they who deserted him, leaving him wounded, with his horse killed, and that he escaped only by a soldier taking him up behind him on his horse in the fight; nothing is said about any "leap." Cortes likewise never mentions it. The legend will never die, for it is of those which please popular fancy and become enshrined in the historical folk-lore, which is imperishable.

After the conquest, he was made governor of Cuauhtemallan and Chiapa, but his restless spirit spurred him to other adventures, and he fitted out an expedition in 1535, by royal licence, composed of some five or more ships, carrying fifteen hundred men, and the necessary horses and arms, bound for Peru, where he landed at Puerto Viejo, marching thence to Quito. His arrival was unwelcome to Pizarro and Diego Almagro, who solved the difficulty by buying out his armament for 100,000 castellanos said at the time to have been an enormous price. He returned to Mexico, and undertook other ventures to the Spice Islands and California, and was finally killed in 1541 by a kick from a horse. When dying, he was asked where he suffered, to which he replied "In my soul."

Alvarado was called Tonatiuh (the sun) by the natives, on account of his high colouring and red beard; he was handsome, physically strong and brave, a typical swashbuckler of his period, cruel to the Indians, faithless to his friends, of quick temper, poor judgment, and known as a confirmed liar. Bernal Diaz fought in Alvarado's division during the siege.

hundred men, almost all of whom were sailors¹⁶⁹ and well drilled, so that in each brigantine were twenty-five Spaniards; and each small vessel had a captain, a pilot, and six archers and musketeers.

According to the foregoing order the captains, who were to command the forces in the cities of Tacuba and Cuyoacan, after receiving instructions as to what they were to do, left Tesaico on the tenth of May, and slept in a fine town, called Aculman, two and a half leagues from there. The same day, I learned that some dispute had arisen between the captains about the quarters, and, to settle this and re-establish peace, I immediately sent a person who reproved and pacified them.¹⁷⁰ On the morning of the next day, they left there, and passed the night in another town, called Gilotepeque, which they found deserted, as it was within the enemy's country. The next day, they continued their march according to their instructions, and slept in a city, called Guatitlan, which I have before mentioned to Your Majesty, and which they also found deserted. The same day they passed through two other cities and towns, where they likewise found no people. At the hour of vespers, they entered Tacuba, which they also found deserted, and made their quarters in the houses of the chief, which are very beautiful and large. Although it was already late the warriors of Tascaltecal made an inspection of the entrance of two causeways leading to the city of Temixtitlan and fought bravely for two or three hours with the people of the city until night separated them, when they returned safely to Tacuba.

The next morning, the two captains agreed, as I had commanded them, to cut off the aqueducts which supplied Temixtitlan with fresh water. One of them went with twenty horsemen and some archers and musketeers to the source of the water, about a quarter of a league from there, and broke the pipes, which were of wood and mortar and stone, fighting valiantly with those of the city who defended the spring by land and water. At last he routed them and accomplished his purpose, cutting off the fresh water from the city — a very politic stratagem. The same day, the captains repaired certain dangerous passes, bridges, and aqueducts, in the neighbourhood of the lake, so that the horsemen might the more easily gallop from one part to another. This delayed them three or four days, during which they had many skirmishes with those of the city, wherein some Spaniards were wounded, many of the enemy killed, and many bridges

169) Although a number of the men had been sailors or fishermen, and consequently knew something about handling boats, none of them wanted to act as rowers for the brigantines, and it was with difficulty that Cortes completed his crews. Many of the natives of Palos, Triana, and other sea-ports, whom he ordered to take the oars, even objected on the score of their gentle birth, but the commander enforced his orders in spite of all excuses and protests. Each brigantine displayed the royal standard as well as its own particular ensign (Bernal Diaz).

170) According to Bernal Diaz, who was in Alvarado's division, Olid had taken possession of all the available houses in Acolman for himself and his troops, marking the houses thus appropriated with green branches, so that when Alvarado's division reached the town there were no quarters for them. The soldiers of the two divisions almost fell to fighting, and the two commanders had challenged one another, but several of the cooler-headed officers interfered and restored a semblance of peace; but Alvarado and Olid were never afterwards friends. Cortes sent the Franciscan, Fray Pedro Melgarejo and Captain Luis Marin, as his peace-makers.

Another incident occurred at this time, which Cortes passes over in silence. This was the desertion of the Tlascalcan general, Xicotencatl, who left the army, accompanied by a few followers, and returned to Tlascalca. Various reasons are given for his action; Bernal Diaz attributes it to jealousy of Chichimecatl, and a perfidious plan to get possession of his lands while the latter was absent, fighting against Mexico. Herrera ascribes his desire to return home, to a love affair (lib. i., cap. xvii.). There had been a quarrel between a Spanish soldier and a Tlascalcan chief, in which the latter was badly wounded; the matter was hushed up, so that Cortes should not hear it, as he was very strict in such matters; thus the soldier remained unpunished and as Xicotencatl was a relative of the wounded chief he left (Prescott, lib. vi., cap. iv.). Cortes first sent some Tlascalans to seek to induce him to return, and, this failing, he despatched some Spanish horsemen, with orders to arrest the general and bring him back. He simultaneously sent news of the affair to the Senate of Tlascalca, informing the senators that amongst Spaniards, desertion was punishable by death. The versions of Xicotencatl's end do not agree. Herrera describes his death by hanging in public at Texcoco, while Bernal Diaz says he was executed where he was captured. Xicotencatl had always mistrusted the Spaniards, nor could the blandishments of Cortes nor the popular sentiment in Tlascalca ever change his opinion. He was opposed to the alliance, and after fighting the Spaniards in the field, he continued to oppose them in the councils of his people. Cortes was aware of his sentiments and conscious of the bad effect such an example of desertion would have if left unpunished; hence it is likely he was glad to be rid of an ally on whose fidelity he could not count. Xicotencatl's act of desertion was indefensible, and its penalty by the code of Tlascalca was death.

and dikes captured. There was much bandying of words, and many challenges between those of the city and the warriors of Tascaltecal, things very remarkable and worthy of notice.

The captain, Cristobal de Olid, departed with the people who were to be garrisoned in Cuyoacan, two leagues from Tacuba, and the captain, Pedro de Alvarado stayed with his people in garrison at Tacuba, where he had skirmishes daily with the Indians. The same day that Cristobal de Olid left for Cuyoacan, he and his men arrived at ten o'clock in the morning and lodged in the houses of its chief, finding the city deserted. The next morning, with about twenty horsemen, some archers, and some six or seven thousand warriors of Tascaltecal they went to take a look at the causeway leading to Temixtitan; and they found the enemy well prepared, the causeway broken up, and many barricades erected. They engaged the enemy, and the archers wounded and killed some of their number. This was repeated for six or seven days, on each of which there were many encounters and skirmishes. One night, at midnight, certain watchmen of the city gave their cry near our quarters and the Spanish watchman cried "To arms!" whereupon our men sallied forth, but none of the enemy were to be found, for the cry which had alarmed them had been given very far from headquarters. As our people were distributed in so many places, the garrisons longed, as for their salvation, for my arrival with the brigantines and they continued hopeful those few days until I arrived, as I shall hereafter relate. During those six days, they would meet from both headquarters daily as they were near each other, and the horsemen scoured the country killing many of the enemy with their lances and bringing into the headquarters from the mountains great quantities of maize, of which bread is made, the principal food of these parts, and much superior to that of the Islands.

In the preceding chapters, I stated that I remained in Tesaico with three hundred men and the thirteen brigantines. As soon as I knew the divisions were in the places assigned for their camps, I could embark and take a look at the city and do some damage to the canoes. Although I very much wished to go by land, to give directions in the camps, the captains were persons who could be trusted with what they had in hand, while the affair of the brigantines was a matter of great importance, requiring stern discipline and attention, so I determined to embark in them, because we calculated to have the greatest risk and adventure by water. The principal persons of my company, however, required me in due form to go with the garrisons, as they believed that they were to undertake the most dangerous part. The day after the Feast of Corpus Christi, Friday, at dawn, I ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, to go with his people directly to the city of Iztapalapa, about six short leagues from there; shortly after mid-day they arrived there, and began to burn it, and to fight with its people, who, when they saw the great force of the alguacil mayor, for more than thirty-five or forty thousand of our allies had gone with him, retreated to their canoes. The alguacil mayor, with all the people accompanying him, lodged in that town, and remained there that day awaiting my orders and what might happen to me.

Immediately after I had despatched the alguacil mayor, I embarked in the brigantines, and we started with sails and oars; and while the alguacil mayor was fighting and burning the city of Iztapalapa, we came in sight of a very large and strong hill¹⁷¹ near that city, all surrounded by water, where, from the towns around about the lake as well as from Temixtitan, many people had collected, for they well knew that our first encounter would be with those of Iztapalapa, and they were there for their own defence and also to attack us if possible. When they saw the fleet coming, they began to shout and make great smoke signals so that all the cities of the lake might know and be prepared. Although my intention was to attack that part of Iztapalapa which is on the water, we retraced our course to that hill or knoll and I leaped on it with a hundred and fifty men; it was very steep and high and it was with much difficulty that we began to ascend it. We stormed their trenches on the top, and pitched into them in such wise that not one of them escaped, except the women and children. In this fight they wounded twenty-five Spaniards, but it was a beautiful victory.

As the people of Iztapalapa had made smoke signals from some towers of their idols which stand on a very high hill near the city, Temixtitan and the other cities on the water knew that I had already entered

171) Called Tepepolco: extensive quarries of the red porous stone Tetzontli, used for building purposes, were found here, and the place afterwards became the property of Cortes, and was known as Penon del Marques.

the lake with the brigantines, and they quickly assembled a very great fleet of canoes to attack us, and to discover what sort of things the brigantines were; and from what we could judge the canoes exceeded five hundred in number. When I saw that their course was straight towards us, I, and the people who had disembarked on that great hill, re-embarked in great haste, and I ordered the captains of the brigantines not to move at all, so that the canoes believing that from fear of them we did not dare to move out towards them might decide to attack us. Thus they directed their fleet against us with great impetus; but at about two arrow-shots' distance they stopped and remained still. I strongly desired that the first encounter with them should be a great victory and inspire them with a dread of the brigantines, which held the key of the whole war, for both the Mexicans and we were exposed to the greatest damage on the water. It pleased Our Lord that, while we were observing one another, a very favourable land wind sprang up, enabling us to attack them; so I immediately ordered the captains to break through the fleet of canoes and pursue them till they took refuge in Temixtitlan. As the wind was very good, we bore down in the midst of them, though they fled as fast as they could, and destroyed an infinite number of canoes and killed and drowned many of the enemy, the greatest sight to be seen in the world. We followed them in this pursuit fully three long leagues, until we shut them up amidst the houses of the city; and thus it pleased Our Lord to give us the best and greatest victory which we could have asked or desired.

The garrison of Cuyoacan could see better than that of Tacuba the movements of the brigantines, and when they beheld all the thirteen sails on the water, favoured by such good weather, knocking the enemy's canoes to pieces, they afterwards assured me it was the one thing in the world which gave them the most pleasure and that they most wished for. As I have said, they and those at Tacuba strongly wished me to come there, and with good reason, for both garrisons were in the midst of such multitudes of enemies; but Our Lord miraculously inspired them and diminished the enemy's courage so that they were unable to decide to attack our camp, but had they done so, they would have done great harm to the Spaniards, although they were always well prepared and determined to conquer or die, like men cut off from all succour save what they hoped from God. When the garrison of Cuyoacan saw us pursuing the canoes, most of the horsemen and foot soldiers took the road towards the city of Temixtitlan, and fought very stoutly with the Indians who were on the causeway. They captured the trenches which had been made, and passed over many abandoned bridges, on foot and on horseback under cover of the brigantines which sailed near the causeway. Our allies of Tascaltecal and the Spaniards pursued the enemy, some of whom they killed and others they forced to seek refuge in the water on the other side of the causeway from where the brigantines approached. Thus victoriously they advanced a long league on the causeway until they reached the place where I stopped with the brigantines, as I shall hereafter relate.

We continued chasing the canoes with the brigantines for nearly three leagues. Those which escaped us took refuge amongst the houses of the city, and, as it was already vespers, I ordered the brigantines to retire, and we arrived with them at the causeway. Here I determined to land with thirty men and capture two small towers¹⁷² of their idols, which were surrounded by a low wall of stone and mortar; and, when we landed, they fought us very stoutly to defend them, but finally after much danger and trouble we captured them. I immediately landed and mounted three heavy iron field pieces which I had brought. As about half a league of that causeway between that point and the city was crowded with the enemy, and on both sides of the causeway the water was covered with canoes full of warriors, I ordered one of the field pieces to be aimed and fired, which raked the causeway, and did much execution amongst the enemy. Owing to the carelessness of the gunner, all our powder was set fire to when he fired, although it was little. I presently sent a brigantine to Iztapalapa, some two leagues distant, where the alguacil mayor was, to bring all the powder he had.

172) This was the small fortress called Xoloc, which stood at the junction of the causeways leading to Iztapalapan and Cuyoacan respectively. It consisted of two small towers surrounded by a wall, and was not large enough to hold a numerous garrison, and hence was easily captured by the Spaniards. It was just after passing Xoloc that the first meeting between Montezuma and Cortes took place.

Although, at the beginning, it was my intention on embarking in the brigantines to go to Cuyoacan and plan to do as much damage as possible, as soon as I had landed on the causeway that day and had captured those two towers, I determined to establish my headquarters there, and to keep the brigantines near the towers. I also ordered the force at Cuyoacan and some fifty of the alguacil mayor's soldiers to come there next day. Having determined these measures, we passed the night with caution, for we were in much danger, as all the people of the city gathered there on the causeway and on the water. At midnight a great multitude of people arrived in canoes and began to attack our camp by the causeway: certainly they threw us into great fear and alarm, especially as it was at night and they never attack at such an hour nor had they ever been seen to fight at night except when they were very sure of victory. As we were well prepared, we fought with them, using the small field pieces from the brigantines, each of which carried one, and the archers and musketeers did their part. Thus they dared not advance further, nor did they arrive near enough to do us any injury; so they left off attacking us for the remainder of the night.

Next morning at daybreak, there arrived at my camp on the causeway, fifteen archers and musketeers, fifty men armed with swords and shields, and seven or eight horsemen from the garrison at Cuyoacan. When they got there, those of the city were fighting with us from canoes and on the causeway, and the multitude was such that on land and water we could see nothing but people, who shouted and yelled so that it seemed the world was sinking. We fought with them, advancing on the causeway and capturing a bridge which they had removed, and a barricade they had made at its entrance. We did them such damage with the field pieces and the horsemen, that we almost shut them up amidst the first houses of the city. As many canoes were collected on the other side of the causeway where the brigantines could not pass, doing us much harm with the arrows and darts they discharged at us on the causeway, I ordered an opening to be made near our camp, and sent four brigantines through from the other side, which as soon as they passed through, shut up all the canoes amongst the houses of the city, so that they did not dare in any way to come out into the open. On the other side of the causeway, the other eight brigantines fought with the canoes and shut them up amongst the houses, following in amongst them, where, until then, they had not ventured to go, because there were so many shallows and stakes which prevented them. When they found canals where the brigantines could enter with safety, they fought with the people in the canoes and captured some of them, and burned many of the houses in the outskirts. We spent all that day in fighting in the aforesaid manner.

The following day, the alguacil mayor departed from Iztapalapa with his people, Spaniards as well as our allies, for Cuyoacan whence there is a causeway about a league and a half in length to the mainland. After making about a quarter of a league, the alguacil mayor reached a small city[Mexicaltzingo] which is also on the water, in many parts of which it was possible to ride on horseback; the inhabitants began fighting with him, but he routed them, killing many, and burning and destroying the entire city. When I learned that the Indians had made a great breach in the causeway, which the people could not easily cross, I sent two brigantines to help them, and these were used as bridges for the foot soldiers to cross over. When they had crossed, they went to camp at Cuyoacan, and the alguacil mayor with ten horsemen took the causeway road to our camp. Upon his arrival he found us fighting, so he and his men joined in and began to fight with the people on the causeway with whom we were engaged. When the alguacil mayor began to fight, the enemy pierced his foot with a dart, but, although he and some others were wounded that day, we did such harm amongst them with the large field pieces and cross-bows and muskets, that neither those in the canoes, nor those on the causeway, dared come near us, but showed more fear and less pride than they had formerly exhibited. Thus we remained six days, having daily combat with them, and the brigantines set fire to all the houses they could in the outskirts of the city, for they discovered canals by which they could enter the outskirts and environs, and penetrated to the heart of it.

This produced a very desirable effect, as they put a stop to the movements of the canoes, none of which dared to come within a quarter of a league of our camp. The next day, Pedro de Alvarado, captain of the garrison at Tacuba, reported to me that the people of Temixtitan came in and out as they pleased by a highway which leads to some towns on the mainland, and by another small one which joins it, and he

believed that should they find themselves hard pressed, they would escape by that way. Although I desired their departure more than they themselves did, as we could more easily overcome them on the mainland than in the big fortress they had on the water, nevertheless in order to completely shut them in so that they could not profit by anything from the mainland, I ordered the alguacil mayor (although he was wounded), to go and plant his camp at a little village at the end of one of the two causeways. He left with twenty-three horsemen, a hundred foot soldiers, eighteen archers and musketeers, leaving me fifty other soldiers for my company; and, when he arrived the next day, he planted his camp where I had commanded him. Thenceforward the city of Temixtitlan was surrounded on all sides wherever they could reach the mainland by the causeways.

I had, Very Powerful Lord, two hundred Spanish foot soldiers in the camp on the causeway, amongst whom were twenty-five archers and musketeers, besides the people on the brigantines, who were more than two hundred and fifty. As we had the enemy completely invested and had many friendly warriors, I determined to penetrate into the city as far as possible by the causeway, while the brigantines should cover our rear on the one side and the other. I ordered some horsemen and foot soldiers of the division in Cuyoacan to repair to my camp and enter with us, and ten horsemen to remain at the entrance of the causeway, protecting our rear. It seemed best that some force should remain in Cuyoacan, because the natives of Suchimilco, Culucan, Iztapalapa, Chilobusco, Mexicalcingo, Cuitaguacad, and Mizquique, which are all on the water, were rebellious and in favour of those of the city, and should they wish to take us on our rear, we would be protected by those ten or twelve horsemen I ordered to guard the causeway, while many more remained in Cuyoacan with more than ten thousand Indian allies. I likewise ordered the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado to attack, from their positions, that same day, for I wished on my part to gain as much of the city as was possible.

Thus, I left the camp early in the morning, and advanced on foot along the causeway. We speedily found the enemy, defending a breach in the road, one lance-length in width and as much in depth, where they had built an earthwork; both our attack and their defence were very stubborn. Finally we took it, and advanced further by the causeway, until we reached the entrance of the city, where stood a tower of their idols, at the foot of which was a broad, high bridge, crossing a very wide street of water defended by another strong earthwork. As we reached this place, they began to attack us, but as the brigantines were on both sides of the causeway, we took it without loss, which would have been impossible without their aid. As soon as they began to abandon the earthwork, our men landed from the brigantines, and we crossed the water, as did those of Tascaltecal, Guajocingo, Calco, and Tesaico, who were more than eighty thousand men. While we filled up that broken bridge with stones and adobes, the Spaniards captured another earthwork in the principal street, which is the broadest one in the city, but, there being no water there, it was very easily captured. They followed in pursuit of the enemy the whole length of the street until the latter reached another bridge which had been raised, with the exception of one broad beam by which they crossed. After the enemy had safely crossed to where they were protected by the water, they quickly removed it. They had thrown up on the other side of the bridge another great breastwork of earth and adobes. When we arrived there, we could not pass without throwing ourselves into the water, and this was very dangerous, as the enemy fought very valiantly, and on both sides of the street there was an infinite number of them fighting very stoutly from the roofs; but when some archers and musketeers arrived and we fired with two field pieces up the street, we did them much damage. As soon as we saw this, certain Spaniards threw themselves into the water and crossed to the other side, which it required two hours to accomplish. When the enemy saw them cross, they abandoned the breastwork and the roofs, and took to flight through the street, and thus all our people passed over.

I immediately ordered that bridge filled up and the breastwork destroyed, and meanwhile the Spaniards continued the pursuit along the street and our Indian allies followed for about two bow-shots distance until they reached another bridge which is near the square and the principal buildings of the city. They had not removed this bridge nor did they have an earthwork, for they never thought we would gain what we did that day, nor did even we expect to accomplish half as much. A field piece was placed at the entrance of

the square, and did the enemy much damage, for they were so numerous that they completely filled the space. The Spaniards, seeing there was no water there, which was the usual danger, determined to penetrate into the square, and, when those of the city saw this determination carried out, and beheld the great multitude of our allies, (although they were not afraid of them without us) they fled, and the Spaniards and our allies pursued them till they shut them up in the court of their idols, which is surrounded by a wall of stone and mortar. As will have been seen from another description of this, it has as great a circumference as a town of four hundred households; it was however quickly abandoned by them, and the Spaniards and our allies captured it, remaining in it and on the towers for a long while. When the inhabitants of the city discovered there were no horsemen, they turned against the Spaniards and expelled them by force from the towers and the court and enclosure, during which our men found themselves in much hardship and danger; as they came in more than a retreat¹⁷³ they turned under the arches of the courtyard. But the enemy attacking them very stoutly, they abandoned this position and retired to the square, whence they were expelled by force and driven into the street, so that the field piece there had to be abandoned. The Spaniards, being unable to withstand the force of the enemy, had to retreat exposed to great danger, in the midst of which it pleased God that three horsemen should advance into the square; when the enemy saw them they believed there were more, and took to flight; and the horsemen killed some of them and recaptured the court and enclosure I mentioned above. In the principal and highest tower, which has a hundred and some steps to the top, ten or twelve of the principal Indians of the city fortified themselves, but four or five Spaniards forced their way up and overpowered and killed all of them in spite of their stout defence.¹⁷⁴ Five or six horsemen afterwards concerted with others and laid an ambush in which they killed more than thirty of the enemy.

As it was now late, I ordered our people to collect and retire, and, while doing so, such a multitude of the enemy pressed on them, that, had it not been for the horsemen, the Spaniards could not possibly have escaped without injury. But, as I had had all the difficult passes in the street and causeway, where danger was anticipated, well filled in with adobes by the time of retiring, the horsemen could easily move about, so they turned against the enemy, who were harassing our rear-guard four or five times in the length of the street, killing some of them with their lances. Although the enemy saw they sustained damage, the dogs rushed on so furiously that we could not check them nor would they stop following us. The whole day would have been spent in this manner, had they not already taken many terraces giving on to the street, and the horsemen were from this cause in much danger. Thus we hastened forward along the causeway to our camp without losing a single Spaniard, although we had some wounded; and we set fire to most of the best houses in that street, so that when we entered again they could not injure us from the roofs. The alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado fought very stoutly this day from their positions, and at the time of the combats we were a league and a half from one another; the population of the city is so extended that perhaps I even diminish the distance between us. Our allies who were with them were infinite and fought very well, retiring that day without sustaining any loss.¹⁷⁵

In the meantime, Don Fernando, Lord of Tesaico and the province of Aculuacan, of whom I have heretofore made relation to Your Majesty, succeeded in winning over all the natives of his city and province to our friendship, who till now were not so steadfast in it as they afterwards became. Many chiefs

173) Como iban mas que retraiendose is the quaint device of Cortes to avoid saying that the Spaniards were in full flight.

174) The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, is authority for the story that Cortes and his Texcocan ally, Prince Ixtlilochitl, headed this assault upon the great teocalli, penetrating into the sanctuary of the idol; and that Cortes himself tore away the jewelled mask of gold from the idol's face while the Prince of Texcoco struck off its head with his sword. In the absence of any mention of these details by Cortes or any other witnesses, this version seems unworthy of credence.

175) It seems incredible that neither Spaniards nor allies should have sustained any loss in this long day's fighting, which, though it ended to their advantage, had witnessed their utter rout and the capture of their gun on the square. Bernal Diaz, who was fighting under Alvarado, on the causeway from the Tacuba side, gives a more convincing description of the daily losses and the wounds which the men had to dress as best they could when they returned at night to their camp. There was a soldier Juan Catalan, who was reputed to have the gift of healing by prayer and charms, who had his hands full, as the Indians also placed faith in him, and brought him all their wounded. "I say," he piously adds, "that it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy to give us strength and to speedily heal us."

and the brothers of Don Fernando daily joined him, determined to declare for us and to fight against those of Mexico and Temixtitan. As Don Fernando was still a youth and professed great love for the Spaniards, recognising the favour, which, in the name of Your Majesty, had been extended to him in the gift of so great a lordship, though there were others whose rights to it preceded his, he worked his utmost to induce his vassals to come and fight against those of the city, and expose themselves to the same danger and hardship as we ourselves. He spoke with his brothers, six or seven in number, all well disposed, beseeching them to bring all the people of their lordships to help me. He sent one of them, called Istrisuchil, who is twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, very brave, beloved and feared of all, as captain, who arrived at the camp on the causeway with more than thirty thousand warriors, very well supplied in their fashion, and another twenty thousand joined the other two camps.¹⁷⁶ I received them gladly, thanking them for their good disposition and conduct. Your Caesarian Majesty may well judge how valuable was this help and friendship from Don Fernando, and how those of Temixtitan felt it, to see those whom they considered their vassals, friends, relatives, and even fathers, brothers, and sons, marching against them.

Fighting went on in the city for two days, as I have said above. As soon as these people came to our help, the natives of Suchimilco, which is on the lake, and some Utumie¹⁷⁷ tribes who are a mountain people, more numerous than those of Suchimilco, and who were slaves of Montezuma, came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, begging me to pardon their tardiness. I received them very well, and was pleased at their coming, for they constituted the only danger to our camp in Cuyoacan.

From the camp on the causeway we had, with the help of the brigantines, burned many houses in the outskirts of the city, and not a canoe dared venture there. I deemed it sufficient for our safety to keep seven brigantines about our camp, and I therefore decided to send three to each of the other camps of the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, instructing the captains that, as supplies of fresh water, fruits, maize, and other provisions came from the mainland on those sides, they should cruise about both day and night, taking turns, and moreover that they should back up our people when we planned an assault to force an entrance into the city. The allotment of these six brigantines to the two other camps was a very necessary and profitable measure, for every day and night they captured many canoes and prisoners.

These measures being decided, and the people above mentioned having come peaceably to our help, I told them I had determined to enter and fight in the city two days hence, that therefore they should all assemble, by that time, well prepared and furnished for war; for by this I would recognise whether they were our true friends; and they promised to be ready. The next day, I had the people prepared and equipped, and I wrote to the camps and two brigantines what I had determined and what they should do.

After having heard mass next morning, and having instructed the captains as to what they should do, I left our quarters with fifteen or twenty horsemen and three hundred Spaniards and all our allies, who were an infinite number, and, advancing along the causeway, we found the enemy already waiting for us, three bowshots from the camp, yelling fearfully. During the three preceding days there had been no fighting with them so they had undone all we had accomplished in filling up the breaches in the causeway, making them very much stronger and more dangerous to capture than before. The brigantines accompanied us on both sides of the causeway, for they could approach very near, and do much damage with field pieces, muskets, and crossbows. Discovering this, our men landed and captured the breast-works and bridge; we

176) The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, contradicts Cortes on this point, affirming that the boy-king Fernando was already dead, and that his brother Ixtlilochitl reigned. Both these princes bore the same Christian name of Fernando, hence the natural and unimportant confusion of their identity, but, as Cortes says nothing of the first one's death, which he could have no motive in misrepresenting, and distinguishes very clearly between the two, his version, given at the time, must prevail over that of a later writer. The same chronicler claims that Ixtlilochitl fought throughout the siege with the Spaniards, performing prodigies of valour, and he reproaches Cortes for suppressing all mention of these services in his despatches, and for failing to recompense him and his people after the victory to which their valour so largely contributed (Orozco y Berra, lib. iii., cap. vi.).

177) Otomies: tribes inhabiting the mountain regions to the west. Orozco y Berra gives June 11th as the probable date of their arrival in the camp.

crossed to the other side and pursued the enemy, who immediately fortified themselves in the other breastworks and bridges they had prepared, which, although with greater trouble and danger than before, we also captured, expelling them from the street and square where the great houses of the city stand. I ordered that no Spaniard should leave there while I and our allies were filling the breaks in the causeway with stones and adobes, which was such a labour, that although ten thousand Indians helped us, it was already the hour of vespers when we had finished making repairs; during all which time the Spaniards and our allies were constantly fighting and skirmishing and preparing ambushes, in which many of the enemy perished. I rode with the horsemen through the city for a while, and in the streets where there is no water, we killed with our lances all whom we could catch, thus holding them at a distance, nor did they dare to come on dry ground. Seeing that they were so rebellious and showed such determination to defend themselves to the death, I inferred two things: first that we should recover little or none of the treasures they had taken from us, and the other, that they gave occasion and forced us to totally destroy them. This last reason caused me the greater grief, for it weighed on my soul and made me reflect on what means I might employ to frighten them, so that they should realise their error and the injury they would sustain from us: and I kept on burning and destroying the towers of their idols and their houses. In order to make them feel it the more, I this day ordered fire to be set to the great houses in the square, where the Spaniards and I had first been quartered when they expelled us from the city. They were so extensive that a prince with more than six hundred persons of his household and retinue could be lodged in them. Some others close to them, though somewhat smaller, were also very splendid and fine, and Montezuma kept all kinds of birds in them. Although it grieved me much, I determined, as it grieved them even more, to burn these edifices. This seemed to cause the enemies immense sorrow, as well as to their allies in the cities about the lake, for none of them ever thought our force would be sufficient to penetrate so far into the city; and they were greatly dismayed. After setting fire to those houses, I collected our people, as it was already late, in order to return to our camp, and, when those of the city saw we were retiring, an infinite number of them charged us and fell upon us furiously, attacking our rear-guard. As the whole street was available to the horsemen, we turned on them, lancing many every time; nevertheless they would not keep away from our rear, yelling all the time. On this day, they felt and showed great dismay, especially when they saw us in their city, burning and destroying it, and the natives of Tesaico, Calco, Suchimilco, and the Otomies fighting against them, each shouting the name of his province; and in another quarter those of Tascaltecal, all showing them their countrymen cut in pieces, telling them they would sup off them that night and breakfast off them next morning, as in fact they did. We returned to our camp to rest, for we had laboured much during that day, and my seven brigantines had entered that day into the city by the water streets and burned a greater part of it. The captains of the other camps and the six brigantines fought very well that day, and about what happened to them I might dilate a great deal, but to avoid prolixity, omit doing so, and limit myself to saying that after the victory they retired to their camp without suffering any loss.

Early in the morning of the following day, after having heard mass, I returned to the city with all the people in the same order, so as not to give the enemy time to excavate the bridges and rebuild the barricades; but notwithstanding that we were very early, two of the three water streets, which crossed the street leading from this camp to the large houses of the square, had been re-established as during the preceding days and were very difficult to capture; so much so that the combat lasted from eight o'clock in the morning till one o'clock in the afternoon, during which we used up almost all the arrows, ammunition, and musket balls, which the archers and musketeers had with them. Your Majesty may well believe that our danger each time we captured these bridges was unequalled, because to take them, the Spaniards were obliged to swim across to the other side, which many could not do, because the enemy awaited them with knife and lance thrusts to prevent their landing. But as they no longer had roofs on the other side from whence to injure us, and we used our crossbows from this side on them (for we were the throw of a horseshoe from each other), the Spaniards daily gathered new courage and were determined to cross, for they saw my determination, and sink or swim, the thing must be done. It may seem to Your Majesty, that after having gone through such danger to gain these bridges and barricades, that we were negligent in not

holding them after having won them, so as not to be obliged every day to again go over so much danger and trouble, which unquestionably were very great, and certainly it must appear thus to those who were absent. But Your Majesty should know that this could in no wise be done, because two things were required to do it, either that the camp should be transferred from where it was to the square enclosure of the towers of the idols, or that a guard should be placed at the bridges during the night; and neither one nor the other could be done without great danger, nor was there possibility of it, because placing the camp in the city we should have had to sustain a thousand contests day and night and at every hour, and they would have fought us and given us intolerable labour, attacking us on every side, they being so many and we so few. As for placing people to guard the bridges by night, the Spaniards were so weary after fighting all day, that it was impossible to do this, and hence we were obliged to retake them every day when we entered the city. That day, as we were delayed in retaking those bridges and refilling them, no time was left for anything else, except that by another principal street leading to the city of Tacuba, two other bridges were captured and filled up, and many good houses in this street were burned; thus the afternoon came on and with it the hour for retiring, which was always accompanied by little less danger than taking the bridges, for seeing that we were in retreat, those of the city would recover as much courage as if they had won the greatest victory in the world, and we were flying from them. To retire it was necessary that the bridges should be well filled up and made level with the ground of the streets, so that the horsemen might freely gallop from one place to another; and as they pursued so eagerly we sometimes feigned in the retreat to be flying, and then the horsemen would turn on them and we would always capture twelve or thirteen of the bravest, and with these manoeuvres and some ambushes we constantly laid for them, they would always get the worst of it. Certainly it was an admirable thing to see, for, although the injury and damage, with which they were threatened from us at the hour of our retreat, was notorious, they would nevertheless follow us until they saw us out of the city. With this we returned to our camp, and the captains of the other camps reported to me that they had done very well that day, and had killed many people by water and land.

The captain Pedro de Alvarado who was in Tacuba, wrote to me that he had captured two or three bridges, for he was on the causeway which leads from the market of Temixtitan to Tacuba, and the three brigantines I had given him could reach a landing place on the same causeway, and he had not been exposed to as much danger as on the preceding days, and where he was there were more bridges and breaks in the causeway, although there were fewer roofs than in the other directions.

During all this time the natives of Iztapalapa, Oichilobuzco, Culuacan, Mezquique, and Cuitaguaca, which as I have said are on the fresh-water lake, would never seek peace, nor had we all this time sustained any injury from them; and as they were very loyal vassals of Your Majesty, and saw that we had enough to do with those of the great city, they joined with other towns on the borders of the lake, to do all the damage they could to those towns on the water. Seeing we were daily victorious over those of Temixtitan, and on account of the injury they were sustaining and might sustain from our friends, these rebellious natives determined to come; and they arrived in our camp and besought me to pardon them the past, and to order the Calcans and their other neighbours to do them no further injury.¹⁷⁸ I told them I was pleased with this and harboured no anger against any except those of the city; and that we might believe

178) The perfidy of these people dealt a terrible blow to Quauhtemotzin and the defenders of Temixtitan, for to their defection they added treachery of the blackest complexion. Their chiefs appeared before the Emperor with offers of assistance, which were gratefully accepted by the hard-pressed sovereign. Their troops were assigned places, and, when the fighting began, made a feint at first of attacking the Spanish allies, but afterwards suddenly turned their arms against the Mexicans who were of course taken completely by surprise: their chiefs quickly rallied, however, and bringing up fresh troops the traitors soon got the worst of it, and, leaving many dead, and others prisoners, the remainder fled from the city. The prisoners were upbraided by Macehuatzin, lord of Cuitlahuac, who decapitated four of the principal ones with his own hand and delivered the others to Quauhtemotzin, who ordered them to be sacrificed in the temples of Mexico and Tlatelolco (Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxxiv.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. cxiii.). One of the worst effects of the defection of the lake towns was to cut off the supplies of fresh water and food, which, in spite of the vigilance of the brigantines, they had found means to transport into the beleaguered city. Henceforth hunger was added to the horrors of the siege, while the Spanish camp was enriched by supplies of fresh provisions.

their friendship sincere, I prayed them, that inasmuch as I was determined not to raise the siege till I had taken the city by peace or war, and as they had many canoes capable of aiding me, they should prepare everything they could with as many warriors as were in their towns, to henceforward aid us on the water. I also prayed them that inasmuch as the Spaniards had few and miserable huts, and it was the rainy season, to build us as many houses in the camp as they could, and to bring adobes and beams from the houses of the city which were nearest to the camp. They answered that the canoes and warriors were prepared every day, and they served me so well in building the houses, that, between the two towers on the one side and the other and the causeway where I was lodged, they built so many that from the first house to the last, there was a distance of three or four bowshots. Your Majesty may see how broad is this causeway, which crosses the deepest part of the lake, from the fact that between these houses, built on both sides, there was ample room to go and come on foot and horseback. There were constantly in the camp, between Spaniards and Indian servants, more than two thousand persons. All the warriors, our friends, were lodged in Cuyoacan, a league and a half from the camp; and the people of these towns likewise supplied us with provisions, of which we stood in great need; especially with fish and cherries, of which there is such a quantity about here, that, during the five or six months of the year they last, they are sufficient for double the inhabitants of the country.

As we on our side had entered the city two or three days successively, besides three or four before, and had always been victorious against the enemy and had killed an infinite number, with our field-pieces, crossbows, and muskets, we thought that any hour they would move to propose peace, which we desired as our own salvation; but nothing availed to bring them to this determination. To reduce them to greater straits, and to see if they could be forced to make peace, I decided to enter the city each day in three or four divisions. I therefore ordered all the people of the cities situated on the water, to come in their canoes, so that day there were in our camp more than a hundred thousand men, our friends. And I ordered the four brigantines, with half the canoes (as many as fifteen hundred) to go on one side, and the other three, with as many more canoes, to go on another, and overrun the greater part of the city and burn and do all the damage they could. I entered by the principal street and found it all free up to the large houses of the square, none of the bridges having been opened. I advanced to the street which leads to Tacuba, where there were six or seven bridges. From there, I ordered a captain to enter another street, with sixty or seventy men and six horsemen to protect their rear, and with them went more than ten or twelve thousand Indians, our friends; and I ordered another captain to do the same in another street; and I, with the remaining people, advanced on the street to Tacuba. We captured three bridges which we filled up, and, because it was already late, left the others for another day, when it could be better done, for I wished to occupy that street so that the people of Pedro de Alvarado's camp might communicate with ours, and go from one camp to the other, and the brigantines the same. That day was one of great victory, both on water as well as land; and some plunder was obtained from the city. In the camps of the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado there was also great victory.

The next day, I again entered the city in the same order as before, and God gave us such a triumph that, in the parts where I penetrated, there seemed to be no resistance at all, and the enemy retired so rapidly that it appeared we had captured three-fourths of the city. The division of Pedro de Alvarado also attacked them briskly, and, undoubtedly on that day and the day before, I was positive they would sue for peace, in favour of which, with or without victory, I made every demonstration I could. Nevertheless, we saw no sign of peace in them, and we retired that day to our camp, very gladly, although we were grieved to our very hearts to see their determination to die. In these past days, Pedro de Alvarado had captured many bridges, and, in order to hold and defend them, he placed a guard of foot soldiers and horsemen on them throughout the night, while the remainder of his people returned to camp, three-quarters of a league from there. As this labour was unendurable, he determined to move his camp to the end of the causeway leading to the market place of Temixtitan, which has a square much larger than that of Salamanca, all surrounded by arcades, to reach which it was necessary to capture only two or three more bridges, but as they were very broad and dangerous, he was occupied in it some days, during which he fought constantly, and

obtained victory. And that day of which I spoke in the past chapter, when he saw the enemies waver, and that where I was engaged they gave continual and stout combats, he got such a taste of victory with the bridges and barricades he had captured, that he determined to pass them, and capture a bridge where they had destroyed the causeway for more than sixty paces, and where the water had entered to a depth of about nine feet; and as the attack was made the same day and the brigantines helped so much, he crossed the water and captured the bridge and pursued the enemy who fled. Pedro de Alvarado hastened to have that pass filled so that the horsemen might cross, and also because I had daily admonished him by writing and by word of mouth not to gain a palm of ground without having the exit and entrance for the horsemen absolutely assured, as they in reality sustained the war. When the enemy saw there were only forty or fifty Spaniards and some of our friends on the other side, and that the horsemen could not cross, they turned on them so quickly that they drove them back and into the water, where they captured three or four Spaniards alive, who were immediately sacrificed; and they killed some of our friends.¹⁷⁹

Finally Pedro de Alvarado retired to his camp, and when I arrived in ours that day and learned what had happened, it caused me the greatest grief in the world, as this was an event to encourage the enemy, and they might think that we would not again dare to enter. The reason why Pedro de Alvarado wished to take the bad pass, was, as I say, because he had overcome a great part of the Indians' force, and they showed some weakness, and chiefly because his people importuned him to capture the market-place; for, having gained that, almost the entire city would be taken, as all the forces and hopes of the Indians centred there: and, as Alvarado's men saw that I stoutly continued to combat the Indians, they feared that I might capture the market place before they did, and as they were nearer to it than we, they held it as a point of honour to take it first. For this reason the said Pedro de Alvarado was much importuned, and the same happened to me in our camp, for all the Spaniards eagerly besought me to enter by one of the three streets leading to the market-place, for we found little resistance, and that once captured we would have less hardship. I alleged every possible reason for not doing it, although I concealed the real cause, which was the inconvenience and dangers which presented themselves to me; for in order to reach the market-place, there were infinite roofs and bridges and broken causeways, so that each house by which we had to pass, was converted into an island surrounded by water.

179) Cortes says nothing of the losses suffered by the Spaniards during the operations of these days, though they were considerable enough to merit notice. The Mexicans had arranged a clever device for capturing the brigantines, which was partially successful. They stationed thirty of their largest canoes, full of warriors, amongst some rushes, and drove a number of stakes into the bottom of the lake in such wise as to impede the movements of the brigantines. Some smaller canoes, such as usually carried supplies, were then sent into the open, where they were quickly discovered by the Spaniards, who gave chase, allowing themselves to be drawn into the trap, where the stakes interfered with their movements. The captain of one of the brigantines, Portillo, was killed, and Pedro Barbo was mortally wounded; many others were wounded, and the Mexicans carried off one brigantine in triumph. They paid dearly for this victory, for Cortes was so much mortified by this disaster, that a counter ambushade was prepared, which drew the Mexicans successfully, and in which they suffered severe loss of many canoes, a number of slain, and others prisoners. The Aztecs had one formidable warrior of giant stature, called Tzilacatzin, who was wonderfully skilful with his sling, every stone he sent bringing down its man. He was made the aim of all the Spanish archers, and musketeers, his great stature making him easily distinguishable, but they could never hit him. On one of these days eighteen Spaniards were captured alive and sacrificed, their bodies being afterwards cut up and distributed to be eaten. Another day a furious assault led by a daring warrior of Tlatelolco called Tlapanecatl, almost succeeded in capturing the ensign Corral who carried the Spanish standard, and did carry off no less than fifty-three Castilian prisoners, besides numerous of the allies, and four horses all of whom were sacrificed in the various temples. In the rout of Alvarado, which Cortes here briefly mentions, but which was a complete disaster, five more Spaniards were taken alive, besides many Indian prisoners; a horseman and his horse were drowned, and the survivors, all badly wounded, and utterly demoralised, drew off to their camp amidst the victorious shouts of the Mexicans. The latter followed up to the very camp, but were repulsed with loss by a small battery stationed there, which was worked by an able engineer, named Medrano. The guns were so placed that they raked the entire causeway, and as the brigantines used their guns on both sides, the camp was effectively protected (Bernal Diaz, cap. cii.; Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxxvi.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. xciii.). Alvarado was an intrepid commander, and, nothing daunted by his repulse, he continued for four days to renew his attack at the same point, until, on Friday, June 28th, he finally captured the bridge. Six more Spaniards perished in these combats, besides the wounded and allies whose dead were unnumbered.

When I learned, that afternoon upon reaching the camp, of Pedro de Alvarado's disaster, I determined to go to his camp the next morning, to rebuke him for what had happened, and to see what had been accomplished, and where he had moved his camp, and to advise him as to his security, and for the attack on the enemy. I was undoubtedly astonished, when I reached his camp, to see how far towards the middle of the city it was, and the bad places and bridges he had taken, so that I no longer blamed him so much as he had seemed to deserve; having talked with him, therefore, about what he should do, I returned that day to our camp.

This finished, I effected several entries into the city at the usual points, and the brigantines and canoes fought in two places, and I in four others within the city, and we always obtained the victory, and many of the adversaries were killed because numberless people daily returned in our favour. I hesitated to penetrate farther into the city, on the one hand that our enemies might reconsider their determination and stubbornness, and on the other because our entrance could not be effected without great danger, as they were very united, strong, and desperate unto death. As the Spaniards observed such delay, and that for more than twenty days they had never ceased fighting, they importuned me, in such manner as I have heretofore stated, to enter and take the marketplace, because, having gained that, the enemy would have little space left to them from which to defend themselves, and, if they did not surrender, they would die from hunger and thirst, having no water to drink save the salt water of the lake. When I excused myself, the treasurer of Your Majesty told me that the entire camp insisted upon it, and that I ought to do it. I answered him and other persons who were in favour of this plan, that their object and wish were excellent, and that I desired, to do it more than anybody else, but that I refrained for the reason his importunity forced me to say; which was that, although he and others approved of it, there might be others who, on account of the great danger would not. And finally, they forced me so much that I agreed to do what I could, after first consulting the people of the other camps.

The next day I conferred with some of the principal persons of our camp, and we agreed to notify the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado that we would enter the city on the following day, and make an effort to reach the market-place, and I wrote to them what they were to do on the Tacuba side, and, besides writing, I sent two of my servants to explain the whole business, that they might be better informed. The course they were to follow was this: The alguacil mayor was to come, with ten horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, and fifteen musketeers, to Pedro de Alvarado's camp, leaving in his own camp ten other horsemen, with whom he should arrange that they were to lie in ambush behind some houses at the hour of the next day's battle; and that he should remove all his baggage as though he were breaking up his camp, so that when the enemy came in pursuit, those in ambush would fall upon their rear. The said alguacil mayor with his three brigantines and the three of Pedro de Alvarado were to take that bad pass, where Pedro de Alvarado had been routed, filling it up quickly, and in marching forward they were not to advance one step without having first filled it up and repaired it; and, if they could advance to the market-place without any great risk or danger, they were to make every effort to do so, as I would do the same; and they were to note well that, although I sent to say this, I did not oblige them to advance a single step which might expose them to any defeat or mishap, and that I communicated this to them because I knew them, and that they would put their face to what I ordered them, even though they knew that by it they might lose their lives. My two servants went to the camp and met the said alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado there to whom they stated the case as we had agreed here in our camp. As they had to fight in one place only, and I in many, I had asked them to send me seventy or eighty foot soldiers who would enter with me next day; these came with my two servants and all slept that night in my camp according to the orders which I had sent them.

This order given, the next day, after having heard mass, the seven brigantines with more than three hundred canoes of our friends, left our camp, and I, with twenty-five horsemen, my people, and the seventy men from the camp of Tacuba, began our march and entered the city, where I divided them in this manner: From the point we had already reached, three streets led to the marketplace, which the Indians

called Tianguizco,¹⁸⁰ and into the principal one, leading to the said market-place, I told Your Majesty's treasurer and accountant[Julian de Alderete] to enter, with seventy men and more than fifteen or twenty thousand of our friends, and that in his rear he should take seven horsemen; and that as they captured the bridges and barricades they should be filled up; and they took a dozen men with picks in addition to our friends, who were most useful for the purpose of filling up the bridges. Two other streets lead from the streets of Tacuba to the market-place and are narrower, having more causeways, bridges, and water streets, and I ordered two captains to enter by the broadest of them, with eighty men and more than ten thousand Indians, our friends, and, at the mouth of that street of Tacuba, I placed two heavy field pieces with eight horsemen to guard them. With eight other horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, amongst whom were more than twenty-five archers and musketeers, and with an infinite number of our friends, I pursued my road, penetrating by the other narrow street as far as possible.

I halted the horsemen at the entrance of it, and ordered them on no account to advance from there, nor to follow after me unless I first ordered them to do so. I then dismounted and we arrived at a barricade they had made at the end of a bridge, which we took with a small field piece, the archers and musketeers advancing by a causeway, which the enemy had broken at two or three different places. Besides these three combats we waged, our friends who entered by the roofs and other places were so numerous that it did not seem that anything could resist us. When the Spaniards took those two bridges, the barricades, and the causeway, our friends advanced by the street without taking any spoils, while I remained with about twenty Spaniards on a small island. I observed that certain of our friends were engaged with the enemy, who sometimes would repel them, driving them into the water, but with our assistance they would turn again upon them. Besides this we took care that from certain cross streets those of the city should not sally out to take at their backs the Spaniards, who were advancing along the street.

They sent to tell me at this time that they had advanced much and were not very far from the market-place, and in any case they wished to push on because they already heard the combat which the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were waging on their side. I sent orders that they should on no account advance a step without leaving the bridges well filled up, so that, if they needed to retreat, the water would be no obstacle or embarrassment, for therein lay the danger; and they returned to tell me that all they had gained were well repaired and I might go myself and see if it was so. Dreading that they might go astray, and commit blunders respecting the filling up of the ditches, I went thither, and found that they had passed over a ditch in the street which was ten paces broad, with water flowing through it ten feet in depth, and that in passing they had thrown wood and maize and reed grass into it; as they had passed few at a time and with care, the wood and maize had not sunk, and they, in the joy of victory, were going ahead so recklessly that they believed the work had been very thoroughly done. The moment I reached that wretched bridge, I saw the Spaniards and many of our friends returning in full flight, and the enemy like dogs setting on them; and, seeing the impending mishap, I began to cry, Stop! Stop! but when I arrived at the water I found it full of Spaniards and Indians as though not one straw had been put into it. The enemy charged so furiously, killing amongst the Spaniards, that they threw themselves into the water with them, and their canoes came by the water streets and captured the Spaniards alive. As the affair came about so suddenly, and I saw the people being killed, I determined to remain there and die fighting; and the most that I and my men could do was to lend our hands to some unlucky Spaniards who were drowning and help them out; and some came out wounded and others half drowned and others without weapons. I sent them on ahead. Such was the number of the enemy that they surrounded me and some other ten or fifteen who had remained with me.

Being entirely occupied in helping those who were drowning, I had not observed or thought of my own danger, and already certain Indians had grasped me and would have carried me away had it not been for a captain of fifty whom I always had with me, and another youth of my company, who, after God, gave me my life, and, in giving it me, as a valiant man he there lost his own. Meanwhile, the Spaniards who had been routed were retreating by the causeway, and as it was small, and narrow, and on a level with the

180) Tianguiz or Tianquitzli is the Mexican word for market.

water which those dogs had intentionally prepared in this manner, and as many of our own friends, who had also been routed, were also going by it, the road was so encumbered, and there was such a delay in advancing, that the enemy had time to come up from both sides and take and kill as many as they chose. And that captain who was with me, called Antonio de Quinomes, said to me, "Let us go away from here and save yourself, as you know that without you none of us can escape"; but seeing that he could not prevail upon me to go, he grasped me by the arms, to force me to retire. Although I would have rejoiced more in death than in life, by the importunity of that and of my other companions, we began to withdraw, fighting with our swords and bucklers against the enemy, who surrounded us. At this moment a servant of mine rode up on horseback and cleared a little space, but immediately a lance thrown from a low roof struck him in the throat, and overthrew him.

In the midst of this great conflict, waiting for the people to pass that small causeway and reach safety while we held back the enemy, a servant of mine arrived with a horse for me to mount, because such was the quantity of mud on that small causeway, brought there by those who fell in and climbed out of the water, that no one could keep his feet, especially on account of the jostling of one another in trying to save themselves. I mounted, but not to fight, because it was impossible on horseback; for, could it have been done, those eight horsemen whom I had left on a small island at the beginning of the causeway would have been there, but they could not do other than go back by it, and even the return was so perilous that two mares mounted by my servants fell from the causeway into the water, one of whom the Indians killed and the other some of our soldiers saved. Another young servant of mine called Cristobal de Guzman mounted a horse, which was given to him at the small island to bring to me to save me, and he and the horse were killed by the enemy before they reached me; his death filled the whole camp with such sadness that the sorrow of those who knew him is still fresh to-day. Finally it pleased God that, after all our troubles, those who were left should reach the street of Tacuba, which is very broad, and, having collected the people, I, with my horsemen, stopped in the rear, where the enemy were charging with such triumph and pride that it seemed that they would leave nobody alive. Retiring as best I could, I sent word to the treasurer and accountant to retreat to the square in good order. I sent the same order to the other two captains who had entered by the street leading to the market, both of whom had fought valiantly and captured many barricades and bridges which they completely filled up, from which cause they were able to retreat without injury. Before the treasurer and accountant retired from the breastwork where they were fighting, those of the city had already thrown two or three heads of Christians at them, although then they did not know whether they came from Pedro de Alvarado's camp or from ours. And we all gathered in the square, so many of the enemy charging on us from every side that we had enough to do to keep them off, and even in places where before this rout they would never have dared to come, they killed three horsemen and ten soldiers. Immediately after, in one of the towers of their idols which was near the square, they offered many perfumes and incense of gums which they use in this country, very much like anime, offering them up to their idols in sign of victory; and even if we had wanted to stop this it could not be done, as almost all the people were already hastening towards the camp. In this rout, the adversary killed thirty-five or forty Spaniards and more than one thousand Indians, our friends, and wounded more than twenty Christians; and I came out wounded in one leg. A small field piece was lost and many crossbows, muskets, and arms.¹⁸¹

181) This was the last victorious day for the Mexicans, and witnessed their culminating effort against their foes. Quauhtemotzin was everywhere present amongst his troops, urging them to a supreme struggle, and sounding his trumpet of conch-shell, "upon hearing which signal" Bernal Diaz says, "it is impossible to describe the fury with which they closed upon us" (cap. ciii.). Dominating the shouts of "Santiago!" the screams of the wounded, the crash of arms, and the fierce war-cries of the Mexicans, was heard the lugubrious roll of the sacred Tlapankuekuetl of serpents' skins which the priests beat with inspired frenzy before the war-god on the teocalli. Cortes again owed his escape from instant death to the determination which obsessed the Mexicans to take him alive for the sacrifice. His rescuer was the same Cristobal de Olea who had once before come to his aid in a moment of peril at Xochimilco; with one blow of his sword he cut off the arm of the warrior who held the general, falling dead himself the next moment. Bernal Diaz says that Olea slew four chiefs before he himself fell (loco citato).

Immediately after obtaining this victory, the defenders of the city, in order to frighten the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, took all the living and dead Spaniards whom they had captured, to Tlatelulco, which is the market, and, in some lofty towers there, they stripped them and sacrificed them, opening their breasts and taking out their hearts to offer them to the idols. This the Spaniards in Pedro de Alvarado's camp could see from where they were fighting, and in the naked white bodies which they saw sacrificed they recognised that they were Christians; and, although they were saddened and dismayed by this, they retreated into their camp, having fought very well that day and arrived almost to the market-place which would have been won that day if God, on account of our sins, had not permitted so great a misfortune. We returned to our camp sadly, somewhat earlier than we were accustomed to on other days; also because we heard the brigantines were lost as the Mexicans had fallen on our rear with the canoes, though it pleased God that this should not be true. The brigantines and canoes of our friends had indeed found themselves in tight straits; so much so that a brigantine was almost lost, and the captain and the master were both wounded, the captain dying within eight days.

Seven horses were killed, seventy Spaniards were captured alive, Cortes was badly wounded in the leg; Sandoval likewise in three places and both his division and that of Alvarado suffered serious reverses. When an account came to be taken of the extent of the disaster, dismay filled the sinking hearts of the Spaniards, and the Indian allies began to doubt the power of the teules and to ask themselves whether they were not after all fighting on the wrong side.

Cortes threw the blame for this catastrophe on Alderete, who had disobeyed his order never to advance without first securing his retreat. Alderete denied that he had ever had any such order, and declared that it was Cortes who had urged the troops forward. Recriminations and censures were thus exchanged, for naturally nobody would accept responsibility for such a calamity; it appears certain that Cortes had not been in favour of the assault, but had allowed his better judgment to be overruled by his companions, who were weary of the daily fighting, and thought they could storm the Tlateloco market-place, and so end the siege.

While gloom reigned in the Spanish camp, there was exultation amongst the Mexicans whose waning hopes of victory were revived by their success. The priests proclaimed that the war-god was appeased by the savour of so many Spanish victims and within eight days would give his faithful a complete victory over the impious invaders. This oracle was published amongst the allies, and shook their wavering faith in the Spaniards: they saw that the city stubbornly held out, they perceived that the strangers were neither invincible nor immortal, and, as the ancient superstitious fear of their gods reasserted itself, tens of thousands quietly detached themselves from the Spanish camp and marched off homewards. Cortes used every effort to hold them and urged that they should at least wait eight days and see whether the prophecy was fulfilled before deciding against him. The Tlascalcan general, Chichimecatecle, and Prince Ixtlilxochitl of Texcoco remained steadfast to their sworn allegiance. The latter was naturally an object of peculiar hatred to the Mexicans, who reviled him, and heaped imprecations on him as a renegade from his race, and a traitor to his country. If he felt these taunts, he did not betray his feelings, but day after day joined in the scenes of carnage, facing both danger and obloquy unmoved. For five days there was some respite, the Spaniards nursing their wounds and preparing for a resumption of hostilities, while the Mexicans were engaged in making overtures to win back their faithless subjects and allies.

The situation of the Spaniards was well-nigh desperate, but that of the Mexicans was hardly better, for famine stalked their streets, claiming as many victims as the Spanish cannon, and terribly weakening the defenders of the city. The besiegers tenaciously held their position on the causeways, and, aided by the brigantines, on the lakes, were unceasingly vigilant in maintaining the blockade.

Throughout the siege there were a few Spanish women — some of them described as “wives” of the soldiers — in camp, who displayed scarcely less courage than the men, for, not only did they occupy themselves in the nursing which is women's natural function in wartime, but they even mounted guard to relieve the weary soldiers, who needed rest; and instances are given of their joining in the actual fighting. Cortes had intended leaving all these women at Tlascala, but his proposed order to that effect aroused such opposition, especially among the women themselves who declared that Castilian wives, rather than abandon their husbands in danger, would die with them, that it was never given. Little has been said of the courage and devotion of these obscure heroines, but Herrera has recorded the names of five, Beatriz de Palacios, Maria de Estrada, Juana Martin, Isabel Rodriguez, and Beatriz Bemudez, as meriting honorable mention in the annals of the conquest.

The eight days appointed by the priests for the destruction of the besiegers expired, and the prophecy remained unfulfilled; seeing which the vacillating allies returned to the Spanish camp in large numbers where the politic general received them with his customary imperturbable urbanity, and, after reproaching them for their faithless desertion in a panic of foolish superstition, declared that he pardoned their fault and accepted them once more as vassals of Spain, and his allies.

That day, and the following night, the people of the city rejoiced greatly with trumpets and kettle-drums so that it seemed the very world was sinking, and they opened all the streets and bridges over the water, as they had them before, and lighted fires, and placed night watchmen at a distance of two bow-shots from our camp; for, as we were all so disordered, and wounded, and without arms, we needed to rest and recuperate ourselves. Meanwhile the enemy had time to send their messengers to many provinces subject to them, telling them how they had obtained a great victory and killed many Christians, and that they would soon finish all of us, and that by no means would they sue for peace with us; and the proofs they carried were the heads of the two horses and some of those Christians they had killed, carrying them about, and showing them wherever it seemed useful, which confirmed the rebels more than ever in their stubbornness. However, lest they should become too proud and divine our weakness, some Spaniards on foot and on horseback, with many of our friends, would go into the city to fight every day, albeit they never could gain more than some of the bridges of the next street before reaching the square.

Two days after our rout, which was already known in all the neighbourhood, the natives of a town called Cuarnaguacar[Cuernavaca], who had been subject to the city but had given themselves for our friends, came to the camp and told me that the people of Marinalco,¹⁸² their neighbours did them much injury and destroyed their fields, and that they also had joined with the large province of Cuisco,¹⁸³ and intended to attack them and kill them because they had given themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, and our friends; once the people of Cuarnaguacar were destroyed, their enemies would then come against us. Although what had passed was still so recent, and we were rather needing to receive than to give help, since they asked it of me with such urgency, I determined to give it to them, although I encountered much opposition, and it was said that in taking people from our camp I was destroying myself. I dispatched eighty foot soldiers and ten horsemen under Captain Andres de Tapia with those who had come to ask our aid, charging him earnestly to do whatever was required for Your Majesty's service and for our security; as he saw the need in which we were, he should spend not more than ten days in going and coming. He left, and reached a small town between Marinalco and Coadnoacad,¹⁸⁴ where he found the enemy expecting him; and he, with the people of Coadnoacad and those he had with him, began his battle on the field, and our forces fought so well that they routed the enemy, pursuing them until they reached Marinalco, which is situated on a very high hill where the horsemen could not approach. Seeing this, they destroyed that part which is in the plain, and returned to our camp within the ten days. In the upper part of this town of Marinalco, there are many fountains of excellent water, a very refreshing thing.

While this captain was absent, some Spaniards on foot and on horseback entered with our friends into the city as far as the large houses which are on the square, to fight, as I have already said; they could not advance further because the enemy had opened the water street which is at the entrance of the square and is very broad and deep; and, on the other side, there was a very large and strong entrenchment, where they fought with one another until night separated them.

A chief of the province of Tascaltecal, called Chichimecatecle, of whom I have heretofore written that he had bought the timbers that had been prepared in that province for the brigantines, had resided with his people, since the beginning of the war, in the Camp of Pedro de Alvarado; and when he saw, after the preceding rout, that the Spaniards did not right as before, he determined to make an entrance with only his own people. Leaving four hundred of his bowmen at a dangerous broken bridge he had taken, (which had never before happened without our aid), he and his people advanced with great shouts, cheering and naming their province and lord. They fought very bravely that day and there were many wounded and dead on both sides; and those of the city believed that they had trapped them because it is their custom, when their adversaries retire, to follow them with much persistence, although it be without chance of victory, believing that in crossing the water, where it sometimes happens there is a certain danger, they may take revenge on them. To forestall this danger and to provide help, Chichimecatecle had left four

182) Malinalco.

183) Probably Huisuco.

184) Cuernavaca again though Cortes varies his incorrect spelling.

hundred bowmen at the water pass, and, while his men were retiring, those of the city suddenly charged them, and the warriors of Tascaltecal threw themselves into the water, and, under the protection of the bowmen, they crossed, leaving the enemy greatly surprised at the resistance they encountered, and at the daring which the Chichimecatecle had displayed.

Two days after the Spaniards had returned from fighting in Marinalco, as Your Majesty will have seen in the chapter before the last, there arrived at our camp, ten Indians of the Otumies who had been slaves to the inhabitants of the city, and, as I have said, had given themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, coming every day to help in fighting; and they told me that the lords of the province of Matalcingo, who are their neighbours, made war upon them, and destroyed their land, burned a town, captured some of the people and were destroying everything they could, intending to come to our camps and attack us, so that those of the city could sally forth and overcome us. We gave credit to most of this, because, each time, for a few days past, that we had entered to fight, the Culuans had threatened us, with the people of this province of Matalcingo, which, though we had not much information, we well knew was large and twenty-five leagues distant from our camp. In the complaint these Otumies made of their neighbours, they gave us to understand that they wanted help, and, although they asked it at a very needy time, confiding in the help of God, and in order to break the wings of those of the city who daily threatened us with these people and hoped for aid, which could only come from them, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, with eighteen horsemen and one hundred foot-soldiers, amongst whom there was only one bowman: he departed with them and the Otumies, our friends; and God knows the danger which attended all who went as well as all who were left. But, as it was necessary to show more courage and valour than ever, and to die fighting, we hid our weakness from friends as well as from foes, and many and many times the Spaniards declared they hoped it might please God to leave them their lives and to see them victorious over the city, even though no other profits should come to them neither in it, nor in any other part of the country; by which the risk and extreme need in which we found ourselves and our lives may be judged.

The alguacil mayor left that day, and slept in a town of the Otumies which is on the frontier of Marinalco, and, the following day, he started very early, arriving at some small hamlets of the said Otumies, which he found deserted, and a good part of them burnt. Advancing more on to the plain, he found near a river bank many warriors who, having just finished burning another town, retreated when they saw him. On the road, were found many loads of maize and roasted children which they had brought as provisions and which they left behind them when they discovered the Spaniards coming. After crossing a river a little ahead of them in the plain, the enemy began to recover, and the alguacil mayor charged on them with the horsemen and put them to confusion; and they fled on the road straight towards their town of Matalcingo, about three leagues from there, the pursuit lasting until the horsemen had shut them all up in the town. There they awaited the Spaniards and our allies who were killing those who had been stopped and left behind by the horsemen. More than two thousand of the enemy perished in this pursuit. When those on foot and our friends, who were more than sixty thousand, overtook the horsemen, they began to rush towards the town where the enemy made a stand, while the women and children, goods, and chattels, were safe in a fort situated on a very elevated hill near that place. But as our force fell on them suddenly, they forced the warriors also to retire to the fort on that elevation, which was very steep and strong. They burned and sacked the town in a very short time, but the alguacil mayor did not attack the fort, as it was late and also because his men were very tired for they had fought during the entire day. The enemy spent that night in yelling and in making an uproar with their kettle-drums and trumpets.

The next day, in the early morning, the alguacil mayor led all the people to scale the enemy's fort, though fearful of finding himself in difficulties from their resistance. On arriving, however, they found none of the adversaries, and certain of our Indian friends, descending from the elevation, said that there was nobody there and that all the enemy had left at daybreak. In the midst of this, they discovered on all the surrounding plains, a great number of people, who were Otumies, and the horsemen, believing that they were enemies, galloped towards them and lanced at three or four of them; and as the language of the

Otumies is different from that of Culua they did not understand them, except that they threw away their arms and came towards the Spaniards, who even after that lanced three or four. But they understood well enough that this had happened from our men not recognising them. As the enemy did not wait, the Spaniards determined to return to another of their towns which was also hostile; but, seeing such a force come against them, the inhabitants came out peaceably. The alguacil mayor spoke kindly to the chief of that town, and told him that he already knew that I would receive with good will all who came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty although they might be very culpable; that he besought him to speak with those of Matalcingo so that they might come to me of their own choice; he agreed to do this and also to bring those of Marinalco to peace. Thus victorious the alguacil mayor returned to his camp.

On that day, some Spaniards fought in the city, and the citizens had sent word to ask our interpreter to come, because they desired to discuss peace, which, as it appeared, they wished only on the condition that we should all leave the country. They did this with the object of resting some days and of furnishing themselves with necessaries, although we never overcame their disposition to fight. While engaged in these parleys with the interpreter, our people were very near the enemy with only a broken-down bridge between them, and an old man amongst them in full sight of all very slowly drew from his provision bag certain things which he ate, so as to give us to understand that they were not in want, for we had told them that they would starve to death; and at this our friends assured the Spaniards that the peace was all a pretence and that they wished to fight. That day, however, no other fighting took place, because the chiefs told the interpreter to call me.

Four days after the alguacil mayor had returned from the province of Matalcingo, the chief of it and those of Marinalco and the province of Quiscon, which is large and important and had also rebelled, came to our camp and asked pardon for the past, offering to serve well; and thus they did and have done until now. While the alguacil mayor was away in Matalcingo, those of the city determined to come at night and fall on the camp of Alvarado. A quarter before dawn, they made the attack, and, when the watchmen on horseback and foot perceived them, they called "To Arms," and those who were ready charged on them. When the enemy perceived the horsemen, they threw themselves into the water; in the meantime our people came up and fought them for three hours. When we in the camp heard one of the field pieces firing, fearing they might be routed, we ordered the people to arm themselves and enter the city, so as to thus draw off the attack from Alvarado. As the Indians found the Spaniards so courageous, they decided to return to the city, where we continued to fight during the day.

By this time, those who had been wounded in our rout were already recovered, and the ship had arrived at Villa Rica, belonging to Juan Ponce de Leon,¹⁸⁵ who had formerly been routed in the country or island of Florida. They sent me certain powder and crossbows, of which we stood in very extreme need; and now, thanks to God, all about here there is not a province which is not in our favour. Seeing that the people of the city were so rebellious, and displayed such determination to die as no race had ever shown. I knew not what means to adopt to relieve our dangers and hardships, and to avoid utterly destroying them and their city, which was the most beautiful thing in the world. It was useless to tell them that we would not raise our camps, or that the brigantines would not cease to make war on them, or that we had destroyed those of Matalcingo and Marinalco, and that nowhere in the country was anyone left to help them, or that they could not obtain maize, nor wheat, nor fruit, nor water, nor any provisions from anywhere. The more I spoke of these things, the less sign of yielding did we see in them; rather we found them more courageous than ever, both in their fighting and their scheming. Seeing that things went on in this way, and that already more than forty-five days had been spent in this siege, I determined to take means towards our security and to further straiten the enemy. This latter consisted in our gaining the streets of the city and demolishing all the houses on both sides, so that henceforward we would not go one

185) A gentleman who first came to San Domingo with Columbus in 1493: he landed on the coast, which he named Florida, in 1512, when sailing under a commission from Don Diego Columbus, governor of San Domingo. Instead of discovering the fountain of perpetual youth he had come to seek, he was wounded in a skirmish with the Indians from which he died in Cuba.

step ahead without levelling everything, so that which was water should be made into dry land, no matter how much time it took. I called the lords and chiefs of our allies and told them what I had determined, so that they might have their workmen bring their spades and coas, which are certain poles which they use, similar to the Spanish hoe. They answered me that they would do this with the best good will, and that it was a very good decision at which they rejoiced greatly, because they perceived that in this way the city would be destroyed, which was what they desired more than anything else in the world.

Three or four days passed in concerting this plan; the people of the city easily divined that we were planning some mischief against them, and they also, as it afterwards appeared, were arranging what they could for their defence, as we likewise conjectured. Having concerted with our friends that we would attack them by land and water, the next morning, after having heard mass, we took the road to the city, and when we reached the water pass and barricade near the great houses of the square, intending to attack them, the people of the city asked us to be quiet as they wished to sue for peace. I ordered my people to cease fighting, and told them that the lord of the city should come there to speak to me, and arrange the conditions of the peace. After telling me that they had already gone to call him, they detained me for more than an hour, but in truth they did not want peace, as they themselves immediately showed, for, while we were quiet, they began to throw adobes and darts and stones at us. When I saw this, I attacked the barricades and captured them, and on entering the square we found it strewn with large stones to impede the horses moving over it; for generally it is these which do the most fighting. We also found a street barricaded with dry stones, and another filled with stones, so that the horses could not pass through them. During the rest of that day, we filled up the water street which leads out from the square, so that the Indians never opened it again, and thenceforward we began, little by little to destroy the houses and to shut up, and fill up completely, all we had gained on the water. As we were accompanied all day by more than one hundred and fifty thousand warriors, a good deal was accomplished; and thus we returned that day to our camp, and the brigantines and canoes of our friends, after doing much damage to the city returned to rest. The next day we again entered the city in the same order, as far as the enclosure and large court where the towers of the idols are. I ordered the captains to do nothing else but fill up the water streets and level the dangerous passes we had captured; and as for our friends, some of them should level and burn the houses and others should fight in the customary places, while the horsemen should guard the rear of all. I ascended the highest tower that the Indians might recognise me, for I also knew that they would be much vexed to see me mounted on the tower; and from there I encouraged our friends and gave aid wherever it was necessary, while they were incessantly fighting. Sometimes it was the adversaries who retreated, and sometimes our allies whom three or four horsemen aided and inspired with infinite courage to turn against the enemy.

In this wise and order, we entered the city on the five or six following days, and always at the hour of retreat we would put our allies ahead and post a number of Spaniards in ambush in some of the houses, the horsemen remaining behind and feigning to retreat hastily, so as to bring them out of the square. With these and the ambushes of the foot soldiers we would kill some of them every afternoon with our lances. On one of these days there were seven or eight horsemen in the square, hoping the enemy would come out, but, as they saw that they did not appear, they feigned to retreat, and the enemy, fearing that they would be caught at the corner, as had sometimes happened, stationed themselves by some walls and roofs in an infinite number. As the horsemen, who were eight or nine, charged towards them, the Indians held the entrance of the street from above so that they could not pursue those of the enemy who passed through it; so they were obliged to retire. The enemy, elated by having forced us to retreat, charged very lustily, and were so well on their guard that without themselves being injured they forced the horsemen to retreat, and wounded two horses. This prompted me to arrange a good ambush, as I will recount hereafter to Your Majesty. The afternoon of that day, we returned to our camp, leaving everything we had gained assured and levelled, and the people of the city very boastful because they believed that we had retired out of fear. That afternoon, I called the alguacil mayor by messenger to come to our camp before daybreak with fifteen of his own and Pedro de Alvarado's horsemen.

The alguacil mayor arrived the following morning at the camp with fifteen horsemen, and I obtained another twenty-five from those at Cuyoacan, so that there were forty in all. I ordered ten of them to join in the morning with our force, and in conjunction with the brigantines to go in the same order as heretofore to attack the enemy and to destroy and capture everything possible; when the time for them to retire came, I would start with the other thirty horsemen. When the larger part of the city was demolished they should in the melee drive the enemy into their entrenchments and water streets, keeping them there until the hour of retiring, when I and the other thirty horsemen would secretly form an ambuscade in the large houses in the square. The Spaniards did as I ordered, and at one o'clock after mid-day I set out with the thirty horsemen, and stationed them in those houses while I went to the city and mounted the high tower as I habitually did. While I was there, some Spaniards opened a sepulchre and found in it more than fifteen hundred castellanos worth of articles in gold. At the hour of returning, I ordered that they should begin to withdraw in a compact body, and that from the first moment of leaving the square the horsemen should feign an attack, behaving as though they hardly dared to make it, choosing the time when they saw a great number of people in and about the whole square. The men posted in ambush longed for the hour to arrive, because they much desired to act their part well, and were already tired of waiting. I then joined them, as the infantry and horsemen began retiring through the square, accompanied by the Indians our friends, who understood all about the ambush. The enemy rushed out, yelling as if they had gained the greatest victory in the whole world, and the nine horsemen feigned to charge them across the square, and then suddenly to fall back; and, when they had done this twice, the enemy acquired such fury that they pressed up to the very croups of the horses and were thus decoyed towards the end of the street where the ambush was laid. When we saw the Spaniards had passed ahead of us, and heard the shot of a gun fired which was the signal agreed upon, we knew that the time to sally forth had arrived; and, with the cry of "Senor Santiago!" we suddenly fell upon them, and rushed forward into the square with our lances, overthrowing and stopping many, which latter our friends, who joined in the pursuit, were able to capture. In this ambush more than five hundred, all of the bravest and most valiant of their principal men were killed, and, that night, our allies supped well, because they cut up all those whom they had killed and captured to eat. Such was the fright and wonder of the enemy at seeing themselves suddenly routed that there was no more shouting the whole afternoon, nor did they dare to show their heads in the streets, nor on the roofs, except where they were entirely protected and safe. About nightfall, the people of the city sent certain slaves to see if we had retired, or what we were doing. As they appeared in the street, some ten or twelve horsemen charged and pursued them, so that none of them escaped.

Such was the consternation of the enemy from this, our victory, that during the rest of the war they never again dared to enter the square when we were retiring, even if only one horseman was there; nor did they ever dare to come out against an Indian or foot soldier, fearing that another ambush might spring up beneath their feet. The victory God was pleased to give us that day was one of the principal causes why the city was taken sooner, for the natives were dismayed by it and our friends doubly encouraged; so we returned to our camp, intending to hasten on the war, and, until we finished it, not to let a single day pass without entering the city. We suffered no loss that day, except that, during the ambush, some of the horsemen collided with each other, and one was thrown from his mare, which galloped directly towards the enemy who wounded her severely with arrows, and she, seeing the ill-treatment she got, returned to us; and that night she died. Although we grieved exceedingly at it, for the horses and mares gave life to us, our grief was less than had she died in the hands of our enemies, as we feared would happen; had such been the case, their satisfaction would have outweighed their grief for those we had killed. The brigantines and canoes of our friends made great havoc that day in the city without suffering any loss.

We already knew that the Indians of the city were much discouraged, and two poor creatures, who came out by night to our camp because they were starving, told us that during the night they came to hunt amongst the houses and search in those parts we had already captured, looking for herbs and wood and roots to eat. Since we had already filled up many of the water streets, and repaired many of the bad places, I determined to enter the city before daybreak, and do all the damage I could. The brigantines left before

dawn and I with twelve horsemen and some foot soldiers and our friends, came in suddenly, having first placed spies, who, at daybreak made signs to us in our ambush to come and charge on a vast number of people. But they were of the most miserable class who had come out to search for something to eat, most of them being unarmed, and women and boys. We did much damage amongst them all over the city, wherever we were able to move about, so that between prisoners and killed they exceeded more than eight hundred, and the brigantines also captured people in canoes who were fishing, making great havoc amongst them. As the captains and chiefs of the city saw us moving about at an unaccustomed hour, they became as frightened as by the recent ambush, and none dared to come and fight with us, so we returned to our camp well satisfied with great spoils and food for our friends.

The next morning, we entered the city, and, as our friends had observed the systematic order we followed in the destruction of it, the multitude which daily came with us was beyond all reckoning. We finished taking the whole street of Tacuba that day and filling up the bad places in it, so that the people from Pedro de Alvarado's camp could communicate with us through the city. We won two other bridges on the principal street leading to the market-place, filling them up, and we burned the houses of the lord of the city, who was a youth of eighteen, called Guatimucin, being the second ruler since the death of Montezuma; and the Indians had many strong places amongst these houses, as they were large and solid and surrounded by water. Two other bridges were also captured in other streets which run near the one leading to the market, and many passes were filled up, so that three of the four quarters of the city were already ours, and the Indians could only retreat to the strongest part of it only, which comprised the houses furthest out in the water.

The following day, which was the feast of the Apostle Santiago[July 25th], we entered the city in the same order as before, following the large street to the market-place and capturing a broad water street where the enemy was well fortified. We were delayed there for some time; and it was dangerous capturing it, nor were we able to fill it up in the whole of the day (as it was very broad), so that the horsemen could cross to the other side. The Indians, seeing we were all on foot, and that the horsemen had not passed over, attacked us with some fresh troops, many of them very splendid; but, as we turned upon them with our many archers, they retreated towards their barricades and forts, badly wounded with arrows. Besides this, all the Spanish foot soldiers carried their pikes, which I had ordered made after our rout, and which were very useful. Nothing was heard all day on each side of the principal street but the burning and destroying of the houses, which was certainly pitiful to see, but as nothing else could avail we were obliged to follow those tactics. When the people of the city saw such ruin, they encouraged themselves by telling our friends to go on burning and destroying as it was they who would have to rebuild the city in any case, because if they[the Mexicans] were victorious they would make them do it, and if not they would have to rebuild it for us; and it pleased God that this last should turn out to be true, for they are indeed the ones who have to do this work.¹⁸⁶

Very early on the morning of the next day, we entered the city in the customary order, and, arriving at the water street which we had filled up the day before, found it in the same state we had left it; and, advancing about two bow-shots, we captured two large ditches of water, which had been cut in the same street, and arrived at the small tower of their idols, in which we found certain heads of Christians whom they had killed; a sight which filled us with much commiseration. And from that tower, the street in which we were, led straight to the causeway of Sandoval's camp, and, on the left side, another street in which water no longer flowed, led to the market; they still held only one against us, nor could we pass it that day, though we fought the Indians stoutly. God, Our Lord, gave us victory every day, and the worst always fell on them. It was late that day when we returned to our camp.

The next day, while preparing to return to the city about nine o'clock in the morning, we observed from our camp that smoke was rising from the two highest towers which were in Tatelulco, or the market-place of the city. This we could not understand, for it seemed something more than the incensing which the

186) The logic of this taunt was verified later, as Cortes observes, for the work of rebuilding the city fell upon the Indian allies who had destroyed it.

Indians usually made to their idols, so we suspected that Pedro de Alvarado's men had arrived there, and, although this was the fact, we could not believe it. Pedro de Alvarado's men certainly behaved very valiantly, for there were many bridges and barricades to capture and the greater part of the enemy always came to defend them: but as he saw that on our side we were hedging the enemy in, he did everything he could to enter the market-place, because their whole strength was centred there. However, he could arrive only within sight of it, and capture those towers and many others which adjoin the same market-place, forming an enclosure almost like that of many of the towers in the city; the horsemen had hard work and were forced to retreat with their horses wounded, and thus Pedro de Alvarado and his people returned to his camp. We could not, that day, capture a bridge and water street which still remained to be taken in order to reach the market-place, without filling up and levelling all the bad places, and on retiring they pressed us very hard, although at their cost.

We again entered the city on the morning of the following day, and, encountering no obstacle before reaching the market-place, except a water course and its barricade near the small tower of which I have spoken, we attacked it, and the standard bearer and two or three other Spaniards threw themselves into the water, so the defenders immediately abandoned the pass, which we filled and made passable for the horsemen. While we were repairing it, Pedro de Alvarado arrived by the same street with four horsemen, to our mutual satisfaction, for this was the way to speedily finish the war. Pedro de Alvarado left a file of guards in the rear, not only for the purpose of preserving what had been won, but also for his protection, and, as the pass was quickly repaired, I, with some horsemen, went to view the market-place, and ordered that the others should not advance beyond that pass. Afterwards we reconnoitred the square for a short time, inspecting its arcades whose roofs were full of the enemy. As the square was very large, and they saw the horsemen moving about there, they did not dare to attack. I ascended that large tower which adjoins the market-place, in which, and in others also, we found the heads of the Christians whom they had killed and offered to their idols, as well as those of the Indians of Tascaltecal, our friends between whom and the Mexicans there was a very ancient and cruel feud. I saw from that tower that we had without doubt captured seven-eighths of the city, and, seeing that such a number of the enemy could not possibly hold out in such straits, chiefly because those houses left them were so small and each built over the water, and above all because of the great famine prevailing amongst them, for we found the gnawed roots and bark of trees in the streets, I determined to suspend fighting for a day and devise some measure to save this multitude of people from perishing. The harm done them caused me such compassion and distress that I continually importuned them with offers of peace, but they answered that in no wise would they surrender and that only one man being left he would die fighting, and that of all they possessed we could never obtain anything for they would burn it and throw it into the water whence it would never more appear. Not wishing to return evil for evil, I dissembled, and refrained from fighting.

As very little powder was left to us, we had in the last fifteen days discussed somewhat about making a catapult;¹⁸⁷ and, though there was no first-class master-workman who knew how to do it, some carpenters

187) A soldier called Sotelo, native of Seville, who claimed to have seen much service in Italy, and to know all about the construction of engines of warfare, proposed to Cortes to make this catapult. As Bernal Diaz says, he was eternally talking about the wonderful military machines he could build, with which he promised to destroy in two days the remaining quarter of the city, where Quauhtemotzin held out. The commander consented to the trial, and stone, lime, timber, cables, and all the necessary materials, were furnished, together with carpenters, and masons, to carry out Sotelo's instructions. The machine was erected on the platform of masonry known as the Mumuztli, a sort of theatre which stood in the square, and the process of its construction was watched with exultant expectations by the Indian allies, who foresaw the wholesale destruction of their enemies by means of the mysterious machine. They indulged in jubilant prophecies, and called on the Mexicans to observe the growth of the engine destined to accomplish their overthrow. The Mexicans were equally impressed by the strange monster, and watched its building with the feelings of one in the condemned cell, who hears the workmen building the scaffold on which he is to perish at dawn. The day of the trial (August 6th) arrived, and a huge stone was fired which instead of flying over into the Indian quarter where it was aimed, shot up into the air, and fell back into exactly the place from whence it departed. Cortes was furious with Sotelo, and ashamed of the failure in the presence of the gazing multitude: the luckless inventor was in disgrace, and the catapult remained one of the standing jokes in the army. Infusing some gaiety into the company this invention may be said to have served some good purpose, even though

offered to make a small one. Although I always believed that we would not succeed in this work, I consented that they should make it, and, in those days when we had the Indians cornered, they finished it and took it to the market-place to station it on a sort of square theatre which stands in the middle, and which is built of stone and mortar and is about fourteen feet in height, and about thirty paces long from one corner to the other; when they celebrated their plays and festivals, the performers placed themselves on this where all the people in the market both above and below the arcades could see them. After the catapult was brought there, three or four days were occupied in placing it, and the Indians our friends threatened those of the city with it, telling them that with this engine we would kill them all. Although no other result was obtained (as indeed there was none) except the fright it caused, from which we thought the enemy would surrender, it would have been sufficient; the deception was a double one because neither the carpenters fulfilled their design nor did the defenders of the city (although they were much frightened) take any step to surrender, while I disguised the failure of the catapult by pretending that moved by compassion, we forbore to kill them all.

The next day, after placing the catapult, we returned to the city, and, as three or four days had passed without any fighting, we found the streets by which we passed full of women and children and other miserable people, who came out so emaciated and thin, that it was the greatest pity in the world to behold them, so I ordered our friends not to hurt them. But, none of the warriors appeared where any harm could reach them, though we saw them on the tops of their roofs, covered with the blankets they wear, and without weapons. I had them required that day to make peace, but their replies were inconclusive. As they occupied us most of the day with this, I sent them word that I intended to attack them and that they should withdraw all their people, otherwise I would permit our friends to kill them. They said they desired peace, and I answered them that I did not see amongst them their lord with whom I must treat, but when he came for that purpose I would give him a safe conduct and we would discuss peace. Seeing it was all mockery, and that they were prepared to fight with us, I ordered Pedro de Alvarado, after having admonished them many times and in order to reduce them to extreme necessity, to enter with all his people through a large quarter which the enemy held, and in which there were more than one thousand houses; and I, with those of our camp, came on foot from another side, because we could not avail ourselves of the horsemen. The fight between us and our enemies was very stubborn, but finally we won that whole quarter, and, such was the slaughter committed upon our enemies, that between killed and wounded there were more than twelve thousand.

Our allies handled the enemy most cruelly, for they would in no wise spare any life, although they were reproved and punished by us.

We returned next day to the city, and I ordered that no fighting should take place nor any harm be done to the enemy, who, when they saw such a multitude of people, and their own vassals and subjects, arrayed against them, and saw their extreme necessity, which left them not even a place to stand, save upon the bodies of their own dead, moved by the desire to escape such a great misfortune, asked us why we did not put an end to them; then suddenly they said to call me as they wished to speak to me. All the Spaniards wished that this war might finally end, and, pitying such misery, they rejoiced, believing that the Indians wanted peace; so they came gladly to call and importune me to come to a barricade where certain chiefs wished to speak to me. I knew that little profit would come of my going, but I determined at all events to go, although I knew their not surrendering all depended on the sovereign and some three or four other chiefs of the city, for the others, dead or alive, all desired to be out of it. And when I arrived at the barricade, they told me that, as they held me to be the son of the sun, and as the sun in such brief period as a day and a night, made the circuit of the entire world, I ought likewise to finish killing them speedily and save them from so much suffering, because they wished to die and go to heaven to their Ochilobus,¹⁸⁸ who was awaiting to give them rest; this being the idol which they hold in the greatest reverence. I said many things in reply to persuade them to surrender, and nothing availed with them, although they perceived in

not exactly the one expected of it.

188) Huitzilopotchli, also spelled Huitchilopochtli: the god of war whose statue stood in the great teocalli.

us greater wishes and offers for peace than had ever been shown to any other vanquished, for with the help of Our Lord we were the victors.

Having reduced the enemy to the last extremity, as may be gathered from what has been said, and in order to win them from their evil intention, which was their determination to die, I spoke to one of their noble chiefs, the uncle of Don Fernando, lord of Tesaico, who had been captured fighting in the city, and whom we held prisoner. Although badly wounded I asked him if he wished to return to the city, and he answered me, "yes, " and, when we entered it the next day, I sent him, with certain Spaniards, who delivered him to the people of the city; and, to their chief, I had spoken exclusively in order that he might talk to the sovereign and the other chiefs about peace, and he promised to do everything that was possible. The people of the city received him with much deference as a nobleman, and, when they took him before Quatamucin, their sovereign, and he began to speak of peace, it is said they immediately ordered him to be killed and sacrificed, and the answer we were awaiting they gave us with great yells, saying that they wanted nothing but death. They began to discharge arrows and stones at us, and fought us very stoutly, so much so that they killed a horse with a dagger which one of them had taken from one of our friends; but finally they paid dearly for it, because many of them perished, and thus we returned that day to our camp. The next day, we again entered into the city, and our adversaries were so reduced that an infinite number of our friends ventured to remain there during the night; having come in sight of the enemy we did not care to fight with them, but only moved about in their city, because every hour and every moment we believed that they would come to surrender. In order to persuade them, I rode near one of the barricades and called certain chiefs, who were behind them, whom I already knew, and said to them that since they saw that everything was lost, and recognised that, if I wished, none of them would escape why was it that Quatamucin their lord did not come to speak with me; that I promised to do him no harm, and if he and they wished for peace they would be well received and well treated by me. I gave them other reasons, with which I provoked them to many tears; and, weeping, they replied that they well recognised their error and perdition, and that they would go and speak to their lord and return speedily with the answer, asking me not to go away from there. So they went away, returning within a short space to tell me that, inasmuch as it was already late their lord had not come, but that at noon on the following day he would certainly come to speak with me in the market-place; so we returned to our camp. I ordered that on the next day that high square platform which stood in the middle of the market-place should be prepared for the lords and princes of the city, and that they should likewise prepare a repast for them; and this was done accordingly.

We went into the city early the next morning, and I ordered the people to be prepared in case the inhabitants intended to perpetrate any treachery, so that we might not be surprised; I also cautioned Pedro de Alvarado who was there. When we reached the market-place, I sent word to Quatamucin, telling him that I was waiting for him, but, it appeared he had determined not to come, but sent five of his nobles or chief lords of the city whose names, as it is not worth while, I do not give here. They came and told me that their lord had sent them to pray me to pardon him if he did not come, that he was greatly afraid to appear before me, and also that he was ill and that they had come hither to hear my commands, which they would obey; although the sovereign did not appear we rejoiced a great deal that these chiefs had come, as it seemed to us that here was now a way to reach a speedy end of the whole business. I received them with a show of gladness, and immediately ordered meat and drink to be given them, in partaking of which they showed their craving and need for it. When they had eaten, I told them to speak to their lord to persuade him not to be afraid, for I promised him that no annoyance would be offered him if he appeared before me, nor would he be detained, but that, without his presence, no good understanding could be reached, nor agreement made. I ordered some refreshments to be taken to him, and they promised me to do all that was in their power; and thus they departed. Two hours afterwards, they returned, and brought me some fine mantles of cotton, such as they use, and they told me that Quatamucin their lord would by no means come, and that he refused to discuss it. I again repeated to them that I did not know why he mistrusted me, inasmuch as he saw that to them whom I knew to be the principal promoters of the war, and who had sustained it, I nevertheless extended good treatment, allowing them to come and go in security without

being in any way annoyed, and I besought them to speak again to him, and to urge his coming because it was for his advantage. They answered me that they would do so, and bring me the answer the next day; and thus they left and we also withdrew to our camp.

The next day, those chiefs came to our camp very early in the morning and asked me to come to the square of the market of the city, because their sovereign wished to speak to me. Believing it was true, I mounted my horse and awaited him where it had been agreed, for more than three or four hours, but he never chose to appear before me. As I saw the mockery, and it had already become late, and that neither the other messengers nor the lord came, I sent for the Indians, our friends, who had been left at the entrance of the city almost a league from where we were, whom I had ordered not to advance beyond there because the people of the city had asked me that, whilst treating for peace none of them should be inside it. Neither they nor those of Pedro de Alvarado's camp delayed in coming, and, when they arrived, we attacked some of the barricades and water streets which they held, no other strong force being left them, and we charged amongst them ourselves, as well as our friends, according as we pleased. Before leaving the camp, I had ordered that Gonzalo de Sandoval should proceed with the brigantines to the place where the Indians had fortified themselves in the houses, thus holding them surrounded, but not attacking them until he should observe that we began to fight; in such manner that, holding them thus surrounded, they had no place to go except amongst the dead, and on the roofs which were left them. For this cause, they neither had, nor procured, arrows, nor darts, nor stones, with which to hurt us. Our friends accompanied us, armed with swords and shields, and such was the slaughter done that day on water and on land, that with prisoners taken they numbered in all more than forty thousand men; and such were the shrieks and the weeping of the women and children that there was none whose heart did not break; and we had more trouble in preventing our allies from killing and inflicting tortures than we had in fighting with the Indians, for no such inhuman cruelty as the natives of these parts practice was ever seen amongst any people. Our allies obtained very great plunder, which we could not prevent, because we were about nine hundred Spaniards, and they more than one hundred and fifty thousand men, and no attention or diligence was sufficient to prevent them from robbing, although we did everything possible to stop it. One of the reasons why I refused to go to extremes in those previous days was that, by taking them by assault, they would probably throw what they had into the lake, and if they did not do so our allies would steal everything they found; and, for this reason, I feared that but a small part of the great wealth existing in the city, as shown by what I had before obtained for Your Highness, would be secured for Your Majesty. As it was already late, and we could no longer endure the stench of the dead which had lain for many days in those streets (the most pestilential thing in the world), we returned to our camps.

That afternoon, I arranged that, as on the next day following we should again enter the city, three large field pieces should be prepared which we would take to the city, because, as I feared that the enemy were so compact that they could not turn round, the Spaniards in charging might be crushed by mere numbers, and therefore I wanted to do them some damage with the field pieces in order to force them out towards us. I ordered the alguacil mayor likewise to be prepared to enter, the next day, with the brigantines, through the canals of a large lake extending amongst some houses where the canoes of the city were all gathered; and there were already so few houses left where they might shelter that the lord of the city, with certain of the chiefs, had placed himself in a canoe, not knowing what to do with themselves. Thus we planned our entrance on the morning of the following day.

When day had dawned, I had our whole force prepared, and the large field pieces brought out; and I had, the day before, ordered Pedro de Alvarado to await me in the square of the market-place, and not to begin fighting until I arrived. All being assembled, and the brigantines ready for action, behind the houses on the water, where the enemy were gathered, I ordered that, on hearing a musket-shot, the land force should enter the small part which was still to be captured, and force the enemy towards the water where the brigantines would be awaiting them; and I cautioned them particularly to look after Quatamucin, and to endeavour to take him alive, because then the war would stop. I mounted the top of a roof, and, before the fight began, I spoke with some of the chiefs of the city whom I knew, and asked them why their lord

did not come, seeing that they were in such straits, and I said they ought not to be the cause of all perishing; and told them to call him, saying that nobody need be afraid; and it seemed that two of those chiefs went to call him. After a short time, they returned with one of the highest chiefs of all of them, who was called Ciguacoacin,¹⁸⁹ captain and governor of them all, whose counsel was followed in everything concerning the war. I showed a very good disposition towards him, so that he might be reassured and have no fears, and finally he told me that the sovereign would in no way appear before me, and that he rather preferred to die where he was, and that he himself was much grieved at this decision but that I could do as I pleased. Recognising by this his determination, I told him to return to his own people, and that he and they might prepare themselves, as I was determined to attack them, and finish destroying them; and so it happened. More than five hours had passed in these parleyings, and the inhabitants of the city were all treading on the dead, others in the water were swimming, and others drowning themselves in the large lake where the canoes were collected. Such was the plight in which they were, that no understanding could conceive how they could endure it; and an infinite number of men, women, and children kept coming towards us, who, in their haste, pushed one another back into the water and were drowned amidst the multitude of dead. It appears they had perished to the number of more than fifty thousand, from the salt water which they drank, or from starvation, and pestilence. All these bodies, (in order that we should not understand their extremity), were neither thrown into the water lest the brigantines might come across them, nor were they thrown outside their boundary, lest we should see them about the city; and thus, in the streets they occupied, were found heaps of dead, so that nobody could step without trampling them. As the people of the city came towards us, I ordered Spaniards to be stationed in all the streets, to prevent our allies from killing those unhappy creatures, who were beyond number; and I also ordered the captains of our allies not to allow in any way those fugitives to be killed, but, as they were so many, it was not possible to prevent it that day, so more than fifteen thousand persons were massacred. Meanwhile, some of the chiefs and warriors of the city were brought to bay on some roofs and in the water, where they could no longer stop, or hide from us all their disasters and their weakness which had become very apparent; and, seeing that the afternoon was coming on us, and that they would not surrender, I had two large field pieces directed against them to see whether they would surrender then, because they would suffer greater damage by our giving permission to our friends to attack them, than by those two field pieces, which caused some destruction. As this also brought no result, I ordered the signal of the musket to be fired, whereupon the corner they still held was immediately taken, and those who were in it were forced into the water, and others who had not fought surrendered. The brigantines swiftly entered that lake, and broke into the midst of the fleet of canoes, and the warriors no longer ventured to fight.

It pleased God that the captain of a brigantine, called Garci Holguin, overtook a canoe in which there were some distinguished people, and, as he had two or three cross-bowmen in the prow of the brigantine, and was crossing in the front of the canoe, they signalled to him not to shoot because their sovereign was there. The canoe was quickly captured, and they took Quatamucin,¹⁹⁰ and the lord of Tacuba, and the other

189) Chihuacoatl.

190) Quauhtemotzin, seeing that escape was hopeless, stood up in the canoe saying: "I am the King of Mexico and of this country; take me to Malintzin. I ask only that my wife and children and the women be spared." Some twenty persons were with him, all of whom Holguin brought back to the city. There is little to add to what Cortes here says about what passed on that historic occasion, except that he gave orders that the Princess Tecuichpo, youngest daughter of Montezuma, recently married to her cousin Quauhtemotzin should receive every consideration. Humboldt, commenting on Quauhtemotzin's choice of instant death, commends the unfortunate young sovereign's conduct in the following terms: "Ce trait est digne du plus beau temps de la Grece et de Rome. Sous toutes les zones, quelle que soit la couleur des hommes, le langage des ames fortes est le meme lorsqu'elles luttent contre le malheur" (Essai Politique, p. 192, 4th ed.). The captive monarch was not deceived by the suave manners and honied words of his captor, and his forebodings were realised, when, a few days later, upon his protesting that there was no treasure left in the city, Cortes consented to his torture to force him to speak. Bernal Diaz seeks to excuse Cortes's part in this unworthy proceeding. It may be said in extenuation that he yielded to the angry clamours of disappointed soldiers, and the insinuation that he had arranged with Quauhtemotzin to conceal the treasure so as later to appropriate it for himself. The custodian of the royal fifth, Aldarete, seems to have insisted on the torture. The king bore the pain unflinchingly and rebuked his fellow sufferer who groaned

chiefs who were with him; and the said captain, Garci Holguin,¹⁹¹ immediately brought the said sovereign of the city and the other chief prisoners to the terrace where I was, which was near the lake. When I invited them to sit down, not wishing to show any rigour, he approached me and said to me in his language that he had done all that on his part he was bound to do to defend himself and his people, until he was reduced to that state, and that I might now do with him as I chose; and placing his hand on a dagger which I wore he bade me stab him with it and kill him. I encouraged him, and told him not to be afraid; and this lord having been made prisoner, the war immediately ceased, which God Our Lord was pleased to bring to its end on this day, the Feast of San Hipolito, which was the 13th of August in the year 1521. So that from the day when we laid the siege to the city, which was the 30th of May of the said year, until it was taken, seventy-five days passed, in which Your Majesty may perceive the hardships, dangers, and cruelties, which these, your vassals, suffered, and in which they so exposed themselves that their deeds will bear testimony of them. In all these seventy-five days of the siege, none passed without more or less fighting.

On the day of the imprisonment of Quatamucin, and of the capture of the city, we returned to camp, having gathered the spoils found that day, and given thanks to Our Lord for the signal mercy and the much wished for victory He had granted us.¹⁹² I remained in the camp for three or four days, and afterwards we came to the city of Cuyoacan where I have remained until now, providing for the good order and government and pacification of these parts. Having collected the gold and other things, we had them melted, with the approbation of Your Majesty's officials, and what was melted amounted to one hundred and thirty thousand castellanos, of which one fifth was given to the treasury of Your Majesty, besides one fifth of other duties belonging to Your Majesty, such as slaves and other things, as will be more extensively seen from the account of all belonging to Your Majesty, which will go signed with our names. The remaining gold was distributed amongst myself and the Spaniards, according to the conduct, service,

aloud, saying: "Do you think I am taking my pleasure in my bath?" His feet were almost burned off, and he remained a cripple until his death. The anniversary of his capture and the fall of the city were celebrated as a public holiday all during the period of Spanish rule in Mexico, but the Republic has abolished this observance. The eleventh and last of the Aztec sovereigns was the son of Ahuitzotl; he succeeded Cuitlahuatzin and married his widow Tecuichpo. He was a young man of great personal bravery and energy, in all things the opposite of his superstitious uncle Montezuma. He worked indefatigably to win allies, organise an effective defence, and save the tottering kingdom and city; he galvanised the timid into something like courage, confirmed the waverers, and encouraged the patriots; large stores of arms and provisions were laid in, the useless, aged men, and women and children, were sent off to safe places in the mountains, while the city was filled with warriors. The kings of Texcoco and Tlacopan joined in these plans, co-operating with their fellow sovereign. Had like zeal and harmony existed a year earlier Cortes and his men would never have reached the capital, save as victims to be offered to Huitzilopochtli. Quauhtemotzin arrived too late. Nothing could ward off the oncoming disaster. The powerful states of Tlascala, Cholula, and others, had openly gone over to the Spaniards, blind to the inevitable destruction they were preparing for themselves; the allies of Mexico were doubtful and faint-hearted, — some of them merely neutrals, awaiting the issue to declare for the victor. Never did prince die for duty's sake, choosing death with open eyes and making a last stand for a forlorn cause, more nobly than did the heroic Quauhtemotzin. His captivity and death are noted in the Fifth Letter.

191) While the brigantine with the royal captain and his fellow prisoners was returning across the lake, Sandoval came on board and demanded that Quauhtemotzin be delivered to him, as he was commander of that division of the fleet, but Holguin claimed the honour of the capture, and refused to yield to his superior. The dispute which ensued, delayed matters, but Cortes who was informed of the dissension, sent Luis Marin and Francisco Lugo with peremptory orders to cease wrangling, and bring the prisoners to him.

Bernal Diaz relates that, afterwards, the commander called the two claimants, and cited to them, by way of example, the incident from Roman history of the capture of Jugurtha and the dispute between Marius and Sylla as to the honour of that feat, which was productive of civil wars which devastated the state. He calmed them with the assurance that the circumstance should be fully laid before the Emperor, who would decide which of the two should have the action emblazoned in his arms. Two years later, the imperial decision was given, and ignored both the contestants, granting instead to Cortes himself the device of seven captive kings, linked with a chain and representing Montezuma, Quauhtemotzin, and the rulers of Texcoco, Tlapocan, Iztapalapan, Coyohuacan, and Matolzingo.

192) See Appendix at close of this Letter.

and quality of each. Besides the said gold, there were certain made pieces, and jewels of gold, of which the best was given to the treasurer of Your Majesty.

Amongst the plunder which was obtained from the said city, many bucklers of gold were found; plumes, and feather work, and things so marvellous that they cannot be described in writing, nor can they be comprehended without being seen. And being such as they are, it seemed to me they should not be divided but should all be placed at the disposition of Your Majesty, for which purpose I assembled all the Spaniards, and besought them to approve of all these things being sent to Your Majesty, and that the shares belonging to them and me should be placed at Your Majesty's disposition, which they rejoiced in doing with much good will. They and I send them for Your Majesty's acceptance by the procurators whom the council of this New Spain has deputed.

As the city of Temixtitlan was so important, and so renowned throughout these parts, it seems it came to the knowledge of the lord of a very great province, seventy leagues distant from Temixtitlan, called Mechuacan,¹⁹³ how we had destroyed and desolated it, and, considering the strength and grandeur of the said city, it seemed to the lord of that province that, inasmuch as it could not defend itself, there was nothing which could resist us. So, from fear or whatever cause he chose, he sent certain messengers, who, through the interpreters of his language, told me on his part, that their lord had learned that we were vassals of a great ruler, and that, with my approval, he and his people desired to become vassals and have friendship with us. I answered that it was true that we were all of us the vassals of that great ruler, who was Your Majesty, and that we would make war upon those who refused likewise to be so, and that their lord and they had done very well. As I had received news some short time since of the South Sea, I also inquired of them whether it could be reached through their country; and as they answered me affirmatively, I prayed them to take with them two Spaniards, whom I would give them, so that I might inform Your Majesty about that sea and their province. They replied that they were glad to do so with much good will, but that, to reach the sea, they would have to pass through the country of a great lord, with whom they were at war, and for this reason they could not now reach the sea. The messengers from Mechuacan remained here with me three or four days, and I made the horsemen skirmish for them, in order that they might describe it, and, having given them certain jewels, they and the two Spaniards set out for the said province of Mechuacan.

As I said in the foregoing chapter, Most Powerful Lord, I had obtained a short time ago information of another sea to the south, and had learned that, in two or three different directions, it was twelve or fourteen days' journey from here. I was very much concerned because it seemed to me that in discovering it a great and signal service would be rendered to Your Majesty, especially as all who have any knowledge or experience of the navigation in the Indies have held it to be certain that, with the discovery of the South Sea in these parts, many islands rich in gold, pearls, precious stones, spices, and other unknown and admirable things would be discovered: and this has been and is affirmed by persons of learning and experience in the science of cosmography. With this desire, and wishing to render Your Majesty this most singular and admirable service, I dispatched four Spaniards, two through certain provinces, and the other two through certain others; and, having first informed myself of the routes they were to take, and giving them guides from amongst our friends, they departed. I ordered them not to stop until they had reached the sea, and, upon discovering it, to take actual and corporeal possession of it in the name of Your Majesty.

The first travelled about one hundred and thirty leagues through many beautiful and fair provinces without encountering any hindrance, and arrived at the sea, and took possession of it, in sign of which they placed crosses on the coast of it. Some days afterwards, they returned with an account of the said discovery, and informed me very minutely of everything, bringing me some of the natives of the said sea[coast] and also very good samples from the gold mines, which they found in some of those provinces

193) Michoacan was an independent kingdom, peopled by a different race from the Mexicans, and speaking a different language, though it shared to some degree the manners, customs, and civilisation of Anahuac: the chief city was Pazuaro on the lake of the same name. There was an almost permanent state of hostilities between the Tarasque (tribal name of the natives of Michoacan) and Aztec nations.

through which they passed; I send these, with the other samples of gold, to Your Majesty. The other two Spaniards were somewhat longer, because they travelled about one hundred and fifty leagues through other parts until they reached the sea, of which they likewise took possession. They brought me a full description of the coast, and, with them, came some natives of it. I received them and the others graciously, and they, having been informed of Your Majesty's great power, and given some presents, returned very contented to their country.

In the other account, Most Catholic Lord, I told Your Majesty, how, when these Indians routed and expelled me from the city of Temixtitlan the first time, all the provinces subject to the city rebelled against the service of Your Majesty, and made war upon us; and, by this account, Your Majesty may see how we reduced to Your Royal service almost all the provinces which had rebelled. Certain provinces on the coast of the North Sea at ten, fifteen, and thirty leagues' distance from the said city of Temixtitlan, had revolted and rebelled, and their natives had treacherously killed certainly more than one hundred Spaniards who had thought themselves safe. I could not possibly proceed against them before the conclusion of the war, so, after I had dispatched those Spaniards who had first discovered the South Sea, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, with thirty-five horsemen, two hundred Spaniards, some of our allies, and some of the chiefs and natives of Temixtitlan, to this province, which we called Tatactetelco and Tuxtepeque and Guatuxco and Aulicaba; and, having been instructed how to conduct this expedition, he began his preparations for it.

At this season, the lieutenant, whom I had left in the town of La Segura de la Frontera, in the province of Tepeaca, came to this city of Cuyoacan, and informed me how some of the natives of that province and other neighbouring ones, vassals of Your Majesty, were troubled by the natives of the provinces of Guaxacaque[Oaxaca] who made war on them because they were our friends, and, besides it being necessary to correct this evil, it was well to secure that province of Guaxacaque, because it was on the road to the South Sea, and to pacify it would be very advantageous as well for the aforesaid as for other reasons, which I will hereafter state to Your Majesty. The said lieutenant told me that he had privately received information respecting that province, and that we could subjugate it with a small force, because, while I was in the camp against Temixtitlan, he had gone there, as those of Tepeaca had urged him to make war upon the natives of it, but, not having taken more than twenty or thirty Spaniards they had forced him to return, less leisurely than he would have wished. Having heard his relation I gave him twelve horsemen and eight Spaniards, and the said alguacil mayor and the lieutenant left this city of Guaxacaque on the 15th October, 1521.

When they reached the province of Tepeaca, they there made their review, and each departed on his conquest. The alguacil mayor wrote to me five days later that he had arrived at the province of Guatuxco, and that, although he had much apprehension that he would find himself in straits with the enemy as they were very skilful in war and had many forces in the country, it had pleased Our Lord that he should be received peaceably; and that, although he had not reached the other provinces he felt sure that all the natives of them would offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty. Fifteen days later, other letters of his arrived in which he reported to me that he had advanced, and that the whole of the country was already at peace, and that it seemed to him it would be well to settle in the most accessible parts and thus make sure of it, as we had already discussed many times before, and for me to decide what should be done in the matter. I wrote, thanking him very much for what he had done on his expedition in the service of Your Majesty, telling him that all he reported about settling was approved by me, and I sent him word to establish a town of Spaniards in the province of Tuxtepeque, and to call it Medellin,¹⁹⁴ I sent the appointment of alcaldes and municipal officials, all of whom I charged to look after Your Majesty's service and the good treatment of the natives. The Lieutenant of Segura de la Frontera departed with his people for the province of Guaxaca with many friendly warriors from that neighbourhood, and, although the natives of that province set themselves to resist, and fought two or three times very stoutly against him, they finally surrendered peacefully without sustaining any damage; he wrote very minutely

194) Named after Cortes's birthplace in Estremadura.

respecting all this, informing me that the country was very good, and rich in mines, and he sent me a very remarkable sample of gold from it, which I also forward to Your Majesty; and he remained in the said province awaiting my commands.

Having taken measures for the accomplishment of these two conquests, and having heard of the good success of them, and seeing how I had already peopled three towns with Spaniards and that a number of them still remained with me in this city, I debated where to establish another town within the circuit of the lakes; for it was needed for the greater security and peace of all these parts. Considering also that the city of Temixtitlan, which was a thing so renowned and had made itself so important and memorable, it seemed to us that it was well to rebuild it, for it was all destroyed. I distributed the lots to those who offered themselves as householders, and I appointed the alcaldes and municipal officers in the name of Your Majesty, as is customary in your kingdoms; and, while the houses were being built, we agreed to continue living in this city of Cuyoacan, where we are at present. In the four or five months since the rebuilding of the said city of Temixtitlan was begun it is already very beautiful, and Your Majesty may believe that each day it will become nobler, so that as it was before the head and mistress of all these provinces, so it will be henceforward; it is being and will be so built that the Spaniards will be perfectly strong and safe, and supreme lords of the natives, secure from any fear of being assailed by them.

In the meantime, the chief of the province of Tecoantepeque, which is near the South Sea where the two Spaniards discovered it, sent me certain notables by whom he offered himself as vassal of Your Majesty, and made me a present of certain jewels, pieces of gold, and feather work, all of which was delivered to the treasurer of Your Majesty; I thanked the messengers for what they told me on behalf of their chief, and I gave them certain presents which they took and returned very happy.

At this season, those two Spaniards returned from the province of Mechuacan, whence the messengers had come from that chief, and told me that the South Sea could be reached by that way, except that it had to be done through the country of a chief who was his enemy. A brother of the chief of Mechuacan came with the two Spaniards, and other chiefs and servants with him, exceeding two thousand persons, whom I received, showing great love towards them; and they gave me on the part of the chief of the said province, who is called Calcucin, a present for Your Majesty of shields of gold, weighing[word missing] marks, and many other things which were delivered to Your Majesty's treasurer. To show them our customs, and let them report to their chief, I had all the horsemen ride to the square, where they manoeuvred and skirmished, the foot soldiers marching in file, and the musketeers firing their muskets and firing with the artillery against the tower. The chiefs were all dreadfully frightened to see the effect it made, and to see the horses manoeuvring; then I had them taken to see the destruction and desolation of the city of Temixtitlan, and they were astonished on beholding it and its strength and its fortress, situated as it was in the water. After four or five days, I gave them for their chief many such things as they esteemed, and others for themselves, so they departed very happy and satisfied.

I have heretofore made relation to Your Majesty about the river of Panuco, which is fifty or sixty leagues down the coast from the city of Vera Cruz, where the ships of Francisco de Garay had gone two or three times and received a good deal of hurt from the natives of the said river on account of the little tact which the captains who had been sent there had shown in the traffic they attempted to establish with the Indians. Afterwards, when I perceived that on the whole coast of the South Sea there was a lack of harbours, and that none was equal to the harbour of that river, and also because those natives, after coming to me to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, are making war against the vassals of Your Majesty, our friends, I felt it very necessary to send a captain there with a force to pacify all that province, and, if the country was a likely one for settlement, to establish a town on that river, so that the entire neighbourhood might be assured. Although we were few and scattered in three or four places, from which reason there was some opposition to taking more people from here, nevertheless, both in order to help our friends, and because, after the taking of the city of Temixtitlan, ships had arrived bringing some people and horses, I prepared twenty-five horsemen and one hundred and fifty foot soldiers to go with their captain to the said river.

While engaged in dispatching this captain, they wrote to me from Vera Cruz that a ship had arrived in its port, in which there came Cristobal de Tapia,¹⁹⁵ inspector of the foundries in the island of Hispaniola. I received a letter from him the next day afterwards, in which he made known to me that fog coming to this country was for the purpose of taking charge of its government by order of Your Majesty; for this purpose he said he had brought the royal provisions, but would in no wise present them until we met, which he desired should happen immediately. As his animals had been fatigued at sea, he had not begun his journey and he prayed me to give orders how we might see each other, either by his coming hither or my going to the sea-coast. Immediately I received his letter, I answered it, saying that I rejoiced at his arrival, and that nobody could have come provided with Your Majesty's orders for holding the government of these parts whom I would receive with more satisfaction, not only on account of our mutual acquaintance, but also as fellow neighbours and early settlers in the island of Hispaniola.

Since the pacification of these parts was not so complete as it should be, and any novelty would disquiet the natives, I besought Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, commissary of the Cruzada,¹⁹⁶ (who accompanied us in all our hardships and well knew the state of things here, making himself so useful in Your Majesty's service that we had availed ourselves of his devotion and advice), to go and see the said Tapia, and to examine the warrants of Your Majesty; and, since he knew better than anyone else what was profitable to your royal service in these parts, to come to some agreement with the said Tapia as to what was most advantageous, for I conceived that he would not exceed them in any way. I besought him thus in the presence of Your Majesty's treasurer, who also charged him in the same sense. He departed for the city of Vera Cruz where the said Tapia was staying; and to insure that, in the city or wherever the Inspector might come, he would be well served and accommodated, I sent two or three notable persons with the said Father. After they left, I awaited his answer.

Meanwhile I was preparing for my departure, giving orders about some things necessary to Your Majesty's service, and for the pacification and quieting of these parts. Some ten or twelve days afterwards the justice and Municipal Council of Vera Cruz wrote to me that the said Tapia had presented the provisions he brought from Your Majesty and your governors in your royal name, and that they had been received with all due reverence, but as for executing them, they had answered that as most of the Municipal Council were here with me, aiding in the siege of the city, they would report to them, and all would do and comply with what was most profitable to Your Majesty's service and the good of the country. The said Tapia was somewhat displeased by this reply, and had even attempted something scandalous. As this grieved me somewhat, I replied, praying and charging them very much to look chiefly to Your Majesty's service, endeavouring to satisfy the said Tapia and not to give occasion for any tumult as I was about starting to see him, ready to comply with what Your Majesty had ordered and was most suitable to your service. Being on the very eve of starting on my journey, and the captain and people, whom I intended to send to the river Panuco, having been detained here, where it was necessary, while I was away for this city to remain well guarded, the Procurators of this New Spain requested me with many protestations not to leave, because, as this entire province of Mexico and Temixtitan had only recently been pacified, it would be disturbed by my absence, and much injury would be done to the service of Your Majesty and to the tranquillity of the country; they gave many other causes and reasons for their said

195) When the news of Narvaez's summary treatment of the commissioner from the audiencia of Hispaniola, Ayllon, reached Spain, proceedings were begun against him, but the Bishop of Burgos, always active in Velasquez's interests, secured their suspension until fuller information might be had, and also the release of Narvaez from the prison in Vera Cruz, where Cortes had confined him. Cristobal de Tapia, an inspector of the royal smelting operations in Hispaniola was therefore despatched to Vera Cruz, with full powers to deal with the matter; he was hardly the man for the mission, and was as little able to cope with Cortes as Narvaez had been.

196) He was a Franciscan friar, empowered to administer the Bulas de la Cruzada. The indulgences provided by such bulls were granted on the usual conditions required for obtaining an indulgence, and were applicable to the living and the dead. This usage originated, as the title indicates, with the Crusades, and after it had fallen into disuse elsewhere, was continued in Spain owing to the long centuries of warfare against the Moors and the later conflicts with the Barbary pirates. It became therefore a peculiarly Spanish institution, and was extended to all countries under Spanish rule.

requirement that I should not leave this city at that present time, and they told me they would go themselves to the city of Vera Cruz where the said Tapia was staying, with power of attorney from the councillors, and would see the warrants of Your Majesty and do all that was suitable to Your Royal service. As this seemed to us expedient, the said procurators left, and I wrote to the said Tapia letting him know what was happening, and that I was sending my power of attorney to Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, and to Diego de Soto and Diego Valdenebro, who were there in the town of Vera Cruz, in order that in my name, they together with the municipal councillors and procurators of their municipal councils, might take measures to do what was suitable to Your Majesty's service and for the good of the country; for they have been and are persons who would do so. They met Tapia, who was already on the road, accompanied by Fray Pedro, and required him to return to the city of Cempoal, and there Tapia presented Your Majesty's provisions which were received by all, with the submission due to Your Majesty. As for executing them, they appealed that to the presence of Your Majesty, because such was advantageous to your royal service for the causes and reasons apparent in their same petition, and as will appear more fully from what passed; all of which the procurators who came from this New Spain carried, signed by a public notary. After exchanging other decrees and requirements between the said inspector and the procurators, he embarked in his ship as he was required to do, because, after publishing that he had come to be governor and captain of these parts his presence had caused some disquietude, and the people of Mexico and Temixtitlan had plotted that the natives here should rebel and work a great treason, which, if it had been carried out would have been worse than the past. The plan was, that certain Indians who were in Mexico, agreeing with the natives of this province which the alguacil mayor had gone to pacify, should come to me in all haste, telling me that twenty ships had arrived on the coast with a great many people, and that, as they had not come on land, they could not be good people, and that I should come there and see what was the matter, they having prepared themselves, and going with me as warriors; and, to make me believe this, they brought me a drawing of the ships on paper. As they brought me this news secretly, I immediately divined that their intention was mischievous, and its purpose was to get me out of this province, for the chiefs of it had known all these past days that I had been prepared to march, but seeing that I remained quiet they devised this plan. I dissembled with them, and afterwards captured some who had invented the plot.

The coming of the said Tapia and his want of experience of the country and its people caused a great deal of confusion, and his remaining here would have done much harm, had not God remedied it, and he would have done better service to Your Majesty, if when he was in the island of Hispaniola he had refrained from coming, without first consulting Your Majesty, and making known the condition of things in these parts. For he had learned from the ships I had sent to the said island for help, and knew clearly that the scandal it was hoped to create by the coming of the armada of Panfilo de Narvaez had been remedied, principally by what the governors and royal council of Your Majesty had provided; and more still, for the said Tapia had been required many times by the Admiral and the judges and officials of Your Majesty who reside in the said island of Hispaniola not to interfere in these parts without Your Majesty first being informed of everything that had happened, and hence they forbade his coming under certain penalties; but by scheming and looking more to his private interest than to Your Majesty's service he obtained the revocation of the prohibition. I relate all this to Your Majesty, because, when the said Tapia left, the procurators and myself did not send a report, for he would not have been a good carrier of our letters, and also that Your Majesty may see and believe that, in not having received the said Tapia, Your Majesty had been well served, as will be more fully proven as often as may be necessary.

In a chapter before this, I made known to Your Majesty that the captain, whom I had sent to conquer the province of Guaxaca, was waiting there for my commands, and, as he was needed, and was judge and lieutenant in the town of Segura de la Frontera, I wrote to him to give the eighty men and ten horsemen whom he had to Pedro de Alvarado. The latter I had sent to subjugate the province of Tututepeque, forty leagues beyond Guaxaca near the South Sea, where they did much damage to, and made war against, those who had given themselves as Your Majesty's vassals, and to those of the province of Tututepeque,

because they had allowed us to come through their country to discover the South Sea. Pedro de Alvarado left this said city the last of January of this present year, and, with the people he took from here, and with those he got in the province of Guaxaca, he united forty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, aided by forty archers and musketeers, and two small field pieces. Twenty days later, I received letters from the said Pedro de Alvarado, saying that he was on the road towards the province of Tututepeque, and he told me that he had captured certain native spies, and obtained information from them; for they had told him that the lord of Tututepeque and his people were expecting him on the field and he was determined to do in that journey all he possibly could to pacify that province, and besides the Spaniards had collected many and good warriors.

While waiting to hear the end of all this business, I received letters on the 4th of the month of March of the same year from the said Pedro de Alvarado in which he reported to me that he had entered that province, and that three or four towns of it had set themselves to resist him, but had not persevered in it, and that he had entered the town and city of Tututepeque, and had been well received as far as appearances went; and that the chief had asked him to lodge there in some of his great houses, which were thatched with straw, but that, inasmuch as the place was not very suitable for the horsemen, he had not accepted, but had come down to a part of the city which was more level; that he had also done this because he had learned that the chief had planned to kill him and all of them, by setting fire at midnight to the houses where the Spaniards were lodged.

When God had disclosed this baseness, he had feigned ignorance and, as if accidentally, had carried the chief and his son with him and had decided to keep them in his power as prisoners; they had given him twenty-five thousand castellanos and from what the vassals of that chief had told him, he believed there were great treasures. The whole of the province was as pacified as possible, and they carried on their markets and commerce as before. The country was very rich in gold mines, for in his presence they had taken out a sample which was sent to me. Three days before, he had been to the sea, and taken possession of it for Your Majesty, where, in his presence, they had taken out a sample of pearls which he likewise sent to me, and which I sent to Your Majesty, together with the sample from the gold mines.

As God, Our Lord, had well guided this business, and fulfilled my desire to serve Your Majesty on this South Sea, being as it is of such importance, I have provided with so much diligence that, in one of the three places where I discovered the sea, two medium-sized caravels and two brigantines are being built: the caravels for the purpose of discovering, and the brigantines to follow the coast. For this purpose, I sent, under a reliable person, forty Spaniards, amongst whom go ship-masters, ship-carpenters, wood-sawyers, blacksmiths, and seamen; and I have sent to the city for nails, sails, and other things necessary for the said ships, and all possible haste will be used to finish and launch them. Your Majesty may believe that it will be a great thing to accomplish this, and the greatest service since the Indies have been discovered will be thus rendered to Your Majesty.

While I was in the city of Tesaico, before we laid siege to Temixtitan, preparing and furnishing ourselves with the necessities for the said siege, and entirely unaware of what certain persons were plotting, one of the conspirators warned me that certain friends of Diego Velasquez, who were in my company, had treasonably plotted to kill me, and that amongst them they had elected a captain, an alcalde, and alguacil mayor, and other officials. My informer begged that I should thwart this by all means, for, besides the scandal which would follow, respecting my person, it was clear that not a Spaniard would escape, for, seeing us turned against one another not only would we find the enemy against us, but even those whom we regarded as friends would join in and finish with all of us. I thanked Our Lord, because in the discovery of this treachery lay the remedy. We immediately seized the principal offender, who spontaneously confessed that he had designed and planned, with many persons whom he betrayed in his confession, to assault and kill us, and to take the Government of the country for Diego Velasquez, and that it was true he had designed to appoint captains and alcaldes, and that he himself was to be the alguacil mayor, and that he was to seize and kill me. Many persons were involved in this, whom he had placed on a list which was found in his lodgings (although torn in pieces), together with the names of persons with

whom he had spoken of the said affair; he had not only contemplated this in Tesaico, but he had also communicated it, and spoken of it during the war against the province of Tepeaca. After hearing the confession of this man, who was called Antonio de Villafana, a native of Zamora, and as he reiterated it, the judge and myself condemned him to death, which was executed on his person.¹⁹⁷ Although we found others inculpated in this offence, I dissembled with them, treating them as friends, because the case being mine, although more properly it might be said to be that of Your Majesty, I was not willing to proceed rigorously against them; this dissimulation has not produced much advantage, because since then some partisans of Diego Velasquez have started many intrigues, and have secretly created many seditions and scandals, in which it has been necessary for me to be more on my guard against them than against our enemies. But God, Our Lord, has always conducted everything in such a manner, that, without executing any punishment on them, there has been, and exists, peace and tranquillity; and if from henceforth I should discover anything else it shall be punished as justice dictates.

After the city of Temixtitlan was captured, and while we were in Cuyoacan, Don Fernando, the lord of Tesaico died, which much grieved us all because he was a good vassal of Your Majesty and a great friend of the Christians; and with the approval of the chiefs and the notables of that city and of his province the lordship was given in the name of Your Majesty to a younger brother, who was baptised and took the name of Don Carlos,¹⁹⁸ and as far as we know he has followed until now in the footsteps of his brother, and seems much pleased with our habits and conversation.

I made known to Your Majesty in the other account how there was a very high and conical mountain near the provinces of Tascaltecal and Guaxocingo, from which much smoke almost constantly issued, ascending straight like an arrow.¹⁹⁹ As the Indians gave us to understand that it was a very fearful thing to ascend it, and that those who went there perished, I made certain Spaniards undertake it, and examine the summit of the mountain. When they ascended, the smoke came out with such noise that they neither could nor dared to reach its mouth; and afterwards I made some other Spaniards go, who ascended twice, reaching the mouth of the mountain where the smoke comes out, and from one side of the mouth to the other it was two crossbow-shots, for the circumference of it is almost three-quarters of a league, and the depth is so great that they could not see the bottom of it, and they found near the circumference some sulphur, deposited there by the smoke. They heard such a great noise made by the smoke that they made all haste to come down, and before they had descended to the middle of the mountain an infinite number of stones came rolling down, greatly endangering their position; and the Indians held it a very great thing to have dared to go where the Spaniards had gone.

In one of my letters, I told Your Majesty that the natives of these parts were much more capable than those of the other islands, appearing to be as intelligent and as reasonable as is ordinarily considered sufficient; wherefor it appeared wrong to oblige them to serve the Spaniards as those of the other islands do, though without some assistance, the conquerors and settlers of these parts would on the other hand be unable to maintain themselves. In order not to force the Indians to help the Spaniards, it seemed to me that Your Majesty might order that as compensation the latter should receive assistance from the incomes which here belong to Your Majesty for their provisions and sustenance; respecting this Your Majesty may provide what seems profitable to your service, according to the more extensive relation which I have made

197) This man was a private soldier who had come to Mexico in Narvaez's company; not Cortes alone but also Sandoval, Alvarado, and Olid were to be killed, and the commandship given to Francisco Verdugo, brother-in-law to Diego Velasquez, who was said, however, to be ignorant of the conspiracy. The plan was for several of the conspirators to stab the four leaders while they were seated at table. Cortes displayed a wise self-restraint in going no further in the affair than the execution of Villafana, though he had the list of other names, the finding of some of which surprised and pained him greatly. He spread the report that Villafana had swallowed the paper containing the list of the guilty ones.

198) This is an error; after Don Fernando's death, the young prince Ahuaxpitzcatzin, an illegitimate son of Nezahualpilli, who had received the name of Carlos upon his baptism as a Christian, was chosen King, but Cortes had refused to recognise the election, and had prevailed on the electors to annul it in favour of his ally, the ambitious Ixtlilxochitl, whose Christian name was also Don Fernando. The confusion of the two Fernandos, Kings of Texcoco has already been noticed.

199) The volcano of Orizaba which was mentioned in the First Letter. The Indian name was Citlatepetl, meaning Star Mountain. Humboldt gives the height as 17,368 feet; the crater is now extinct.

to Your Majesty. Seeing the many and continual outlays of Your Majesty, and that we ought rather to augment your rents by all possible means than to be an occasion of further expenses, and considering also the long time we have spent in the wars, and the necessities and debts caused thereby, and the delay attendant upon Your Majesty's decision in this case, and above all the many importunities of Your Majesty's officials and of all the Spaniards from which it was impossible to excuse myself, I found myself almost forced to place the chiefs and natives of these parts amongst the Spaniards, to recompense them for the services they have rendered to Your Majesty. Until something else is ordered or this confirmed, the said chiefs and natives serve and give each Spaniard to whom they are allotted the needful for his subsistence. This step was taken with the approbation of intelligent persons, who have had, and have, great experience of the country, for there was nothing else possible not only for the maintenance of the Spaniards but also for the preservation and good treatment of the Indian, as is shown in the more extensive relation which the procurators who now go from this New Spain will make to Your Majesty. The plantations and farms of Your Majesty have been established in the best and most convenient provinces and cities.

Most Catholic Lord, may God Our Lord preserve and augment the life and very royal person and powerful state of Your Caesarean Majesty with increase of much greater Kingdoms and Lordships, as your royal heart may desire. From the City of Cuyoacan of this New Spain of the Ocean Sea on the 15th of May, 1522. Most Powerful Lord, Your Caesarean Majesty's very humble servant and vassal who kisses the royal hands and feet of Your Majesty.

Fernando Cortes.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

THE FALL OF MEXICO

In the last desperate days, a final appeal was made by Quauhtemotzin to the national gods. Choosing one of the most valiant soldiers, a youth called Tlapaltecatlopuchtzin, from the quarter of Coatlan, he caused him to be vested in the armour of his dead father, the Emperor Ahuitzotl, giving him also the helmet and bow and arrows which adorned the statue of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, and which were regarded as the most sacred emblems preserved in the temple. Thus accoutred, the young warrior went forth, accompanied by a Chief named Cihuacoatlucotzin, who acted as his herald, and who called upon all the people in the name of the god, from whom they now, in their extremity, demanded a sign. The effort was vain, and the god was silent: this was on the tenth of August. On the night of the eleventh, there burst over the city a terrific storm, in the midst of which the affrighted Mexicans beheld a whirlwind of blood-red fire, throwing out sparks and flashes of light, which seemed to start from the direction of Tepeyaca and, passing over the small quarter of Tenochtitlan still left to them, bury itself in the black waters of the lake. This ominous apparition, which was probably a meteor, was accepted as a portent symbolising the downfall of the empire, and the extinction of their power. Cortes's description of the final assault, the fall of the last entrenchment, and the capture of Quauhtemotzin, is not embellished by rhetoric, but his terse language gave Charles V a faithful picture of that dreadful massacre. Neither does Bernal Diaz enlarge upon details, and indeed no language could do justice to the horror of the fall of the Aztec city, amidst the crash of battle, the smoke and flame of burning houses, the wails of the vanquished, and the shouts of the victors. The living and the dead choked the canals, the wounded and dying were trampled together with putrefying corpses in the sea of bloody mire into which the streets had been converted; the stifling August air reeked with the mingled smell of fresh carnage and decaying bodies, while, amidst these human shambles, the emaciated forms of women and children, destitute of any refuge, tottered pitifully under the merciless weapons of the savage allies, who gave no quarter, but hunted all alike through this hell of despair, like demons set upon the ghosts of the eternally damned.

The courage of the defenders never flagged; under the leadership of their young sovereign, who kept his serenity throughout and exercised his best generalship. These naked barbarians, weakened by famine and confronted by inevitable defeat, fought against a steel-clad foe, armed with guns both on land and on their ships, which mowed down a very harvest of death at every discharge. Never did they so much as name surrender thus verifying literally the words with which Quauhtemotzin answered the Spanish overtures for peace, that they would all perish to the last man in the city and he would die fighting.

Cortes daily renewed his offers of honourable terms for the Emperor and his people if the city would surrender. Day after day, with infinite patience, he made appointments which Quauhtemotzin never kept; time after time, he wasted hours in waiting for better counsels to prevail; but nothing he could say or do sufficed to allay the distrust of Quauhtemotzin, or bring the Mexicans to terms. Their choice was made; they had had enough of the Spaniards, whose semi-divine character was an exploded myth, and whose presence in the land was felt to be incompatible with the Aztec sovereignty. Cortes protests throughout the greatest reluctance to destroy the city, and declares repeatedly that the necessity of doing so filled him with inexpressible grief. The fate known to be in store for every Spaniard taken alive, and the sight of the

hideous rites of sacrifice, performed under the very eyes of the soldiers, helpless to intervene, followed by the cannibal feasts, in which the mangled members of their comrades furnished the banquet, were certainly sufficient to arouse the Spaniards to a very frenzy against such inhuman foes, and yet there is nowhere found any hint that the spirit of vengeance prompted reprisals on the prisoners who fell into their hands. Such remains of the Spanish victims as could be found were afterwards collected and reverently buried: a chapel dedicated to the Martyrs was erected over the spot, which was afterwards replaced by the Church of San Hipolito (Orozco y Berra, lib. iii., cap. viii.).

Riotous celebrations of the city's fall naturally followed, the opportune arrival of some casks of wine and pork from Cuba furnishing the substance for a banquet, which was followed by dancing. Bernal Diaz remarks that the "plant of Noah was the cause of many fooleries and worse," and that he refrains from mentioning the names of those who disgraced themselves by over-indulgence and unseemly antics. Fray Bartolome Olmedo was much scandalised at this profane celebration, and quickly asserted his spiritual authority over the men. The next morning a solemn mass of thanksgiving was said, and the good friar delivered a sermon on the moral and religious duties of the conquerors. Cortes and others received the sacraments, and these becoming rites ended decorously with a procession in which the crucifix and an image of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by the military standards, were carried to the sound of drums, alternating with chanted litanies.

These vinous and pious festivities over, the first great disappointment of the conquest had to be faced. The fabulous treasure was nowhere to be found, nor did tortures succeed in producing it. The place of its alleged burial in the lake, indicated by Quauhtemotzin, was searched by divers, who, after many efforts, recovered only about ninety crowns worth of gold (Bernal Diaz, cap. clvii). The same authority states his opinion that, though it was rumoured that vast treasures had been thrown into the lake four days before the end of the siege, the amount had doubtless already been greatly diminished before it came into Quauhtemotzin's hands, and moreover that, from the first, the value of it had seemed double what it really was found to be when it came to be accurately estimated. The discontent amongst the soldiery was great, and expressed itself in several ways, one of which, more original than the others, was the writing of pasquinades on the white walls of Cortes's quarter at Coyohuacan, some of which were witty, some insolent, and others not fit for print. Cortes even deigned to reply to some of them in the same vein, and on the same wall, for he rather prided himself on his ready wit and skill at verse-making, but Fray Bartolome, perceiving that the limits of propriety were being overstepped, advised Cortes to stop the practice, which he did by publishing severe punishments for any further writing on the walls.

Positive data, on which to base a computation of the numbers engaged during the siege and the lives lost, are wanting. Cortes estimates that 67, 000 Mexicans fell in the last three assaults on the city, and that fifty thousand died of starvation and diseases, without taking any account of all those who perished during the earlier days of the siege. Bernal Diaz gives no figures, but both he and the historian Oviedo state their conviction that not more lives were lost at the siege of Jerusalem than in Mexico. The Jewish historian Josephus computes the losses of his people at 1, 100, 000 souls! The comparison with these appalling figures is so obviously exaggerated that these two authorities may safely be disregarded. Writing from the Mexican standpoint, Ixtlilxochitl puts the number of the dead, from all causes, at 240, 000 persons, which greatly exceeds the estimate of Cortes. The same discrepancy appears in the counting of the forces which laid down their arms when Quauhtemotzin was captured. Oviedo leads again, with 70, 000. Ixtlilxochitl follows, with 60, 000, and Herrera, who agrees with Torquemada, puts the number at 30, 000 fighting men. (Herrera, *Hist. Gen.*, lib. ii., cap. vii.; Torquemada, *Monarchia Ind.*, lib. iv., cap. ci.; Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Espanoles*, p. 49. Oviedo lib. xxxiii.).

Whatever the exact number may have been, the Mexican Empire was destroyed, its capital annihilated, and a vast number of people butchered, amidst scenes of unexcelled ferocity and horror. The annals of no great siege record deeds of greater bravery, and, had the justice of their cause equalled the heroism of their defence, the downfall of the Aztecs would be forever sung in song and story wherever brave deeds are remembered.

As has been elsewhere explained, the laurels of the conquest are not exclusively for Spanish brows. The superlative generalship and personal qualities of Cortes, their superior arms and knowledge of military tactics, and their indomitable courage, were the Spaniards' contributions to the successful issue of the long campaign. In the ready hatred of its neighbours, and the quick desertion of its dependencies and allies, is read the proof of the inherent weakness of the Aztec Empire. All that these peoples possessed — their knowledge of the country, their labour, their treasure, their fighting men, and their thirst for vengeance — were placed at the disposition of Cortes, and thus the conquest was accomplished. Even admitting the most and the worst that has been said of the Spaniards' methods in carrying on this war of invasion, the result commands our applause in the name of humanity.

The Mexican civilisation, even granting that it had reached the high perfection claimed for it by some writers, was chaotic, stationary, and barren; it rested upon despotic power, and its many crimes were expiated in the blood of their perpetrators.

Whatever culture and refinement of living there were, centred in the capital and its immediate neighbourhood, the outlying provinces being peopled by aboriginal, not to say savage tribes, which justified their existence by the tribute of men and money they paid, without being sharers in the learning and luxury their labours sustained. "Humanum paucis vivit genus."

The arrival of the Spaniards in the midst of this chaos of tyranny and disloyalty shattered the loosely joined organisation, whose inferior character foredoomed it to destruction when brought into contact with a higher and more progressive type of civilisation.

The substitution of the Christian religion for the horrors of human sacrifices and the revolting cannibal feasts is, of itself, a sufficient justification for the overthrow of the Aztec Empire, whose bloody and degrading rites were of the very essence of its religious system. Upon the ruins of the old order, a new civilisation has been founded, from which a nation still in the process of formation has developed, in which Spanish and Indian blood are mingled, and which is advancing on the road of human progress to what destiny we know not, but in which the humblest Indian has his place living in a securer present, and moving towards a higher future, than any his own race could have shaped for him. Many of the best men in modern Mexico trace with pride their descent from Aztec kings and nobles. A uniform and rich language with its system of phonetic writing, the introduction of horses and beasts of burden, the use of iron and leather, improved systems of mining and agriculture which have brought under civilisation vast tracts of land, and increased the variety and quality of crops — these and countless other resources, unknown and unknowable to the Mexicans, have revolutionised the conditions of their existence beyond anything their ancestors could have dreamed.

Even at the price it cost, the conquest must be approved, though it obliterated an interesting and wonderful civilisation so entirely that the few relics left serve but to stimulate enquiries to which few answers are forthcoming.

With the destruction of the archives of Texcoco, and of the Golden Key to the hieroglyphs, the sponge was passed over the tablets of Aztec history: unwise laws destroyed native arts and crafts, whose products had astonished the foremost artisans of Europe, while the secrets of the lapidaries, of the gold and silver-smiths, of the deft workers in feathers, and of other unique crafts, perished for ever leaving the civilisation of Anahuac a mystery for all time.

FOURTH LETTER

Very High, very Powerful, and most Excellent Prince very Catholic and Invincible Emperor, King and Lord.

In the account which I sent to Your Majesty by Juan de Ribera, concerning what had happened to me in these parts after the second letter I despatched to Your Highness, I said that, in order to pacify and reduce to the royal service of Your Majesty the Provinces of Guatusco, Tuxtepeque, Quatasca, and others in the neighbourhood, which are on the South Sea and which since the revolt were in rebellion, I had sent the alguacil mayor thither with some people; I told what had happened to him on the road; and also that I had ordered him to make a settlement in those provinces and to name the town Medellin. It now remains that Your Highness should know how the said town was founded and all that country and its provinces subdued and pacified.

I sent him reinforcements, and ordered him to go up the coast to the province of Guazacualco, which is fifty leagues from where that town was founded and one hundred and twenty from this city; for, when I was in this city while Montezuma was still alive, striving to discover all the secrets of these parts in order to give a full account of them to Your Majesty, I had sent thither Diego de Ordaz,²⁰⁰ who resides at the Court of Your Majesty; and the lords and natives of the said province had received him cordially, and had offered themselves as vassals and subjects of Your Highness. I had received information that there was a very good harbour for ships at the mouth of a large river which flows through that province; for the said Ordaz and those with him had explored it and had found the country very well adapted for settling. The absence of harbours on this coast made me anxious to find a good one where I might found a town.

I ordered the alguacil mayor that, before entering the province, he should send certain messengers whom I gave him, natives of this city, to tell the inhabitants that he went there by my orders to discover if they were still loyal to Your Majesty's service and faithful to our amity, as they had formerly professed to be; and to tell them also that, on account of the wars I had carried on with the sovereign of this city and its dependencies, I had sent no one to visit them for a long time, but that I had always considered them as my friends and vassals of Your Highness and that, as such, they might count upon my friendship if they had need of it; and that hence I sent my people thither to pacify and to assist them in anything they might require, and to settle that province. The alguacil mayor departed with his people, and did as I commanded him, but did not find the natives well disposed as they had formerly professed, but rather they displayed a war-like disposition to prevent the alguacil mayor and his people from entering their country. He managed so well that, surprising a town one night, he seized a woman whom all in those parts obeyed, and everything quieted because she sent to call the chiefs and ordered them to observe whatever was commanded them in Your Majesty's name as she herself intended to do. They arrived at the river four leagues from its mouth where they founded a town on a good site — as no good place was found nearer the sea, to which the name of Espiritu Santo was given, and the alguacil mayor stopped there for some days until many of the neighbouring provinces were pacified and brought to the service of Your Catholic Majesty. Some of these were: Tabasco, which is on the River Victoria, or Grijalba as it is commonly

200) Diego de Ordaz was a native of Tierra de Campo, and first came to Mexico when he was forty years old, with Juan de Grijalba; he was a Captain of infantry under Cortes, and conducted the first ascent of Popocatepetl, for which exploit he was afterwards granted a volcano in his armorial bearings. He received the Knighthood of Santiago, and died as Governor of Maranon.

called, and that of Chimaclan, and Quechula, and Quizaltepeque, and others which being insignificant I do not name. And we apportioned the natives to the householders of the said town to serve them; and they actually do serve them, although some, I mean those of Chimaclan, Tabasco, and Quizaltepeque, have again rebelled. About a month since, I sent a captain with some people from this city to subdue them to the service of Your Majesty, and to punish their rebellion; I have had no news of them but I believe, Our Lord willing, they will succeed, as they took a good supply of artillery, ammunition, crossbowmen, and horsemen.

In the account, most Catholic Sire, which the said Juan de Ribera took with him, I also made it known to Your Caesarian and Catholic Majesty that the ruler of the great province near Mechuacan, whose name is Casulci,²⁰¹ had offered himself and his people as subjects and vassals of Your Caesarian Majesty and had sent certain presents by his messengers, which presents I sent with the Procurators who went from this New Spain to Your Highness. As the province and dominion of the said Lord Casulci, according to the information which certain Spaniards whom I sent there gave me, was large, and, from all indications, very rich, and since it is so near to this great city, after I had received reinforcements, I sent thither a captain with seventy cavalry and two hundred foot soldiers, well armed and provided with artillery, to explore that province and its secrets, with orders, if they found it as it was described, to settle in the principal city — Huicicila. They were well received and lodged by the chiefs and natives, who, besides providing them with food, gave them as much as three our Majesty's progress sent their messengers to me and offered themselves as your subjects and vassals. I received them in the royal name of Your Majesty, and as such they always considered themselves until the coming of Cristobal de Tapia, who caused such disturbances and scandals amongst these other peoples that they, too, not only renounced their obedience, but even did much harm to the neighbourhood where there are vassals of Your Catholic Majesty, burning many towns and killing many people. I had no people to spare at that moment, as they were scattered in so many other places, but, seeing that to leave this unnoticed was very mischievous, and fearing that the people who bordered on those provinces might join them for fear of reprisals if they did not, and also because I was not myself entirely satisfied as to their loyalty, I sent a captain with thirty horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, crossbowmen, musketeers, and many Indian allies. Several encounters took place in which they killed some of our friendlies and two Spaniards; but our Lord was pleased that they should proffer peace of their own free will; the chiefs were brought to me, and, as they had come without being captured, I pardoned them. Afterwards, when I went to the province of Panuco, the natives spread the report that I was gone to Castile, which news caused much apprehension; and one of the two provinces — Tututepeque — again rebelled, and its chief descended with many people and burned more than twenty towns of our friendlies, and killed and captured numbers of them. Finding myself on the march from the province of Panuco, I returned and subdued them, and, although at the outset they killed some of our friendlies who had straggled behind, and some ten or twelve horses foundered on account of the roughness of the mountain roads, all the province was conquered, and the lord and his brother, a youth, and another, his captain-general, who guarded one of the frontiers, were captured. The lord and his captain-general were immediately hanged, and all who were captured in the war, perhaps two hundred persons, were made slaves and were branded and sold by auction. Your Majesty's fifth having been paid, the rest of the proceeds were distributed amongst those who took part in the war, although there was not sufficient to pay for one-third of the horses which perished, as, on account of the poverty of the country, no other spoil had been obtained. The rest of the people in the said province surrendered peaceably and have kept their word. That young brother of the dead chief is now lord, although for the present he is of no service or profit as the country is so poor, still he keeps it in such security that those who do serve us will not be disturbed, and moreover, I have placed amongst them some of the natives of this country for greater security.

At this season, Most Invincible Caesar, there arrived at the port and town of Espiritu Santo, which I mentioned in the chapter before the last, a very small and miserable brigantine coming from Cuba, on

201) Catzolcin, King of Michoacan and ruler of Xalisco; he was afterwards burned alive with many of his nobles by Nufio de Guzman, who first robbed him of ten thousand marks of silver, a quantity of gold, and six thousand men for his army.

board which was one Juan Bono de Quejo who had come to this country in the armada of Panfilo de Narvaez as master of one of the ships; and, as it appeared from the despatches he brought, he came by order of Don Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos,²⁰² in the belief that Cristobal de Tapia whom he had designated for Governor of this country was here. Lest he should meet with an unfavourable reception, as for notorious reasons he was led to fear, he was sent by way of the island of Cuba in order to communicate with Diego de Velasquez; this he did and was given by the latter the brigantine in which he came. The said Juan Bono brought about one hundred letters of the same tenor, signed by the said Bishop, and I even believe they were in blank so that he could deliver them to such persons as seemed expedient here, telling them that they would render great service to Your Cassarian Majesty by receiving the said Tapia, and promising them increased and signal favours for so doing; saying also that they should know Your Excellency was displeased at their being under my command, besides many other things tending to excite them to sedition and disquiet. To me, he wrote another letter, telling me the same, and saying if I would obey the said Tapia he would obtain signal favours from Your Majesty for me, and if not, I might be sure he would always be my mortal enemy. The arrival of this Juan Bono and the letters he brought occasioned such commotion among my company that I declare to Your Majesty I had to reassure them, explaining to them why the Bishop had written thus and that they should not fear his threats as the greatest service to Your Majesty, and for which they would receive greater favours, was to resent the meddling of the Bishop and of any of his creatures in those parts; because his intention was to conceal the truth from Your Majesty, obtaining favours the while without your knowing what was given in exchange. I had much trouble to pacify them, especially as I was informed — although I dissembled at the time — that some murmured amongst themselves, saying that since thus far they had received nothing but threats in payment for their services they might better form themselves into comunidades²⁰³ as had been done in Castile until Your Majesty should be informed of the truth; for the Bishop had so many fingers in this business and thus prevented their accounts from reaching Your Highness, as he held the office of the Casa de la Contratacion²⁰⁴ at Seville in his hands, where their messengers were ill-treated, and their letters and monies were seized, and reinforcements, supplies, arms, and provisions were withheld from them. When I spoke to them as I have explained above, and told them that Your Majesty was not in any wise cognisant of this, and they might rest assured that, when Your Highness came to know, their services would be recompensed and they would receive such favours as loyal vassals who had served their King and Lord

202) Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and titular Archbishop of Rosano, was of noble family, and when Dean of Seville had been named by King Ferdinand to the presidency of the newly constituted Royal Council for the Indies, which had charge of the affairs of the recently discovered realms in the New World. This appointment was singularly unfortunate as he possessed no aptitude for the post, and, being of choleric temper, touchy, vindictive, and given to favouritism, he seems never to have grasped the possibilities of his office, or to have comprehended the meaning of the events, whose course he was called upon to shape. Instead of aiding and encouraging the daring men who were eager to stake everything, including their lives, in great enterprises, he almost invariably vexed and persecuted them, perverting his great power to thwart the very undertakings it was his business to favour. He was bitterly hostile to Columbus, continuing his opposition to his son Diego. The story of his dealings with Cortes sufficiently appears from the accounts in these Letters. The Emperor's eyes were finally opened to his incurable defects of character, and his influence received its death-blow from the transactions of his agents with Cortes. He died March 14, 1524, having done his worst during thirty years with the interests confided to his direction.

203) Referring to the uprising of the Town Corporations in Spain, provoked by a grant of subsidies which the Cortes held in Galicia made to the king, without having first obtained from him the settlement of long standing grievances which awaited his adjustment. The Corporations were powerful bodies, governed by independent and democratic principles, possessing charters which granted them valuable privileges and immunities which they jealously defended against the Crown, the Church, and the Nobles. They sent representatives to the Cortes and could check the royal power by refusing funds. When, therefore, the Cortes subserviently voted the supplies asked by Charles V., who was in haste to leave for Germany where he had been elected Emperor, the cities revolted. Toledo, setting the example, under the leadership of Juan de Padilla was followed by Burgos, Segovia Zamora, and others, including Valladolid, where the cardinal-regent was then living.

204) Casa de Contratacion, or India house as Prescott aptly translates the name, was created for the administration of affairs in America.

merited. they became reassured, and they were and are still content with the favour which Your Highness deemed well to bestow upon me with Your Royal provisions. and they serve very willingly as the fruits of their service give testimony. They deserve, therefore, that Your Majesty should concede them great favours, which I on my part supplicate most humbly from Your Highness because I deem anything conceded to them as no less a favour than if it had been granted to me, for without them I could not have served Your Highness as I have; and especially do I most humbly supplicate Your Highness to order some recognition of their services to be sent them in writing, promising them favours; because besides paying a debt which Your Majesty owes them, they will be animated henceforth with greater good will to continue. By a royal cedula which Your Caesarian Majesty ordered to be given at the petition of Juan de Ribera, respecting the affair of the adelantado,²⁰⁵ Francisco de Garay, it seems that Your Highness was informed that I was about to go very soon to the river Panuco to pacify that region, because it was stated that there was a good harbour there, and because the natives had killed many Spaniards, not only of those under Francisco de Garay's captain, but also those of another ship which sometime afterwards arrived on that coast of whom none escaped alive. Some of the natives of those parts had come to me, excusing themselves for those murders, saying that they had acted thus because they knew those men were not under my command, and because they had been ill-treated by them; but that, if I wished to send my people there, they would esteem it a great favour and would serve them the best they could, and would thank me very much, because they feared that the others with whom they had fought might return against them and take vengeance, and also because they had hostile neighbours who molested them, whereas if I sent Spaniards there they would be protected. I was short of people when they came so I was unable to comply, but I promised I would do so as soon as possible; and thus satisfied them so that ten or twelve towns in that neighbourhood offered themselves as vassals of Your Majesty. A few days afterwards, they again returned, and besought me most earnestly to send some Spaniards to settle there, as I had done in other places, because they were much molested by their foes and others of their own nation who lived along the seacoast, because they were our friends. To comply with this, and for the purpose of making a settlement in their country, and also because I had then received reinforcements, I sent a captain with certain companions to the said river, but just as they were leaving I learned by a ship that had arrived from Cuba how the Admiral Don Diego Colon²⁰⁶ and the adelantados, Diego Velasquez and Francisco de Garay, had agreed amongst themselves to go there with the hostile intention of doing me all the mischief they could. To forestall the effects of their evil intentions, and to prevent a disturbance and trouble arising from their going similar to what had occurred on the arrival of Narvaez, I determined to go myself, leaving this city as well defended as I could, so that if any of them did come there they would meet me rather than another; for I could better prevent the mischief.

I set out therefore with one hundred and twenty horsemen, three hundred foot soldiers, some artillery, and about forty thousand Indian warriors of this city and its neighbourhood. At the frontier of their country quite twenty-five leagues from the port, and in the neighbourhood of a large town called Ayntuscotaclan,²⁰⁷ we encountered and fought with many warriors, but owing to our numerous Indian allies, and also to the fact that the ground was level and suitable for the cavalry, the battle did not last long; although they wounded some horses and Spaniards and some of our friendlies perished, they got the worst share, for many of them were killed. I remained in that town two or three days for the purpose of caring for the wounded and also because those who had formerly offered themselves as vassals to Your Highness came to see me there. From there they accompanied me to the port and ever afterwards rendered

205) The title given to the Governor of a province, and which, in the case of the Spanish discoverers, meant the Commander of an exploring expedition who was empowered to colonise and establish a Government of which he should be the head, in any countries he might discover. Las Casas sarcastically explained the etymology of the title saying "porque se adelantaron en hacer males y danos tan gravissimos a gentes pacificos" (because they took the lead in perpetrating such great evils and injuries on peaceful people).

206) Diego Columbus had obtained a royal decree from the Cardinal-Regent (afterwards Adrian VI.), during the Emperor's absence in Germany, which was dated from Burgos in 1521, authorising him to colonise the Panuco country.

207) The present Coscatlan at the mouth of the Huasteca River.

us the greatest possible service. I continued my march until I reached the port, and nowhere did I have any further hostile encounters, but rather, all along the road, the people came and asked pardon for their error, and offered themselves for the royal service of Your Highness. When I reached the port and river, I lodged in a town, called Chila,²⁰⁸ five leagues from the sea, which was abandoned and burned because it was there that Francisco de Garay's captain and his people were routed. From there I sent messengers to the other side of the river and along those lakes which are all peopled with great towns, telling them to have no fears for what had happened in the past for I was well aware they had revolted on account of the ill-treatment they had received from our people and that they deserved no blame for it. But they never would come to me, but ill-treated the messengers, and even killed some of them. They also stationed themselves on the other side of the river, at the spring where we got our fresh water, and attacked those who went to fetch it. This continued for more than fifteen days while I waited always hoping to win them by kindness, and that, on seeing how well treated those were who had submitted, they would do likewise; but they had such confidence in the strength of their position among these lakes that they never would yield. And seeing that gentle means availed nothing with them, I sought a means to bring matters to a finish. I already had some canoes and managed to procure some others, so that one night I transported my men and horses across the lake without the enemy suspecting anything, and by morning I had assembled a strong troop of foot soldiers and horsemen, leaving at the same time a good garrison in my quarters. When they saw us on their side they fell upon us in great numbers so fiercely that never since I have been in this country have I been so vigorously attacked; and they killed two horses and wounded ten others so badly that they were disabled. In the course of the day — thanks to God — the enemy was defeated, and we pursued them for more than a league and killed numbers of them. With the thirty horsemen remaining and one hundred foot soldiers, I continued my march, and slept that night in a town three leagues from the camp which was found deserted. In the mosques of this town we found many articles belonging to those Spaniards who had been sent by Francisco de Garay, and who had been killed.

The next day, I set out along the shore of the lake, searching for a passage to the other side where we had seen people and towns, but I marched all day without finding it, nor any place to cross; and towards the hour of vespers we came in sight of a very beautiful town, and marched towards it as it still lay on the shore of the lake. Upon approaching, it was already late and no people appeared, but to make sure I sent ten horsemen into the town by the main road and I with another ten went round towards the lake; for the other ten were bringing up the rear-guard and had not yet arrived. On entering the town, a number of people who had been hiding in ambush in the houses, so as to take us unawares, came out and fought so stoutly that they killed a horse and wounded almost all the others besides many Spaniards. Their determination was such that the battle lasted a long time; though we broke through them three or four times, they re-formed in a phalanx, kneeling on the ground, and, without speaking or shouting as the other natives are accustomed to do, they would await us; and each time we charged them they discharged such a volley of arrows against us that, had we not been well armoured, they would have gained a great advantage, and I believe that none of us would have escaped. It pleased our Lord that some of them who were nearest the river, which emptied into the lake near there and whose course I had followed all day long, began to throw themselves into the water, and all the others followed; and thus they dispersed, though they did not go further than the other bank of the river. Thus they on one side, and I on the other, remained until night fell, as on account of the depth of the water we could not cross to them. Indeed we were glad when they crossed, for we then returned to the town, about a sling's throw from the river, where we mounted guard and remained that night: and we ate the horse which they killed for we had no other provisions. The next day, we went out on the road, for the people of the day before did not appear; and we marched through three or four towns where there were no people nor anything but a few wine vaults, in which we found large numbers of earthen jars filled with wine. During the whole day we met no people, and slept on the bare ground at a place where we found some fields of maize, with which the people and the horses somewhat refreshed themselves. In this wise, I continued for two or three days, without

208) The small lake of Chila near the mouth of the river Panuco.

meeting any people, although we passed through many towns. Being in want of provisions, as we had not amongst the whole of us fifty pounds of bread, we returned to the camp and found the people I had left there doing very well, and having had no encounters. Seeing the entire population was on the other side of the lake where I had not been able to cross, I embarked my men, crossbowmen and musketeers, and the horses during one night, ordering them to cross to the other shore where others of my people would join them by land. Thus they arrived at a large town, where they surprised the inhabitants, killing a large number of them; the others were so frightened, seeing themselves surprised in the midst of their lakes, that they came to seek peace, and, in less than twenty days, the entire population offered themselves as subjects and vassals to Your Majesty.

When the country was pacified, I sent people to visit every part of it, in order to bring me reports of the towns and peoples. When these were brought, I chose the most suitable place, and founded there a town which I called Santistevan del Puerto,²⁰⁹ establishing as inhabitants those who wished to remain, and giving them in the name of Your Majesty those towns for their service. I appointed alcaldes and municipal officers, and left a captain there as my lieutenant, besides thirty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers; I also left them a barque and a fishing boat which was brought to me with provisions from Vera Cruz. One of my servants also had sent me a ship with provisions of meat, bread, wine, oil, and vinegar, but everything was lost, excepting three men who took refuge on a desert island five leagues from the coast for whom I sent to search. They were found in good health, having kept themselves alive by eating the seals which were plentiful on the island, and a kind of fruit like figs.²¹⁰ I certify to Your Majesty that this expedition cost me alone more than thirty thousand dollars in gold, as Your Majesty may order to be shown by the accounts, if such is your will; and those who went with me had as great expenses, for horses, provisions, arms, and horse-shoes, which at that time cost their weight in gold, or twice their weight in silver. But, to serve Your Majesty well, we would have undertaken it, even had our expenses been greater, for, besides putting those Indians under the imperial yoke of Your Majesty, our expedition produced good results, for, immediately after, there arrived a ship with many people and provisions and, had the country not been at peace, none of them would have escaped, as had happened with the others whom the Indians had killed, and whose remains we had found in their temples. I mean their skins, cured in such a manner that we recognised the faces of many of them. When the adelantado, Francisco de Garay, arrived in that province, as I shall relate to Your Caesarian Majesty later, neither he, nor any of those with him, would have escaped alive; for the wind drove them thirty leagues from Panuco where they lost some ships, and the others were driven disabled ashore, where, had they not found the people at peace, and ready to carry them on their backs, and serve them, in a Spanish town, they would have all perished, even had there been no other hostilities. It was thus a great good fortune to find that country at peace.

In the chapter before this, Most Excellent Prince, I related how, during my march after the pacification of the province of Panuco, the province of Tututepeque, which had rebelled, had been again conquered, and all that was done there. I received news of a province, called Impilcingo, which is near the South Sea, and which is much the same as Tututepeque in the mountainous and rugged character of its country; and the equally war-like inhabitants had done much mischief to the vassals of Your Caesarian Majesty on the border of their country; and these had come to complain of them and ask for help. Although my people were not rested, as the road from one sea to the other is two hundred leagues, I immediately assembled twenty-five horsemen and eighty foot soldiers, whom I sent to that province with one of my captains; I instructed him to seek to win the inhabitants by peaceful means, and if unsuccessful to fight them. He went there, and had several encounters with them, but, on account of the ruggedness of the country, it was impossible to conquer it entirely. I had also ordered him, in the same instructions, that, having accomplished this, he should go to the city of Zacatula, and, to proceed with his people and those whom

209) San Estevan del Puerto was built on a narrow strip of land separating Lake Chila from the sea. Pedro de Valleja was placed there as his lieutenant.

210) Lobos marinos are sometimes called sea-dogs. The figs were the fruit of the nopal or Mexican cactus, commonly called tunas, which are very refreshing.

he might collect there to the province of Coliman, where, as I have related in the preceding chapters, they had routed and captured the people who had come from the province of Mechuacan; and to seek to win them by kindness, but if he could not, to conquer them. He departed, and altogether, with the people he took, and those whom he collected there, he assembled fifty horsemen and one hundred and fifty footmen and marched to the said province down the coast by the South Sea about sixty leagues from the city of Zacatula. He pacified several towns along the road, and reached the said province, finding, at the place where the other captain had been routed, many warriors, who were expecting him, confident that they could treat him as they had done the other. Our Lord was pleased that the victory in this encounter should be for us, none of ours being killed, although many men and horses were wounded; the enemy paid dearly for the mischief they had done, and this punishment was sufficient, without further fighting to bring the whole country suing immediately for peace; not merely that province, but many other neighbouring ones, which came and offered themselves as vassals of Your Caesarian Majesty, namely: Aliman, Colimante, and Ceguatan. He wrote me from there all that had happened, and I ordered him to seek a good site to found a town, which he should call Coliman like the province, and I sent him the nominations for alcaldes and municipal officers, directing him to visit the towns and peoples of those provinces and bring me the fullest reports of the secrets of the country. When he returned, he brought this report, as well as certain samples of pearls; and, in the name of Your Majesty, I divided the towns and those provinces amongst the settlers who remained there, who numbered twenty-five horsemen and one hundred and twenty foot soldiers. In his description of these provinces, there was news of a very good port on that coast, which greatly pleased me because they are few: he likewise brought me an account of the chiefs of the province of Ceguatan, who affirm that there is an island inhabited only by women without any men, and that, at given times, men from the mainland visit them; if they conceive, they keep the female children to which they give birth, but the males they throw away. This island is ten days' journey from the province, and many of them went thither and saw it, and told me also that it is very rich in pearls and gold. I shall strive to ascertain the truth, and, when I am able to do so, I shall make a full account to Your Majesty.²¹¹

On returning from the province of Panuco, and while in a town called Tuzapan, the two Spaniards arrived, whom I had sent with some natives of Temixtitan and others of Soconusco (which latter is on the coast of the South Sea, near where Pedrarias Davila is Your Highnesses's Governor, two hundred leagues from this great city of Temixtitan) to obtain information of some towns, about which I have heard for a long time, and which are called Uclaclan and Guatemala, and which are more than seventy leagues distant from this province of Soconusco. There came with these Spaniards more than one hundred of the inhabitants of those two towns, sent by their chiefs to declare themselves subjects and vassals of Your Imperial Majesty. I received them in Your Royal name and assured them that, if they remained faithful to their pledge, they would be well treated and favoured by me and my people in Your Majesty's name; and I gave them some presents of things which they esteem, not only for themselves, but also for their chief, and sent two other Spaniards back with them to provide everything necessary along the road. Since then, I have learned from certain Spaniards in the province of Soconusco, that those cities with their provinces, and another, called Chiapan, near there, have not kept faith, but are molesting the towns of Soconusco because they are our friends. On the other hand, the Christians have written to me that they constantly send messengers to excuse themselves, saying that these things had been done by others, and that they had no part in it. So, to learn the truth of this, I despatched Pedro de Alvarado, with eighty odd horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers, amongst whom were many crossbowmen and musketeers; he took four field pieces and artillery, and a great supply of ammunition and powder. I likewise had an armada of ships built, of which I sent Cristobal de Olid as captain, he having come with me to go to the North Coast, where I ordered him to make a settlement on the Cape of Hibuera, which is sixty leagues from the Bay of

211) The island of the Amazons turned out to be a myth. Another such island is mentioned in Pigafetta's letter on Magellan's voyage as existing in the Malay Archipelago, called Acoloro near Java, but he says that he only heard of it from a pilot (Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo, Ant. Pigafetta, translated by A. Robertson, 1905).

Ascension, beyond what is called Yucatan, on the coast of the mainland towards Darien²¹²: for I have information that that country is very rich, and many pilots believe that a strait links that Bay with the other sea, and this is the one thing in the world which I most desire to discover, and which I think would render greatest service to Your Caesarian Majesty. As these two captains were about to start, with all preparations for the march completed, I received a message from each of them, from Santistevan del Puerto which I had founded on the River Panuco, telling me that the Governor Francisco de Garay had arrived at Panuco with one hundred and twenty horse, four hundred foot soldiers, and numerous artillery, proclaiming himself, through an interpreter, whom he had brought with him, governor of the country; he told the Indians he would revenge the ills they had suffered at my hands in the recent war, and that they should join with him in driving out those Spaniards whom I had placed there, and that he would help them; besides many other scandalous things which considerably agitated the natives. To confirm my suspicion of his understanding with the Admiral and Diego Velasquez, a few days later, there arrived at the river a caravel from the island of Cuba having on board certain friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, and a servant of the Bishop of Burgos, who said that he came as factor for Yucatan; and the rest of the company was composed of creatures and relatives of Diego Velasquez and of the Admiral. When I heard this news, although I had a lame arm from a fall from my horse, and was in bed, I decided to go to meet him and arrange the difficulty, and I immediately sent Pedro de Alvarado ahead of me with all the people he had ready for his march, while I prepared to start in two days. My bed and baggage were already on the road and had gone ten leagues from Mexico to a place where I was to join them, when, towards midnight, there arrived a courier from Vera Cruz who brought me letters,²¹³ which had arrived

212) This coast was first reached by Rodrigo de Bastidas and Nicuesa in 1502; the survivors of the expedition of Nicuesa and Ojeda founded a town there which Encisa named Santa Maria Antigua, in honour of the Blessed Virgin venerated under that title in Seville; Vasco Nunez de Balboa was Governor, and Pizarro, who later conquered Peru, was one of Ojeda's companions. The hardships endured by Ojeda and his men were beyond all human endurance, and the description of their sufferings from disease, famine, shipwreck, and rebellions within the colony, and fighting the Indians without, is one of the most harrowing tales of human misery and human courage anywhere to be read. Cortes was providentially prevented from joining this expedition by a swelling on his knee which laid him up. The pilot and cosmographer, Juan de la Cosa, was killed by a poisoned arrow. Ojeda himself survived, but died poor and obscure in San Domingo. Gomara (Hist. Gen.) says that he became a monk, but Las Casas who mentions his wish to be buried under the threshold of the Church of St. Francisco, so that all who entered might tread upon his grave as an act of expiation for his sins of pride, does not mention that he belonged to any religious order.

The end of Nicuesa was even more unfortunate, for he was driven from Darien by the rebellious colonists, and, putting to sea with a few followers in an unseaworthy vessel, poorly provisioned, was never seen again.

213) The fortunate arrival of the Emperor's letter forbidding Garay to interfere in any way with Cortes's administration, or to settle any lands already occupied by him, nipped this very serious difficulty in the bud. Alvarado's prompt success with Ovalle, who yielded with scarcely a show of resistance, suggests that a little golden diplomacy may have been used with him and his men, as had been successfully employed with Narvaez's followers under similar circumstances. The ship's captains were equally amenable, and Grijalba could not make good his intention to fight. The exhibition of the royal cedula rendered Garay powerless, his prestige amongst his followers was hopelessly damaged, and, meanwhile, their imaginations had been so fired by the alluring tales of Alvarado and Ocampo that the majority were deaf to their leader's commands and entreaties. They had the technical excuse that they had engaged for an expedition to Panuco under certain stipulated conditions, but for nowhere else, and, as to Panuco, Garay could not go, their contract no longer bound them. Ocampo, to whom Garay appealed to uphold his authority, made a show of beating the country for fugitives, but was careful to collect only the least desirable men, those known as adherents of Velasquez, whom he was glad to see leave the country. Reduced to these straits, Garay went to Mexico where Cortes played the magnanimous, receiving him as an old friend and arranged a marriage between his daughter Catalina and Garay's eldest son.

On Christmas eve, Garay assisted at midnight mass with Cortes and breakfasted with him afterwards; the same day he was seized with violent pains and died a few days later; so opportune did his death seem to some, that whispers of poison were not wanting. The rising of the Indians of Panuco provoked by Garay's lawless followers under command of his son, whose authority they ignored, was one of the most formidable of its kind, and its suppression by Alvarado was marked by the ferocious cruelty characteristic of him. Ocampo, as lieutenant of Cortes, presided as judge at the sham trial, passing barbarous sentence on about four hundred prisoners, the chiefs and principal men of the tribes. Of these some were burned, while others were hanged, and, in order that the lesson might not be lost on the Indians, they were compelled to be present at this ghastly execution which took place en masse.

from Spain in a ship, and with them a cedula, signed with the royal name of Your Majesty. By this latter the said Governor Francisco de Garay was commanded not to meddle in the affairs of the said river region, or in any way where I had settled, as Your Majesty desired that I should hold them in Your Royal name; for which I kiss the royal feet of Your Caesarian Majesty a hundred thousand times. The arrival of this cedula interrupted my journey, which was of advantage to my health, because for sixty days I had hardly slept, and was so overcome with work that to travel at such a time was to risk my life.

I had however, put all considerations aside and held it better to die on the march than to live and be the cause of such scandals and troubles and deaths as would notoriously have followed; so I immediately sent Diego de Ocampo, alcalde mayor, with the said cedula to follow Pedro de Alvarado, to whom I also sent a letter ordering him on no account to go where the people of the adelantado were, so as to avoid disturbances; and I ordered the said alcalde mayor to notify the adelantado of that cedula and to let me know immediately what he said. He set out as quickly as possible and reached the province of the Guatecas, through which Pedro de Alvarado had passed into the interior of the province. When the latter learned that the alcalde mayor had come, and that I had remained behind, he told Ocampo that one of Garay's captains, called Gonzalo Dovalle, was scouring the country with twenty-two horsemen, pillaging the villages, and disturbing the Indians, and that he had been told that this captain had placed spies on the road where Alvarado must pass; all of which greatly vexed the said Alvarado and convinced him that Gonzalo Dovalle intended to attack him. He pushed on ahead with his people to a village called Las Lajas, where he found Gonzalo Dovalle with his people. Alvarado spoke with him and told him that he knew what he had been doing, and marvelled much at it, because the governor and his captains had in no way intended to offend the people of Garay, but on the contrary planned to aid them and furnish them with whatever they might need; however, since things had taken another turn, he asked him as a favour, and in order to ensure that no scandal or mischief should ensue amongst the people on one side or the other, not to take it ill if his arms and horses were sequestered until some agreement should be reached. Gonzalo Dovalle excused himself, assuring Alvarado that he had been misinformed as to what had happened, but accepted the conditions which were imposed; thus the two troops were united, the men living and eating together without any dissension. As soon as the alcalde mayor learned this, he ordered one of my secretaries, Francisco de Orduna, who had gone with him, to go to the captains, Pedro de Alvarado and Dovalle, taking an order to return the arms and horses to their owners, and to tell them it was my intention to aid and favour them in everything they might require, but that they should not make trouble in the country; he further counselled Alvarado to come to a good understanding with Dovalle and not to mix in any way in his affairs; and this was done.

At the same time, Most Powerful Lord, it happened that the ships of the said adelantado, which were lying at the mouth of the River Panuco were a menace to the inhabitants of the town of Santistevan, which I had founded three leagues up the river where all the ships which arrived at that port anchored. Seeing this, my lieutenant in that town, Pedro de Vallejo, wishing to forestall any danger arising from possible troubles with those ships, required the captains and masters of them to go up the river peacefully without disturbing the country, and he also required them that, if they had any authority from Your Majesty to settle or land in that country or for any other purpose, they should exhibit it, protesting that it would be complied with in every respect as Your Majesty commanded. The captains and masters answered these requirements, refusing everything the lieutenant commanded, which obliged the latter to issue a second order to them, insisting anew on all that he had ordered in the first requirement under certain penalties; to this mandate they replied as before. Seeing therefore that their remaining with the ships at the mouth of the river for the space of two months or more would result in causing scandal, not only amongst the

The proposed marriage between Dona Catalina and the son of Garay never took place, for she is mentioned in the bull of legitimisation, in 1529, as a maiden: and, in her father's will, made in 1547, she is mentioned as being in a convent in Coyohuacan. It is difficult to identify her mother, for Archbishop Lorenzana says she was the daughter of Cortes's first wife Catalina X Suarez; others affirm that her mother was Marina de Escobar, and still others that she was the daughter of Dona Elvira (daughter of Montezuma), in which case she would have been an infant at the time of her betrothal to Garay.

Spaniards, but also among the natives, two masters of the said ships, one Castromocho, and the other Martin de San Juan a Guipuzcoan, secretly sent messengers to the lieutenant telling him they wished for peace and would obey his commands, which they thought just, and that they would do whatever he ordered them, adding that the other ships would likewise obey him. Upon receiving this information, my lieutenant decided to go aboard the vessels, accompanied by only five men; he was received by the pilots with all respect, and from there he sent to Juan de Grijalba, the commander of the fleet, on board the flag-ship and summoned him to obey the orders which had already been communicated to him. The said captain not only refused to obey, but he ordered the other ships to unite with his and surround the other two above mentioned and fire upon them with their artillery and sink them: this order was made public, and everybody heard it, and my lieutenant responded by ordering the artillery of the two ships which obeyed him to be prepared. Meanwhile, the captains and masters of the ships about the flag-ship refused to obey Grijalba's orders, seeing which, he sent a notary, called Vicente Lopez, to my lieutenant to arrange matters. My lieutenant answered that he came there merely to negotiate peace and prevent the scandals which the presence of these ships outside the port provoked, as they seemed like pirates ready to make a raid on the dominions of Your Majesty, which sounded very badly, advancing other reasons in support of this opinion. These arguments prevailed upon the notary Vicente Lopez to return with the reply to Captain Grijalba whom he informed of all he had heard from the lieutenant, persuading the captain to obey, for it was clear that the said lieutenant was the justice of that province for Your Majesty, and the said Captain Grijalba knew, that neither the Governor, Francisco de Garay, nor he himself had presented any royal provisions which the lieutenant and inhabitants of Santistevan were bound to obey, and that it was a very ugly thing to act in this way; for they were behaving like pirates in Your Majesty's dominions. Convinced by these reasons, Captain Grijalba, and the captains and masters of the other ships, obeyed the lieutenant and went up the river to where ships usually anchored.

Upon arriving at the port, the lieutenant ordered the said Juan de Grijalba to be imprisoned for the disobedience he had shown to his mandates but when this imprisonment became known to him, the alcalde mayor immediately ordered the said Juan Grijalba to be set free the next day and that he and all the others should be treated kindly; and thus it was done. In like manner, the said alcalde mayor wrote to Francisco de Garay, who was in another port ten or twelve leagues further South, telling him that I was unable to come and see him but that I had sent him with my power of attorney to come to some agreement and exhibit our provisions on one side and on the other so as to decide what might best advance Your Majesty's service. As soon as Francisco de Garay saw the letter of the alcalde mayor he came to meet him and was very well received, and his people were provided with all necessaries. At this meeting, after having discussed and seen the provisions and the cedula which Your Majesty had so graciously sent me, the said adelantado obeyed it, and declared that in compliance with it, he, with his people, would retire to his ships and go to settle in some other country beyond the boundaries designated in Your Majesty's cedula: and since I wished to assist him, he besought the alcalde mayor to collect all his people, for many of them wished to stop there and others had gone off, and also to supply him with provisions for the ships and people of which he stood in need. The alcalde mayor immediately provided everything he asked, and it was published by the public crier, in the port where most of the people of both sides were staying, that all persons who had come in the armada of the adelantado, Francisco de Garay, should join him under penalty that, whoever did not, if he were a horseman, he should lose his arms and horse and be imprisoned by the adelantado, and if a foot soldier, he should receive one hundred stripes and likewise be imprisoned.

The adelantado likewise asked the alcalde mayor that, inasmuch as some of his people had sold their arms and horses in the port of Santistevan, and in the port where they stopped, and elsewhere in the neighbourhood, they might be returned to him, because without arms and horses his people would be of no use; the alcalde mayor ordered the horses and arms to be taken wherever they might be found and to be returned to the adelantado. The alcalde mayor also sent out and seized all those who had deserted, and many were thus captured and brought in. He also sent the alguacil mayor of Santistevan, with a secretary of mine, to ensure in that town and port, the same diligence in proclaiming by the public crier and

capturing deserters and in collecting all the provisions possible for the ships of the adelantado; besides which he ordered the arms and horses which had been sold there also to be taken and brought back to the adelantado. All this was done with great diligence, and the adelantado left for the port to embark, while the alcalde mayor remained behind with his people so as not to make too great demands on the supplies of the port, and in order to provide the better for everything; and he stopped there six or seven days to see that all I had ordered was executed.

The alcalde mayor wrote to the adelantado, that if he desired anything else, to let him know, as he was returning to Mexico where I was; and the adelantado sent a messenger to say that he had not been able to get ready to sail, as six ships were wanting, and those which remained were not seaworthy, and that he was preparing a statement which would prove to me how impossible it was for him to leave the country. He told him at the same time that his people raised a thousand objections, pretending that they were not obliged to follow him, and that they had appealed from the commands which my alcalde mayor had given them, saying they were not obliged to comply with them for sixteen or seventeen reasons which they assigned; one of them was that some of his people had already died of starvation, and other not very weighty reasons touching his own person. He likewise stated that all his precautions to keep his men together were useless, as they disappeared in the evening without coming back next morning, and those who were one day delivered to him as prisoners again deserted the next day when they got their liberty; and it had happened that between night and morning two hundred men had left. For this reason, the adelantado besought my alcalde mayor most earnestly not to leave until they had seen each other, because he wished to come with him to this city to see me, and said that, if the alcalde mayor left him thus he would drown himself in despair. After receiving this letter the alcalde mayor decided to wait for him, and, two days later, when he arrived, they sent a messenger to me, by whom the alcalde made known to me that the adelantado was coming to see me in this city, and that they would come slowly as far as Cicoaque, which is on the border of this province, where they would await my answer. The adelantado also wrote me, describing the bad condition of his ships and the ill-will his people displayed, and said that he believed I might find a remedy by providing some of my people and whatever else he might need; for he was aware that nobody else could help him and hence he had decided to come to see me: and that he offered me his eldest son with all he possessed, hoping to leave him with me as my son-in-law by marriage with a small daughter of mine.

Meanwhile, when they were about starting for this city, it being clear to the alcalde mayor that some very suspicious persons had come in the armada of Francisco de Garay, friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, who had shown themselves hostile to my undertakings, and, being aware that they could not safely remain in the said province, without stirring up tumults and disturbances, he ordered, by virtue of the royal provisions Your Majesty sent me authorising me to expel all such scandalous persons from the country, that Gonzalo Figueroa, Alonzo de Mendoza, Antonio de la Cerda, Juan de Avila, Lorenzo de Ulloa, Taborda, Juan de Grijalba, Juan de Medina, and others, should leave. After this was done, the adelantado and the alcalde mayor came as far as the town of Cicoaque, where they received my answer to the letters they had sent me in which I wrote that I rejoiced much at the arrival of the adelantado, and that, on reaching this city, we would come to an amicable understanding about all he had written to me, with which he would be fully satisfied. I had likewise ordered the chiefs of the towns along the road to provide him fully with everything necessary.

When the adelantado arrived here, I received him with every hospitality such as I would have shown for my brother, for I was sincerely grieved at the loss of his ships and at the rebellion of his people, and I offered him my services, truly desiring to do everything possible for him. He wished very much to carry out the plan he had written me about the marriage, and again importuned me so persistently, that, in order to please him, I agreed to everything he asked. So, with mutual consent, a binding agreement was made, under oath, leading to the consummation of the said marriage, on condition that Your Majesty, after learning the contents of our agreement, should approve of it; thus, besides our ancient friendship, we were

joined by the mutual contracts and engagements which we made for our children, and were both satisfied with the conditions thereof, especially the adelantado.

In the preceding chapter, Most Powerful Lord, I told Your Catholic Majesty of all my alcalde mayor had done to collect the adelantado's men, who were scattered over the country, and the steps he had taken for this purpose, which, in spite of their being so many, were not sufficient to calm the dissatisfaction felt against Francisco de Garay; for they feared they would, in accordance with the orders published by the public crier, be forced to accompany him. The deserters had penetrated to the interior of the country in bands of three and six together, in different places, so that they could not be captured. This led to much disturbance amongst the Indians, who saw the Spaniards scattered over the country, and the many disorders, which they aroused by seizing the native women and supplies, and to a general rising of the whole country; for the natives believed what the adelantado had published on his arrival, namely: that there existed dissension among the different commanders, as I have already related to Your Majesty. Thus, the Indians astutely got information as to where those several Spaniards were, and, both by day and night, they would fall upon them in the towns where they were scattered and, taking them unawares and disarmed, they easily killed a good number of them. Their boldness grew to such a pitch that they came to Santistevan del Puerto, which I had settled in the name of Your Majesty, where they pressed the inhabitants very hard with their fierce attacks, so much so that the latter gave themselves up for lost, as indeed they would have been had they not been prepared and collected where they could fortify themselves and withstand their adversaries. When things were in this state, I received news of what had happened by a messenger, who had escaped on foot from the contests and told me that all the province of Panuco had rebelled and had killed many of the adelantado's Spaniards who had remained there, and also some householders of the town I had established there in the name of Your Majesty; and, from his account, I fear that none of the Spaniards survive, for which God our Lord knows what I suffer! No such occurrence can happen in these parts without costing much and risking the loss of all. The adelantado was much impressed by this news, not only because it seemed to him that he was the cause of it, but also because he had left his son in that province with all his possessions; so much so indeed, that his chagrin brought on an illness from which he died within the space and term of three days.

That Your Highness may be better informed of what occurred, I relate that the Spaniard, who first brought the news of the rising of the natives of Panuco, told me that he, a foot soldier, and three horsemen, had been surprised by the Indians in a village called Tacetuco²¹⁴; that these Indians had killed the foot soldier, two of the horsemen, and the horse of the third, and that he and the surviving horseman had fled under cover of night; they had observed a house in the village where a lieutenant, fifteen horsemen, and forty foot soldiers should have waited for them, but the house was burned and he believed, according to certain indications, that these men had been massacred. I had waited six or seven days for any other news when a messenger arrived from the lieutenant in a town, called Tenertequipa,²¹⁵ which is subject to this city and is on the boundaries of that province; by his letter he made known to me that, while he was in Tacetuco with fifteen horsemen and forty foot soldiers expecting some people to join him preparatory to crossing the river to pacify certain towns, his quarters had been surrounded just before dawn, one night, by a great number of people who set fire to them. Though he and his men had mounted very quickly they had been taken off their guard for they had believed in the friendship of those people; and he thinks all were killed but himself and two other horsemen who had escaped; his own horse had been killed and one of his men had to take him up behind him. Two leagues from there, they met the alcalde of that town who came to their assistance with some people, but they did not tarry long and left the province as quickly as possible. He had, however, no news, either of those who had stayed in the town, or of the men of Francisco de Garay, but he believed there was not one left alive.

214) Tanjuco: a small village, one hundred and twenty-seven miles from the mouth of the Panuco, and less than half that distance overland. The Panuco country was carefully visited and described, in 1826, by Captain Lyon, whose Journal contains much interesting information about the land and people. He found the Guasteca language was spoken there.

215) Possibly Tantoyuca.

As I have told Your Majesty, after the adelantado had proclaimed to the natives throughout the province that I was no longer to have anything to do with them, since he was the Governor whom they must obey, and that by uniting with him they would expel all my Spaniards, the town had revolted, and the natives refused afterwards to serve the Spaniards, even killing some whom they met alone on the roads. The lieutenant believed that what had been done was by concerted action of all the Indians and, as they had attacked him and his people, that they must have done the same to the inhabitants of the town, as well as to those who were scattered amongst the neighbouring villages, all of whom were ignorant of any such revolt, seeing that the natives had, until then, served them willingly. Having satisfied myself by this news that a rebellion existed in that province, and having heard of the death of those Spaniards, I sent, with the greatest possible haste, a Spanish captain in command of fifty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, crossbowmen and musketeers, with four pieces of artillery, much powder, and ammunition, and two native chiefs of this city each with fifteen thousand of their warriors. I ordered the captain to march without stopping anywhere to the town of Santistevan del Puerto to obtain news of the inhabitants there, as perhaps they had been besieged; and if so, to help them. This was done with all haste, and, after entering the province, the captain fought the Indians at two places; and God, our Lord, having given him the victory, he continued his march to the said town, where he found twenty-two horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers who had been besieged there. They had defended themselves with certain pieces of artillery against six or seven attacks, although they could not have held out much longer as it had been done only with the greatest difficulty; and had the captain I sent been delayed three days more not one of them would have been left alive, for they were already dying of hunger. They had sent one of the adelantado's brigantines to Vera Cruz to let me know their condition by that way (as they could not send news by any other messenger) and also to bring them provisions, which afterwards was done, although they had already been succoured by my people. My captain there learned that Francisco de Garay's people, left in a town, called Tamequil,²¹⁶ in all about a hundred foot soldiers and horsemen, had been killed, without one escaping, with the exception of an Indian from the island of Jamaica. He managed to escape through the forest, and from him the news of how they were attacked at night was obtained. It was ascertained that two hundred and ten men of the adelantado's people had been killed, and also forty-three of the inhabitants I had left in that town, who were going about their villages which they held under encomienda²¹⁷; it was even believed that the adelantado's people were more numerous, though they could not remember them all. There were altogether, including those whom the captain had taken with him and the lieutenants and the alcalde's people and the inhabitants, eighty horsemen who were divided into three companies. During the war they carried on in the province, they captured about four hundred chiefs and notable persons, besides others of lower class, all of whom — I speak of the chiefs — were burned,²¹⁸ having confessed that they had instigated the war and that each had participated in the killing of Spaniards; the other persons were then liberated, and, through them, the people were brought back to the towns. The captain then appointed, in Your Majesty's name, new chiefs from among the rightful heirs, according to their laws of inheritance. At that time I received letters from the captain and other persons who were with him assuring me that — God be praised — the whole province was entirely pacified and subdued, the natives serving them faithfully; and I believe the past ill-feeling will be forgotten and there will be peace for the whole year.

Your Caesarian Majesty may believe that these people are so turbulent that any novelty or preparation for disturbance excites them, for they have been used to rebelling against their chiefs and never lost an occasion to do this.

216) Possibly Tamuy or Tancanhuici.

217) See Appendix at the close of this Letter.

218) Some authors have sought to cast doubts upon the number burned, Herrera even reducing them to thirty, but the language of Cortes seems to be sufficiently explicit. To drive the lesson well home, the Indians were all assembled to witness this frightful execution of their relatives. Gonzalo de Sandoval was the Captain commanding in this war, and it is with reluctance that we record this black deed against his otherwise exceptionally fair fame.

In the past chapters, Very Catholic Lord, I said that, when I heard of the adelantado's arrival at Panuco, I had prepared a certain armada of ships and people to send to the Cape of Hibueras, and gave the reason which moved me to do this; and that the arrival of the said adelantado had caused me to suspend things, believing that he was endeavouring to take possession of this country by his authority, and in order to resist any such attempt I needed all my people. Having terminated the affairs of the adelantado, although a great outlay for the payment of seamen and provisions for the ships and people was necessary, it seemed to me that Your Majesty's service required that I should fulfil the intention I had conceived; so I bought five more large ships and a brigantine, and gathered four hundred men, with artillery, ammunitions, arms, and other provisions and stores. I sent two of my agents to the island of Cuba with eight thousand pesos of gold to buy horses and provisions, not only for this first voyage, but also to have them in readiness for the return of the ships, so that there would be no excuse for not following my orders; and I also did this to avoid demanding provisions from the natives of the country, for it was better to give to them rather than to take from them. They departed, with these instructions, from the port of San Juan de Chalchiqueca on the 11th of January, 1524, being obliged to go first to Havana, which is the point of the island of Cuba where they are to get what they require, especially the horses, and to assemble the ships there from whence — with God's blessing — they will continue their route to Hibueras.²¹⁹ Upon their arrival at the first port, they are to land the people, horses, and provisions, and fortify themselves, with their artillery — of which they take plenty — in the best position they can choose, and there establish a settlement; three of the largest ships are then to go to Cuba, to the port of Trinidad, because that is the best place and because one of my agents has everything in readiness there which the commander of the expedition may require. The other smaller ships and the brigantine, with the chief pilot — who is a cousin of mine called Diego Hurtado — in command, are to cruise along the coast of the Ascension Bay, searching for the strait which is believed to be there, and, after discovering everything about it, are to return to wherever Captain Cristobal de Olid may be, sending me one of the ships with an account of what they have discovered so that I may make a complete report of all that has been done to Your Catholic Majesty.

I also said that I had prepared certain people to go with Pedro de Alvarado to those cities of Uclatan²²⁰ and Guatemala which I have mentioned in preceding chapters, and to other provinces of which I have heard beyond them, and also how this had been interrupted by the arrival of Francisco de Garay. Although I had already incurred great expenses for horses and horsemen, artillery and ammunition, as well as for money advanced to help the people, I believed this to be for the service of God, our Lord, and Your Sacred Majesty, and, according to the accounts of those parts which I had received, I expected to discover many new and rich lands and strange inhabitants, so I reverted to my original intention. In addition to what I had already provided for the last expedition, I again fitted out Pedro de Alvarado, and despatched him from this city on the 6th of December, 1523, and he took one hundred and twenty horsemen, so that with his relays, he had one hundred and seventy horses and three hundred foot soldiers of which latter one

219) Olid's expedition left Vera Cruz on January 11, 1524, and stopped first at Cuba, where the commander fell under the influence of Diego Velasquez, who incited him to throw off the authority of Cortes and act independently. The first news of his insubordination was brought to Cortes by the factor, Gonzalo de Salazar, and led to his sending his kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, to recall Olid to his obedience. Olid had sent a part of his forces against Gonzalo de Avila, who was also exploring in that country, and, upon Las Casas's arrival, he temporised, seeing that he could not successfully resist; and while thus gaining time, he sent hurriedly to recall his men. A violent storm drove the ships of Las Casas on the coast, and thus he and his men were easily captured, and, at the same time, Gonzalo de Avila was likewise taken, so Olid's star was in the ascendant. His triumph was short lived, however, for he had rendered himself very unpopular in the colony, of which fact his prisoners, who had complete liberty to go about, with the sole restriction that they were not to carry arms, took advantage to plan a successful rebellion against him. He was captured, and, after a summary trial, was beheaded in the public square of Naco. The Audiencia of San Domingo had sought to forestall these conflicts amongst Spaniards, by sending their agent, the bachelor Moreno, to order Las Casas back to Vera Cruz, to put an end to the contests between Olid and Avila, and to stop Pedro de Alvarado, who was marching overland against Olid by order of Cortes. Moreno's proceedings, and those of his companion Ruano, are recounted in the memorial read by the colonists to Cortes, which the latter transcribes in the Fifth Letter for the Emperor's information.

220) Ucatlan.

hundred and thirty were crossbowmen and musketeers; he also took four field pieces of artillery, with plenty of powder and ammunition, and he was accompanied by some chiefs, both of this city and from its neighbourhood, who brought some people with them, though not very many, as the journey was so long.

I have heard that they arrived in the province of Tecuantepeque on the 12th of January, and that everything was going well. May it please our Lord to guide them and the others, for I readily believe that, acting in His service and in the Royal name of Your Caesarian Majesty, great success will not be wanting.

I also recommended Pedro de Alvarado always to take special care to send me a complete account of everything that happens to him so that I may report to Your Highness. I am positive from the reports I have had about that country that Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal de Olid will meet each other if they are not separated by the strait.

I would have undertaken many of these expeditions and discovered many of the secrets of this country had I not been hindered by the armadas which have arrived here. I assure Your Sacred Majesty that your service has been much injured, not only because countries have not been and discovered, but because much great wealth in gold and pearls has not been procured for Your Royal Treasury. Hereafter, however, if others do not come, I shall strive to recover what has been lost, because nothing which depends upon my efforts shall be left undone; for I certify to Your Caesarian and Sacred Majesty that, besides having spent all that I possessed, I owe money, which I have taken from the funds of Your Majesty for my expenses, amounting, as Your Majesty may see from my accounts, to sixty thousand pesos of gold, besides another twelve thousand which I borrowed from various persons for my household expenses.

I said in the foregoing chapter that some of the natives of neighbouring provinces who were near about, and who served the inhabitants of the town of Espiritu Santo, had revolted and killed certain Spaniards, and that, both for the purpose of reducing them to the royal service of Your Majesty, as well as for winning over others of their neighbours, as the people of the town are not strong enough to hold what has been won and conquered, I sent a captain with thirty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, some of them crossbowmen and musketeers, together with two field pieces and provisions and ammunition and powder. He left on the 8th of December, 1523. I have thus far had no news of them, but expect to obtain good results from this expedition for the service of God, our Lord, and Your Majesty, and hope that they will discover many secrets in that country, which is a small territory lying between the one conquered by Pedro de Alvarado and the other by Cristobal de Olid. Including this small bit, the land conquered along the North Sea comprises a territory of more than four hundred leagues which is now subject to Your Majesty, and on the southern coast the conquered country extends from one sea to the other, without interruption, for more than five hundred leagues, with the exception of two provinces, one of which is called Zapotecas and the other Mixes, which lie between the province of Tecuantepeque and that of Chinanta and Guaxaca and that of Guazaqualco. The mountains here are rugged and difficult, so that they can hardly be crossed, even on foot, for twice I have sent people to conquer them but they have never been able to do anything against these Indians, who are well armed and entrenched in their mountains. They fight with lances twenty-five and thirty palms long, very thick, and well made, with points of flint,²²¹ and they have defended themselves with these and killed some Spaniards, and have done, and are doing, great mischief to their neighbours who are Your Majesty's vassals, assaulting them by night and burning their towns and killing them; to such an extent have they done this that many towns have rebelled and joined with them. To prevent this spreading, although I am at present short of men, I collected one hundred and fifty foot soldiers — the cavalry being useless — most of them crossbowmen and musketeers, and four field pieces with necessary ammunition. This force I put under the command of Rodrigo Rangel, alcalde of Espiritu Santo, who, last year, had already marched against these same Indians but could not rout them on account of the rainy season which obliged him to return after two months spent in their province.

He left this city with his people on the 5th of February of this present year, and I believe that — God willing — since they take a good equipment and go at a good season with many skilful Indian warriors of

221) Obsidian: a vitreous mineral substance, harder than glass, which was called *itztli* by the Aztecs. They gave it such a keen edge that it served for knives and razors as well as spearheads.

this city and its neighbourhood, they will put an end to the strife there, which will redound greatly to the Imperial Crown of Your Majesty; for not only do these people render no service but they molest those who are well disposed. The country is very rich in gold mines, and, once these people are pacified, our settlers say that they will get possession of them and reduce to slavery those people, who had once offered themselves to Your Majesty, and had afterwards rebelled and had killed the Spaniards, and done every mischief. I ordered that those who were captured should be branded with Your Highness's mark, and, after separating the part belonging to Your Majesty, that the rest should be distributed amongst the members of the expedition.

Most Excellent Lord, I may assure Your Royal Excellency that the least of these expeditions cost me more than five thousand pesos of gold, and those of Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal de Olid cost more than fifty thousand pesos in monies, besides other outlays from my property which are not accounted or set down in the memoranda; but if it will only conduce to the service of Your Caesarian Majesty, although it should cost my own life I would deem it sufficient recompense to ever devote myself to the service of Your Highness.

In the last account, and also in this, I have mentioned to Your Majesty that I had begun to build four ships on the South Sea, and, as some time has passed since they were begun, it may seem to Your Royal Highness that I have been slow in finishing them; but I now give Your Sacred Majesty the cause, which is that the port on the South Sea where these ships are building, is two hundred leagues, and even more, from the ports on the North Sea where all material which arrives in this New Spain is delivered, and there are very steep mountain passes in some parts, and in others great rivers, over which everything required for the said ships must be carried, as nothing can be obtained elsewhere. Another thing also happened, which was that when I had got together the sails, cordage, nails, anchors, tar, tallow, tow, bitumen, oil, and everything else required, and stored them in a house in that port, it took fire and everything was burned, except the anchors, which could not burn. I have now again begun, as a ship arrived from Castile, four months since, bringing me everything necessary for the ships; as, foreseeing the possibility of what had happened, I had already ordered material to be sent. And I certify to Your Caesarian Majesty that the ships cost me to-day, before launching them on the water, more than eight thousand pesos of gold, without the extra outlays, but now — our Lord be praised — they are in such a condition that, between the Feast of the Holy Ghost and that of St. John in June, they will be ready for navigation if the tar does not fail me, for I have not been able to replace that which was burned, though I have ordered more to be sent me. I attach more importance to these ships than I can say, for I am positive that — God willing — I shall discover for Your Majesty more kingdoms and dominions than all those discovered up till now, and that, with His guidance, my projects may succeed according to my desires, and Your Highness will become the Sovereign of the World.

After God our Lord granted that this great city of Temixtitlan should be subdued, it did not seem to me well to live in it, for many reasons, so I brought all the people to a town, called Coyuacan, on the shore of the lake which I have already mentioned. As I always desired that this city should be rebuilt, because of its great and marvellous position, I strove to collect the natives, who, since the war, were scattered in many parts, and, though I still held the ruler of it a prisoner, I charged a captain-general of his, whom I knew in the days of Montezuma, to repeople it; and, in order that he might enjoy greater authority, I gave him the same office he had held in the time of his sovereign, which is that of Ciguacoat, meaning "lieutenant of the sovereign," and, at the same time, I appointed other personages whom I knew to the principal offices which they had formerly held. I gave these new officers such lordships of territory and people as were necessary to maintain themselves, though not as much as they had before, or enough to make them dangerous; and I always take care to honour and favour them. They have done very well, so that now the city is peopled with about thirty thousand households, and is just as orderly in the market-places as it formerly was; moreover I have given them such liberties and immunities that they will increase in great numbers; for they live quite as they please and many artisans live by their work among the Spaniards, such as carpenters, masons, stone-cutters, silversmiths, and others. Merchants trade in safety, and others

live as fishermen, which is an important business in this city, and others by agriculture, for there are already many who have their plantations sown with all kinds of vegetables which we have obtained from Spain. I assure Your Caesarian Majesty that, could we but obtain plants and seeds from Spain, and if Your Highness would be pleased to order them sent to us as I besought in my other account, the ability of these natives in cultivating the soil and making plantations would very shortly produce such abundance that great profit would accrue to the Imperial Crown of Your Highness; for even greater revenues can be procured for Your Sacred Majesty in these parts than what Your Highness now enjoys in those you possess in the name of God our Lord. Your Highness may rest assured that I shall strive with all my mind and power to achieve this end.

Immediately after the capture of this city, I took steps to establish a fort in the water where the brigantines might be kept safely, and from where I might control the whole city should there be any occasion for it, and the exit and entrance remain in my hands. It was constructed in such wise that, although I have seen some forts and arsenals, I have seen none that equals it, and many others affirm the same as myself; and it has been built in this wise: on the side towards the lake, it has two very strong towers, provided with loop-holes: these two towers are joined by a building in the form of three naves, where brigantines are kept, and which have doors towards the water for going in and out; and all this building is provided also with loop-holes, and on the end towards the city there is another large tower, with many rooms above and below for offensive and defensive operations. But, as I shall send a plan to Your Majesty to make this more clearly understood, I shall give no more particulars about it, but, holding these with the ships and artillery, peace or war is in our hands as we choose. Once this building was finished, everything seemed secure for re-peopling the city, so I returned there with all my people, and distributed plots of ground to the householders; and to each of those who had been conquerors I gave, in the name of Your Highness, a plot of ground in recompense for their services, besides the one they received as citizens.²²² And so well and quickly does work go on in these parts, that many of the houses are finished and others are well advanced, for there is an abundance of stone, lime, wood, and bricks which the natives make, so that the houses are mostly large and good, and Your Sacred Majesty may believe that, within five years, this will be the most nobly populated city which exists in all the civilised world, and will have the finest buildings.

The town where the Spaniards have settled is distinct from that of the natives, for an arm of water separates us, although there are bridges of wood which connect them. There are two great native markets, one in their quarter and one in the Spanish quarter,²²³ where every sort of provisions can be bought; for the people come from all over the country to sell, and there is no scarcity as sometimes happened in the days of its prosperity. It is true that now there are no jewels of gold, silver, or feather work and other rich things, as there used to be, although some small miserable pieces of gold and silver appear, but not as formerly.

Owing to Diego Velasquez's ill-will towards me, and that of Don Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, who is influenced by him, and in consequence of the orders of the officials of the Casa de la Contratacion of Seville, particularly Juan Lopez de Recalde, accountant of it, on whom everything in the time of the Bishop used to depend, I have not been provided with the artillery nor the arms which I needed, though I

222) Tlatelolco and Popotla were the quarters of the new town assigned to the Indians. A plan was drawn in which each concession of ground was marked; one lot was given to anyone who applied, on the condition that he should build a house and live there for four consecutive years. Each of the conquerors, as Cortes says, was entitled to two lots.

223) The Indian market remained where it had been in Tlatelolco; the Spanish one was on the square before the Viceroy's palace.

The Indians either speedily forgot their arts and handicrafts, or concealed them: unwise laws were enacted which tended also to suppress them.

Archbishop Lorenzana relates an incident illustrating the extraordinary ability of the Indians in executing the most delicate work with primitive tools. A native counterfeiter was arrested and his whole outfit was found to consist of nothing but some thorns from the maguey or cactus plant. The Viceroy was so amazed that he offered the man his life if he would show how he worked, but the Indian preferred to die.

have many times sent the money for them. However, as nothing exercises a man's ingenuity like necessity, and as I laboured under such an extreme one, and, since they did not permit Your Majesty to know, had no hope of help. I strove to take steps toward saving what had been won by such labour and danger (for such a loss would have been a disaster to the service of God, our Lord and that of Your Caesarian Majesty), and also ourselves from the peril which menaced us. I hastened therefore to find copper in the provinces, offering a good price that it might be the more quickly found; and, as soon as it was brought to me in sufficient quantity, I set a master of artillery, who was fortunately here, at making two medium-sized culverins. These came out so well that, considering their size, they could not have been better. Besides the copper, tin was required for these, as they could not be made without it, and, though with great difficulty and cost, I had procured some from people who had tin plates or other vessels; but neither dear nor cheap could much be found, so I began to enquire whether there was any in the country. Thanks to our Lord, who always provides speedily what is most needed, some small pieces of it were found among the natives of a province, called Tachco,²²⁴ in the form of very thin coins; and continuing my search I discovered that in that province and many others this was used as money; I further learned that it was mined in the province of Tachco, twenty-six leagues from this city so I sent Spaniards with implements there and they brought me a sample of metal. From this time forward I ordered the necessary quantity to be extracted, and shall continue to work these mines, though it will be difficult; while searching for these metals a rich vein of iron was found as I learned from those who say they know it.

Since finding this tin, I have made, and daily continue to make cannon; so far there are five pieces, two medium-sized culverins, two a little smaller, and a serpentine cannon; I have two falconets which I brought with me to these parts and a medium-sized culverin which I bought from the sale of the adelantado Juan Ponce de Leon. I shall have in large and small bronzes all those which have arrived on the ships at Vera Cruz, thirty-five pieces and of iron Lombardy guns, culverins of smaller calibre, and other guns and field pieces of smelt iron up to seventy pieces. Thus — our Lord be praised — we are able to defend ourselves; and as far as ammunition is concerned, God provided for that likewise, for we found a sufficient quantity of saltpetre of the best quality and vessels in which to bake it, though there was much waste at first. As for sulphur, I have spoken to Your Majesty of that mountain in the province of Mexico which smokes. A Spaniard²²⁵ descended by means of a rope, seventy or eighty fathoms, and obtained a sufficient quantity to last us in our need; but henceforward there will be no necessity of going to this trouble because it is dangerous and I shall always write to obtain these things from Spain since Your Majesty has been pleased that there should be no longer any Bishop to prevent it.

After establishing peace in Santistevan, which was founded on the river Panuco, and having finished the conquest of Tututepeque, and despatched the captain who went to Impilcingo and to Coliman, all of which I mentioned in one of the past chapters, I went, before going to the city, to visit Vera Cruz and Medellin that I might provide certain necessary things in those parts. I observed that for want of any Spanish settlement near the port of Chalchiqueca other than that of Vera Cruz all the ships arriving there unloaded in that town: the port is far from being safe, and many ships are lost there on account of the Northers that frequently blow. I therefore sought a place nearer the port of San Juan suitable for founding a town, but, in spite of our efforts, we found nothing but drifting sandhills, until finally, after some days' search, it pleased our Lord that, two leagues from the port, a good site, with all requisites for establishing a town was found; for there was plenty of wood and water and pasturage, though there was no timber nor stone for building purposes except quite far from there. We found an inlet near this place, and I sent to see if it led to the sea or if barques might come up it to the town. It was found to lead to a river which flowed into the sea; and at the mouth of the river there was more than a fathom of water, so that by cleaning that

224) Tasco. Humboldt was struck with this mention of tin money and notes "le passage remarquable dans lequel Cortes parle de Vetain comme monnaie" (Essai Politique).

225) Francisco Montano was the daring soldier who performed this exploit, which Humboldt refuses to believe, notwithstanding the explicit statement of Cortes. That he was let down into the crater, and did bring back the required sulphur can hardly be questioned: perhaps the exact distance he descended was not accurately measured.

inlet, which is full of trunks of trees, the barques could ascend to the very houses of the town and unload their cargoes. Seeing the convenience of this site for the safety of the ships, I moved thither the town of Medellin, which was about twenty leagues in the interior of the province of Tatalptelco; and already most of the householders have gone there and built their houses, and steps have been taken to clear that inlet and establish a custom house, for although the ships are delayed in discharging, by means of canoes over a distance of two leagues, they will have safe anchorage. I am certain that this town will be second to the capital in New Spain, for already some ships have unloaded there, and barques and even brigantines bring their merchandise right up to the houses of the town. I will endeavour to arrange so that they may unload without trouble, and the ships will henceforward be safe in that good port; I have likewise hastened to make roads from that town to this city, so that the merchandise will be more quickly delivered than at present and the distance shortened.

In the past chapters, Most Powerful Lord, I have told Your Excellency to what points I had sent people, both by sea and land, believing that, with God's guidance, Your Majesty would be well served by them; and, as I always take great care and bethink me of all possible means to carry out my desires for the advancement of the royal service of Your Majesty, it seemed to me that it remained only to explore the coast from Panuco to the coast of Florida, which was discovered by Juan Ponce de Leon, and from there to follow the coast of Florida towards the north as far as the Bacallaos.²²⁶ For it is believed absolutely that there is a strait on that coast which leads to the South Sea, and if it should be found according to a certain drawing which I have of that coast, it must lead very near to where the Archipelago was discovered by Magellanes under Your Highness's commands. And should it please God, our Lord, that the said strait be found there, it would open a good and short passage from the spiceries to these dominions of Your Majesty quite two-thirds shorter than that which is at present followed, and which will be free from risks and dangers to the ships; for they would then always go and come through the dominions of Your Majesty having facilities for repairs in any port they choose to enter. I thought over to myself the great service which would be rendered to Your Majesty, though I am quite wasted and exhausted by all I have done, and spent in the expeditions I have fitted out by land and sea and in providing ammunition and artillery in this city, and in many other expenses and outlays which daily occur; for all our provisions are expensive and of such excessive prices that, although the country is rich, the income I obtain does not correspond to the outlays, costs, and expenses which I have — yet repeating all I have said before, and setting all personal interest aside, I have determined to prepare three caravels and a brigantine, of which the cost will reach more than ten thousand pesos of gold which I swear to Your Majesty I shall have to borrow. I add this new service to those I have already rendered, for I hold it to be the most important, hoping as I do to find the strait; and even if this should not be found, certainly many good and rich countries will be discovered, where Your Caesarian Majesty will be served, and other dominions in considerable number will be brought under Your Imperial Crown. If there be no such strait, then it will be useful that this be known, so that other means may be discovered by which Your Caesarian Majesty may draw profits from the Spicelands and other countries bordering on them. Thus I hold myself at Your Majesty's service, very happy if you will so command me, and, in the absence of the strait, I hope to conquer these countries at less expense than anyone else; but I pray the Lord, nevertheless, that my armada may attain the object I pursue, which is to discover the strait, for that would be the happiest of all results. Of this I am well convinced, because, to the royal good fortune of Your Majesty, nothing can be denied, and diligence and good preparation and zeal will not be wanting on my part to achieve it.

I likewise expect to send the ships I have built on the South Sea, which vessels — our Lord being willing — will sail down the coast at the end of July of this year 1524 in search of the same strait; for if it

226) Bacallaos. This is the first known project for finding the northwest passage. Bacallaos, or the sea of codfish was so-called from the vast numbers of these fish which have been such an important article of commerce on our North Atlantic coasts. The Spaniards reached Newfoundland, called by them Terra Nuova; and Archbishop Lorenzana mentions in one of his notes that the Marques del Valle (in his time) bore the title of Duke of Terranuova. This is true, but has no reference to the discovery of that land by Cortes's efforts, as the title was created by Philip II., in 1561, and given to Don Carlos de Aragon, second Marques of Terranuova, who married Dona Stefana, a great granddaughter of Cortes.

exists it cannot escape both those who go by the South Sea and those who go by the North; for the South Sea Expedition will go till they either find it or reach the country discovered by Magellanes, and those of the North, as I have already said, until they reach the Bacallaos. Thus on one side or the other we cannot fail to discover the secret. I certify to Your Majesty that, judging by my information, I should have obtained greater returns and rendered greater service to Your Majesty by sending these ships to the countries up the coast of the South Sea, but, as I am informed of Your Majesty's desire to discover this strait, and of the greater service your royal crown would thereby receive, I ignore all other profits and interests to follow this other expedition. May our Lord grant it as it best pleases Him, and may Your Majesty's desire be satisfied, and my desire to serve be likewise gratified.

Your Majesty's officials sent to take charge of Your Royal revenues and assets have arrived, and have begun to take the accounts of those who previously had this charge, which I in Your Highness's name had given them. As these officials will submit the statement which has been kept until now to show Your Majesty, I will not speak of it again, in any particular, but refer myself to their report, believing that it will be one from which Your Majesty may perceive the solicitude and vigilance that I have always exercised in everything touching Your Royal service. Although the occupation of the wars and the pacification of this country has been so great, as is manifested by the above, I have nevertheless not forgotten to take special care to collect and secure the greatest possible revenues for Your Majesty.

It will appear by the copy of the accounts which the said officials send to Your Caesarian Majesty that I have used some sixty-two thousand pesos in gold from Your Royal revenues in all the necessary expenses of pacifying these countries and the extension of the dominions Your Majesty holds in them. It is well that Your Highness should know that I could not do otherwise for I began to spend these monies only after I had nothing left of my own to spend, and when I even owed more than thirty thousand pesos of gold which I had borrowed. As there was nothing else to be done, and as I could not otherwise meet the necessary demands of the royal service of Your Highness, I was forced to spend these sums; and I do not believe that the result obtained, and to be obtained, is very small, for it certainly pays a profit of one thousand per cent. Although Your Majesty's officials are satisfied that the amounts have been spent in your service, they will not enter them in the account, for they say they have no power to do this. I beseech Your Majesty to order that it be shown they were properly spent, and admit them in the account, and also to command fifty odd thousand pesos of gold which I have spent out of my own fortune or have borrowed from my friends to be repaid me for if this is not returned to me I shall be unable to repay those who loaned me them, and will find myself in great want. I do not think that Your Catholic Majesty will permit this, but rather order that they be paid me, and will grant me many and greater favours in addition, because, Your Highness being so Catholic and so Christian a Prince, my own services are not without merit, to which the fruits they have produced bear testimony.

I have learned from these officials, and from other persons who came with them, as well as by letters from Spain, that the articles I sent Your Caesarian Majesty by Antonio de Quinones and Alonzo de Avila, my procurators in New Spain, did not reach Your Royal presence having been captured by the French²²⁷ because of the little care which the Casa de Contratacion at Seville used for their transport from the Azores. All the objects which were sent were so rich and so strange that I greatly desired Your Majesty might see them, for, besides the profit Your Highness would have from them, my services would have become more apparent; and I was much grieved for their loss. I do rejoice, however, that they were taken, because Your Majesty has but small need of them and I will endeavour to send others much richer and more curious, judging from the information I have about provinces I have now sent to conquer, and others

227) This treasure never reached its destination. Alonzo de Avila and Antonio de Quinones, the two officers charged to carry the gifts and letters to the Emperor, first stopped at the island of Santa Maria, one of the Azores, where Quinones was killed in a brawl; Avila was captured off Cape St. Vincent, by a French corsair, Florin, who, after robbing the ship of the precious freight, allowed it to continue its voyage to Seville, where it arrived on November 7, 1522. Avila was carried by Florin to La Rochelle, but found means to send his despatches to the Emperor. The Aztec spoils went to enrich the treasury of Francis I. of France, who justified their capture by saying he knew of no provision in father Adam's will which made his brother of Spain sole heir to all the earth's treasures.

which I will conquer when I have people for the purpose. The French and the other princes to whom those things may become known will also know through them the reason why they are subjected to the Imperial Crown of Your Caesarian Majesty, as, besides many great kingdoms which Your Highness has in these parts, so far and distant, from these, I, the humblest of Your vassals, come rendering such and so many services. In fulfilment of my offers, I now send by Diego de Soto my servant some trifles, which were formerly left behind as not worthy to accompany the others, and some which I have since then obtained, which, although as I have before said, they were refused as unworthy, bear some resemblance to the others. I likewise send a silver culverin,²²⁸ which in its smelting required two thousand four hundred and fifty pounds, in which I believe there was even some gold, for it had to be done twice. It was very costly, as, besides the value of the metal, which amounted to twenty-four thousand pesos of gold, the mark of silver being at five dollars of gold, the cost of founding, engraving, and carriage to the port, came to more than three thousand pesos more. I set myself to make it so rich and so noteworthy and fit to go before such a High and Most Excellent Prince, that I beg of Your Majesty to receive my small gift measuring its value by my devotion and disposition to send greater if I possibly could; for though I am indebted, as I heretofore stated to Your Highness, I willingly went deeper into debt, desiring that Your Majesty might know my zeal, for I have been made so unhappy by the many contradictions I have suffered before Your Highness that I have never heretofore had opportunity to manifest this desire.

I likewise send Your Sacred Majesty sixty thousand pesos of gold, belonging to Your Royal revenues as Your Highness will see by the account which the officers and myself send respecting it, and we venture to send this sum together because we imagine that Your Majesty must need it on account of the wars and other things, and also that Your Majesty need not regret the past loss. Hereafter, every time occasion offers, I shall send to Your Majesty the most of what I obtain, and Your Sacred Majesty may believe, as things are being developed, that these kingdoms and dominions of Your Highness will provide surer revenues, with less cost than any of your kingdoms and dominions in Europe; that is, if no other such embarrassments present themselves as have heretofore arisen. I say this because, I learned from Gonzalo de Salazar, factor to Your Highness, who arrived two days since, at the port of San Juan in New Spain that he was informed in the island of Cuba, where he stopped, that Diego Velasquez, lieutenant of the admiral there, had had an understanding with Cristobal de Olid, whom I had sent to Hibueras, to revolt against me in his favour. This proceeding seemed so contrary to Your Majesty's service that I am unable to believe it; nevertheless, on the other hand, knowing that the said Diego Velasquez as always sought to work me mischief and to disturb me in every possible way, and even to prevent people from coming to these parts, I do believe it. In that island he imprisons those who go there from here, and oppresses them, taking away their goods, and afterwards bringing judicial proceedings against them so that they, to obtain their freedom and escape him, do and say anything he pleases. I shall inform myself of the truth, and, if I find it to be thus, I think to send to arrest Diego Velasquez and deliver him to Your Majesty; because by cutting the root of these evils — which this man is — all the branches will decay, and I shall be able to make effectual the services I have begun and those which I hope to undertake.

Each time I have written Your Sacred Majesty, I have told Your Highness of the preparation made for the conversion to our holy religion of the Indians of these parts, and I have since besought Your Caesarian Majesty to provide religious persons of good life and example; but so far very few or almost none have come. It is positive they would obtain great fruit, and I have again to recall it to Your Highness's memory, beseeching you to order some provision in this with all possible haste, because God, our Lord, will be much pleased, and Your Majesty's desire as a Catholic in this matter will be gratified. The procurators Antonio Quinones and Alonzo de Avila, counsellors of the towns of New Spain, and myself, begged Your

228) It weighed about twenty-three hundred-weight; the ornamentation executed by the best native silversmiths displayed a phoenix underneath which was the following inscription:

Aquesta nació sin par,

Yo en serviros sin segundo:

Vos sin igual en el mundo.

Cavo says this legend provoked much invidious comment at the Spanish Court.

Majesty to send us bishops and other prelates to administer the offices and divine cult, for it then appeared to us that this was necessary, but, examining the matter more fully, it now seems to me Your Sacred Majesty should order other measures to be provided for the more speedy conversion of the natives, and that they may be better instructed in the mysteries of our holy faith. This would be as follows: Your Majesty should order many religious men to come to these parts, as I have already said, who would be zealous for the conversion of infidels; houses and monasteries would be provided for them in the provinces which we would indicate, and a tithe of one tenth may be levied for their support; the surplus would be assigned for the churches and their furnishings in the towns where Spaniards live, and to their clergy. The tithes would be collected by Your Majesty's officials who would keep account of them and provide all such monasteries and churches with necessaries; the amount will be enough and more than enough so that Your Majesty may receive the surplus. Let Your Highness beseech His Holiness to concede Your Majesty the tithes in these parts for this purpose, making him understand the service rendered to God, our Lord; and this can only be obtained in this way, because, if we have the bishops and other prelates, they will follow the customs, which as a punishment for our sins exist to-day, of disposing of the gifts of the Church and wasting them in pomps and other vices, leaving family estates for their children.²²⁹ A still worse evil might happen, for the natives of these parts had, in their times, those who conducted their rites and ceremonies who were so strict not only in composure and honesty, but also in chastity, that if one was discovered violating his vows he was punished with death; if they now saw the servants of God's Church in the power of Mammon, practising vanities, and learned that they were ministers of God, and beheld them falling into vice, as is the case in our times in Spain, it would bring our Faith into contempt and the natives would hold it as a mockery; and this would do such mischief that I do not believe any amount of preaching would be of any avail. As this is of such importance, and the principal object of Your Majesty is, and should be, the conversion of these people, those who reside here in Your Royal name should behave as becomes Christians. I have wished to give this information and my opinion which I pray Your Highness to accept as coming from your subject and vassal, who has worked with all his vital powers, and will ever strive to extend Your Majesty's kingdoms and dominions in these parts and to publish Your Royal fame and great power among these people: and who likewise desires and will strive that Your Highness may sow amongst them our Holy Faith meriting thereby the eternal reward to everlasting life. As the giving of holy orders, the consecration of churches, ornaments, oils and chrism, and other functions require a bishop, and, we not having any, it would be difficult to seek them elsewhere, Your Majesty should likewise beseech His Holiness to grant such powers to two principal persons amongst the religious men coming here, who might be as special delegates, one from the Order of St. Francis, and the other from the Order of St. Dominic. They should bring the most extensive powers Your Majesty can obtain, because these countries are so distant from the Roman Church, and the Christians who actually live here and will hereafter reside here are so far from religious discipline and, as human beings, subject to sin, that His Holiness should grant to these religious men very ample powers to be handed down by persons who always reside here, be it either to one General or to a Provincial of each Order in this country.²³⁰

The tithes farmed in these countries have been farmed in some of the towns, and in others they are offered by public crier; they have been farmed since the year 1523 until now, for before then it did not

229) Archbishop Lorenzana agrees with other authorities that there were bishops and canons in Spain who led far from exemplary lives, but says this state of things was fortunately brought to a close by the disciplinary enactments of the Council of Trent. Cortes also objected to doctors, and more especially to lawyers; he earnestly begged the Emperor to forbid members of these learned professions to come to Mexico, saying that the doctors would only bring new diseases with them, while failing to cure the old ones, and the lawyers would flourish by augmenting the contentions and dissensions, which, though already too frequent, the colonists managed to settle amicably amongst themselves.

230) Charles V. acted on this suggestion, and the Pope, at his instance, gave to Padre Toribio de Benevente (Motolinia) power to give confirmation, but not to consecrate holy oils. The first superior of Franciscans was Friar Martin de Valencia, and of the Dominicans, Friar Vetanzos, who built the first convent near Texcoco, at a place called Tepetlaxtoc (Lorenzana, Relation Quarta, note).

seem to me that they should be levied, as they were insignificant in themselves, and because at that time those who had land spent more in keeping themselves during the war than their profits amounted to. Whatever else Your Majesty may command for your services will be done.

The tithes of this city for the year 1523 and 1524 were adjudged to the highest bidder for five thousand five hundred and fifty pesos of gold, and those of the towns of Medellin and Vera Cruz are estimated at one thousand pesos of gold. For the present year they are not yet adjudged, and I believe they will go still higher; I do not know how much the other towns brought, as they are distant and I have as yet no information. This money will be used to build churches, pay priests and sacristans, providing the ornaments and other necessary things for their upkeep. The different accounts will be submitted to the treasurer and the accountant of Your Majesty, for everything will be paid to the treasurer and nothing expended without an order from the accountant or myself.

I have likewise, most Catholic Lord, been informed by ships from the island that Your Majesty's judges and officials living in the island of Hispaniola have ordered a prohibition to be published by the public crier against exporting, under pain of death, any mares or other breeding animals to New Spain; and they have done this with the intention of forcing us always to buy beasts and cattle from them which they sell at excessive prices. This they should not do, and the mischief done to Your Majesty is notorious, for the peopling and pacification of this country are retarded; they know our need of horses, and have forbidden their exportation out of excessive love of gain, for it is clear that no need of their port has provoked this measure. I beg Your Majesty that it be revoked, by sending an injunction under Your Royal hand that everyone may export mares without being exposed to any penalty, for, besides that they would not miss the horses, Your Majesty has the greatest interest that we should have all we require, as we cannot otherwise continue our conquest, nor preserve what we have already conquered; moreover, I would pay very liberally for these mares. In any case, I could revenge myself in such a manner that they would gladly revoke their mandates and edicts, for, by retaliating and prohibiting all products of these islands from entering this country, save only what they had forbidden, they would gladly allow the one in order to be allowed the other.²³¹ Their only resource is in trading with this country, and, heretofore, a thousand pesos of gold could not be found amongst all the householders of the island, while now they have more than they ever had at any time. Rather than give occasion to evil speakers and maligners, I have dissembled until I could make it known to Your Majesty, so that Your Highness might order whatever seems required for Your Royal service.

I have also explained to Your Caesarian Majesty the need for plants of all kinds; for every species of agriculture may flourish here; but nothing has been so far provided, and I again pray Your Majesty to order a provision from the Casa de la Contratacion at Seville, so that no ship be allowed to sail without bringing a certain number of plants which would favour the population and prosperity of the country.

I seek by every possible means to increase the population of these countries, that the Spanish settlers and natives of them should preserve themselves and propogate, and that our Holy Faith be built up in every respect. As Your Majesty has done me the favour to charge me with its government, and God, our Lord, has pleased to make me the medium of bringing it under the imperial yoke of Your Highness, therefore I order certain ordinances to be published, of which I send a copy to Your Majesty, and hence need not explain, except to say that in my judgment, it is necessary that these ordinances should be obeyed.²³² The Spaniards here are not satisfied with some of them, especially those which require them to

231) Pan-American reciprocity in embryo.

232) Some of the enactments of Cortes were as strict as any Puritan could prescribe. Married colonists were obliged to bring their wives to their plantations within eighteen months, under pain of forfeiting their grant: those who were unmarried were given the same period within which to find wives (Gomara, Hist. Mex. Ordenanzas Municipales apud Pacheco and Cardenas).

Sumptuary laws regulated the wearing of velvets, silks, and brocades, or their use for saddles, shoes, and sword-belts, as well as jewels, gold ornaments, and embroideries (Herrera, Hist. General, Dec, III lib. 5; Puya, Cedulaario).

Sunday observance was very rigid, and all shops were closed; trades of every kind were suspended during the hours of religious services, while attendance at mass was compulsory on Sundays and great feast days (Pacheco and Cardenas).

settle in the country, for all, or most of them, expected to conduct themselves here as they have done in the islands; where their conduct consisted in consuming the country's substance, destroying, and afterwards abandoning it. But, as it seems to me, we who have had experience in the past, would be blamable, did we not provide a remedy for the present and the future, correcting notorious abuses which caused ills on the said islands; especially as this country being, as I have already many times written to Your Majesty, of such size and wealth, where our Lord may be well served, and the royal revenues of Your Majesty increased. I, therefore, beseech Your Majesty to have the ordinances examined, and to send me an order respecting what Your Highness may approve, directing me what to do, not only concerning the compliance with the said ordinances, but also in how far Your Majesty desires their execution. I shall always be careful to add whatever circumstances may seem to me to require, for the country is so large, the climate so diverse, and there are so many new discoveries, that it is necessary to modify plans and counsels according to new events, so that if in anything I had said, or shall hereafter say to Your Majesty, there seems to be something contradictory to what I had said before, Your Excellency may believe that the new case obliges me to give a new opinion.

Most invincible Caesar, may God, our Lord, guide, prosper, and preserve the person of Your Majesty, and grant extension of greater kingdoms and lordships for very lengthy times in His Holy Service, and everything else which Your Highness may desire.

From the great City of Temixtitan in this New Spain on 15 October, 1524.

Your Sacred Majesty's very humble subject and loyal vassal who kisses the Royal feet of Your Majesty.

Ferdinand Cortes.

The incident of Cortes submitting to a public whipping for failing to attend, is related in the Biographical Note. Gambling was the hardest vice to control, and Cortes's enemies were not slow to pick upon his own fondness for cards and dice, alleging that he privately practised and encouraged what he publicly condemned. Unfortunately the Spaniards introduced the most reprehensible of all "sports," — if indeed such it can be honestly called, — the bullfight as early as 1526 (Vetancourt, Teatro Mexicano). Dancing was not discouraged, and religious festivals were celebrated with gorgeous processions, so life was not quite so colourless as it was afterwards made in the New England colonies.

APPENDIX

ENCOMIENDA SYSTEM

The system of repartimientos and encomiendas of the Indians was begun in the Islands in the time of Columbus, and was, at the outset, sanctioned by the Catholic Sovereigns, though the first authorisation, given in 1497, grants repartimientos of lands but says nothing about Indians. It was represented to be the best means for civilising and Christianising the natives; but this sanction was afterwards revoked by Isabella the Catholic, who, with a fuller knowledge of the real conditions and of the abuses which quickly sprang up, issued severe edicts against them.

The repartimiento, according to Leon, signified the first partition or allotment of Indians made to the colonists, and the encomienda was the second grant, made after the death of the first holder of the right. The repartimiento in the Islands was sometimes of only a week's duration, and hence had a temporary character, whereas the encomienda was a permanent concession of rights over certain Indians which was as much a property right as a grant of land and became hereditary in the family holding it.

The home government enacted many measures for regulating the system, and for the protection of the Indians, but distance and other circumstances made it easy to evade these provisions, and shocking abuses and cruelties, which rapidly depopulated the islands, became common. It was this deplorable state of things which first aroused the indignation of the Dominican monk, Las Casas, afterwards Bishop of Chiapa and started him upon the zealous crusade in favour of the rights of the natives; which procured him the glorious title of "Protector-General of the Indians."

The defenders of this system of enforced serfdom argued that the Indians were by nature lazy, and, if left free, would never work; that the only hope of converting them to Christianity was to keep them in touch with Christians; and also that the climate was such, that white labour could not be employed, even if there were plenty of workmen, which there were not. It was therefore urged that without compulsion there would be no native labour and without native labour there would be no revenue.

Practically the only reward given to the soldiers of Cortes after the conquest of Mexico was to assign to each one a repartimiento or encomienda of Indians, with whom to work the lands granted them. Cortes seems to have been sincerely opposed to the system from the outset, and to have yielded to the general clamour, only after having presented other projects which were refused; nor does he seem to have ever reconciled his conscience to it, although, once his sanction had been given, he defended it on the usual grounds of its expediency, even going so far as to withhold the publication of a royal decree which the friars had obtained from the Emperor, revoking all repartimientos and encomiendas already conceded, and forbidding new ones under severest penalties in the future. He defended this action by writing to the Emperor that to execute the decree would be to throw the Indians back into barbarism, ruin the colony, and drive the colonists out of the country.

The bishops and friars in Mexico energetically repudiated this idea, and in writing to the Emperor, in 1528, during the governorship of Nuno de Guzman, who was striving to obtain the royal approval of encomiendas, the Franciscans of Mexico expressed themselves as follows: "The proposal of the Governor and his auditors, suggested to them by the holders of encomiendas in New Spain, that the natives should be so held for their own welfare, their conversion to the faith, and their obedience to the King, is nothing else but the using of religion as a pretext to enable them to continue their tyranny as heretofore. When have these impious men ever had a thought of converting these people? or of treating them humanely? We

have been witnesses of the methods of these holders of *encomiendas* for the last five years, and we have seen that their vexatious torments seem to have for their object the destruction of the Indians, and from these we may infer how much more cruel they were in the other three years after the conquest. By a special providence of God they have not succeeded, even with all the means they have used, in destroying the Mexicans. To wish to make slaves of the natives of the New World in order to subject them to the Faith and the King's obedience, is undoubtedly iniquitous, and God has forbidden men all abominations, even though the greatest good should result from them. Sacrifice is never acceptable if offered with unclean hands. It were a lesser evil if not a single inhabitant of the New World were ever converted to our Holy Faith, and that the King's sovereignty should be lost forever, than that these people should be brought to the one or the other by slavery" (Fr. Andres Calvo, *Apud Bustamante*).

The Empress, when she was regent, was moved to tears by one such relation as this; royal decrees without number were repeatedly issued, not merely to correct the abuses, but to suppress the system itself; but by intrigue and every sort of subterfuge, rapacious conquerors and greedy colonists would wrench concessions from the unwilling sovereigns which, as soon as the real state of things became known, would be promptly revoked. Open violation of the law was common, and winked at by the local authorities, only the bishops and friars being left to protect against such doings. They were the abolitionists of those times, and they had recourse to the severest spiritual penalties, refusing the sacraments, and launching excommunications on the notoriously cruel among the slave-holding colonists. Yielding to the arguments so persistently advanced, temporising measures were adopted; the system being provisionally tolerated while every possible provision for mitigating its evils was prescribed. Some of these were as follows: the holder of an *encomienda* was bound to pledge himself to an eight years' residence on his estate; no women or boys under twelve years were to do plantation work; Indian labourers could not be let out to others, nor be employed for regulating waterways, excavating canals, nor for building any house other than that of the holder of the *encomienda*; they were not to be taken 'away from their native province, and squads of labourers could be summoned for a period of twenty days at a time only, at the ratio of ten men out of every hundred in a village, and this not at their own harvest time; since mules, horses, and oxen had been imported, the Indians were not to be used as beasts of burden, as they were in the beginning; the villages were to be within a given distance of the plantations; the hours of work were from sunrise until one hour before sunset, with a rest at midday, and the proprietor must feed them well, pay them at least one *castellano* per year, clothe them, and provide for the education of the sons of chiefs in the friar's school; moreover a priest was to be in charge of every two thousand Indians. Had these, and the many other safeguards provided, been strictly observed by the Spaniards, the state of the Indians would not have been a particularly bad one.

The Indians thus divided in *encomiendas* were not, strictly speaking, slaves, though their labour was enforced. The slaves were a class apart, and consisted of those who had been held in slavery by the Mexicans before the arrival of Cortes, and of such as had afterwards been condemned to slavery for rebellion.

Mention is several times made in the Letters of whole villages being sold or divided as a punishment for insurrection. How easy it was for the unscrupulous to provoke quarrels and broils, readily magnified into "rebellions," or to trump up a charge on which natives might be enslaved, may be imagined. All such were branded, and as *encomienda* Indians could not be sent to the mines or to work at a distance; the slaves were used for these hard purposes. They were procured in immense numbers from Mexican chiefs either by purchase — sometimes for nominal sums — and sometimes in payment of debts, or to discharge obligations, and this opened the way to countless abuses, as the *caciques* not infrequently delivered free men into Spanish slavery, and, once branded, their status was fixed forever. The trade in human flesh flourished, and thousands were shipped to the islands where the natives were rapidly being exterminated, and the treatment of these poor creatures was so inhuman that many died during the voyage, and others in despair threw themselves overboard and were drowned.

It is a question, however, whether this treatment was worse than they had suffered from their Mexican owners. Cortes affirms that it was not, and that the threat they most feared was to be sold back to the Aztecs. On the other hand, Motolinia describes the Spanish system as the "sixth plague." I have elsewhere read that the Aztec system was a purely patriarchal one, and that such slaves as were not destined for human sacrifices had everything but their freedom; it being also against the law to sell them, while their children were all born free, and they could hold property of their own. It may indeed be that the Aztec law provided such humane protections, but then we have seen that the Spanish laws were also numerous and beneficent, so that the actual fate of the slave cannot be gauged by the spirit of the laws, but by the observance of them.

The Tlascalans were exempt from the prevailing system, in recognition of their services during the conquest, and, in 1537, they themselves suppressed slavery and serfage of every sort within their province, a measure which was approved by the Viceroy.

The system of *encomiendas* was finally abolished in Mexico under Charles III.

FIFTH LETTER

Sacred Catholic Ceesarian Majesty:

On the 23 October of the past year, 1525, I despatched a ship to the Island Espanola, from the town of Trujillo, which is a port on the Cape of Honduras,²³³ on board which was a servant of mine whom I ordered to cross over to Spain. I wrote to Your Majesty something of what had happened, at the gulf called Hibueras, between the two captains²³⁴ I had sent there, and another captain called Gil Gonzalez who went there afterwards. As I was unable, when the vessel and messenger departed, to give Your Majesty any account of my journey and adventures, from the time I left this great city of Temixtitan, until I met with the people in those distant parts, it seemed to me important that Your Highness should be informed of my doings, if only for the sake of not departing from my custom, which is to withhold nothing, wherein I am concerned, from the knowledge of Your Majesty. I shall, therefore, relate events as best I can; for to describe them as they occurred is more than I could undertake to do, and, moreover, my narrative might perhaps be incomprehensible to those for whom it is destined. I will relate the principal and most important occurrences of the said journey, omitting a great many as accessory, though each would furnish material for ample writing.

Having given my orders respecting that affair of Cristobal de Olid, as I related to Your Majesty, it seemed to me I had been a long time inactive, and without undertaking anything in Your Majesty's service; and, although my arm was not yet healed of its wound, I nevertheless determined to undertake something. I left this great city of Temixtitan on the 12 October of 1524 last, accompanied by some horsemen and foot soldiers, chosen among my old retainers and servants, and by some friends and relatives of mine, amongst whom were Gonzalo de Salazar, and Peralmindez Chirino,²³⁵ the former a factor, and the latter an inspector, for Your Majesty; and I also took with me some noble persons of the natives, and I left the administration of justice and government to the treasurer and accountant of Your Highness, and to the licenciado Alonzo de Zuarzo. I provided this city with sufficient artillery, ammunition, and a garrison, and also placed artillery at the dockyard, ordering the brigantines to be made ready, and a military governor to have charge of any operations necessary for the defence of the city. All this being settled I left this city of Temixtitan with the said design, and, while engaged at Espiritu Santo,

233) First discovered by Columbus in 1502, and named by him Cape Caximos, after some fruit trees, called thus by the natives; the name of the gulf is spelled in different ways; Hibueras, which is perhaps the most usual; means "pumpkins" in the provincial dialect, and these are plentiful there about. The name Honduras meaning difficulties is Spanish.

234) Cristobal de Olid and Francisco de Las Casas; as explained in the Fourth Letter.

235) Gonzalo de Salazar, Pero Armildez Chirino, Alonso de Estrada, and Rodrigo de Albornoz, were sent as revenue officers to Mexico in 1524, and to establish a court of accounts. Estrada was treasurer, Albornoz was accountant, Salazar factor, and Chirino inspector. Their expectations of finding immense treasures ready at hand were disappointed, and the only explanation which seemed to them adequate was that Cortes had concealed or made way with them. In their joint despatch to the Emperor, they accused him of possessing great riches, and of having hidden the treasure of Montezuma instead of accounting for it to the crown. They described Cortes as tyrannical, disloyal, and engaged in plotting to establish his authority independently in the country. This despatch was closely followed by two other letters, one signed by all of them, and the other by Salazar alone. Salazar stated that Cortes had collected three hundred and four million castellanos, without counting Montezuma's treasure, which was buried in various secret places; that he had retained for himself some thirty-seven to forty provinces, some of them as large as all Andalusia; that he was commonly believed to have poisoned Francisco de Garay; and that the ships he pretended were preparing for the expedition to the Spice Islands were really for carrying his treasure and himself in safety to France.

which is a town in the province of Coazacoalco, one hundred and ten leagues from this city, in settling the internal affairs of the community, I sent messengers to Tabasco and Xicalango to inform the chiefs of these provinces of my intended journey, ordering them to meet me or to send persons to whom I might give my instructions, adding that their deputies should be honourable men of good understanding, who would repeat faithfully to them the sense of my instructions. They did exactly as I directed, and received my messengers with due honour, sending me seven or eight responsible men with full authority, as is their habit on such occasions.

After enquiring of them respecting things I wished to know about the country, they told me that on the seacoast, beyond the country called Yucatan, towards the Bay of Assumption,²³⁶ there were some Spaniards who molested them; for, besides burning their villages and slaying their people, in consequence of which many had fled to the forests, they had totally destroyed the trade which formerly flourished on that coast. Some who had been in those parts described to me most of the villages on the coast as far as the residence of Pedrarias de Avila,²³⁷ Your Majesty's Governor in those parts, and they made me a drawing on cloth of the whole of it by which I calculated that I could go over the greater part of it, especially as far as the place they indicated to me as the abode of those Spaniards. Thus informed about the road I was to take for carrying out my plans, and converting the natives to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith, and bringing them to Your Majesty's service (certain as I was that on such a long journey I would have to cross many provinces and encounter people of divers races), being also curious to know whether the Spaniards they described were those whom I had sent under the Captains Cristobal de Olid, Pedro de Alvarado, or Francisco de las Casas, I esteemed it advantageous to Your Majesty's service to go thither myself; inasmuch as my journey being through regions and provinces heretofore unexplored, I would have ample occasion for serving Your Majesty, and pacifying the said countries, as afterwards happened. Conceiving to myself the result my expedition would produce, and setting aside the fatigues and expenses it entailed, of which some of my people did not fail to remind me, I determined to follow the route already decided upon before leaving this city.

Before I reached the said town of Espiritu Santo, I had received letters from this city at two or three places on the road, from my lieutenants, and other persons; and Your Majesty's officials who were with me likewise received similar ones. These informed us that the Treasurer and Accounting Master had quarrelled, and that there no longer existed between them the harmony necessary for the proper discharge of their respective functions with which I, in Your Majesty's name, had charged them. I took what seemed to me the required measures, which was to write them urgent reproofs for their conduct, even warning them that if they could not agree with one another and adopt different methods, I would provide a remedy which would please neither of them, and report the whole matter to Your Majesty. During my stay in the said town of Espiritu Santo, and while engaged in preparations for my journey, fresh letters came from the lieutenants and from other persons, reporting that their enmities still continued and were even increased; so much so that during one council meeting they had actually drawn their swords, thus causing a great scandal and commotion, not only amongst the Spaniards who armed themselves and took one side or the other, but even among the natives of the city who took up arms saying that the commotion justified them. Seeing therefore that my reproofs and warnings were not sufficient, and that I could not go myself to remedy the matter without abandoning my expedition, it seemed to me sufficient to send the factor and inspector who were with me, with equal powers to inquire into the cause of the dispute and pacify things;

236) A misspelling for Ascension, though Gonzalo de Avila's people were not there but some sixty leagues down the coast.

237) Pedrarius de Avila was from Segovia, and had distinguished himself in the Moorish wars, both in Spain and Africa: he was sent, in 1513, to supersede Balboa as Governor of the colony on the Isthmus of Darien, and sailed in command of one of the best expeditions sent by King Ferdinand to the New World, consisting of fifteen ships carrying twelve hundred soldiers, besides fifteen hundred gentlemen, or persons of some quality. Balboa, without a murmur, surrendered to the new Governor his authority at Santa Maria Antigua, as the town on Darien was called, and shortly afterward married his daughter; but, in spite of this, Pedrarius trumped up a charge of disloyalty and plotting a rebellion against Balboa, who, to the sorrow and amazement of the protesting colonists was executed. The Bishop of Burgos protected Pedrarius from the punishment his conduct merited.

and I even gave them another secret power of attorney, enabling them to suspend both men from the charge which I had left them, if reasonable means did not suffice, and to assume the government themselves, together with the licenciado Alonzo de Zuazo, and to punish the offenders. I was quite convinced that the errand of the said factor and inspector would produce good results, and that they would succeed in pacifying the rival passions, so I went on my way with my mind at ease.

This being done I made a review of my forces which were to accompany me, and found that there were ninety-three horsemen, besides crossbowmen and arquebusiers, and thirty odd foot soldiers; altogether a total of two hundred and thirty men. I took a large caravel which had been sent to me from the town of Medellin, loaded with provisions, and was then at anchor in the port of Espiritu Santo. I again loaded this vessel with the stores I had brought; and, putting four pieces of artillery on board, as well as crossbows, muskets, and other ammunition, I ordered the crew to sail to the island of Tabasco, and wait there for my commands.

I likewise wrote to a servant of mine who lives at Medellin to provision two other caravels and a large boat then in the port, and to send them to me: I gave instructions to Rodrigo de Paz whom I left in care of my house and property in Temixtitlan to send five or six thousand ounces of gold to Medellin to pay for the said provisions, and I likewise wrote to the treasurer asking him to advance me that money as I had no more in the hands of the aforesaid agent. All this being done according to my wishes, the caravel came as far as the River Tabasco, laden with provisions which proved, however, to be of little use, as, my road being far inland, the heavily laden caravel could neither go up the river, nor could I send for them on account of the extensive swamps that lay between. Having arranged for what was to go by sea, I set out and marched along the coast until I reached a province, called Cupilco,²³⁸ some thirty-five leagues distant from Espiritu Santo; besides several large swamps and streams, over all of which temporary bridges were built, I had to cross, on this journey, three very large rivers, one near a village, called Tumalo, some nine leagues from the town of Espiritu Santo, the other at Aguascalco, nine leagues further on; these were crossed in canoes, the horses swimming, being led by halters; and the last river was so wide that nothing could make the horses swim it, so I had to provide a wooden bridge about half a league up from the sea where the horses and people could pass. It was nine hundred and thirty paces long and was indeed a marvellous thing to behold. This Province of Cupilco abounds in the fruit called cacao and has also many fisheries; there are ten or twelve good towns, I mean chief towns besides hamlets, and the country is flat with many marshes so that in winter it is impossible to go about except in canoes. Although I traversed it in the dry season from one end to the other, which is about twenty leagues, more than fifty bridges had to be built for the passage of men and horses. The natives are quiet and peaceable, though rather timid and shy owing to the little intercourse they had had with Spaniards, but, through my arrival, they became more confident and served very willingly, not only myself and my companions, but also the Spaniards to whom they were allotted on any departure.

From this province of Cupilco, according to the drawing the natives of Tabasco and Xicalango had given me, I was to proceed to another, called Cagoatan; but, as the natives travelled only by water, they were ignorant of any overland route, though they pointed out to me where the said province was supposed to be. I was obliged, therefore, to send some Spaniards and Indians in that direction to look for the road, and, upon discovering it, to make it possible for the rest of us to advance; for it was through very great forests. It pleased our Lord that, after some difficulty, it should be found, for, besides the forests, there were many troublesome marshes over all, or most, of which bridges had to be built, and we had to cross the great river, called Quecalapa, a tributary of the Tabasco. From there, I sent two Spaniards to the chiefs of Tabasco and Conapa, asking them to send me some fifteen or twenty canoes to bring provisions up that river from the caravels lying there, and to help me to cross the river and to transport the provisions to the chief town of Zaguatan, which, it afterwards appeared, was some twelve leagues up the river from where I crossed; and they did all this, complying exactly with my request.

238) Most probably Tupilcos is meant: no map shows these various names as Cortes spells them.

After discovering the road to the River Zalapa,²³⁹ which, as I said, we had to cross, I left the last village of the province of Cupilco, called Anaxuxuan, and slept that first night on the open ground between some lagoons; and early the next day we reached the river but found no canoes in which to cross because those I had sent to ask from the chief of Tabasco had not arrived. I learnt, moreover, that the scouts who went ahead were opening the road up the river from the other side, because, having been told that it flowed through the principal town of the said province, they naturally followed its course so as not to go astray. One of them had gone in a canoe by water to reach the town the sooner, and on his arrival had found all the people in a commotion, so he spoke to them through an interpreter he had with him; and, after succeeding in calming them somewhat, he sent some Indians in his canoe down the river to tell me what had happened with the natives of that town, and that he was coming down himself, opening the road by which I was to march until he should meet the scouts who were working up on this other side. This news gave me great pleasure, not merely because it made known the peaceful disposition of the natives, but also because it assured to me a road which I had thought was doubtful, or at least very difficult. On the canoe brought by these Indians, and some rafts which I had built out of logs, I managed to send all the heavy baggage to the other side of the river, which at that point is very wide. While occupied in crossing, those Spaniards whom I had sent to Tabasco arrived with twenty canoes loaded with supplies from the large caravel which I had sent there from Coazacoalco; and I learned from them that the two other large caravels and the ship had not yet arrived in the river, having remained behind at Coazacoalco, but that they were expected soon. No less than two hundred Indians from Tabasco and Cunapa came in the said canoes, and I crossed the river without other accident than the drowning of a negro slave and the loss of two loads of iron tools of which we afterwards stood in some need.

That night, I, with all my people, slept on the other side of the river, and the next day set out to follow the track of the scouts who were opening the road, having no other guide but the river bank itself. We marched thus about six leagues, and arrived under a pouring rain in a forest, where we slept. During the night, the Spaniard who had gone up the river to the town of Cagoatan came back with some seventy Indians, natives of that place, and told me that he had opened the road on the other side, but that if I wished to take it I would have to retrace my steps for a distance of two leagues. I did this, but gave orders at the same time that the scouts, who were in advance cutting their way along the bank of the river, and who had already gone three leagues from the place where I myself had passed the night, should continue their work: they had scarcely advanced a league and a half when they reached the outskirts of the town, and, in this way, two roads were open where before there had been none.

I took the road opened by the natives, and, although it proved a hard one, on account of the torrents of rain which had fallen that day and of the many swamps we had to cross, I still managed to arrive on the same day at one of the suburbs of the said town, which, though the smallest of all, contained more than two hundred sufficiently good houses; we could not reach the other because it was separated from us by rivers which flowed between and which we could have crossed only by swimming.

The towns were all very deserted, and we found, upon our arrival, that all the Indians who had accompanied the Spaniards had also fled, notwithstanding that I had spoken to them kindly and treated them well, distributing among them some of the trifles I had with me, and thanking them for the pains they had taken in opening the said road. I had told them that my coming to these parts was by Your Majesty's commands and for no other purpose than to teach them to believe in and worship only one God, Creator and Maker of all things, and to acknowledge Your Majesty as supreme lord of the country, and many other like things, which I usually said to them. I waited three or four days, thinking they had left from fear and would come back to speak to me, but none of them ever appeared.

In order to bring them by peaceable means to Your Majesty's service, and to obtain information from them about my road, for there seemed not to be even a track of a single person ever having gone on land, all travelling on the great rivers and lakes, I determined to send two companies of Spaniards and some natives of Temixtitan, whom I had with me, to search for the people of the province and bring some of

239) Also sometimes given as Quezolape, and Guezalapa.

them to me. By means of the canoes which had come up the river from Tabasco, and of others we procured at the said town, my men managed to navigate most of the rivers and swamps, as marching overland seemed impracticable; but they discovered only two Indians and some women from whom I took every pains to ascertain where their chief and his people were. They told me no more, however, than that they were wandering dispersed through the forest, swamps, and rivers. I likewise asked them about the road to the province of Chilapan, which, according to the drawing I had, was the next on my road; but they would never tell me, saying that their only mode of travel was by rivers and swamps in their canoes, and that they only knew how to go thither by water and never by land. They did, however, point out to me a chain of mountains, some ten leagues distant perhaps, saying that in its neighbourhood stood the principal town of Chilapanon on the banks of a large river which, joining with the Cagoatan lower down, flowed afterwards into the Tabasco; and that further up the river there was another town, called Acumba²⁴⁰; but neither did they know any road thither by land.

I remained in this town twenty days, during which I never ceased to seek a road leading to somewhere, but I never found one, either great or small; on the contrary, the country about us had so many swamps and lagoons that it seemed impossible to cross them, but, as we were already in such straits from want of provisions, we commended our souls to God, our Creator, and built over the marsh a bridge three hundred paces in length, which was constructed of many large beams, between thirty-five and forty feet in length, on which cross beams were laid, and on these we passed over, marching through the country in quest of the place where we had been told was the town of Chilapan. Meanwhile, I sent a company of horsemen, with crossbowmen, by another way to search for the town of Acumba, and they found it that same day. By swimming and by means of two canoes which they found there, they surprised the villages whose inhabitants fled so they were unable to capture any except two men and some women with whom they came to meet me on the road; they also found plenty of provisions. That night, I slept on the open ground.

Next day, it pleased God that we should come to a dryer country with fewer marshes, and those Indians who had been taken at Acumba guided us as far as Chilapan, where we arrived late the next day, finding all the town burned and the natives absent. This town of Chilapan is beautifully situated and very large. It is surrounded by plantations of fruit trees of the country and fields of maize, which, though not yet ripe, were of great comfort to us in our necessity. I remained there two days, laying in supplies for the journey, and sending out some expeditions into the neighbourhood to capture, if possible, some natives from whom I might learn about the road; but with the exception of two at first, who were found concealed in the village, all our searching was in vain. I got information from these, however, about the road to Tepetitan,²⁴¹ otherwise called Tamacastepeque; although they hardly knew their way thither, we were fortunate enough, sometimes by their guidance, and sometimes by half feeling our way, to reach that town within two days.

On the road, we had to cross a large river, called Chilapan, from which the town took its name, and this was accomplished with great difficulty owing to the deep and rapid stream; we used rafts as there were no canoes there and we lost a negro who was drowned, and much of the baggage of the Spaniards. After this river, which we crossed at a place a league and a half distant from the said village of Chilapan, we had to cross several large swamps before reaching Tepetitan, in all of which but one the horses sank to their knees and many times to their ears. Between Chilapan and Tepetitan, a distance of six or seven leagues, the country was full of similar swamps; one especially we found so perilous that, though a bridge was built over it two or three Spaniards were very nearly drowned. After two days of such fatigues, we reached the said village of Tepetitan, which we also found burned and deserted, thus causing us double hardship. We found some fruits of the country inside and some fields of maize in the neighbourhood, unripe, though it was taller than that at Chilapan; we also discovered under the burnt houses, some granaries which contained small quantities of maize; this was of great help in the extreme necessity to which we were

240) Also written Athumba, but, according to Gayangos, Ocumba appears very distinctly in the Vienna MS.: he adds that some writers identify the place as Cicimbra.

241) Tepetizan.

reduced. At this village of Tepetitan, which stands at the foot of a mountain chain, I remained six full days, causing excursions to be made in search of natives who might be induced to return peaceably to their dwellings and point out to us the road ahead; but we never could catch but a single man and some women from whom I learned that the chief and natives of the town had been induced by the people of Cagoatan to burn their village and fly to the woods. The man said that he did not know the road to Iztapan, the next place on my map, there being, as he said, no road overland, but that he would guide us more or less towards the vicinity in which he knew it was.

With this guide, I sent thirty Spaniards on horseback and thirty men on foot with instructions to discover the village of Iztapan, and, once there, to write me a description of the road I was to follow; for I decided not to leave the place where I had camped until I heard from them. They left, but, at the end of two days, having received no letters, nor other news, from them, and seeing, moreover, the extreme want to which we were reduced, I decided to follow them without a guide and with no other indication of the road they had taken than their footsteps in the fearful, miry swamps, with which the country is covered; for I assure Your Majesty that, even on the hill tops, our horses, being led, and without their riders, sank to their girths in the mire. In this manner, I travelled two days on the said trail, without receiving any news of the people who had gone ahead; and I was perplexed enough as to what I should do, because to go back I held as impossible, and to proceed with no certainty of the road seemed equally so. God, Who in our greatest afflictions often comes to our help, was pleased to permit that, while we were encamping in great sadness and distress, believing we were all destined to perish of hunger, two Indians should arrive, bringing letters from the Spaniards whom I had sent ahead. They informed me that upon reaching the village of Iztapan, they found that the natives had sent all their women and property across a large river, which ran close to that place, and that the village itself was full of natives, who thought the Spaniards would not be able to pass the great swamp near by; but, when they saw my men swimming across it on their horses, they had been much frightened and had begun to burn their village, which my men prevented by putting out the fire. Seeing this, all the inhabitants fled to the banks of the river, which they crossed, either in numerous canoes or by swimming, and in their haste and confusion, which were very great, many were drowned; my Spaniards, nevertheless, had succeeded in capturing seven or eight, among whom there was one who seemed to be a chief; the letter also added that they were anxiously awaiting my arrival. I cannot describe to Your Majesty the great joy the receipt of this letter caused all my people, for, as I said above, we had almost despaired of relief.

Early the next morning, I continued my march, guided by the Indians who had brought the letter, and, in this manner, I arrived at Iztapan late in the evening, where I found all the people who had gone ahead very contented; for they had discovered many plantations of maize, though the grain was not yet ripe, and also yucas and agoes²⁴² in great abundance, these latter two furnishing sustenance and constituting the food of the natives of the Islands. I immediately had brought before me those natives of the town who had been captured there, asking them through the interpreter why they had burned their own houses and towns and why they fled since I intended them no harm or mischief, but rather shared what I had with those whom I met. They answered that the chief of Cagoatan had come in a canoe and frightened them, inducing them to fire their town and abandon it. I had the chief and all the men and women who had been captured in Cagoatan and Chilapan and Tepetitan brought before me, and explained to them how that wicked man had deceived them, telling them they might inform themselves from those Indians now before me, by asking them whether I or any of my people had done them any harm or mischief, or if they had not been well treated in my company. Being informed by them, they all began to weep, declaring they had been deceived and showing great grief for what had happened. In order to reassure them, I gave permission to all the Indians, both men and women, who had come with me from the other villages to return to their homes, making them some small presents and giving them sundry letters which I ordered them to keep in their towns, and to show to any Spaniards who might pass there, because by them they would be

242) The root of the Yuca (vulgarly called Adam's needle) is farinaceous and edible: the Agoes or Aji are the red peppers so commonly used in Mexican dishes.

protected. I also told them to explain to their chiefs the mistake they had committed in burning their houses and towns and in abandoning them, and that henceforth they must not act thus, but rather stop confidently in their homes as no harm or evil would be done them. After this, they left, well satisfied and contented, as were likewise the others who remained.

After this, I spoke to the Indian who seemed to be their chief, and told him to observe how I harmed no one about me; neither was my coming there for the purpose of offending them, but rather to make known many things to them which were advantageous, not only for the security of their lives and property, but also for the salvation of their souls. For the same reason I besought him earnestly to send two or three of his people, with whom I would send as many more of the natives of Temixtitan, to call the chief and tell him not to be afraid, for by his coming he would profit greatly. He answered that he would be pleased to do this, and he immediately sent his people with whom went the Indians of Mexico, and, the next morning, the messengers returned with the chief and some forty men. The chief told me he had abandoned his town and ordered it to be burned because the lord of Cagoatan had advised him to do this, and not to meet me, as I would kill them all, and that he had learned from those who had come to call him that he had been deceived, and that he was sorry for what had happened, praying me to pardon him, for henceforth he would obey me; and he besought me that certain women who had been captured by the Spaniards when they arrived should be restored to him, so twenty were immediately collected which pleased him greatly.

It happened, however, that a Spaniard saw an Indian of Temixtitan eating a piece of flesh taken from the body of an Indian who had been killed when they entered Iztapan, and he told me this; so in the presence of that chief I had the culprit burned, explaining that the cause was his having killed that Indian and eaten him which was prohibited by Your Majesty, and by me in Your Royal name. I further made the chief understand that all the people of those parts must abstain from this custom, and that I had punished that man with death because he had slain and eaten a fellow creature, for I wished that none should be killed, but that, on the contrary, I came by order of Your Majesty to protect their lives as well as their property and to teach them that they were to adore but one God, who is in the heavens, Creator and Maker of all things, through whom all creatures live and are governed; and that they must turn from their idols, and the rites they had practised until then, for these were lies and deceptions which the devil, the enemy of the human race, had invented for deceiving them and to bring them to eternal damnation, where great and frightful torments awaited them; being thus deprived of the knowledge of God they could not be saved nor come into the enjoyment of glorious and eternal beatitude, which God had promised and has prepared for them who believe in Him; all of which the devil through his malice and evil doings had lost. I, likewise, had come to teach them that Your Majesty, by the will of Divine Providence, rules the universe, and that they also must submit themselves to the imperial yoke, and do all that we who are Your Majesty's ministers here might order them in Your Royal name; for, acting thus, they would be favoured and maintained in justice, and their lives and properties protected, but that, acting otherwise, they would be proceeded against and punished according to justice. I told them many things concerning these matters which, as they were lengthy, I do not repeat to Your Majesty.

The chief showed much satisfaction, and sent some of his people to bring provisions, and I gave him some presents from Spain, which he admired very much; and all the time he remained with me he was very contented. He ordered a road to be opened to another town, called Tatahuitapan, five leagues up the river from this, and, as we had to cross a very deep river, he had an excellent bridge made over it on which we crossed, and he filled in some very big swamps, and gave me three canoes in which I sent three Spaniards down the river to Tabasco (because this is the principal river which empties into it) where the ships were, as I have said, awaiting my orders. I sent orders with these Spaniards that they were to follow the coast until they doubled the cape, called Yucatan, after which they should proceed to the Bay of Ascension, where they would either find me or my orders as to what they were to do next. I also ordered the three Spaniards who went in the canoes and all those they could collect in the provinces of Tabasco and Xiculango to bring me as many provisions as they could by way of the great salt lagoon which

connects with the province of Aculan, some forty leagues distant from Iztapan, where I would wait for them.

These Spaniards having departed, and the road being completed, I begged the chief of Iztapan to give me three or four other canoes in which to send up the river a half dozen Spaniards and some of his people, under a chief, to tranquillise the natives, and prevent them from burning and deserting their towns; he did this with every show of good will, and my people, being accompanied by Indians from Iztapan, succeeded in quieting the inhabitants of four or five villages up the river, as I shall hereafter relate to Your Majesty.

This town of Iztapan is very large and built on the bank of a very beautiful river. Its position is advantageous for a Spanish settlement, and the pasture is excellent along the banks of the river, while there is good farming land; and the country is well populated.

After stopping eight days in Iztapan, and having provided everything as specified in the former chapter, I left, and arrived that day at the small town of Tatahuitapan, and found it burned and deserted. I reached there before the canoes, which were coming up the river and were delayed by the strong currents and many windings. After their arrival, I sent some people to cross in them to the other bank in search of the natives of the town, in order to reassure them. About half a league on the other side of the river, they found some twenty men in one of the temples of their idols, which they had decorated profusely; these they brought to me, telling me that all the people had abandoned the place through fear, but they had preferred to remain on the spot and die with their gods. While engaged in this talk with them, some of our Indians passed, carrying some things taken from those idols, seeing which, the natives cried out that their gods had been killed; I replied to this, telling them to observe what a vain and foolish belief was theirs, for they believed that gods who could not even protect themselves could give them benefits, and to behold how easily they were destroyed: they answered me that their fathers had held that creed, and until they knew of a better one that they would hold it. I was unable, on account of the brevity of the time, to explain this subject more fully than I had already done to the people at Iztapan, but two Franciscan friars, who were with me, also told them many things about these matters. I besought them to send and call the chief and people of the town and to reassure them, and the chief whom I had brought from Iztapan also told them of the kindness they had received from me in his town, upon which they pointed out one of themselves, saying that he was their chief; so he sent two of them to call the people to return, but they never appeared.

Seeing that they did not come, I besought the one who I was told was the chief to show me the road to Cagoatespan,²⁴³ through which, according to my map, I would have to pass higher up this river; and he said that he did not know the way by land, but only by the river, as they all travelled that way, but that he would try to guide us through those forests, though he was uncertain whether he might reach there or not. I asked him to show me from there whereabouts it stood; and I marked it the best I could, and ordered the Spaniards of the canoes and the Chief of Iztapan to go up the river to the said town of Cagoatespan and reassure its people and those of another town, which they would come to first, called Ozumazintlan; if I arrived first I would wait for them, otherwise they should wait for me. Having despatched these men, I departed with the native guides and, leaving the town, I came to a great marsh, more than half a league in length, which we managed to pass, after the Indians our friends, had lain down branches and underbrush. We next came to a deep lagoon over which we were obliged to build a bridge for the passage of the heavy baggage and the saddles, whilst the horses crossed swimming. After that, we came to another deep lagoon, more than a league long, where the water was never below the knees of the horses, and many times up to the girths, but, as the bottom was rather solid, we crossed without accident, and reached the forest through which we cut our way as best we could during two consecutive days, until our guides said they were bewildered and knew not whither they were going. The forest was such that we could see nothing but the ground where we stood, or, looking upwards, the sky above our heads, such were the height and density of the trees; and although some climbed up them, they could not see a stone's throw ahead.

243) Singuatepecpan, various spellings, Bernal Diaz calls it Ciguatepecad.

When those who were ahead with the guides opening the roads sent me word that they were lost, I ordered them to stop where they were and went ahead on foot till I came up with them and saw the bewilderment in which they were; I made the people turn back to a small marsh we had crossed the day before, and where there was some pasturage for the horses, since they had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours. We remained there that night, suffering much from hunger, and hopeless of finding any populated place, so that my people were more dead than alive. I consulted my compass by which I had often guided myself, though never had we been in such a plight as this, and, remembering the direction in which the Indians said the town stood, I calculated that, by going towards the north-east from where we were we would come out at, or very near to, the town; so I ordered those who were ahead opening the road to take the compass with them and follow that direction without deviating from it. Our Lord was pleased that they should come out so exactly that, at the hour of vespers, they came upon some temples of the idols in the centre of the town, which caused such rejoicing among the people that they all ran to the town as though almost out of their senses, and, not observing a large marsh at its entrance, many of the horses sank in it so that some could not be got out until the following day, God being pleased, however, that none should perish; and we who came in the rear avoided the swamp, though with considerable difficulty.

We found Cagoatespan entirely burned; even to the mosques and houses of their idols, nor did we find any people there, nor news of the canoes which were ascending the river. There was plenty of maize, riper than that of other places, also yuca and agoes, and good pasture for the horses on the banks of the river, which are very fertile and covered with fine grass. Thus refreshed, our past troubles were forgotten, although I was uneasy at hearing nothing from the canoes. Walking about this village and inspecting it, I found a cross-bow arrow stuck in the ground, by which I knew that the canoes had been there, for all of the men in them were archers; this grieved me, leading me to believe they had fought there and been killed, since none of them appeared. To ascertain the truth, if possible, I sent some of my people, in certain small canoes which were found there, to explore the river on the other side. They soon met a great number of Indians, and saw many cultivated fields, and, proceeding on their way, they reached a large lake where all the people of the town, partly in canoes and partly on small islands, had collected; who, when they saw the Christians, came to meet them very confidently, though without understanding what they said. Thirty or forty were brought to me, and, after I had spoken to them, they said that they had burned their town at the instigation of the chief of Cagoatespan, and had gone to the lakes out of fear; and that, afterwards, some Christians of my party, had come there in canoes, accompanied by natives of Iztapan, from whom they heard of the good treatment shown to everybody, which had reassured them; and that the Christians had stopped there two days waiting for me, but, as I had not come, they had gone up the river to another town, called Petenacte,²⁴⁴ accompanied by the brother of their chief and four canoes full of people to help them in case that other town should be hostile; and that they had been given all the provisions they needed. I greatly rejoiced at this news, and believed them, seeing they came so confidently to me, and were so well disposed. I, therefore, prayed them to immediately send a canoe with people in search of these Spaniards, and to take a letter of mine, ordering them to return to that place forthwith. This they executed with diligence enough, and I gave them my letter for the Spaniards; so, the next day, at the hour of vespers, the latter arrived accompanied by the townspeople who had gone with them, and the four other canoes full of people and provisions from the town whence they had come; and they told me that they had crossed the river higher up after leaving me, arriving at Ozumazintlan, which they found burned and deserted; and that the natives of Iztapan who accompanied them, had searched for the people and called them, so that many had come very confidently, bringing them provisions and everything they had asked for. And thus, they had left them in their town, and afterwards had gone to Cagoatespan, which they also found deserted, the inhabitants having gone to the other side of the river; but the people of Iztapan had

244) Petenacte: also Penacte. As these names belong for the most part to obscure Indian villages which appear on no map, and are written with every variety of spelling, correction is undertaken only when it seems important to identify a spot by its correct geographical

spoken to them, so they had come back rejoicing, and had given the Spaniards a good reception and all the provisions they required. They had waited there for me two days, and, as I did not come, they thought I had gone higher up, so they went on accompanied by the people of that village to the next town, Petenecte, which is six leagues from there, finding it also deserted but not burned, and the people on the other side of the river; but the people of Iztapan and those of Cagoatespan had reassured the natives, and induced them to come in four canoes to see me, and bring me maize and honey and cacao and a little gold. They had sent two messengers to three more villages up the river, named Cozacocalco, Caltencingo, and Tautitan, so they believed that people from those places would come to speak to me there on the following day. And so it happened that some seven or eight canoes came down the river the next day bringing people from all these towns, who gave me provisions and a little gold. I spoke very fully to them, trying to make them understand that they were to believe in one God and serve Your Majesty; and they all offered themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Highness, and promised to obey whatever was commanded of them. The natives of Cagoatespan brought me some of their idols, and in my presence broke and burned them, and the principal chief, who until then had not appeared, arrived, bringing me a little gold, and I gave them all presents of such as I had, which pleased and reassured them very much.

There was some difference of opinion amongst them about the road I was to take to Acalan, for those of Cagoatespan said my road lay through the villages up the river and that they had caused six leagues of road to be opened expressly in that direction, and ordered a bridge to be built over a certain river which we had to cross. Others maintained that this road, besides being a very bad one, was much longer, and that the best and shortest road to Acalan was to cross the river at the town where we were, for a trail existed there which traders sometimes took, by which they would guide me as far as Acalan. Finally it was settled amongst them that this was the best road, so I sent a Spaniard ahead, with some natives of Cagoatespan, to inform the people of Acalan of my coming, and to reassure them and calm their fears. The messenger was also to ascertain whether my people, who had been charged with bringing supplies from the brigantines, had arrived or not. Afterwards, I sent four other Spaniards by land with guides who claimed to know the road, to inspect it, and see if there were any obstacles, while I waited for their answer; after they left, I was obliged to depart before hearing from them, so that the provisions provided for the journey should not be exhausted, for I was told that we would march for five or six days through a desert country. I began, therefore, to prepare canoes, and to cross the river which was sufficiently dangerous, as it was broad, and its current so very strong that one horse was drowned and some of the Spaniards' baggage was lost. After crossing, I sent a couple of foot soldiers ahead with guides to open the road, whilst I, with the others, followed in the rear; and having travelled three days through a mountainous district, covered with forests, we came by a narrow trail to a large marsh, more than five hundred paces broad, to cross which we sought in vain to find a place; but one could not be found, neither up nor down, and the guides declared that it was useless to search for it unless we marched for twenty days towards the mountain chain. This marsh occasioned more trouble than I can say, for to cross it seemed impossible, on account of its great size and of our having no canoes, though even had we had them the men and horses and heavy baggage could not have crossed, for both sides were surrounded by morasses, full of stumps and roots of trees, while to cross the horses in any other way was entirely hopeless; to think of turning back plainly meant the destruction of everybody, not only on account of the bad roads, and the heavy rain which had fallen and had so swollen the river that the bridge we had left was already destroyed, but also because the people were perfectly exhausted, and, having consumed our provisions, we would find nothing to eat; for we were numerous, there being, besides the Spaniards and the horses, more than three thousand natives with me. I have already told Your Majesty the difficulties in the way of advancing, and that no man's brain was equal to devising relief if God, Who is the true help and succour of all the afflicted, had not provided it. For I found a very small canoe, in which the Spaniards whom I had sent ahead to explore the road had crossed, and with it I sounded the marsh and found it to be four fathoms deep; so I had some lances tied together to examine the bottom and found that, besides the depth of the water, there were two fathoms of mud, so that in all there were six fathoms. Finally I determined to make a bridge over it and set about distributing the

work to be done, and the wood to be cut, among the different people: the beams were to be from nine to ten fathoms in length according to the part which would remain above water. I charged the chiefs who had come with me to cut and bring a certain number of trees, each in proportion to the number of his people, and the Spaniards and I, on rafts and with that little bit of a canoe and two others which we afterwards found, began to lay the timbers. Everybody thought it was impossible to complete it, and, behind my back, some of them even said it would have been better to go the roundabout way before the people became too exhausted to be prevented afterwards from returning, for in the end this work would never be finished and we should be forced to go back. This murmuring spread to such an extent that they almost dared to utter it to me; and as I saw them so despondent, and in truth they had reason because of the character of the work we had undertaken, and because they were reduced to eating roots and herbs, I ordered them to take no part in building the bridge, for I would do it with the Indians. So I immediately sent for all the chiefs and told them to consider the great strait to which we were reduced, and that we were forced either to cross or to perish; hence I besought them earnestly to exhort their people to finish that bridge, for, once across, we would have immediately before us a large province, called Acalan, where there was abundance of provisions, and there we would rest; and that besides the provisions of the country they knew I had sent to have supplies brought from the ships, and that people would bring them in canoes, so that there we would have great abundance of everything. Besides all this, I promised them that, on our return to Medellin, they would be well rewarded by me in Your Majesty's name. They promised me that they would work to that end, and they divided the task among them, and worked so hard and with such skill that, in less than four days, they constructed a fine bridge over which all the people and horses crossed; and, unless it is intentionally destroyed, which would have to be done by burning it, it will last for more than ten years, as more than one thousand beams were used, the smallest of them as big round as a man's body, and from nine to ten fathoms in length, without counting the smaller number. I certify to Your Majesty that I do not believe anyone capable of describing the system they displayed in building this bridge; I can only say that it is the most wonderful thing that has ever been seen.

All the people and horses having crossed to the other side of the lagoon, we came upon a great morass, two bow shots long, the most frightful thing men ever saw, where the unsaddled horses sank to their girths, and by their efforts to get out only sank deeper, so that we despaired of saving any of them or crossing ourselves; still we set to work, and, by putting bundles of herbs and branches under them, they could support themselves so as not to sink altogether, by which measure they were somewhat relieved. Thus we were engaged going backwards and forwards to the assistance of the horses, when a narrow channel of water and mud was discovered where the animals began to swim and advance a little, so that with our Lord's help they all came out safe though so exhausted from the exertion that they could scarcely stand on their legs. We gave many thanks to our Lord for His great mercy extended to us.

Just then the Spaniards whom I had sent to Acalan arrived with about eighty Indians from that province loaded with supplies of maize and birds, which God knows the rejoicing it caused, especially when they told us that all the people were peaceable and well disposed. With the Indians of Acalan there came two of their notables sent by a chief of the province, called Apaspolon, to tell me that he greatly rejoiced at my coming as many days had passed since he first heard of me from the traders of Tabasco and Xiculango, and he would be glad to know me, and he sent me some gold which they gave me. I received them with pleasure thanking their lord for the good disposition he showed towards Your Majesty's service; and, giving them some small presents I sent them back, very contented, accompanied by the Spaniards who had come with them. They left full of admiration at beholding the bridge, which contributed largely towards the confidence which afterwards prevailed, for, as their country lies among lakes and swamps they might have taken refuge among them, but, seeing that work, they were convinced that nothing was impossible to us.

About this time, there also arrived a messenger from the town of Santisteban del Puerto, on the River Panuco, bringing me letters from the judges of those parts, and with him came some four or five Indian messengers who brought me letters from Temixtitan, Medellin, and the town of Espiritu Santo, from

which I was much pleased to learn that they were well, although I had no news from the factor and the inspector, for they had not yet arrived at Temixtitan.

The day after the Indians and Spaniards who were going ahead to Acalan had left, I started, with the rest of the people, to follow in the same direction. I slept one night in the woods, and the next day, a little after noon, we arrived at the plantations and farms of the Province of Acalan, from which we were still separated by a large morass, the crossing of which gave us much trouble, though we accomplished it by making a detour of about a league, leading our horses by their bridles. About the hour of vespers, we reached the first village, called Ticatepelt, whose inhabitants we found living comfortably in their houses and showing no signs of fear; they had plenty of food, both for the men and horses, so that we were completely refreshed and forgot our past troubles. We rested six days, during which time a youth, of attractive appearance and well attended, visited me and told me that he was the son of the lord of that country; and he brought me some gold and birds, offering himself and his country for Your Majesty's service, saying that his father had lately died. I sympathised over the death of his father, although I perceived that he was not telling me the truth, and I gave him a collar of Flemish beads which I was wearing on my neck and which he greatly esteemed, after which I told him to leave with God's blessing; but he remained two days longer of his own free will.

One of the natives of Ticatepelt who claimed to be the chief told me that there was in the neighbourhood another village, also belonging to him, where I would find better lodging and more abundant supplies, for it was larger and more populous, and suggested, also, that, if I went thither, I would be more comfortable; so I at once accepted his proposal, and ordered him to have the road cleared by his men, and lodgings prepared, all of which was done as I wished; and we went to that town, which is six leagues from here, and found the people tranquil, and a certain quarter vacated for our lodging. It is a beautiful town, called Teutiercas by the natives, and has very handsome mosques or houses for idols wherein we established ourselves, throwing out their gods, at which the natives showed little concern; for I had already spoken to them and explained their errors and that there was only one God, the Creator of all things. Afterwards I spoke more fully to the principal chief and to all of them together, and I learned from them that the principal one of these two mosques was dedicated to a goddess in whom they had faith and hope, and that they sacrificed only the most beautiful virgins to her, for otherwise she would be angry with them, and therefore they took special care to search for such as would satisfy her; and they reared the most beautiful ones from childhood for this purpose. I spoke of this horrible cruelty in which the devil with his arts had taken them, and I also told them what seemed to be necessary; and they appeared to be satisfied.

The chief of the town showed himself my great friend and held much conversation with me, giving me a full account and description of the Spaniards, for whom I was going to search, and the road I should take; and he told me in great secrecy, praying that no one should know that he had informed me, that Apaspolon, lord of all that province, was alive, though he had sent to say that he was dead; the young man who came to see me was his son and had been sent to misdirect me so that I might not see his country and towns. He gave me this information out of friendship, and because of the good treatment he had received from me, but prayed me that this should be kept strictly secret, for, if it became known that he had informed me, the lord would kill him and burn his town. I thanked him very much, and rewarded his good will with some small presents, and promised to keep the secret as he asked me to do; I also promised him that as time went on he would be well rewarded by me in Your Majesty's name.

I immediately sent for the son of Apaspolon and told him that I marvelled very much that his father should have refused to come knowing as he did my good disposition towards all of them and my wish to honour them and make them presents, for I had received good treatment in their country and greatly desired to repay them; but I knew for certain that he was alive and I prayed him to go and call him and to persuade him to come and see me, for he might be sure that he would be benefited by so doing. The son told me that it was true he was alive, and that if he had denied this to me, it was because he had been commanded to do so by his father; but that he would go and endeavour to bring him; and he believed that he would come, for he desired to know me, feeling sure I had not come thither to harm him, but on the

contrary to give presents to him and his people. He would have come before except that, as he had given himself out as dead, he was now ashamed to appear before me. I besought the youth to go and use every means to bring him; and thus it was done, and the next day both came. I received them with much pleasure, the chief excusing himself because he had not known my disposition; and he said that now, having learnt it, he desired greatly to see me, and that it was true he had ordered me to be misdirected away from his towns, but that now he prayed me to come to the principal one where he resided, as there he had better arrangements for providing me and my people with everything we required. He immediately ordered a broad road to be opened thither, and, the next day, we left together; and I ordered one of my horses to be given him, on which he rode very happily till we reached the town, called Izancanac, which is quite large, and has many mosques, and is situated on the borders of a great lagoon which traverses the country as far as the ports of Terminos, Xicalango, and Tabasco; some of the people of this town were absent and others stopped in their houses. We found a great store of provisions, and Apaspolon remained with me in my lodging, though he had his own household close by. As long as I remained at Izancanac, he rendered me service, and gave me a lengthy account of the Spaniards I sought, pointing out to me on a drawing of cloth the road I ought to take. He also gave me some gold and women without my asking for them, and I declare that up till now I have never asked the chiefs of these parts for anything unless they first offered it. We had to cross that lagoon before which extended the large morass; the chief ordered a bridge to be made over it, and provided as many canoes as were necessary for crossing the morass, and gave me guides for the road. He also gave me canoes and guides to accompany the Spaniards who had brought the letters and messages from Santisteven del Puerto, as well as several others for the Indians who were returning to Mexico and to the provinces of Tabasco and Xicalango. I sent letters again by these Spaniards to the authorities of the different towns and the lieutenants whom I had left in this city, as well as to the ships at Tabasco, and for the Spaniards who were to bring the provisions instructing each and every one of them what they were to do. Having despatched all these, I gave the chief certain small presents which he esteemed, and leaving him entirely satisfied, and all the people reassured, I left that province on the first Sunday of Lent in the year 1525.

That day, we accomplished only the crossing of the lagoon, which was no small thing. I gave this lord a letter because he begged me to do so, as, in case any Spaniards should come there later, they would thus learn that I had passed there and considered him my friend.

An event happened in this province which it is well Your Majesty should know. An honourable citizen of Temixtitan, by name Mexicalcingo, but now called Cristobal, came to me one night privately, bringing certain drawings on a piece of the paper used in that country, and explained to me what it meant. He told me that Guatemucin, whom, on account of his turbulent nature, I hold a prisoner since the capture of this city (always carrying him, as well as the other chiefs and lords whom I considered the cause of revolt in the country with me) was conspiring against me. Besides Guatemucin there was Guanacaxin, the King of Texcuco, and Tetepangual, the King of Tacuba, and a certain Tacatelz who had lived formerly in Mexico in the quarter of Tatelulco, who all had many times conversed among themselves and told this Mexicalcingo how they had been dispossessed of their land and authority and were ruled over by the Spaniards, and that it would be well to seek some remedy so that they might recover their authority and possessions; and, in speaking thus, during this expedition, they had thought the best way would be to kill me and my people, and afterwards to call on the natives of these provinces to rise and kill Cristobal de Olid and all his people. After that they would send their messengers to Temixtitan to incite the people to kill all the Spaniards, which thing they thought could easily be done as many were newly arrived and untrained to warfare. After that, they would raise the whole country, and kill all the Spaniards wherever they might be found, putting strong garrisons of natives in all the seaports so that none might escape, nor any vessel coming from Castile take back the news. By these means, they would rule again as before, and they had already distributed the different provinces amongst themselves, giving one to this same Mexicalcingo. I gave many thanks to our Lord for having revealed this treachery to me, and, at daybreak, I imprisoned all those lords, each one by himself, and then inquired of them one by one about the plot; and

to each I said that the others had told it to me (for they could not speak with one another). Thus they were all constrained to confess that it was true that Guatemucin and Tetepanguecal had invented the plot, and that, though the others had heard it, they had never consented to take part.²⁴⁵ These two, therefore, were hanged, and I set the others free because it appeared they were to blame for nothing more than having listened to it, although this alone was sufficient for them to deserve death; their case, however, remains open so that at any time they relapse they may be punished accordingly, though it is not probable that they will again conspire, for they think that I discovered this by some magic, and that nothing can be hidden from me; for they have noticed that to direct the making of the road I often consult the map and the compass, especially when the road approaches the sea, and they have often said to the Spaniards that they believed I learnt it by that compass; also they have sometimes said, wishing to assure me of their good disposition, that I might know their honest intentions by looking into the glass and on the map, and that there I would see their sincerity since I knew everything by this means. I also allowed them to think that this was true. his province of Acalan is very large, and well populated; many of its towns were visited by my Spaniards. It abounds in honey and other products and there are many merchants who trade in different places and who are rich in slaves and merchandise. It is completely surrounded by lagoons, all of which extend to the bay and port called Los Terminos, by means of which they carry on a considerable trade by water with Xiculango and Tabasco. It is believed, also, though the exact truth is not known, that the lagoons extend to the other sea, thus making the country known as Yucatan an island: I shall endeavour to ascertain the secret of this so as to inform Your Majesty truthfully about it. According to what I learn, they have no other lord save this Apaspolon, whom I have mentioned above to Your Majesty, and he is the richest trader and has the greatest shipping traffic of anybody. His commerce is very extensive, and at Nito, a town of which I will hereafter speak, and where I met the Spaniards of Gil Gonzales de Avila's party, there is an entire quarter peopled with his agents under command of one of his brothers. The chief articles of merchandise in those provinces are cacao, cotton cloth, colours for dyeing,

245) The Indian version of Quauhtemotzin's execution, given by Torquemada, who copied it from a Mexican MS., is quite different from the one Cortes gives the Emperor. Cohuanacox, King of Texcoco, spoke privately at Izancanac with his fellow prisoners, saying that were their people not what they were, their Kings would not be so easily reduced to slavery and marched about behind the Spanish commander, and that it would in reality be easy enough to repay Cortes for burning Quauhtemotzin's feet. At this point the others stopped him, but a Mexican, who is called Mexicalcin by early writers and was baptised as Christopher had overheard and reported the words to Cortes, who, without more ado hanged the three Princes that night on a Ceiba tree. Torquemada expresses the opinion that Cortes was weary of guarding the royal captives, and yet dared not free them, and was glad to use the first pretext to kill them.

Bernal Diaz states that both Quauhtemotzin and Tetepanquezatl protested their entire innocence, and that all the Spaniards disapproved of the execution.

Cortes dared much, and there was little articulate public opinion in Mexico whose voice he could not control, but it is doubtful if he would have dared to hang the last three Kings on such vague charges reported by a camp servant, with all Mexico looking on. This, the blackest deed of his life, was done in an obscure part of a remote wilderness.

It were not strange that the royal captives should have talked of their misfortunes and sufferings, when they thought they were alone, or have discussed how it all might have been prevented, or even repaired, but it is a far cry from such communings over their camp-fire to the organisation of a plot to kill their captor and raise a general insurrection against the Spaniards. There seems no discoverable justification for this barbarous and treacherous act. It needed no gift of prophecy for Quauhtemotzin to foresee his fate when he fell into Cortes's hands, and the choice he then expressed for immediate death proved that he cherished no illusions as to what the future held for him. Prescott, in describing the inglorious end of the last Aztec Emperor, says: "might we not rather call him the last of the Aztecs, since from this time, broken in spirit and without a head, the remnant of the nation resigned itself almost without a struggle to the stern yoke of its oppressors?"

It is said that Cortes was disquieted in his conscience after this "execution," and for a long time could not sleep. The murdered captives were: Quauhtemotzin, Emperor of Mexico; Cohuanacox; King of Texcoco; Tettlepanquetzal, King of Tlacopan; Oquizi, King of Atzcapotzalco; Vehichilzi, brother of Quauhtemotzin and King of Michuacan; and the two Indian Generals, Xihmocoatl and Tlacatle. Humboldt (Essai Polity lib. iii., cap. viii.) describes an Indian picture-writing, representing the hanging of these prisoners by their feet to prolong their sufferings, which he saw in Mexico.

Quauhtemotzin's widow, Princess Tecuichpo, who was a daughter of Montezuma, had already had one husband, Cuitlahuatzin, and, afterwards married successively three different Spaniards.

and a kind of stain with which they smear their bodies to protect them against heat and cold; tar for lighting purposes. resine from pines for the incensing of their idols, slaves, and certain red beads of shells which they greatly esteem for ornamenting their persons in their feasts and festivities; they trade in some gold, which is mixed with copper and other alloys.

To this Apasolon, as well as to other notable persons of the province who came to see me, I spoke as I had to all the others on the road respecting their idols and what they ought to do to save their souls, and to what they were bound in Your Majesty's service. They appeared to accept what I said with satisfaction, and they burned many of their idols in my presence, saying that henceforth they would no longer honour them, and promising that they would obey everything commanded of them in Your Majesty's name; upon which I took my leave of them and departed as I have said above.

Three days before leaving this province of Acalan, I sent ahead four Spaniards, with two guides whom the chief had given me, to explore the road to the province of Mazatlan, which in their language is called Quiacho. They had told me that for four days I would have to cross the deserted country, sleeping in the forest, so I ordered the men to inspect the country well, and see if there were any rivers or swamps to cross; and at the same time I directed that my people should take supplies for six days so as not to be again in such another strait as before. There being an abundance of everything, this was done, and, five leagues beyond a certain lagoon which we crossed, I met the four Spaniards who had explored the road with the guides; and they told me they had found a very good road, which, although it led through the heart of the forest, was level and without rivers or swamps to obstruct us, and that, without being seen themselves, they had reconnoitred some villages where they had seen people, and had then returned. I rejoiced greatly at this news, and sent six active foot soldiers ahead with some Indians, our friends, to keep always a league in advance of those who were opening the road, with orders that if they should meet any traveller, to seize him so that we might arrive in the provinces unexpected, for I wished to prevent the people from burning and deserting their towns as those before them had done.

That day, they found two Indians, natives of Acalan, near a lake, who said they were coming from Mazatlan where they had traded salt for cotton clothing, which indeed appeared, in a measure, to be true, for they were loaded with clothing. When brought before me, and asked if the people of that province knew about my coming, they answered no, saying that they were all perfectly quiet; so I told them they must return with me, and not to be disturbed as they would lose nothing of what they carried, but that, on the contrary, I would give them more, and that upon our arrival at that province they might return, for I was a great friend of all the natives of Acalan, and had received great kindness from its lord and people. They were quite willing to do this, and returned, guiding us by another road than the one first opened by my Spaniards, which led only to some plantations, whereas theirs led directly to the towns.

We passed that night in the forest, and, the next day, the Spaniards who went ahead as scouts met four natives of Mazatlan, with their bows and arrows, who were apparently sentries on the road, and who, on the approach of our people, wounded one of our men with their arrows, after which they fled, and, the forest being so dense, only one was captured; this one was given in charge to three of my Indians, and the Spaniards ran on believing that there were more of them; but, no sooner had the Spaniards gone, than the fugitives, who, as it appeared, had concealed themselves close by, returned, and fell upon our Indian friends who held their companion a prisoner, and, fighting with them, they liberated him. Mortified by this, our Indians pursued their enemies through the forest, and, having overtaken them, they fought with them, and wounded one by a great gash in the arm, taking him prisoner, while the others escaped, for they perceived that some of our people were coming up. I asked this Indian if his countrymen knew of my coming, and he answered that they did not; I then asked why he and his companions had been there as sentries, and he answered that this was their custom, for they were at war with some of their neighbours, and, to protect their farms, the lord had ordered sentinels always to be kept on the road to forestall any surprise. Having learnt from him that the first village of that province was near at hand, I made all possible haste to arrive there before any of his companions who had fled should give the alarm, and I

ordered those of my people who went ahead to stop as soon as they came in sight of the plantations and to hide themselves in the forest until I arrived.

When I came to the place, it was already late, so I made haste, thinking we might reach the town that night, but, perceiving that our baggage train was somewhat scattered, I ordered a captain, with twenty horsemen, to remain at the plantations and collect the bearers as they came up, and, after sleeping there with them, to follow my trail. I took a narrow path through the forest which was level and straight enough, but through such a dense growth that I walked leading my horse; and all my people followed me, one behind the other, in like manner. We marched in this wise until nightfall, when we were stopped by a morass which could not be traversed without first making some preparations; seeing which, I gave orders which were passed from one man to the other to return to a small cabin we had passed in the evening, and there we spent the night, though neither we nor the horses had any water.

The next morning, after preparing the morass with branches of trees so as to pass it, we crossed, though with much difficulty, leading our horses, and, three leagues beyond the place where we had passed the night, we beheld a town built upon a hill. Thinking that we had not been seen, I approached it with caution, and found it was so completely closed round that we could discover no entrance. At last we discovered one, but found the town abandoned, though full of provisions of all kinds, such as maize, fowls, honey, beans, and other products of the country, for, as the inhabitants were taken by surprise, they had no time to carry off their provisions which, as it was a fortified town, were very plentiful. The town is situated upon a lofty rock, having a great lake on one side and on the other a deep stream which empties into the lake; there is but one accessible entrance, and all is surrounded by a deep moat behind which there is a palisade, breast high; and beyond this palisade there is an enclosure of very thick planks, two fathoms high, with loop-holes at all points from which to shoot arrows; its watch towers rise seven or eight feet higher than the said wall, which was also provided with towers, on the top of which were many stones with which to fight from above. All the houses of the town had loop-holes and were fortified, while the streets were provided in the best possible manner; I speak with reference to the kind of arms with which they fight.

I sent some of the natives to search for the inhabitants of the town, and they brought me two or three whom I then sent, accompanied by one of those traders from Acalan whom I had captured on the road, to find the chief, and to tell him in my name not to be frightened; for I had not come to do him or his people any harm, but rather to help him in the wars he was carrying on, so as to leave him and his country in a state of peace and security. Two days later, the messengers returned, bringing with them an uncle of the lord of the country who was governing during his nephew's minority; the lord himself did not come, for he said he was afraid, but I spoke to the uncle and reassured him, after which he escorted me to another village of the same province, seven leagues further on, called Tiac, which was much larger than the former and equally well fortified, though not so strong since it was situated in a plain. Like the other town, it had strong palisades, a deep moat, and watch towers, and each of the three quarters into which it was divided had its own fortifications, while the whole was encircled by an outer wall stronger than the others. I had sent to this village two companies of cavalry and one of foot soldiers each under a captain, but upon their arrival they found it entirely deserted, though full of provisions; my men, however, managed to capture seven or eight natives near by, some of whom they had set at liberty so that they might go and speak to their chief, and tranquillise the people. They succeeded so well in this that, before my arrival at the place, its chief had already sent messengers with a present of provisions and cotton clothing.

After I arrived, the natives returned at two different times to bring us food and to speak with us, not only on the part of the lord of this town, but also on behalf of five or six others in this province, each of whom was independent, and everyone of whom offered himself as vassal of Your Majesty and our friend, though I never could induce those lords to come and see me. As I had no time to waste, I sent them word that I received them in Your Highness's name and asked them to furnish me guides for my journey; this they did very willingly, giving me one who not only knew the country as far as the town where the Spaniards were whom I came to search for, but had also seen them. Thereupon I left the town of Tiac,

sleeping that night at another, called Yasuncabil, which is the last in the province; this was surrounded by palisades, as the other two, but deserted. We found there a most beautiful house of the chief built entirely of straw. We provided ourselves there with everything required for the march, for the guide told us we had five days' journey in the desert before reaching the Province of Taiza which we had to traverse; and it turned out that this was true.

In this Province of Mazatlan, or Quiatcho as it is called, I dismissed the two traders whom I had stopped on the road, as well as the guides from Acalan, giving them some presents, both for themselves, and for their chief, so they went off very contented. I also dismissed to his home the chief of the first town who had come with me, giving him some of his women who had been captured in the forest; I also gave him some other small presents at which he was much pleased.

Having left the Province of Mazatlan, I continued my march towards that of Taiza sleeping four nights on the road in that deserted country. My way led over high and rocky mountains, and I had to cross a dangerous pass of which all the rocks were of very fine alabaster, hence I named it Puerto del Alabastro. On the fifth day, the scouts who went ahead with the guides discovered a great lake which seemed to be an arm of the sea and so large and deep is it that, although its waters are fresh, I even believe that it is so.²⁴⁶ On a small island in this lake there stood a town which the guides said was the chief one of the Province of Taiza and that if we wished to reach it we could do so only in canoes; hearing this the Spaniards remained there keeping watch while one returned to report to me what had happened. I halted the people, and went ahead on foot to see that lake and its situation, and, upon arriving at that place, I found my scouts had succeeded in capturing an Indian, belonging to the town on the island, who, carrying arms, had come in a very small canoe to reconnoitre the road; and though taken by surprise he would have escaped had not one of our dogs overtaken him before he could spring into the water. I learned from this Indian that his countrymen knew nothing about my arrival. I asked him whether there was any way to reach the town on the island, and he answered that there was none, but that not far distant there was a narrow arm of the lake on the other side of which were some plantations and houses, and that, if we succeeded in reaching there without being seen, we were sure to find canoes. I immediately sent to order the people to follow me, and, accompanied by ten or twelve crossbowmen, I went on foot with the Indian and crossed a great stretch of swamp up to our waists in water, and sometimes even higher. In this manner, we reached the plantations, but, as the road was bad, and we could not always conceal ourselves, we had already been seen and when we got there the inhabitants were hastily taking to their canoes on the lake shore.

I marched along the shores for about two thirds of a league, passing plantations and houses; but everywhere we had been detected and the inhabitants were escaping in their canoes. It was already late, and I considered it useless to follow them, so I ordered my people to halt and camp at those plantations, taking the best precautions possible; for the guide of Mazatlan told me the people were numerous and warlike and much feared by all their neighbours. The guide then offered to go in that little canoe in which the Indian had come, and cross to that town on the island, a good two leagues distant where he would speak to the lord, whom he knew very well, and who is called Canec, telling him my intentions and the reason of my coming to his country, with which he himself was perfectly acquainted as he had accompanied me. He believed that the chief would be perfectly reassured and would believe what he told him, for he was well known to him and had often been in his house. I immediately gave him the canoe belonging to the Indian who had come in it, and, thanking him for his offer, I promised that if he carried it out successfully I would reward him to his entire satisfaction; and thus he went, and returned at midnight bringing with him two distinguished persons of the town who said they were sent by their lord to see me, and to inform themselves about what my messenger had said, and to learn what I wished. I received them very well, and made them some small presents, telling them that I had come to those countries by order of

246) This lake, some twelve leagues in length, was called by the natives Hohuken meaning "the mighty drinker," and is now known as Peten-Itza. Peten meaning lake, and Itza being the name of a Maya tribe. Needless to add that Cortes was wrong in thinking it was joined to the ocean.

Your Majesty for the purpose of seeing them, and to acquaint the lords and chiefs of the land with matters touching Your Royal service and their own welfare; that I desired them to tell their lord to come and see me without fear, and proposed that, if he hesitated, one of my Spaniards should go to the island as a hostage during the time their chief was with me. They took back this message, accompanied by the guide, and one of the Spaniards; and, the next day, the chief, himself, escorted by about thirty men in five or six canoes came bringing with him the Spaniard I had given as a hostage. He seemed much pleased at meeting me, and I received him very well.

As it was the hour of mass when he arrived, I ordered it sung with great solemnity, accompanied by clarions and sackbuts to which he listened with great attention, observing all the ceremonies; and, when mass was finished, one of the Franciscan friars whom I had with me, preached a sermon which was translated by the interpreter so that he could easily understand, touching the matters of our Faith, and giving him to understand with many arguments how there was but one God, and the error of his sect. The chief displayed much satisfaction, and declared that he wished to destroy his idols immediately, and to believe in that God of whom we had spoken, and that he desired to know how he was to serve and honour Him, and that if I wished to come to his town I should see that he would burn the idols in my presence; and he desired that I should leave a cross in his town, as he had been told I had left one in all the towns through which I passed.

After this sermon, I again spoke to him, explaining Your Majesty's greatness and how he and all living creatures were the natural subjects and vassals of Your Imperial Highness, and bound to your service; that to those who did so Your Majesty granted all manner of favours which I, in Your Royal name, had dispensed to all those who had offered themselves to Your Royal service and placed themselves under Your Royal rule; I promised the same or greater to him. He answered that, until then, he had never recognised anyone as superior, nor had he known that there was any such one; that it was true that some five or six years ago some people from Tabasco passing through his country had told him how a captain with certain people of our nation had been there and vanquished them in three battles, after which they had been told that they must become vassals of a great lord and many other things like what I was now telling him. He wanted to know therefore whether it was all one and the same thing. I answered him that I was the captain of whom the people of Tabasco had spoken as having fought with them in their country, of which he might assure himself from the interpreter with whom he was speaking, who is Marina whom I have always had with me since she was presented to me with twenty other women. She explained everything to him and how I had conquered Mexico, and told him of all the countries I had subjected and placed under the Empire of Your Majesty. He rejoiced greatly on learning this and said he desired to become a subject and vassal of Your Majesty, considering it a joy to be under so great a lord as I told him Your Highness was. He ordered birds, honey, and some gold, and beads made of red shells, which they highly prize, to be brought, and these he offered to me as a present, while I in return gave him some things I had brought with me, which he received with great pleasure.

After having dined with me, I explained how I came in search of those Spaniards who were on the sea coast, and who belonged to my company, and had been sent thither by me; and that many days had passed without news from them, and hence I came to seek them; and I besought him to tell me if he had any news of them. He answered that he knew a great deal about them, because, not far from the place where they were, he had certain vassals who worked the plantations of cacao, for that country was favourable to its growth; from them, and from many other traders who daily went to and fro, he constantly received news about them, and would give me a guide to take me to where they were. He told me, however, that the road was very rough, the mountains very high and rocky, and that it would be less fatiguing to go by sea. I replied that he could see for himself that, on account of the numerous people and baggage and horses I had, there would not be sufficient boats, and therefore I was compelled to go by land; I asked him, however, to give me the means of crossing that lake, to which he replied that, about three leagues from the place where we were, the lake became shallow, and, by skirting it, I could reach the road opposite his village; but he begged me that, as my people were coming round the lake, I would accompany him in his

canoe to visit his town and house where he wished to burn the idols and have a cross made for him. To please him, although it was against the will of my people, I embarked, with about twenty of my men, most of them archers, in his canoe and went to his town with him, where I spent the rest of the day in festivity. At nightfall, I took leave of him, and he gave me a guide with whom I entered the canoe and returned to sleep on land, where I met many of my people who had come round the lake to a place where we passed the night. In this town, or rather at the plantations, I left a horse which got a splinter in his foot and was unable to go on; the chief promised to cure it but I do not know what he will do with him.²⁴⁷ The next day, collecting my people, I set out, accompanied by the guides, and, about a half a league from our camping place, I came upon a small plain where there were some huts, beyond which was a small forest extending for about a league and a half; after which we again reached some beautiful plains, covered with grass, from which point I sent ahead some horsemen and foot soldiers with orders to stop and seize any natives they might find on their way, for the guides had told us we would arrive near a village that same night. We found these I plains abounding in deer, so we hunted all that day on horseback, and speared eighteen of them, though, owing to the heat and the fact that our horses were in bad condition from the previous journey through mountainous and swampy districts, two of them died, and many others were in great danger. Our hunting finished, we continued our route, and, after a little while, I met some of the scouts ahead who had captured four Indian hunters, these latter having just killed a lion and some iguanas, a species of large lizard which are common in the island[lucerta eguana]. I learned from the hunters that their townsmen knew nothing about me, and they then pointed out to me the plantations from which they came, which were visible about one league and a half from where we were. I hastened thither, thinking I might arrive without difficulty, but, just as I thought I was about to enter the village, and could see the people moving about in it, we came upon a large lagoon which seemed to me very deep, and so I was delayed. I called to the Indians, and two of them came in a canoe, bringing about a dozen chickens, and approaching very near to where I was on horseback, standing in water up to the girths; but, although I remained talking with them quite a while, and trying to persuade them to approach the shore, they were afraid to do this, but rather retreated, and began to withdraw in their canoes to their town. The Spaniard who was on horseback by my side spurred his horse through the waters and swam after them, which so frightened them that they abandoned their canoes, upon which some foot soldiers swam quickly after them and captured them. All the people we had seen in the town had completely deserted it. I asked those Indians where we could cross, and they showed me a road where, by a roundabout march of about a league, we would find a passage; so that we went that night to sleep in that town. It is eight leagues from our starting place, and is called Checan, and the name of its chief is Amohan.

I remained four days collecting supplies enough for six days more, for which time the guide told me we would march through a desert, and also waiting to see if the chief of the town, whom I had sent to call, would come, for I had assured him through those Indians I had captured; but neither he nor they appeared. Having collected all the provisions obtainable there, I left, and marched, the first day, through a very level and beautiful country, with no forests, save now and then. And, having travelled six leagues, we reached the foot of a great mountain range where we found a large house and two or three smaller ones situated near a river, all surrounded by maize plantations; the guides told me that the house belonged to Amohan, the chief of Checan, who kept it as an inn for the many traders passing that way. I stopped there one day besides that of my arrival, as it was a festival, and also because I wished to give the scouts who went ahead time to clear the road. We had very excellent fishing in the river near Checan, where we found a large number of shad which we took without difficulty, not one of those which entered the nets escaping.

247) The fate of this animal was indeed a strange one. Villagutierra (in his *Hist. de la Conquista del Itza*) relates that some Franciscan monks who visited Peten-Itza in 1697, with Don Martin Ursua, landed with the intention of building a church on the island, and found there a large temple in which stood the image of a horse very well carved in stone. They discovered that Cortes's lame horse became an object of great veneration to the natives who fed him on flowers, birds, and similar delicacies with the natural result that the poor animal starved to death, after which he was ranked amongst the native deities and worshipped under the title of Tziminchak, god of thunder and lightning. It would appear from this that the Christian doctrines had not been so clearly understood by the chief and his people as Cortes imagined.

The following day, we marched seven leagues through a rough and mountainous country, and spent the night on the banks of a large river. On the next day, after about three leagues of very bad road, we reached a beautiful plain without woods, except a few pines; we killed seven deer in these plains, which extended for about two leagues, and we dined on the banks of a very fresh stream that flows through them. After dinner, we began to ascend a mountain pass, which, though small, was rough enough so that we had to lead our horses with some difficulty; and, after the descent, we again found half a league of plain, beyond which there was another mountain pass which was about two and a half leagues long, and so rough that there was not a horse left but that had lost his shoes. I slept at the foot of the pass near a stream, where I remained the next day until about the hour of vespers, waiting for the horses to be shod; and, although I had two smiths, and more than ten who helped drive the nails, they could not all be shod that day. So I went to sleep, three leagues farther on, while many Spaniards remained there, some to shoe their horses, and others to wait for the baggage, which, on account of the bad road and the heavy rains, had not come up.

I left there the next day because the guide told me that there was a hamlet, called Asuncapin, close by belonging to the lord of Taiza, where I would arrive in plenty of time to sleep; after marching four or five leagues we reached the said hamlet, and found it deserted; and there I lodged two days, waiting for the baggage and gathering provisions. This being accomplished, I went to a hamlet, called Taxuytel, where I slept, and which is five leagues from Taiza, and belongs to Amohan the Lord of Checan; there were many cacao plantations and some of maize, although in smaller quantities and still green. Here the guides and the chief of these hamlets, whom we captured with his wife and his son, told me that we would have to cross a chain of high and rocky mountains all uninhabited, and that, after this, we would arrive at some other hamlets, belonging to Canec, lord of Taiza, which were called Tenciz.

We did not stop here long, but departed the next day, and, having traversed about six leagues of level country, we began to ascend the mountain pass, which is one of the most marvellous things in the world to behold; for were I to try to describe its roughness and difficulties I would entirely fail to make anybody understand me. But, that Your Majesty may have some idea, I will say that, in crossing the eight leagues of this mountain pass, we spent twelve days, I mean until we reached the uttermost end of it; during which time, sixty-eight horses were lost by falling over precipices and being hamstrung, while all the others were so fatigued and injured that we hardly thought we could ever use them again, and more than three months passed before they were fit for service. During all the ascent of this dreadful pass, it poured rain day and night, but such was the character of the mountains that the water never collected anywhere so that we could drink it, and hence we suffered greatly from thirst and our horses perished on account of it; indeed, had it not been that we collected water in copper kettles and other vessels while camping in the ranches and huts we made to shelter us, not a man or horse would have escaped alive. During this crossing, a nephew of mine fell and broke his leg in three or four places, and, aside from the suffering he endured, this increased our difficulties, because we had to carry him.

Our troubles were not yet at an end; for, about a league before reaching the hamlets of Tenciz, which, as I said before, are on the other side of the mountains, we were stopped by a very large river, so swollen by the recent rains that it was impossible to cross it. The Spaniards who had gone ahead had followed up the river and found the most marvellous ford which has ever been seen or thought of, for the river spread out for upwards of two thirds of a league, owing to certain large rocks, between the crevices of which the water flows with most frightful force. There are many places where the rocks lie so close together that we managed to cross by cutting down large trees and laying them from one rock to another and holding fast by creepers which were tied from one side to the other, for had anyone lost his footing and fallen he would have been certainly lost. There were more than twenty of these channels to cross, so that it took us two days, and the horses crossed lower down where the current was less swift; but though the distance to Tenciz was only one league, as I said before, many of them were three days in arriving there; such was their broken-down condition after their march across the mountains that my men were almost obliged to carry them, for they could scarcely walk.

I reached Tenciz on the day before Easter²⁴⁸ though many of my people did not arrive until three days afterwards; I mean those who had horses and had been delayed in looking after them. The Spaniards whom I had sent ahead had arrived two days before me, and, taking possession of two or three of the above mentioned hamlets, had captured some twenty odd Indians, who, being unaware of my presence in those parts, had been surprised. I asked them if they had any provisions, and they said no; nor could any be found in all the country, which considerably augmented our misfortunes, as, during the past ten days, we had eaten nothing except cores of palm trees and palmettos, and even of these we had not enough, so that we were so weak we had scarcely the strength to cut them down. One of the chiefs, however, told me that, by ascending the river a day's journey (which river had again to be crossed at the same dangerous spot) there was the large town of a province, called Tahuyecal, where we would find abundant provisions of maize, cacao, and fowls, and that he would give us a guide to lead us there. I immediately sent one of my captains with thirty foot soldiers and more than one thousand of the Indians who came with us thither, and our Lord was pleased that they should find a great abundance of maize, and plenty of people, so that we supplied ourselves, although it was with difficulty on account of the distance.

From this hamlet, I sent certain crossbowmen with a native guide to explore the road we were to take to the province, called Acuculin; and they reached a village of the said province some ten leagues from where I had stopped and six from the chief town of the province, whose lord is called Acahuilguin. They arrived there unnoticed, and in one house they surprised seven men and a woman, whom they brought to me, saying that though the road they had taken was bad and somewhat rough, it appeared to them very good in comparison with that over which we had come. I questioned the Indian prisoners to obtain information about the Christians whom I sought, and one of them, who was a native of Acalan, told me that he was a trader, having his principal trade in the town of Nito where those Spaniards lived, that there was a large traffic carried on there by merchants from all parts of the country, and that his own people of Acalan lived in a quarter of their own, having as their chief a brother of Apaspolon, the lord of Acalan. He said that the Christians had come there one night, captured the town, and robbed the inhabitants of all they had, besides much valuable merchandise belonging to traders from all parts who were in the town. In consequence of this, which had happened about the year before, the people had abandoned the place and gone to other provinces, while he and certain other traders of Acalan had obtained permission from Acahuilguin, the lord of Acuculin, to settle in his country. Here he[Acahuilguin] had given them a small town in which they lived and whence they carried on their trade, although it was entirely ruined after the Spaniards had come there, for there was but that one road and nobody ventured to use it. He said he would guide me, but that we would be obliged to cross a large inlet of the sea and many difficult mountain chains, altogether a ten days' journey.

I rejoiced greatly at having found so good a guide, and treated him well, instructing the guides I had brought from Mazatlan and Taiza to tell him how well I had treated them, and that I was a great friend of Apaspolon, their lord. This increased his confidence in me, and I ventured to set him and all his companions free, trusting him to such an extent that I discharged the guides whom I had brought thus far, giving them some small presents for themselves and for their chiefs, and thanking them for their services; after which they left me well satisfied. I ordered four men from Acuculin and two chosen among the inhabitants of Tenciz to go ahead with a message from me to the lord of Acuculin, and encourage him to await me; and after them there followed other Indians to open the road. The scarcity of provisions and the want of rest, both for the men and horses, delayed me two days longer at that place, after which I departed, leading most of our horses until we reached a place where we passed the night. At daybreak we found that the man who was to have been our guide and all his companions had gone, and God knows how I regretted having dismissed the others. I marched ahead however, and slept in a forest, five leagues distant from there; and on the road we encountered such rough places that the only one of my horses which had held out was disabled by a fall and has not yet recovered.

248) Easter fell in the year 1525, on May 15th.

The next day, I marched six leagues and crossed two rivers, one of which we crossed on a tree which had fallen spanning it; the horses swam across and two mares were drowned; we crossed the other river in canoes, the horses swimming. I slept in a small town of about fifteen newly built houses which I learned belonged to the merchants of Acalan who had left the town where the Christians were and had settled here. I waited there a day to collect the men and baggage, then I sent two companies of horsemen and one of foot soldiers in the direction of Acuculin; from there they wrote me that they had found the place deserted, but that in a large house, belonging to the lord of the country, they had captured two men who were waiting there, by command of their chief, to advise him of my arrival as soon as they saw me. The prisoners declared that their lord had heard of my coming from those messengers whom I had sent from Tenciz, and that he would rejoice to see me and come as soon as he learnt that I had arrived. My men sent one to summon the lord and to bring some provisions, while the other they held as hostage. They said they had found cacao but no maize, and that the pasture for the horses was fairly good.

When I reached Acuculin, I immediately asked whether the lord had arrived or the messenger returned, and they answered that they had not, so I spoke to the hostage and asked him why it was. He answered that he did not know unless the lord was awaiting to hear that I had arrived there, and that now he was aware of it he would come. I waited one day, and, as he did not come, I again spoke to the hostage; and he said that he did not know the reason, but that if I would give him some Spaniards he knew where his lord was and would go with them to call him. So ten Spaniards immediately left with him, and he led them a good five leagues through forests to some hamlets which they found empty, but which, according to what the Spaniards said, had evidently been recently occupied; and that night the guide deserted them and they returned. Being left without any guide, which was cause enough to double our troubles, I sent squads of people, not only Spaniards, but also Indians, in all directions through the province, and they explored for eight consecutive days without meeting any living creature, save some women, who were of little use to our purpose, because neither did they know any road, nor could they give any account of the lord of the province. One of the women, however, said that she knew of a town, two days' journey from there, called Chianteco, where we would find people who could give us news of those Spaniards whom we sought; for many merchants lived in that town who traded everywhere. So I immediately sent people thither with this woman for a guide, and, although the town was two long days' journey from where we were, and accessible only by a rough and deserted road, the natives of it had already heard of my coming and no guide could be secured. Our Lord was pleased that, we being almost hopeless at finding ourselves without a guide, and unable to use the compass on account of being in the midst of forests so intricate, and with no other road discoverable which led anywhere save the one we had come on, should find in the forest a lad of about fifteen years of age, who, being questioned, said he would guide us as far as some hamlets of Taniha, which is another province I remembered I had to cross, and which he said was two days' journey from there. So I departed with this guide, and reached those hamlets within two days, finding that the scouts who had gone ahead had taken an old Indian there who guided them as far as the towns of Taniha, which are another two days' journey further on. Four Indians were captured in these towns, and, as soon as I inquired of them, they gave me news of the Spaniards whom I sought, saying they had seen them, and that they were two days' journey from there in the same town, which I remembered and which is called Nito.²⁴⁹ This being a centre of much trade amongst the merchants was very well known everywhere, and I had heard about it already in the Province of Acalan, of which I have already spoken to Your Majesty. They also brought two women, natives of the said town Nito, who gave me further details; for they told me they were in the town when the Christians captured it, and that they themselves were among the prisoners taken when it was assaulted by night, and had served the Christians whom they called by their names. I cannot express to Your Majesty the great joy which I and my people felt at the news these natives of Taniha gave us, for we saw ourselves at the end of our perilous journey. We had passed through innumerable troubles during the four days march from Acuculin, owing to the precipitous roads and rough

249) Nito and Naco are sometimes confused, but they are distinct places: Nito is now called San Gil de Buena Vista, and the name of Naco remains to a valley near Puerto Caballos.

mountainous passes we had to cross. During this time, the few horses we had left suffered falls, and my cousin, Juan de Avalon, rolled down a mountain with his horse and broke his arm²⁵⁰; and, had it not been for the steel plates of his armour which protected him from the stones, he would have been dashed to pieces; and we had trouble enough to get him up again. And there were many other misfortunes, too many to be recounted, which befell us, especially through famine; for, although we had brought from Mexico some swine, which were not as yet all consumed, neither I nor my men, when we arrived at Taniha, had tasted any bread for eight consecutive days; our only food was palmettos boiled with the meat and without salt, and the cores of palm trees. Neither did we find any food in these towns of Taniha, for, being in the near neighbourhood of the Spaniards, they were deserted, although, had the natives known the miserable plight in which I afterwards found the Spaniards, they might have felt safe from being attacked by them. The news that we were so near to them made us forget all our past troubles and gave us courage to support our present ones, which were not less great; especially that of hunger, which was the worst of all, because even all those palmettos without salt were in insufficient quantity, since they had to be cut with such great difficulty from thick and tall palm trees that it took two men a day's hard work to cut what they could eat in an hour.

Those Indians who brought me news of the Spaniards told me that, before reaching Nito, I would have two days' march over a bad road, and that, near by, there was a large river which could be crossed only in canoes, for it was so wide, and the current so strong, that it would be impossible to swim. Upon hearing this, I sent fifteen Spaniards on foot in that direction, guided by one of those Indians, and ordered them to explore the roads and the river, and see if they could encounter any of those Spaniards, and discover to what group or party the settlers at Nito belonged, whether to those I had sent with Cristobal de Olid, or to those of Francisco de las Casas, or to those of Gil Gonzales de Avila. So they left, and the Indian guided them to the said river, where they took canoes from some traders and hid themselves there for two days, at the end of which time four Spaniards came in a canoe to fish. They seized them, not letting any escape, nor had the people of the town noticed the occurrence. When they were brought before me, I learned that the people there belonged to Gil Gonzales de Avila, and that they were all ill and almost starved to death, so I immediately despatched, in that same canoe, two of my servants, to take a letter of mine to the Spaniards, announcing my arrival and my intention to cross that river by the ford, begging them to send me all the canoes and boats they could to help my crossing. I set out with all my people for the said ford of the river, reaching it in three days; and one Diego Nieto came there and told me that he had been condemned to exile. He brought me a boat and a canoe in which I embarked with ten or twelve of my people, and crossed that night to the town, though in great peril, for a strong wind struck us in the crossing and as the river is very broad just there at its mouth, we were in danger of being lost. It pleased our Lord to bring us safely across.

The next day, I prepared another boat, which I found in the harbour, by means of which and some other canoes which I had tied securely two by two, I managed to bring over the whole of the people and horses within five or six days. The Spaniards whom I found there, some seventy men and twenty women, brought thither by Gil Gonzales de Avila, were in such a plight that it excited the greatest compassion merely to behold them, aside from seeing their rejoicing at my coming; for, of a truth, had I not arrived, everyone would have perished. For, besides being few, unarmed, and without horses, they were very ill, suffering from want and starvation, as their provisions from the island, and what they had captured from the natives when they took the town, were exhausted; they were in no condition to procure any more, for they were settled on a sort of tongue of land from which there was no issue, except by water, as we afterwards discovered, and they had never penetrated half a league into the country from where they were. Seeing their great want, I determined to obtain some relief, until means could be provided for sending them back to the Islands, where they could recuperate, for amongst them all there were not eight fit to remain in the country in case they were left there. I immediately sent some of my people, in five or six canoes and two barques which they had there, in various directions by sea to seek provisions.

250) A few pages back he describes his cousin's injuries as a broken leg — "in three or four places."

The first expedition was to go to the mouth of a river, called Yasa, about two leagues from that settlement, and in the direction of the territory through which I had come; for I had learned that there were well provisioned towns thereabouts. Upon reaching the said river, they ascended it some leagues and arrived at some very considerable plantations; but the natives, seeing them approach, hastily concealed all their provisions in certain houses, and, carrying their women and children and goods and chattels, they all fled to the forest. When the Spaniards arrived at these houses, a pouring rain set in, so they all collected in a large house, and as they were wet through they all took off their armour, and many of them even their clothes to dry them and warm themselves; and, while in this condition, off their guard, the natives fell upon them, wounding most of them in such manner that they were forced to re-embark and to return to me without any provisions. God knows what I suffered, not only at seeing their wounds, some of which were dangerous, and because they had brought no relief for alleviating our wants, but also because those Indians would acquire more confidence at the sight of our misfortunes.

Immediately, in the same boats and canoes, I sent another and more numerous party of men, composed of Spaniards as well as Mexicans under command of one of my captains. I ordered them to cross to the other side of that great river and to follow along the coast while the barques and canoes were to go from one point to another of the land, accompanying them so as to enable them to cross the bays and rivers which were many. So they set out, and came to the mouth of the said river where the other Spaniards had been wounded; but they returned having done nothing, and bringing no supplies of provisions except that they captured four Indians in a canoe at sea. Being asked how it was they came back thus, they said that the great rains had swollen the river to a raging torrent, and they could not ascend it more than a league; but, believing it would subside, they had waited eight days without fire or any provisions except such fruits as the forest yielded; some of them were in such a condition that they hardly survived. I found myself so concerned and perplexed that, had it not been for the swine left over from the journey, which we ate with great relish without either bread or salt, we would have all perished from hunger. Through the interpreter, I asked those Indians who had been taken in the canoe, whether they knew of any place in the neighbourhood where we might procure food, promising them that, if they would guide me, I would release them and give them many presents besides. One of them said that he was a trader and the others were his slaves, and that he had gone frequently with his merchant ships and knew all the bay, which extended from there to a large river, in which all the traders like himself took refuge in time of storm, and that, on that river, there were many large towns which were rich and well stocked with provisions where we could find everything we required, and that he would guide us thither. He offered, in proof of his truth, that I might put him in chains and if he had lied I might punish him as he deserved. So I ordered the boats and canoes to be prepared, and, having manned them with all who were still healthy and capable of bearing fatigue, I sent them under the guidance of that man; but ten days later they returned as they had gone, saying that the guide had led them into marshes where neither the barques nor canoes could float, and that, in spite of their efforts, they had never been able to cross.

I asked the guide why he had hoaxed me thus, and he answered that he had not done so, but that the Spaniards whom I had sent with him refused to go on though they had been close to the spot where the river joined the sea; and indeed many of the Spaniards even admitted that they had heard the sound of the sea very distinctly, so they could not have been very far from it.

I cannot express what I felt at seeing myself so beyond help, and almost beyond hope, faced with the fear that none of us would escape death by starvation. God, our Lord, Who always relieves necessities, even those of one so unworthy as I, and Who has so often delivered me in such because I am in the royal service of Your Majesty guided thither a ship which was coming from the Islands, with no idea of finding me, and which carried some thirty men, besides the crew and thirteen horses, seventy odd swine, twelve casks of salt meat and thirty loads of bread, of the kind used in the Islands. We all gave thanks to our Lord, Who had rescued us in our great necessity; and I bought all those provisions of the ship for the price of four thousand pesos. I had already worked at repairing a caravel which the Spaniards there had allowed to go almost to pieces, and had begun building a brigantine from pieces of other vessels which had been

wrecked thereabouts, so that, when this ship arrived, the caravel was already repaired; though I believe we would never have finished the brigantine had that ship not come, because it brought us a man who, though not really a ship's carpenter, was yet sufficiently versed in that trade.

In scouring the country, a path was discovered leading through some rough mountains to a certain town, called Leguela, eighteen leagues from there, where plenty of provisions were found, though, owing to the bad road, it was impossible to avail ourselves of them.

Some Indians captured there told us that the place where Francisco de las Casas, Cristobal de Olid, and Gil Gonzalez de Avila had left, and where Christobal de Olid had died, as I have already informed Your Majesty, and will again hereafter speak of, was a town called Naco. This agreed with the information given by the Spaniards I had found at Nito, so I immediately ordered a road to be opened, and sent ahead all my men, foot soldiers and horsemen, under one of my captains, keeping with me only the servants of my household, the sick, and those who wished to remain and go by sea. I instructed that captain to go to the said town of Naco, and try to pacify the people of that province who were still somewhat disturbed in consequence of the presence of those Spaniards; and that as soon as he arrived he should send ten or twelve horsemen, with as many crossbowmen, to the bay of San Andres,²⁵¹ about twenty leagues distant from there. Meanwhile I would bring the sick and wounded and the rest of the people by sea, and wait for them if I arrived first; if, on the contrary, they arrived first, they should wait for me.

After their departure and the completion of the brigantine, I thought to embark with the rest of my people, but I discovered that, although we had salt meat enough, we had not sufficient bread; and it seemed a very risky thing to put to sea without this, having so many sick people on board, for, if we encountered bad weather which would delay us, we should be exposed to death by starvation instead of finding relief for our woes. While considering how to remedy this, one who had been left as captain of those people told me that, when they had first come there with Gil Gonzalez, they had brought a very good brigantine and four ships; and that with the ships' boats they had ascended that river and found two large gulfs of fresh water, on whose shores there were several villages well stocked with food. After they had navigated to the extreme end of them, a distance altogether of fourteen leagues up the river, the stream became so narrow and so impetuous that, in six days, they had not made more than four leagues, although the waters were still very deep. They had not been able to discover much about it, but he believed that we would there find sufficient provisions of maize. He thought I had too few people to go thither, for eighty of his party had landed, and, although they had succeeded in surprising the town, the Indians gathered afterwards and fought with them, wounding several people and forcing them to re-embark.

Seeing, however, the extremity in which we were, and that it was more dangerous to go to sea without provisions than to hunt for them on land, I determined to ascend that river; for, besides having no alternative, it might be that God, our Lord, would grant that I should there discover some secret profitable to Your Majesty. So I immediately counted the people capable of accompanying me, and found some forty Spaniards who, though not all fit for service, were still able to guard the ships while I landed. With these forty Spaniards and about fifty Indians who still remained of those whom I brought from Mexico, and everything being ready for sea, I set out, in two other boats and four canoes, in the direction of that river we were to ascend, leaving all my sick people in that town with a steward of mine to take charge of them. At first, we had great difficulty in navigating against the strong current of the river, but after two nights and a day we reached the first of the two rivers above mentioned, some three leagues distant from our starting place; the gulf may measure about twelve leagues around, its shores being completely deserted, very low, and swampy. I sailed an entire day about this gulf, until I came to another narrowing which the river makes; and, entering it, I reached the other gulf the next morning. It was certainly the most beautiful thing in the world to behold, for, in the midst of the rockiest and most rugged mountain chain, there existed a sea of over thirty leagues in extent. I followed along the shore until towards nightfall we perceived a village, and, landing, we found an entrance to it about two thirds of a league distant; but it appeared I had been perceived, for the place was entirely deserted and empty. In the neighbouring fields

251) San Andres is now called Puerto Caballos.

we found a great abundance of green maize which we ate that night and the next morning; but, as we did not find what we came for, we took a supply of that green maize and returned to our boats, without having seen any natives of the country.

In crossing to the other side of the gulf, which was accomplished with great difficulty on account of a contrary wind we encountered, one canoe was lost, but its crew were saved by a barque, so that only one Indian was drowned. It was late in the evening when we reached the shore, so we could not land until the next morning, when we ascended a small stream with the barques and canoes, leaving the brigantine outside. Thus I reached the place where there seemed to be a trail, and, having ordered the boats and canoes to return to the brigantine on the gulf, I landed with thirty of my men and all the Indians; and, following the trail, I reached a village about a quarter of a league distant which seemed to have been abandoned by its inhabitants many days before, for the houses were choked with weeds, although there were many fine orchards of cacao and other fruit trees in the neighbourhood; I explored the town to see if there was a road leading anywhere, and finally found one, so overgrown that apparently it had not been used for some time. As I found no other I followed it, and marched that day some five leagues over mountains so rugged that we had to scramble over them with both hands and feet. We came to some maize plantations, with a house in the midst of them, where we captured three women and a man, who were doubtless the owners of these plantations. They guided us to other plantations, where we took two more women, who, in turn, led us by a road to a very large plantation, in the midst of which stood forty very small huts which seemed to have been recently built. It would appear, however, that our arrival was known, for the village was deserted and all the people had fled to the mountains; but, as we came upon them so suddenly, they could not carry off their provisions, so they had to leave us something, especially fowls, partridges, pigeons, and pheasants, which they kept in cages; there was, however, no dried maize, and no salt. I passed the night there, and the fowls and some green maize which we found somewhat assuaged our hunger. We had been there more than two hours when two of its inhabitants came, very much surprised to find such guests in their houses; they were captured by my scouts, and, on being asked if they knew of any town near there, they answered yes, and that they would guide me to it the next day but that we could arrive only very late, almost at night. The next morning, therefore, we began our march, guided by these two Indians, over roads still worse than those of the day before; for, besides being quite as overgrown with brushwood, we had at almost every arrow's shot to cross one of the many rivers which empty into that gulf. It is owing to the great accumulation of waters coming down from the mountains that these gulfs and lagoons are formed and that the river flows with such rapidity at its mouth, as I have told Your Majesty. Following our road in this wise, we travelled seven leagues without seeing any inhabited places, during which distance we crossed forty-five large rivers, not counting many creeks. On the road we captured three women, who were coming with loads of maize from that town to which the guide was taking us, who assured us that the guide spoke the truth.

At about sunset, we distinguished a noise as of people, and, asking those women what it meant, they answered that a certain festival was being celebrated that day. I concealed all my people in the forest in the most perfect manner possible, and placed some scouts quite close to the town, and others on the road, to capture any Indians who might be passing; and thus we passed the night in a great downpour of rain and amid the greatest pest of mosquitoes imaginable. Such was the condition of the forest and the road, and so dark and tempestuous was the night that, two or three times when I attempted to reach the town, I failed to discover the way, although we were so near that we could almost hear the people talking to one another; thus we were forced to wait for daylight, when we fell upon them so opportunely that we found them all asleep. I had given orders that nobody should enter a house or utter a cry, but that we should surround the principal houses, especially that of the chief, and a large barracks in which the guide said all the warriors slept. Our good fortune willed it that the first house to which we came was that in which the warriors were gathered. It was already daylight, so that everything could be seen, and one of my men, seeing so many people in arms, and considering how few in number we were to attack such numerous opponents, even though they were asleep, began to cry for help, and to shout, "Santiago! Santiago!" which awakened the

Indians. Some of them seized their weapons. and others did not, but, the houses having no walls, their roofs being supported merely by wooden posts, most of the Indians fled in every direction as soon as we entered the place, for it was too large to be entirely surrounded. I assure Your Majesty that had that man not shouted everyone of them would have been captured and it would have turned out the most beautiful undertaking ever seen in these parts, and might have brought about their complete pacification; for, by setting them free again, and explaining the reason of my coming, and reassuring them, they would have seen how well they were treated and thus good results would have been produced; whereas exactly the contrary happened. We captured about fifteen men and twenty women, and some ten or twelve other men perished in resisting capture, among whom was their chief, who had not been recognised until afterwards when the prisoners showed me his dead body. Neither in this town did we find anything to supply our wants, for, although there was plenty of green maize in the fields, it was not the kind of food for which we came to search. I remained in this town two days to rest my people.

Having asked the Indians who were captured there whether they knew of any other town in the vicinity where dried maize could be found, they said they knew a town, called Chacujal, which was a large and ancient one, where all kinds of provisions would be found in abundance, so I departed, guided by these Indians towards the town they mentioned; and, having marched six long leagues of bad road that day, crossing many a river, I reached some large plantations which the guides told me belonged to the towns whither we were going. For about two leagues through the forest near them, we advanced so as not to be seen, and my scouts, whom I always sent ahead of me, captured eight wood-cutters and other labourers who were coming unsuspectingly through the forest towards me. About sunset, the guides told me to halt, as we were already very near the town; so I stopped in the forest till the third hour of the night. Then I again began to march, coming to a river, which we crossed in water, breast high, and so swift that the crossing was sufficiently dangerous, and only by holding one another hand in hand did we cross without losing anyone. The guides then explained that the village was near by, so I ordered my men to halt and went myself with two companies close enough to see the houses and even to hear the people talking; they all seemed quite tranquil, and we had evidently not been detected. I returned to my people, and made them take some rest, putting six men on watch in sight of the town on each side of the road; but when I had lain down on some straw to rest, one of my scouts whom I had left came and told me that many armed people were coming along the road, talking together and evidently unaware of our presence. I, therefore, ordered my people to form as quickly as they could; but, as the distance between the village and our camp was so short, the Indians discovered the scouts, and, as soon as they perceived them, they let fly a volley of arrows and then retreated towards the town, fighting until we entered, when it was so dark they disappeared immediately amongst the streets. Fearing an ambush, I did not allow my people to disband, but, keeping them well together, I marched to a great square where there were mosques and oratories, built in the same manner and surrounded by buildings of the same kind, and in the same fashion as those of Culua; our fears were here increased because, since leaving Acalan, we had seen nothing of the kind. There were even some who expressed the opinion that we ought to return and cross the river that same night before the people of the town, perceiving we were so few, should cut off our retreat. And, truly, this advice was not bad in view of what we had already seen of the place, and what we had reason to fear; thus we remained gathered in that great square for a long time, without hearing any sound of the people. It seemed to me we ought not to leave that town in such manner, for this reason, that, perhaps, the Indians seeing we remained would be more frightened than if they saw us leave in that way; for, if we retreated, the enemy would the sooner perceive our weakness, which would augment our danger.

It pleased our Lord that it should happen thus, for, after remaining a long time in that square, I entered with my people into one of those large halls, and sent others out into the town to report if they saw anyone. They never encountered anyone, but, on the contrary, they entered many houses and found the fires still burning, and a large stock of provisions, which pleased them greatly; so we remained there that night with every possible precaution. At daybreak, we explored the whole town, which was well laid out, the houses being very well built, and close together. We found a great deal of cotton in them, some

woven, and some ready for weaving, also clothing, and a large quantity of dried maize, cacao, beans, pepper, and salt, besides many fowls and pheasants in cages, partridges, and dogs of the species they raise to eat (and which are exceedingly good); and every other variety of provisions to such an extent that, had we had the ships where we could load them, I would have regarded myself as well provided for many a day. But to avail ourselves of them we would have had to carry them on men's backs twenty leagues, while we were in such a condition that we had enough to do to carry ourselves back to the ships without taking other loads, for, had we not rested there for some days, we should have been unable to return to our boats.

The next day, I sent for a native of the place who had been captured near the plantations, and who seemed a person of importance, for he had his bow and arrows for hunting, and was well dressed, according to their fashion. I spoke to him through an interpreter I had, telling him to go to the chief and his people and say to them that I had not come to do them any harm, but rather to tell them some things which were expedient for them to know, and to say that the chief or some other honourable person should come and learn the cause of my arrival, for they might be sure that much good would result to them; on the contrary if they refused they might suffer for it. Thus I despatched him with a letter of mine to the chief, for the people of those parts were always more assured by seeing my letters. I did this against the advice of some of my men, who said it was unwise to send him, for he would explain to them how few we were; that the village was large and populous, judging from the number of houses closely built together, and that the inhabitants, seeing how few we were, might easily call on their neighbours for help and attack us. I saw they were right, yet wished to find the means of sufficiently provisioning my company, and believing that, if those people came to me peaceably, they might perhaps furnish means for carrying away some of the provisions, I set aside their arguments; because in truth no less danger waited us from starvation if we lived without provisions, than there did in an attack from the Indians. I, therefore, despatched the Indian, who promised to return the next day, as he knew where the chief and all the people were. On the day appointed for the Indian's return, two of my Spaniards who were exploring about the town and country found my letter placed on a pole by the roadside, from which we judged we would have no answer; and thus it happened, for neither the Indian nor anybody else came, so we remained eighteen days there, resting, and seeking to devise some means for carrying away those provisions.

While pondering this it seemed to me that, by following down the river, I might perhaps come to the other large river that empties into the gulf of fresh water where I had left my brigantine as well as my boats and canoes; so I asked those Indians whom I held prisoners if this was true, and they answered yes, though we could not understand them very well, nor they us, for they spoke a different language from any we had yet heard.²⁵² By signs, however, and with some words which I understood of that language, I prayed that two of them would guide ten Spaniards to the junction of that river with the other; and they answered that it was very near, so that they could go and return the same day. And God was pleased that, having travelled about two leagues through some very beautiful orchards of cacao and other fruit trees, they came upon a large river which they said emptied into the gulf where I had left the brigantines and barques and canoes, saying that the river's name was Apolochic. Having been asked how long the journey would take in canoes to the gulf they replied five days, so I immediately sent two Spaniards with one of those guides who offered to take them, by short cuts known to him, to where the brigantines lay. I ordered that the brigantines and barques and canoes be brought to the mouth of that large river, and that, leaving the vessel behind, the two Spaniards should try, with one canoe and a boat, to ascend the river to its junction with the other. Having despatched these men, I ordered four rafts to be constructed of logs and large bamboos, capable of carrying forty bushels of dried maize and ten men, not counting many other things such as beans, and red peppers, and cacao, which each Spaniard took besides. It took eight full days

252) The multitude and variety of American languages prove the high antiquity of the different peoples, for long centuries must have been required to evolve such diversity, especially where there was no written language. Humboldt enumerates fifteen different idioms, as absolutely distinct from one another as Persian from German, or French from Polish. Brasseur de Bourbourg estimates the total number, including dialects, at about two hundred.

to construct the rafts. When they were loaded, the Spaniard I had sent to the brigantines returned, and told me that, after ascending the river for six consecutive days, they had found it impossible to fetch the barque up, and had therefore left it with a guard of ten Spaniards and finished their journey in the canoe; they arrived at a place about one league lower down the river, where exhausted from rowing they had left it hidden. On their way up the river they had been attacked by some few Indians and had fought sometimes with them; these, they thought, however, would gather forces to await their return. I immediately sent people to bring up the canoe to where the rafts were, and, having loaded all the provisions we had gathered onto the rafts, I selected the necessary people to man them, who were supplied with long poles to protect them from floating logs, which made the river rather dangerous. I sent the remainder of my people under a captain to return by the same road on which we had come, with orders to await me where we had first disembarked if they arrived there before me, for I would go thither to meet them; and if I arrived first I would wait for them. I embarked in a canoe with the only two crossbowmen left.

Though the journey I was undertaking was extremely dangerous, owing to the rapid current and to the approximate certainty that the Indians would waylay us on our passage, I, nevertheless, determined to go that way, the better to preserve order; and, recommending myself to God, I began the descent of the river, which was accomplished with such rapidity that, in three hours, we came to where the barque had been left.

Here we thought to lighten the rafts by transferring some of the cargo onto it, but so rapid was the current that they could not stop. I went on board the barque, and ordered that the canoe, well-manned, should go ahead of the rafts, to see whether any Indians were in ambush, and to discover any dangerous places there might be. I myself remained behind in the barque ready to help the rafts if need should be, for I could more easily be of assistance from the rear than from the front.

About sunset, one of the rafts was somewhat shattered by striking a submerged log, though it was floated again by the fury of the water after half its cargo had been lost. Three hours after nightfall, I heard the shouts of Indians ahead of us, but, not wishing to leave the rafts behind, I did not go ahead to see what it meant, and, after a little, it ceased, and we heard nothing more for a while. A little later I heard it again, and it seemed to me nearer, but it ceased, and I could not ascertain what it was, as the canoe and the three rafts went ahead and I followed behind with the damaged raft, which could not travel so fast. For quite a while then no more shouts were heard, so we proceeded somewhat off our guard while I took off my helmet, for I had a high fever, and rested my head on my hands. Continuing thus, the violence of the current at the bend of the river struck us with such force that the barque and rafts were driven on the bank. It then transpired that the shouts we had heard had come from this point, for the Indians who inhabited its banks knew the river well, and foresaw that the force of the current would throw us on land at that point; so, many of them awaited us there, and, as soon as the canoe and rafts which had gone ahead reached that spot where we arrived later, they were assaulted by a volley of arrows which wounded almost everyone of their crews though knowing that most of us still remained behind, the attack of the Indians was not so furious as that which they afterwards made upon us. The people in the canoe were prevented by the strong current from coming back to warn us, so, when we were thrown on land, the Indians raised a great yell and let fly such a volley of arrows and stones that we were all of us wounded, I in the head which was the only part not protected by my mail. Our Lord permitted this to happen by a high bluff where the waters were very deep, and to this circumstance we owed our escape; for, the night being very dark, some of the Indians fell into the water, and I believe many were drowned. The current soon whirled us quickly away, and very shortly after we could hardly hear their shouts. The rest of the night passed without any further encounter, though now and then we heard faint cries from the distance, or from the bluffs of the river. The banks of the river are lined with beautiful plantations.

At daybreak, we found ourselves about five leagues from the mouth of the river, where it flows into the gulf; the brigantine was waiting for us there at the gulf, and we arrived about noon, so that in one day and one night we covered twenty long leagues in descending that river. Wishing to transfer the provisions from the rafts to the brigantine, I found that everything had been wet, and seeing that, were it not dried, all

would be spoiled and our labour lost, I had the dry separated from the wet and placed in the brigantine, while the rest I placed in the barque and the canoes and sent it as quickly as possible to the town where it might be dried; for, on account of the swamps about that gulf, there was no place there where this could be done. Thus they left, and I ordered the canoes and barques to return immediately to help me transport the people, as the brigantine and one canoe which remained were insufficient to carry them all.

After the barques and canoes had left, I set sail, and went to the place where my people who had gone overland were to meet me; and there I waited for them three days, at the end of which time they arrived in very good condition, except for one Spaniard, who, they said, had eaten certain herbs on the road and died instantly. They brought with them an Indian whom they had captured in that town where I had left them; he was going about unguardedly, and, as he was different from the natives of the country not only in language but also in dress, I began to question him by signs, when another was found among the prisoners who said he could understand him; and he told me that he was a native of Teculutlan. As soon as I heard this name, it seemed to me I had heard it mentioned before, so, when I reached the town, I searched amongst my memoranda and found that name as belonging to a place somewhere across the country, a distance altogether of seventy-eight leagues from the Spanish settlement on the South Sea governed by Pedro de Alvarado, one of my captains; it also appeared from the memoranda that some of Pedro de Alvarado's men had been in that town of Teculutlan, which indeed this Indian confirmed; and this news pleased me very much. All the people being collected, and the boats not having yet returned, we consumed the small quantity of provisions which had been kept dry, and embarked on board the brigantine, though the vessel was so small that there was hardly room for us all. The intention was to cross the gulf to the town where we had first landed, and where we had seen the ripening maize fields. More than twenty-five days having passed, we reasonably expected to find it ripe enough for our use, and so it was; for, one morning, we saw boats and canoes coming towards us in the middle of the gulf, and, continuing altogether in that direction, we reached land. Immediately after landing, all my people, Spaniards as well as Indians, besides forty native prisoners, went straight to the town, where they found excellent maize fields, the greater part fully ripe. Meeting no opposition, both Christians and Indians made three journeys to and fro that day, for the distance was short, carrying loads of grain, so that the brigantine being filled, as well as the boats, I went to the town myself, leaving them engaged in transporting the maize. I at once sent the two barques, another which had arrived there with a ship which had been lost on the coast coming to New Spain, and four canoes, to gather this great harvest, which was a most providential supply, repaying the labour it cost; for, had it not been found, we would have all inevitably perished by starvation.

I had all those provisions loaded on the ships, and embarked with all the people in that town who belonged to Gil Gonzalez, besides those who remained of my people; and this being done I set sail on the [passage missing in MS.] day of [passage missing in MS.], and steered to the port on the bay of San Andres. Having first landed all those who were able to walk and two horses I had with me on the ship, I ordered them to go to the said harbour and bay where they would find, or wait for, the people who were to come from Naco, for that road had been already travelled. The ships were dangerously overcrowded, so I sent a barque along the coast to enable them to cross certain rivers on their road; and, when I reached the said port, I found that the people from Naco had arrived there two days before me. I learned from them that all the others were well, and had a great store of maize and red peppers and many fruits of the country, though they had neither meat nor salt, as for two months they had not known what those things were.

I remained twenty days in this port, striving to establish some order amongst those people in Naco, and looking for a convenient place to found a settlement; for that port is certainly the best which exists along the discovered coast of all this mainland, that is to say from the Gulf of Pearls to Florida. God willed that I should find a very good one, suitable for my purpose, for, after I had sent to explore some streams one or two leagues from the site of this town, good samples of gold were found; and, both on this account, and also because the port was so beautiful and had such an excellent, well-populated neighbourhood, it

seemed to me that it would be for Your Majesty's good service to found a settlement here; I therefore sent a messenger to Naco where the people were, to learn if any of them would like to settle there. The land being good, about fifty of them, mostly of those who had come thither with me, consented, and thus, in Your Majesty's name, I founded there a town, which on account of the day of its foundation, being the Nativity of Our Lady, I named Natividad de Nuestra Senora. I appointed alcaldes and municipal officers, leaving them a priest, church ornaments, and everything necessary for the celebration of mass; I also left them workmen and mechanics, such as a smith, with a very good forge, and his necessary tools, a carpenter, a shipwright, a barber, and a tailor. Among the settlers there were twenty horsemen and some crossbowmen. Finally I provided certain artillery and powder.

When I arrived at that town, and heard from the Spaniards from Naco that the natives of that and the neighbouring towns were all in a commotion, and had fled from their dwellings to the forests, refusing to return, although frequently invited to do so, for they remembered their injuries at the hands of Gil Gonzales, Cristobal de Olid, and their men, I wrote to the captain there to endeavour by all means to secure some of those Indians and send them to me that I might speak to them and calm them. He did this, and sent me certain persons whom he had captured in a foray he had made for the purpose. I spoke to them, and reassured them, and made some of the principal persons from Mexico who were with me speak also with them. These latter told them who I was, and of what I had done in their country, and of the good treatment all had received from me after they became my friends, and of how they had been protected and maintained in justice, they and their property, their wives and children; they told of the punishment which those who rebelled against the service of Your Majesty received, and of many other things which tended to pacify the captured Indians. Nevertheless, they still said they were afraid that what they had been told was not the truth, because those captains who had been there before had said the same thing and afterwards they had discovered it was all a lie; for the women whom they had given them to make their bread had been kept, as well as the men who carried their baggage, and they feared I would do the same. Still they were reassured by what the Mexicans and my interpreter told them, and by observing that they were all well treated and happy in our company, so they grew a little more confident. I sent them to speak to the chiefs and people of the towns, and, a few days later, the captain wrote me that some of the neighbouring towns had come peaceably, especially the chief ones, which are Naco, where they are stationed, Quimiotlan, Suli, and Tholomi, the smallest of which numbered more than two thousand households, besides other villages depending on them; they had said that they would later all peaceably return to their homes, for messengers had been sent to reassure them, and let them know of my arrival and of all I had told them, and what they had learned from the natives of Mexico. They also greatly desired I should visit them, for the people would be more reassured by my presence. This I would willingly have done had I not been obliged to go on and re-establish order elsewhere, concerning which I will relate to Your Majesty in the following chapter.

Upon my arrival, Invincible Caesar, at that town of Nito, where I found the lost people of Gil Gonzalez, I learnt from them that Francisco de las Casas, one of my lieutenants, whom I had sent to inquire about Cristobal de Olid and his men, as I have already related to Your Majesty, had left certain Spaniards down the coast at a port which the pilots called Las Honduras; these Spaniards no doubt were still there. As soon as I reached that town and bay of San Andres, where, in Your Majesty's name, I established a town called Natividad de Nuestra Senora, I delayed there to organise the settlement of it, and likewise to give orders to the captain and people in Naco concerning the measures they should take for the pacification and security of those other towns. I sent the ship I had bought to the said port of Honduras to inquire after those other people, and bring me information. By the time the above mentioned orders were executed, the ship returned, bringing the procurator of the town and an officer of the Municipal Council, who besought me earnestly to go there and relieve them, because they were in extreme need. The captain appointed by Francisco de las Casas and a judge whom he had likewise nominated, had rebelled and taken possession of a ship, then in the harbour, and had persuaded fifty out of the hundred and ten colonists to follow them, leaving the others without weapons or iron tools of any sort; taking away also almost everything they

owned; so that they were in great fear either that the Indians would kill them, or that they would starve to death, for they were unable to procure provisions. A vessel from the island of Espanola, owned by a man called the Bachelor Francisco Moreno, had since arrived there; but, though they had besought him to provide them with necessaries he had refused, as I would more fully learn when I came to that town. To correct all this, I embarked in my ships, with all my suffering people (some of whom had meanwhile died), it being my intention to send them from that place to the Islands and to New Spain, as I afterwards did. I took with me some of my own household servants, and gave orders that twenty horsemen and ten crossbowmen should go overland, as I heard that the road to the village was good, although they would have to cross some rivers.

It took me nine days to arrive, owing to unfavourable weather, and, having cast anchor in the port of Honduras, I entered a boat with two Franciscan friars, whom I always took with me, and about ten servants of mine; and thus we went on land where the people of the town were in the square awaiting me. As I neared shore, they all rushed into the sea and lifting me out of the boat they carried me to the town and church with every demonstration of welcome. After having given thanks to our Lord, they prayed me to stop and hear their account of all that had transpired, for they feared that in consequence of misrepresentations which might have been made to me, I might be vexed with them, and they wished me to know the truth before I judged them. I assented to this and their priest rose and spoke to me as follows:

Sir, you know how all, or almost all, of us who are here, were sent from New Spain under your captain Cristobal de Olid to settle and populate this country in the name of His Majesty, and that you ordered us to obey the commands of the said Cristobal de Olid as though they were your own. Thus, we left for the island of Cuba, where we were to take in some provisions and horses that were still requisite; and, having arrived at Havana, which is a port of the said island, he exchanged letters with Diego Velasquez and His Majesty's officers residing there, who sent him some more people. After we were provisioned with what we required, all of which was provided through your agent, Alonzo de Contreros, we left the island and continued our voyage.

Omitting some incidents of our voyage, too tedious to be related, we landed on this coast, fourteen leagues below the port of Caballos, where the said captain Cristobal de Olid took possession for your worship, and in the name of His Majesty, establishing a town with its alcaldes and municipal officers, who had already been nominated at the outset. He executed certain official acts regarding the possession and laying out of the town, acting in the name of your worship and as your captain and lieutenant. Some days later, however, he made common cause with those servants of Diego Velasquez, who had come with him, and went through certain formalities which made it clear that he had renounced obedience to your worship; although most of us disapproved of this, we did not dare to oppose him because he threatened us with the gallows, but, on the contrary, we consented to all he did, the more so as certain servants and relatives of your worship did the same, for neither did they dare to act otherwise. This being accomplished, and, having heard from six messengers whom he caused to be imprisoned, that certain people of Gil Gonzalez de Avila were coming down upon him, he stationed himself near the ford of a river where they had to cross, so as to capture them.

After waiting some days in vain, he left there a lieutenant with some force, and returned to this town, where he began to fit out two caravels, and to provide them with artillery and ammunition, intending to attack the settlement of Spaniards, which the said Gil Gonzalez had founded higher up the coast. While thus engaged, Francisco de las Casas arrived with two ships, and, as soon as Cristobal de Olid knew that it was he, he ordered the artillery on his ships to fire on him, in spite of the fact that Francisco de las Casas hoisted flags of peace, and shouted the information that his ships belonged to your worship. The artillery, however, continued to play under his orders, and, after the ships had anchored, he still fired ten or twelve shots, one of which went through one of the vessels and came out on the other side. When Francisco de las Casas perceived his intentions to be hostile, the suspicions he already entertained against Olid were confirmed, and he saw he could not temporise with such an enemy; so he manned his boats and began to

use his artillery, taking possession of those two vessels that were in the port as their crews had deserted them and gone ashore. After these ships were taken, Cristobal de Olid began to sue for terms, not, however, with the intention of observing them, but to temporise until the men he had sent against Gil Gonzalez de Avila should return, for he did not feel himself strong enough to cope with Las Casas; he, therefore, sought to deceive him, and Las Casas allowed himself to be hood-winked. During these inconclusive negotiations a great tempest suddenly arose at sea, and, as there was no proper anchorage, but only an unsheltered coast, the ship on board of which Francisco de las Casas was, was dashed on shore, thirty odd men being drowned, and almost everything they had being lost. Las Casas and the others escaped naked and so bruised by the waves that they could not keep their feet, so Cristobal de Olid took them all prisoners; and, before they entered the town, he made them swear on the Holy Gospels that they would obey him and regard him as their captain ever afterwards, doing nothing against his will.

Just then the news came that his lieutenant had captured fifty-seven men and an alcalde mayor of Gil Gonzalez de Avila, and had afterwards set them free again, allowing them to go one way while he with his men took another. Rendered furious by hearing that his orders had not been obeyed, Cristobal de Olid left for Naco, where he had formerly been, taking with him Francisco de las Casas and some of his men, and leaving the other prisoners under guard of a lieutenant and an alcalde. Las Casas, in the presence of all, entreated him to allow him to return to your worship, and give an account of what had happened; for otherwise he must keep him under strict guard and not trust him, as he would do his best to escape. Some days later, Cristobal de Olid learned that Gil Gonzalez and a few of his men had settled at the port called Tholoma, so he sent certain people thither, who attacked Gonzalez by night and captured him as well as those who were with him, bringing them prisoners. Thus both these captains were kept there many days, Cristobal de Olid refusing to set them free, although he was begged many times to do so. He also made all the people of Gil Gonzalez swear to obey him as their captain, just as he had already done with those of Francisco de las Casas.

Many times, after the imprisonment of Gil Gonzalez, did Francisco de las Casas beg him in everybody's presence, to set him and his companions at liberty, saying that otherwise he had better be on his guard for they would kill him; but he would never consent to do so, until his tyranny had gone so far that one night, when they were all together in a hall, and many other people were with them discussing certain matters, Francisco de las Casas seized him by the beard and having no other arms, he stabbed him with a penknife with which he had been cutting his nails while walking up and down, crying at the same time, "The time is already passed for suffering this tyranny!" Gil Gonzalez and others of your worship's servants joined with him and disarmed the body-guard, and, in the scuffle which ensued, Cristobal de Olid, the captain and ensign of his body guard, his field-officer, and others, were wounded, taken prisoners, and disarmed, though none were killed. In the midst of the confusion, Cristobal de Olid escaped and hid himself, while the captains, within two hours, pacified the people and secured the persons of his principal adherents; and they proclaimed by the public crier that, whoever knew where Cristobal de Olid was hidden, should declare it immediately under penalty of death. They quickly learnt where he was, and captured him, placing him under good guard; and on the next morning, after giving him his trial, the captains agreed in sentencing him to death. This was executed on his person by cutting off his head, to the great satisfaction of the people who were thus liberated. It was then proclaimed by the public crier that all who wished to settle in this country should say so, and that those who wished to leave should do likewise; one hundred and ten men said they desired to settle, and the others said they would go with Francisco de las Casas and Gil Gonzalez who were about to return to your worship. Among these former, there were twenty horsemen to which number I and all those here present belonged. Francisco de las Casas provided us with everything we needed, appointed a captain over us, and directed us to come to this coast and colonise for your worship, in the name of His Majesty; and he nominated sheriffs, municipal officers, a notary public, a procurator of the town council, and an alguacil, ordering us to call the town Trujillo; he promised us and pledged his faith as a gentleman, that he would procure from your worship more people and arms and horses for the pacification of the country. He, moreover, left us two interpreters, an Indian

woman and a Christian, who understood very well the languages hereabouts. Thus, we took leave of him and came here as he had ordered us to do; and to inform your worship the more quickly, he despatched the brigantine so that assistance might reach us the sooner.

Having arrived at the port of San Andres, also called Caballos, we found there a caravel which had recently come from the Islands; and, as that port did not seem to us the proper place for a settlement, and as we had heard about this one, we loaded all our heavy baggage on to that caravel and embarked, taking with us the captain and forty men, while the horsemen and others remained on land, keeping nothing but the clothes on our backs, so as to be freer and unencumbered in case of accident on our march. The captain gave his full powers to one of the alcaldes, who is now here present, whom he ordered us to obey during his absence; the other municipal officers went with him in the caravel. Thus we parted from each other to meet again in this port, and, during our march, we had some encounters with the natives who killed two Spaniards and some of the Indians whom we had brought for our service.

Upon arriving in a dreadful plight at this port, the horses unshod, but all of us happy in the expectation of finding the captain with our baggage and arms, we were more than afflicted to find nothing at all, while we were ourselves almost stark naked, destitute of arms and iron tools, all of which the captain had taken in the caravel. We were perplexed and knew not what to do with ourselves, until, after consulting together, we decided to wait for the relief which was to come from your worship, about which we entertained no doubts. So we immediately set about founding our town and took possession of the country for your worship, in the name of His Majesty, as your worship may see from the official acts drawn up before the notary public of the municipal council.

Five or six days later, a caravel appeared at sea, about two leagues from this place, and the alguacil immediately went in a canoe to discover what caravel it was; and he brought us news that it belonged to the bachelor in law, Pedro Moreno, a resident of Espanola, who came by the order of the judges residing in that island, for the purpose of inquiring into certain matters between Cristobal de Olid and Gil Gonzalez. He brought a full stock of provisions and arms which belonged to His Majesty; and we all rejoiced greatly at this news, giving thanks to our Lord, and believing that our necessities would be relieved. The municipal officers and some of the householders immediately went and besought him to provide for us, explaining our miserable plight; but, upon their arrival, he armed the men on his caravel and would allow no one to go on board, so the most we could obtain from him was that four or five without arms should go aboard. They first explained to him how we had come there to settle for your worship, in the name of His Majesty, and that, on account of the captain having left in a caravel with all we owned, we were in the utmost extremity, as well for want of provisions, arms, and iron tools, as for clothing and other things, and that in as much as God had conducted him hither for our relief and his caravel belonged to His Majesty, we prayed and besought him to provide for us, as by so doing he would serve His Majesty, besides which we bound ourselves to pay for everything he gave us. He answered that he had not come there for the purpose of relieving us, and would give us nothing unless we paid cash down in gold or gave him slaves in payment.

Two merchants who had come on the ship, and a certain Gaspard Roche, a resident of the island of San Juan, advised him to give us what we asked for, offering to stand surety for the payment, up to five or six thousand castellanos, within such period as he should fix as they knew we were able to pay, and they were willing to do this in Your Majesty's service; they likewise felt sure that your worship would repay them, besides being grateful for it. Not even then, however, would he give us the least thing, but he sent us away saying he intended to leave; and thus actually put us out of his caravel.

Afterwards, he sent one Juan Ruano, who had come with him, and had been the principal promoter of Cristobal de Olid's treason; he secretly spoke to the municipal officers and some of us, telling us that, if we would obey him, he would obtain all we needed from the bachelor, and that, on his return to Espanola he would even obtain orders from the judges residing there that we should not have to pay for anything, and that, besides, reinforcements of men and horses and supplies of arms and provisions and other necessaries should be sent to us; that the bachelor would quickly return, bringing us all this and full

powers from the judges to be our captain. Having asked him what we were required to do in return, he answered that first of all we were to depose from their respective charges the royal officers, the alcaldes, the municipal officials, the treasurer, the accountants, and the inspector, all of whom exercised their functions in the name of your worship; that after this, we must ask the said bachelor to appoint as our captain the said Juan Ruano, and declare that we wished to come under the government of the *audiencia* instead of under that of your worship; that we must all sign this petition and give our oaths to obey him, Ruano, as our captain, binding ourselves not only to refuse obedience to any representations or orders of your worship but also to resist with force of arms. We answered that we could not do this, for we had already taken another oath, and were settled there for your worship, in His Majesty's name, as his captain and governor, and that we could not act otherwise.

The said Juan Ruano sought to persuade us that it was better to consent than to be left to die; for the bachelor would not give us a jar of water, nor a morsel of bread, and we might rest assured that upon learning of our refusal, he would sail away and leave us to destruction, hence we should look well to our decision. Thus we took council, and, coerced by want we agreed to all he asked of us, rather than starve or be killed by the Indians, being, as we were, entirely unarmed; so we answered Ruano that we had decided to do what he required of us. He returned therefore to the caravel, and the said bachelor landed, with many armed people; and Juan Ruano had a petition drawn up before the notary of the place, signed by almost every one of us, under oath, to the effect that the municipal officials, the treasurer, the accountant, and the inspector, resigned their respective offices, and that the name of the town was changed to that of Ascension; he drew up certain official acts by which we acknowledged our allegiance to the *audiencia* instead of to your worship. He immediately furnished us with all we had asked for, and ordered an expedition to be made, in which we captured certain natives, whom he branded as slaves and took with him, without even allowing that the fifth of them should be paid to His Majesty, ordering that henceforth there should be no treasurer nor accountant, nor inspector for the royal dues, but that the said Juan Ruano, whom he left as our captain, should take all responsibility on himself, without keeping any further books or accounts.

Thus, he left us under command of the said Juan Ruano, furnished with certain requirements to be used in case any people should come here from your worship; and he promised to return quickly with such full powers that no one could resist them. After he had gone, we perceived that what we had done was not for the advantage of His Majesty's service, so we apprehended the said Juan Ruano, and sent him to the Islands, after which the alcalde and municipal officers resumed their functions as formerly, and, since then, we have been, and are, under your worship's orders, in His Majesty's name. We pray you, Sir, to pardon us the past matters, respecting Cristobal de Olid, because, throughout, we were compelled by force to act in this manner.

I replied to this address, saying that I would pardon them, in Your Majesty's name, for all that had transpired under Cristobal de Olid, and that their recent conduct was not blamable as they had been constrained by want; but that, henceforth, they were to abstain from similar novelties and scandals, for they were injurious to Your Majesty's service, and would bring punishment upon them. In order to more fully convince them that I had forgotten the past, and would never more remember it, but would rather aid and favour them, in Your Majesty's name, as long as they acted as loyal vassals to Your Majesty, I confirmed, in Your Royal name, the alcaldes and municipal officers whom Francisco de las Casas, acting as my lieutenant, had appointed; all of which fully satisfied them, and banished their fear of ever again being questioned for their past faults.

As they assured me that the said bachelor, Moreno, would soon return with many people, fully empowered by the *audiencia*, residing in Espanola, I did not leave the port. I was informed by the residents that they had had certain conflicts with the natives, some six or seven leagues distant in the interior, when they had gone to search for food. They said that some of the natives, however, were more peaceably inclined than others; for, although they had no interpreter through whom to talk with them, they had shown their good will and friendship by means of signs; also that no doubt these people, being spoken

to by one who knew their language, might be easily won over, although they had been several times ill-treated, as the Spaniards had taken from them certain women and boys whom the bachelor, Moreno, had branded with a hot iron as slaves, and carried off in his ship.

God knows how grieved I was by this news, knowing the great mischief that would ensue from it. I wrote, therefore, to the *audiencia* of Espanola by the vessels I sent to that island, complaining about the bachelor, Moreno, and enclosing a written statement of all his misdeeds in that town and its neighbourhood, besides certain legal requirements on the part of Your Majesty, in which I demanded that the bachelor be sent here a prisoner in chains (and with him all the natives of this country who had been carried off as slaves) because he had outraged all the laws, as they could see by the proofs I remitted to them. I do not know what they will do about it, but I will communicate their decision to Your Majesty.

Two days after I arrived at this port of Trujillo, I sent a Spaniard, who understood the language, and three Indians of Culua with him, to those towns which the settlers had mentioned to me, instructing the Spaniards and Indians very exactly what they were to say to the chiefs and natives of the said towns, and especially that I myself had come to those parts; for owing to the great traffic many people there had heard of me and of the events in Mexico. The first towns they visited were Chapagua and Papayeca, which are seven leagues from Trujillo, and two leagues distant from one another. They are the principal towns, as I afterwards learned, for Papayeca has eighteen villages subject to it, and Chapagua has ten; and Our Lord, Who our daily experience shows us has especial care of Your Majesty's affairs, was pleased that they should receive the embassy with great deference, and they sent with my messengers, others of their own who might verify if all they had been told was true. I received them very well upon their arrival, and again spoke to them through the interpreter whom I had with me; for their language and that of Culua is almost one and the same, except that they differ somewhat in pronunciation and in some few words. I again assured them of all that my messengers had told them in my name, adding other things which it seemed suitable they should know, and which tended to inspire their confidence; and I earnestly besought them to tell their chiefs to come to see me. They took leave of me entirely satisfied, and five days later a chief, called Montanal, came on behalf of those of Chapagua, he, himself, being as it appeared the chief of one of the subject towns, called Telika; and another lord of a subject town, called Cecoath, came on behalf of those of Papayeca, accompanied by some natives, who brought me provisions of maize and fowls and fruits, saying they had come on behalf of their chiefs to learn what I wished, and the reason of my coming to their country. The chiefs had not come in person to see me, fearing that they might be taken on board the ships as had happened to certain of their people who had been captured by the first Christians who came there. I told them what grief that event had caused me, and that they might be sure such an outrage would not again happen, for I would send for those who had been carried off and have them returned.

May God grant that the lawyers at Espanola will not make me forfeit my word to those Indians, though I greatly fear they will not send them back to me, but will rather seek some way to exculpate the bachelor, Moreno, who captured them; for I do not believe that he acted otherwise than according to what they instructed and ordered him.

In answer to the question of those messengers respecting my purpose in coming to that country, I said that they should know how, about eight years before, I had arrived in the province of Culua where Montezuma then ruled the great city of Temixtitan, and all of that country; being informed by me of the greatness and power of Your Majesty, to whom the universal world was subject, and of my having been sent to visit his country in the royal name of Your Excellency, he immediately received me very kindly and recognised what he owed to Your greatness; and that all the other lords in the country had done the same. I recounted to them other things regarding this matter which had happened to me here, and that I was ordered by Your Majesty to see and visit all these countries without exception, and to establish towns of Christians in them, who would teach the people the best way to live, not only for the provision of their persons and property, but also for the salvation of their souls, and that this was the cause of my coming; that they might be sure that no mischief would follow from it, but a great deal of good, for those who obeyed the royal mandates of Your Majesty would be well treated and maintained in justice, while those

who rebelled would be punished. I told them many other things to this purpose, which I do not repeat here on account of their small importance, and to avoid annoying Your Majesty by too much writing.

I gave these messengers some small presents which they esteem, although with us they are of little value, and they took their leave very content. Soon after, in response to my request, they returned with provisions and people to clear the site of the town, which was situated on a great mountain. None of their chiefs, however, came to visit me; but I took no notice of this, treating the matter of their coming as quite indifferent to me, though I requested them to send messengers to all the neighbouring towns to publish what I had told them, asking the people to come to help in settling that town, all of which they did. So, within a few days, fifteen or sixteen towns, or rather independent lordships, in that vicinity came, with many demonstrations of good will, offering themselves as vassals and subjects of Your Highness, and bringing people to help clear the ground for the town, as well as with provisions to sustain us until the assistance arrived with the ships I had sent to the Islands.

At this time, I sent the three ships I had with me, besides another one which afterwards came, and which I bought, to carry all the invalids to the ports of New Spain; and with the first I wrote fully to Your Majesty's officers whom I had left in command there, as well as to the municipalities, giving them an account of what I had done, and saying that I was obliged to absent myself somewhat longer in these parts; praying and charging them to fulfil the duties of their offices, and giving them my advice upon certain matters. I ordered this ship to return by way of Cozumel, which was on the route, and to pick up certain Spaniards there, whom a certain Valenzuela, who had rebelled and robbed the first town which Cristobal de Olid had founded and abandoned, had left there; according to my information, they were about sixty persons. I sent the other ship, which I had lately bought in the small bay near the town, to Trinidad, on the island of Cuba, to load with maize and horses and people, and to return as quickly as possible; the other I sent to the island of Jamaica for the same purpose. The large caravel, or brigantine, which I, myself, had built, I despatched to Espanola, and on board was a servant of mine, bearing letters for Your Majesty and for the *audiencia* residing in that island. But, as afterwards appeared, none of these ships reached their destination; for the one bound to Cuba and Trinidad had to put in at the port of Guaniguanico, and her crew had to come by land to Havana, a distance of about fifty leagues, in search of cargo. This one was the first to return, and it brought me news of how the other ship, after taking on board the people at Cozumel, had been wrecked on the coast of Cuba, near a cape called San Anton, or Corrientes, everything being lost, and most of her crew drowned, including a cousin of mine, Juan de Avalos, her commander and the two Franciscan friars who accompanied my expedition, besides thirty-four more people whose names I preserved. Those who had been saved were wandering, lost in the forest, not knowing where they were, and almost all had died of starvation; so that, out of eighty odd persons, only fifteen survived, who, by good luck, reached that port of Guaniguanico where my ship was lying. Close at hand, there was a sort of farm, belonging to a resident of Havana, where my ship was being loaded, as he had a stock of provisions; and it was there the survivors found relief. God knows what sorrow I felt at this loss; for, besides losing a number of servants and relatives, and a large stock of breast plates, muskets, cross-bows, and other arms, I sincerely regretted that my despatches never reached Your Majesty, which was of the greatest consequence to me as I shall hereafter show.

The other ship, bound for Jamaica, and the one going to Espanola arrived at Trinidad in Cuba, where they found the licenciado Alonzo de Zuazo whom I had left as chief justice, and partly in the government of this New Spain during my absence; and they also found in that port a vessel which those licenciados living in Espanola were on the point of despatching to New Spain to ascertain if the report spread of my death which was spread there, was correct.²⁵³ When the people of the ship learned news of me, they

253) The report of Cortes's death was so persistently spread, and with such details of the time and place of his decease, that his own friends and servants began to believe it. Diego de Ordaz started with four brigantines on the Xicalango River, which empties into the gulf, to ascertain, if possible, the truth of the rumours; he met several Indian traders, who assured him that Cortes had been dead for seven or eight moons, having been captured after a battle in which he was wounded in the throat by the Cacique of Cuzamilco, a town on a lake seven days distant from Xicalango; and that the Cacique had sacrificed him to the principal deity of the place, called Uchilobos. (Letter of Alborno to Charles V., December 26, 1526, apud

changed their course, because they were bringing thirty-two horses and some saddles for riding in the Moorish style, besides a certain quantity of provisions which they believed they could sell best wherever I was. By this ship, the said *licenciate*, Alonzo de Zuazo, wrote to me about the great scandals and commotions which had arisen among Your Majesty's officers in New Spain, who had spread the report of my death, and two of whom had proclaimed themselves by public crier as Governors, obliging the people to swear and recognise them as such. They had imprisoned the said *licenciate*, Alonzo de Zuazo, and two other officers, as well as Rodrigo de Paz whom I had left in custody of my house and property; they had plundered everything and removed the *alcaldes* and judges whom I had appointed, putting in their places others from amongst their adherents. The letter contained many other things which are too long to repeat, as I send to Your Majesty the same original letter which contains them all.

Your Majesty may easily conceive what I felt on the reception of this news, especially when I learned that my services had been rewarded by their pillaging my house, — an unjustifiable thing, — even granting that the news of my death had been true. Even though they allege, in order to justify their conduct, that I owed seventy odd thousand pesos of gold to Your Majesty, they know full well that, on the other hand, more than one hundred and fifty thousand such were due to me, which I have spent, and not ill either, in Your Majesty's service. My first impulse in reflecting on the means to correct all this, was to embark at once, and punish so great an outrage; for, now-a-days, everyone who holds an office abroad imagines that, unless he swaggers and shows himself independent, he is no gentleman. I hear that a similar thing has just happened to Pedro Arias with a captain of his whom he sent to Nicaragua and who has recently rebelled against his authority as I will inform Your Majesty more fully hereafter. On the other hand, my soul was afflicted at the thought of leaving that country in the state and condition I would have to, because it was equivalent to allowing it to go to ruin, and I am sure that Your Majesty has received good service and that it will turn out another *Culua*; for I hear of large and rich provinces and great lords who live in them in much state and magnificence; especially of one, called Hueitapalan, and, in another dialect, *Xucutaco*,²⁵⁴ of which I have heard for six years past, and during the whole of my journey have made inquiries about it and ascertained that it lies some eight or ten days' march from Trujillo, which would be between fifty and sixty leagues. There are such wonderful reports about it that they excite my admiration, for, even if two-thirds of them should be untrue, it would nevertheless exceed Mexico in wealth and equal it in the grandeur of its towns, the multitude of its population, and its political organisation. Being thus perplexed, I reflected that nothing is well done save what is guided by the hand of the Creator and Promoter of all things, so I had certain masses celebrated and made processions, offering other sacrifices and beseeching God to lead me in the direction most pleasing to Him.

For several days, I continued this, and still it seemed to me I should set aside every other consideration and go at once to remedy those evils. So I left some thirty-five horsemen and fifty foot-soldiers in Trujillo under a cousin of mine, called Hernando de Saavedra, brother of that Juan de Avalos who was drowned coming to that place, who was to act as my lieutenant; and I gave him my instructions as to how he was to govern. Having likewise taken leave of the native lords who had come to see me, I embarked, with all my household servants, on board the said vessel, and, having sent orders to the people in Naco to go overland by the same road Francisco de las Casas had taken (that is to say along the south coast, and come out at the place where Pedro de Alvarado is settled²⁵⁵) as now the road was well known and safe, and they were in sufficient numbers to go where they chose, I, likewise, sent instructions to the town of *Natividad* as to what they were to do. Being already embarked, and about to set sail with the last of anchors weighed, the wind suddenly subsided and my vessel could not leave port. On the next morning, news came that among the people whom I had left in that town there were grumblings about my having absented myself, which would cause certain scandal, and thus, the weather not being propitious for sailing I again landed, made an investigation, and punished the promoters of the trouble so that quiet was restored. I again embarked and

Munoz, torn, lxxvii., fol. clxix).

254) *Axucutaco*.

255) *Santiago de Guatemala* was the Governor's residence.

set sail, but, after making about two leagues, and doubling a large point in which the port terminates, the main mast of my ship was broken, so again I was forced to return to port and repair it. Three more days were spent for that purpose, when I again left with favourable weather, and, after sailing two nights and one day, a powerful head wind assailed us, breaking our main mast, so that I was again obliged to return to the port with great difficulty. We gave thanks to God for our safe arrival, for indeed we had considered ourselves as lost; and I and all the people were so exhausted that we were obliged to take some rest; so while the ship was being repaired I again landed with all the people to await the change in the weather.

Having seen that I had thrice gone to sea with good weather and been obliged to return, it seemed that it was not God's will that I should leave that country in its present state. I was the more confirmed in this as some of the Indians whom I had left peaceably disposed were in some commotion, so again I recommended myself to God and ordered new processions and had more masses celebrated, and, having reflected, I decided to send that vessel in which I had intended to sail for New Spain, with my cousin Francisco de las Casas on board, provided with my power of attorney, and my letters to the municipalities and Your Majesty's officers, reproving their conduct; also to send some of the principal Indians who were with me, that they might convince their countrymen that I was not dead as had been reported and thus tranquillise them. I arranged everything thus, although, had I known of the loss of the ship I had first sent and my despatches respecting the ships in the South Sea, which I had sent in her, I would have provided more exact instructions than I did.

After having despatched this ship to New Spain, and while still ill, owing to my sufferings at sea, from which I had not yet recovered, I was unable to go inland; partly, also, because I was waiting for the return of the ships from the Islands, and was occupied in settling various matters. I had sent my lieutenants here with thirty horsemen and as many foot soldiers to explore the interior; and they marched about thirty-five leagues through a very beautiful valley, where there were many and populous villages with an abundance of all kinds of native fruits, and well adapted for raising any kind of cattle, as well as for the cultivation of our Spanish agricultural products. They had no hostile encounters with the natives, but, rather, by speaking to them through our interpreter and the Indians in the neighbourhood, who were already our friends and accompanied the expedition, they succeeded in establishing peaceable relations, so that more than twenty chiefs of the principal towns visited me and offered themselves willingly as subjects and vassals of Your Majesty, promising to obey Your Royal commands, which indeed they have since done and are still doing. For up to the very day of my departure, I had some of them always with me, any one of whom on going away was immediately replaced by another who came and brought provisions for the town, and rendered every service asked of him. May it please God to confirm them in their good will, and guide them to the ends Your Majesty desires; and I have the fullest faith that it will be so; for, from so good a beginning, no bad end is to be expected, unless it be through the fault of those who are placed in command over them. The provinces of Papayeca and of Champagua, who, I have already said, were the first to offer themselves to Your Majesty's service and to become our friends, were those amongst whom there was some commotion when I had first embarked, and on my return they were still rather apprehensive, so I sent messengers to calm them. Some of the natives of Champagua then came to see me, but not the chiefs, and, as they refrained from coming and sent their wives and sons and their property away from their villages, it was apparent they did not trust us. There were several among those who came daily to work in the town whom I earnestly begged to return to their homes, but they never would, sometimes saying, "to-day, " and sometimes, "to-morrow, " so I managed to lay hands on the chiefs, Chiwhuytl, Poto, and Mondoreto, whom I imprisoned. I gave them a certain period within which I ordered them to bring their people back from the mountains to their towns, threatening to punish them as rebels if they did not; thus I set them free and the natives have all returned to their homes quite pacified and tranquil, and willing to serve us.

The natives of Papayeca, however, would never consent to appear, especially their chiefs who kept all their people with them in the mountains, their towns remaining deserted; although many times summoned they persisted in their disobedience, so I sent a company of horsemen and foot-soldiers with many natives

of the country thither. This force surprised one of the two chiefs of the country, named Pizacura, one night, and captured him; and, having been asked why he was so wicked and disobedient, he said that he would have returned to his village long before had his colleague, Mazatl, who was the most powerful of the community not refused; but that, if they would let him go, he would discover Mazatl's movements so that he could be captured, for if he were hanged the people would immediately be pacified and return to their towns, for he, himself could collect them all without any opposition. So they set him free, which was the cause of still greater misfortunes, as afterwards appeared; for certain friendly Indians, natives of that country, tracked the said Mazatl to his hiding place and guided thither some Spaniards. Having notified him what his companion Pizacura said about him, he was ordered to bring his people down from the mountains into their villages within a given time, but we could never obtain his consent to this. He was consequently tried, sentenced to death, and executed. This has been a great example for the others, for, immediately afterwards, other towns which had rebelled resumed their obedience, so that there is not a single town left that is not perfectly peaceful, with its inhabitants and their families living in security, except Papayeca, which has never been willing to come to terms.

After the release of Pizacura, proceedings were begun against those towns, and war was carried on against their inhabitants, in the course of which more than one hundred prisoners were taken and made slaves, amongst whom was Pizacura himself. I would not sentence him to death, although he deserved it, as was shown in the legal proceedings against him, but have preferred to bring him with me to this city, together with two others, chiefs of rebellious towns, so that they might see for themselves how the natives were treated in this New Spain, and how they served, all of which they could make known on their return. Pizacura died of illness, but the other two are well, and I shall send them back when an opportunity offers. The imprisonment of Pizacura, however, and of another youth who seemed to be the rightful heir, together with the punishment inflicted on those hundred and odd captives who were made slaves, sufficed to completely pacify the province, and, when I left that country, all the towns were inhabited and at peace, having been allotted amongst the Spaniards and serving them apparently with entire good will.

At this time, there arrived at Trujillo a captain with about twenty men of those I had left at Naco, under Gonzalo de Sandoval, and others belonging to the company of Francisco Hernandez, whom Pedro Arias de Avila, Your Majesty's governor in those parts had sent to the province of Nicaragua; I learned from them how the captain of the said Francisco Hernandez had arrived at Naco with about forty men, between horses and foot, expecting to reach the port on the bay of San Andres where he counted on finding the bachelor, Moreno, whom as I have already told Your Majesty had been sent to those parts by the *audiencia* residing in the island of Espanola. It appeared that the said bachelor had written to Francisco Hernandez inciting him to rebel against his lawful governor, just as he had acted with the people under Gil Gonzalez and Francisco de las Casas. That captain therefore had come for the purpose of concerting with him how best to throw off obedience to their governor, and offer allegiance instead to the *audiencia* of Espanola; all of which appeared from certain letters which he carried.

I immediately sent those people back with a letter to Francisco Hernandez, and particularly to some of his captains, whom I personally knew, reproving them all for their wicked doings, and explaining to them that the bachelor was deceiving them, and that Your Majesty would be displeased, besides other things which it seemed to me might serve to win them back from the false course on which they had embarked. One reason they gave to justify their conduct was that they were so distant from Pedro Arias de Avila that it was only with much difficulty and great cost that they could be provided with the common necessaries and even then sometimes not provided at all; and that they were always short of commodities and provisions from Spain, which could easily be obtained at the settlements I had made on that coast. The said bachelor had written to them, saying that all the settlers in the country acknowledged the authority of the *audiencia*, and that he would soon return with people and provisions. I answered them that I would give orders for the settlements to furnish them with everything they needed and to trade amicably with them, as both were equally vassals of Your Majesty and employed in Your Royal service; and that it was to be well understood that this was to continue as long as they obeyed their governor, as was their duty.

but not otherwise. Since they told me that what they most required was horseshoes and iron tools for working in the mines, I sent two mules loaded with such things to take back with them, and, when they arrived at the settlement of Hernando de Sandoval,²⁵⁶ he also gave them two more mules loaded with horseshoes which I had there.

After they left, some natives from the Province of Huilacho, sixty-five leagues from Trujillo, who had previously sent messengers and offered themselves as vassals to Your Majesty, came to see me, and told me that twenty-five horsemen and forty foot soldiers, with many Indians of other provinces, had invaded their country, and were engaged in outraging and injuring them, taking away their wives and children, and robbing them of their goods and chattels. They entreated me to assist them in as much as, when they had become my friends, I had promised to defend them against their enemies. Afterwards, my cousin, Hernando de Sandoval, whom I had left as my lieutenant in those parts, and who was at that time pacifying the provinces of Papayeca, sent me two of those very men of whom the Indians had come to complain. They said they came by order of their captain to search for the town of Trujillo, having been told by the Indians that it was near and that they might come without fear as the entire country was at peace. I learned from these men that their companions belonged to Francisco Hernandez and had come, under command of Gabriel de Rojas as their captain, in search of that port. I immediately sent those two Spaniards, together with the natives who had come to complain, and also one of my alguacils, to Gabriel de Rojas, intimating to him to leave that province at once, after restoring to the natives all the property and women and everything else he had taken from them; besides this I wrote him a letter saying that if he needed anything to let me know as I would willingly supply him to the best of my ability. He complied with my mandate and instructions at once, which entirely satisfied the natives of the said province; though afterwards they returned again to complain that when the alguacils whom I had sent returned, they had again been robbed. I wrote therefore to the said Francisco Hernandez, offering to supply him and his men with everything I could which they required, enjoining him to remain loyal to his governor. I do not know what has occurred since then, though I learned from the alguacil I sent to Gabriel de Rojas, and those who went with him, that, when they were all assembled there, a letter from their captain, Francisco Hernandez, had arrived addressed to Gabriel de Rojas, bidding him join him with all possible haste as great dissensions prevailed among his people, two of his captains, named Soto and Andres Garabito, having rebelled on the plea that he was himself about to renounce his allegiance to Pedro Arias. Thus matters remained in such a state that only harmful results could follow, not only to the Spaniards, but also to the natives. Whence Your Majesty may consider the mischievous consequences of these commotions, and how necessary it is that the authors and promoters of them should be punished. I desired to go at once to Nicaragua, believing that I could devise some remedy for the advantage of Your Majesty's service; and, while making preparations, and having a road opened through some mountains over which I had to pass, the vessel sent by me to New Spain returned to the port of Trujillo, on board which came a cousin of mine called Fray Diego de Altamirano, a Franciscan friar.²⁵⁷

From what he told me, and from the letters he brought, I learned of the many disturbances, scandals, and dissensions, which had broken out among Your Majesty's officials, whom I had left at Mexico in my place; and which still continued, making it necessary that I should immediately repair thither to correct those evils. Hence my journey to Nicaragua and the coast of the South Sea was necessarily abandoned, in spite of my firm belief that much service would have been rendered to God and to Your Majesty, owing to the many extensive and rich provinces which lay on the way; in some of which, although they are at peace, the service of Your Majesty would have been greatly benefited by my passage through them; especially those of Utlatan and Guatemala, where Pedro de Alvarado has always resided. In consequence of certain ill-treatment, they had rebelled and had never afterwards been entirely pacified, but, on the

256) Should be Gonzalo de Sandoval.

257) This friar also counselled Cortes to assume more state and dignity, alleging that one reason some of his enemies affected to treat him as a mere soldier of fortune was because he had never insisted sufficiently on what was due to his rank as Captain-General and Governor; from thenceforward he heeded this advice.

contrary, have done, and continue to do, much harm to the Spaniards who live there, and to their Indian friends. The country is so rough and full of warlike people, so well skilled in the art of warfare, both offensive and defensive, that they have invented pits and other engines to kill the horses, which have been successful; and, although Pedro de Alvarado has unceasingly waged war against them, with more than two hundred horsemen and five hundred Spanish foot soldiers, besides from five to ten thousand Indians, he has so far been unable to reduce them to Your Majesty's service, but on the contrary they become daily stronger through reinforcements of other people. I believe that, had I been able to go that way, I might with God's help, through kindness and other means, have won them over. For some of the provinces which were driven to rebellion by the ill-treatment they received during my absence and against which had marched no less than one hundred and twenty horsemen three hundred footmen, and considerable artillery, besides thousands of Indian auxiliaries, all under command of the inspector who governed at that time, not only continued in their rebellion, but rather succeeded, and killed ten or twelve Spaniards and many Indians; but when I arrived it sufficed to simply send them a message of my speedy coming, for all the principal persons of that province to come and explain to me the cause of their rising. It really seemed to me sufficiently just, for the Spaniards to whom they had been given in charge had burned eight of their principal chiefs alive, five of them dying on the spot, and the remaining three, a few days after; and, although they had demanded reparation and justice, they had not obtained it; so I consoled them in such manner that they went away satisfied, and have so far continued to live peaceably, and to serve as they had done before I went away. Therefore I am persuaded that the other towns in the province of Coatzacoalco, which are in the same plight, on hearing of my arrival, and without even sending messengers to them, will become tranquil.

In another part of my narrative, most Catholic Majesty, I have already spoken of certain small islands off the port of Honduras, which are called Los Guanajos, some of which have been depopulated by the expeditions sent there from the Islands to capture its natives and make slaves of them. But some of the inhabitants had survived, and I recently learned in the islands of Cuba and Jamaica that an expedition had just been fitted out to complete the devastation, by carrying away the remainder; so I sent a caravel to stop the armada amongst the said islands, and to enjoin, on the part of Your Majesty, that no sort of injury should be done to the natives, for I intended to pacify them, and bring them to Your Majesty's service, as I had heard from some who were settled on the mainland of their peaceable dispositions. This caravel encountered at one of the islands, called Huititla, another caravel, of which Rodrigo de Merlo was captain. My captain found means to bring him to me with all the natives he had captured in that island. I immediately sent the natives back to their homes, and did not proceed against the captain, for he showed me the written permission he had from the governor of Cuba, with a proper authorisation from the judges residing in the island of Espanola. I, therefore, dismissed him and his people with no other punishment than that of liberating the captives he had brought from the said Islands; but the captain and most of his company liked the country so much, they remained with us as settlers in those towns.

The chiefs of those Islands recognised the kindness they had received from me, and, having learned from their countrymen who had settled on the mainland, what good treatment I gave them, came to thank me for the benefits I had extended to them, offering themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Highness, and asking me to show them how they could serve; so I ordered them, in Your Majesty's name, that, for the present, they should cultivate the fields in their country, because in truth they are good for nothing else. So they went away carrying for each of these islands my written order, notifying any Spaniard who might arrive there that they were to be in no manner molested; and they begged me also to place a Spaniard in each of the Islands, which although I could not then agree to, on account of the nearness of my departure, I left instructions with my lieutenant, Hernando de Sandoval, to attend to. Immediately afterwards, I embarked on the ship which had brought me the news of the events in this country, taking in her and in two other vessels which I then had in port, some of the people who had accompanied me on that expedition. We were about twenty in number, with our horses, for most of the people preferred to remain in those towns as settlers, and the others were already waiting for me on the road, thinking I was to return

by land. I sent them a message informing them of my departure by sea, and the cause of it, and ordered them to proceed on their march; they have not yet arrived but I have positive information of their coming.

Everything being thus ordered in those towns which I had settled in Your Majesty's name (though to my great regret I was not able to leave them as well provided as I desired) I put to sea on the twenty-fifth of April, with three ships, and sailed with such fine weather that, in four days, I arrived within one hundred and fifty leagues of the port of Chalchicucla.²⁵⁸ There, I encountered such a heavy storm that I could not proceed, and, believing it would abate, I put out to sea for one day and a night; but such was the tempest that the ships were almost wrecked, and I was driven to take refuge in the Island of Cuba, where, within six days, I entered the port of Havana, being received with rejoicing by the residents, as among them there were many friends of the time when I lived in that island. As the vessels had suffered much damage from the bad weather, it was necessary to have them repaired, which cost me a delay of ten days, and even obliged me to buy another vessel, which was in port being careened, so that I could leave mine which was leaking badly there.

The day after my arrival at Havana, a vessel from New Spain entered that harbour, and, on the second day there came another, and, on the third day, still another. I learned from them that all the country was at peace, and quite tranquil since the death of the factor and the inspector, though they told me there had been some rioting and that the instigators had been punished. I greatly rejoiced at this news, as I feared my sudden return from my expedition had caused some new uneasiness. Having written, though briefly, to Your Majesty from there, I sailed from Havana on the sixteenth day of May, bringing with me some thirty persons who had come secretly from this place; and within eight days I reached the port of Chalchicucla. I was unable to enter the port, owing to a change of weather, but remained outside some two leagues off. At nightfall, having manned my ship's boat, as well as a brigantine which we had found abandoned at sea, I landed and proceeded on foot to the town of Medellin, about four leagues distant from my landing place; and without having been seen or heard by anyone in the town I went to the church to give thanks to Our Lord. My arrival having become known almost immediately, the inhabitants rejoiced with me, and I with them; and that very night I despatched messengers to this city, as well as to the towns of the country, announcing my arrival to them, and making certain provisions which seemed to me important and to the advantage of Your Sacred Majesty's service, and the good of the country. I remained there eleven days, to obtain some rest, and recover from the fatigues of my long journey,²⁵⁹ during which time I was visited by many chiefs and other notable natives of these parts who showed great joy at my arrival. From there, I set out for this city, and was fifteen days on the road, constantly receiving the visits of many natives, some of whom had come eighty leagues to see me; for they had placed their post messengers on the roads so as to be informed of my coming which they were expecting. Thus, in a short time, numbers came from many and distant parts to see me, shedding tears with me, and speaking such affectionate and kind words while they recounted all the troubles they had endured during my absence, in consequence of the bad treatment shown them, that it broke the hearts of all who listened to them. And, although it would be difficult to give a full account to Your Majesty of all the things they related to me, some are worthy enough to be told; nevertheless I reserve them to be told by word of mouth.

258) Indian name for Vera Cruz. Also spelled Chalchuihcuecan.

259) Cortes was so broken by the fatigues of these expeditions, and so reduced by fever and his wounds, that he was scarcely recognisable, and many could hardly persuade themselves that the emaciated man they saw was the gallant Malinche. He was received with the wildest rejoicing, the Indians outdoing the Spaniards in their enthusiasm; for, despite the sufferings he had brought upon them, he understood how to be kind to them, and, compared with the cold brutality and insatiable rapacity of the mean-spirited officials who had oppressed the natives during his absence, Cortes's treatment of them seemed to these poor people that of a paternal benefactor. Padre Cavo in recounting the events of this period says that "these were surely among the happiest days of Cortes's life, for he could hardly proceed on his march on account of the constant demonstrations of the crowds of Indians who came, some of them even from sixty leagues distant, to see him, and bring him presents, so that, had he been their own king Montezuma, they could not have behaved differently. Cortes more than once was moved to tears by such unexpected demonstration of joy from this simple people."

Upon reaching this city, both Spaniards and natives congregated here and received me with as much joy and gladness as though I were their own father. The treasurer and accountant of Your Majesty came out to receive me at the head of a large body of people, on foot and on horseback, all in good order and showing the same signs of good will as all the others; so I went directly to the church and monastery of St. Francis, to return thanks to Our Lord, Who had delivered me from such and so great perils and troubles, bringing me again to repose in peace, and to find a country which had been torn by such commotions in a state of tranquillity and peace.

I remained for six days with the monks to give an account of my sins to God. Two days before I left the convent, a messenger arrived from the town of Medellin, announcing the arrival at that port of certain vessels, in one of which it was reported there came by order of Your Majesty a judge of inquiry. Only the bare fact was known, but I believed that Your Majesty, having heard of the tumults and commotions into which Your Highness's officials had plunged this country which I had left in their charge, and not being sure of my return to it, had ordered the situation to be provided for. God knows how much I rejoiced, as it would have given me much pain to act as judge in this cause, for I had myself been so much injured and ill-treated, and my property so destroyed by these tyrants, that any judgment of mine might have been suspected of proceeding from passion, though indeed no sentence of mine would have exceeded the severity their faults merited. I therefore despatched a messenger in all haste to the port of Medellin, to ascertain with certainty, sending an order also to the Lieutenant of Justice of the said town that Your Majesty's judge should be well received and honoured and lodged in a house which I owned there, and that he, and all who accompanied him, should receive every attention; although as it afterwards appeared he would accept nothing.²⁶⁰

The day after I despatched that message, which was the feast of St. John, another messenger arrived while I was witnessing certain bull rights and other games proper for the festivity, bringing me a letter from the said judge, and another from Your Sacred Majesty, from which I learned the purpose of his coming, and that Your Catholic Majesty had been pleased to order an investigation into my administration of the government of this country. In truth, I greatly rejoiced, not only for the immense favours Your Sacred Majesty has done me in desiring to be informed of my services and faults, but also for the graciousness with which Your Highness has been pleased to let me know through your letter Your Royal intentions to reward me. For the one and the other I kiss the Royal Feet of Your Catholic Majesty a hundred thousand times, and may God, our Lord, grant that, after receiving such favours, I may still be able to serve somewhere, and that Your Catholic Majesty may recognise the sincerity of my desire, which recognition alone will be no small reward for me.

In the letter which the Judge Luis Ponce wrote me, I was informed that he was about leaving for this city, and, as there are two principal roads by which he might come and he did not state which of them he proposed to follow, I sent servants of my household upon each of them to wait upon him and show him the way. The said Luis Ponce travelled in such haste, however, that, although we had used all despatch, my people met him only twenty leagues from this city; and although he received my messengers cordially he refused to accept their services. Although I was sorry at this, because, owing to his hurried travelling he required assistance, I was on the other hand glad, because his refusal proved him to be a just man, who desired to execute his functions with all straightforwardness, and inasmuch as he had come to investigate my conduct, he was unwilling to give rise to suspicion by accepting my hospitality. He arrived one

260) As Cortes states, the commissioner showed himself rather reserved towards him, refusing his presents and deprecating his hospitable intentions. He over-ate himself at the splendid banquet he did attend at Iztapalapan, being especially intemperate in the matter of iced drinks of various sorts, so that he was seized with chills, fever, and violent vomiting from which he shortly died. Cortes's account of others falling ill, and a sort of epidemic introduced by the newcomers prevailing, is not confirmed by the reports of others present. Cavo says just the contrary, that, though the others at the banquet ate and drank freely of everything, nobody else suffered from it. The report that the commissioner had been poisoned was at once started, and Albornoz, who left for Spain just at that time, carried the tale thither; so that not even the sworn statement of the doctors who attended Ponce de Leon, affirming that he died of a malignant fever sufficed to entirely kill this calumny.

evening two leagues from this city, where he passed the night; and I prepared everything to receive him properly on the following day, but he sent me word not to come out to meet him in the morning, as he intended to dine where he was, asking me merely to send him a chaplain to say mass for him, which I did. Suspecting that this was only an excuse, as it afterwards turned out to be, to avoid the reception, I was on my guard, but he left so early that although I made all haste, he was already within the city when I met him; so we rode together to the monastery of St. Francis, where we assisted at mass. After this, I said that, if he desired to present his provisions then, it could be done, for the entire municipal council of the city was assembled there, as well as the treasurer and accountant of Your Majesty. He declined to do this, saying that he would present them the next day. And, so it was done; for, the next day, we assembled in the principal church of the city (the dean and chapter, as well as the said officials and myself being present), when the said Luis Ponce presented the royal letters, which I, and all those who assisted at the ceremony, received and kissed, and placed upon our heads as provisions of our King and rightful Sovereign, to be obeyed and complied with in all respects, and by everyone, according as Your Sacred Majesty was pleased to order. The municipal officers delivered their wands into his hands, and all the other ceremonies were complied with, as Your Majesty will see by the official acts drawn by the notary public of the municipal council, in whose presence everything was executed. The public crier announced in the square of the city the investigations which Luis Ponce had come to institute, but during seventeen days no one presented any complaint against me. About this time, the said judge Luis Ponce fell ill, as did also those who had come with him in his armada, and, the disease increasing, it was God's pleasure that he should die of it, as did also thirty others, amongst whom were two monks of the order of St. Dominic; moreover, even at this time there are still many persons ill and in danger of death; for the disease they brought with them in that armada seemed almost to be a plague, as even some who reside here took the contagion and two of them died, while others are still in a convalescent state.

Immediately after the death of Luis Ponce, his funeral was celebrated with all the honour due to a person of his authority sent by Your Majesty. I was then earnestly requested by the Municipal Corporation of this city as well as by the Procurators of all the towns who had assembled here, to take charge of the government, in the name of Your Catholic Majesty, and to carry on the administration of justice conceded me by Your Majesty's order and by Your Royal Provisions, giving their reasons therefor, and explaining the evils which would follow in case I would not accept it, as Your Majesty may see by the report of these proceedings which will accompany this letter. I sought to excuse myself from this, as will appear by the said copy, but other requirements have since been made of me in the same sense, pointing out greater evils as likely to follow should I not accept, and, though I have defended myself until now and have not yielded, I can see that there do in reality exist some evils. But I desired Your Majesty should be convinced of my purity and fidelity in Your Royal service, which is my chief aim, because thinking otherwise of me, all other good things in this world are nothing to me, and I would rather die. I have therefore put aside everything for this purpose and insist with all my influence upon a certain licenciado, called Marcos de Aguilar, whom the said Luis Ponce brought as his successor, requesting and entreating him to continue the investigation to its finish. He has refused to do this, alleging insufficient powers, for which I am exceedingly sorry, as there is nothing in the world I desire so much as to have Your Majesty properly informed of my virtues and sins (and this not without reason) for I believe, as an article of faith, that Your Catholic Majesty will grant me ample rewards, not taking into consideration the smallness of my past services, but because Your Majesty is bound to display munificence towards one who has served you with such fidelity as I have.

Nothing of this should be allowed to remain obscure, but all the good and bad of my services should be manifestly and clearly published, for it is a point of honour with me, to obtain which I have gone through so many trials, and exposed myself to so many dangers. So that I hope that neither God, nor Your Majesty out of respect to Him, will allow invidious and corrupt tongues to deprive me of what I prize most. I neither desire nor ask of Your Majesty any other reward in payment of my services than this. God grant that I shall not live without it. I feel, Most Catholic Prince, that, from the beginning of my expeditions, I

have had many and powerful rivals and enemies; yet their wickedness and malice have not sufficed to eclipse the fame of my fidelity and services; hence in despair they have sought to obscure Your Majesty's vision, and lead you astray from the Holy and Catholic intentions which I have always recognised in Your Excellency, to acknowledge and reward my services. One of their means is to accuse me before Your Majesty of treason, saying that I refused obedience to Your Royal commands; that I held this country not in Your Powerful name, but under my own tyrannical and despotic rule, for which they give some depraved and diabolical reasons which are entirely false and spring from their depraved invention.²⁶¹

Did they but look sincerely into my acts, and were they just judges, they would be forced to recognise the reverse of what they declare, for, up to now, it has not been, nor will it ever be, seen whilst I live that any letter or command of Your Majesty has been refused scrupulous obedience. Now the iniquity and malice of those who have made these accusations will be more clearly and entirely proved and made manifest, because, had what they say been true, I would certainly not have gone six hundred leagues from this city, through an uninhabited country, and by dangerous roads, leaving the government to Your Majesty's officials whom I had every reason to believe were most zealous in the Royal service though indeed their actions did not correspond to the confidence I placed in them. Their other argument is that I held the greater part of the natives here as my slaves, treating them as such and profiting by their services and work, by which means I have amassed a large sum of gold and silver treasure, and that I have used the revenues of Your Catholic Majesty, without necessity, to the sum of sixty odd thousand pesos of gold; also that I have not sent the full amount of the Royal revenues to Your Excellency, retaining them under various pretexts for purposes which I have not succeeded in accomplishing. I can easily believe that, perhaps, they partly believed this, as such rumours are current, but they are contrary to the facts, and I am fully confident that the first use of the touchstone will suffice to discover the counterfeit. As to what they say about my possessing the large portion of the land, I admit this to be true, and I have likewise had for my share a good sum and quantity of gold; but I declare it has not been sufficient to raise me above poverty, and free me from debt, for I owe more than five hundred thousand pesos in gold, to pay which I do not possess a single peso; because, if my share has been large, the expenditures have been greater, for I have consumed very large sums, not in buying lands, nor in founding entails, nor acquiring any sort of property for myself and heirs, but in extending the dominion and patrimony of Your Highness in these parts, and in gaining and conquering many kingdoms and lordships for Your Excellency, and exposing myself to risks and dangers.

These malicious men will never be able to conceal, or defame with their viperous tongues, these services, because, by examining my books, it will be found that I have spent in these conquests more than three hundred thousand pesos in gold belonging to my own fortune and household; having finished with that, I have spent sixty thousand pesos in gold, belonging to Your Majesty, which were not used for me, for I never touched them, but they were paid out on my vouchers for the cost and expenses of this conquest. Whether they have been profitably spent or not may be seen by the patent results which are manifest to all. Respecting what they say of my not sending the revenues to Your Majesty, this is also manifestly contrary to the truth, because, in the short time which has elapsed since I came here, more treasure has been sent to Your Majesty than from all the Islands and mainland put together, which we discovered and peopled thirty odd years ago at great expense and outlay, made by the Catholic Kings, your grandparents, which was not the case in this country. Not only have I sent to Your Majesty all belonging to Your Royal dues, but I have also sent what belonged to me, and those who attended me, taking no account of what we have here spent in Your Royal service. When I sent the first remission to Your Majesty, with Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, we not only sent the fifth of all that had been acquired which belonged to Your Majesty, but the entire amount of what had been obtained; for it seemed right of me to do so, being, as these things were, the first fruits.

Afterwards, the fifth of all the gold obtained in this city during the lifetime of its sovereign, Montezuma, was sent to Your Majesty; I mean of that part which was smelted, and which amounted to

261) See appendix to this Letter.

thirty odd thousand castellanos; and, although the jewellery ought also to have been distributed, giving the people their shares, both they and I were glad to send all of it to Your Majesty, which amounted to more than five hundred thousand pesos in gold. The loss of all this when it was taken from us on our expulsion from this city during the rebellion, caused by the coming of Narvaez to this country, although deserved for my sins, was not caused by my negligence.

When the city was reconquered and reduced to the royal service of Your Highness the same course was followed: of the gold that was smelted, one-fifth was assigned to Your Majesty; and I also obtained that all of jewels and other valuable objects belonging to my men should be sent to Your Highness, and these were certainly not less valuable and precious than the first we had secured. I despatched them together with thirty thousand pesos of gold, in bars, in charge of Julian Alderete, Your Majesty's treasurer in these parts, but they were captured by the French.²⁶² Neither was this my fault, but rather the fault of those who did not provide a sufficient armada in time to go to the Azores for the protection of such an important treasure. As I was starting on my later expedition to the Gulf of Hibuera, I, likewise, sent to Your Excellency sixty thousand pesos of gold, by Diego de Ocampo and Francisco de Montejo; and, if a greater amount was not sent, it was owing to the orders issued by Your Majesty's Council of the Indies, respecting the gold to be sent from these parts to Spain; for, indeed, we somewhat exceeded ourselves and contravened the orders in sending such an amount at one time. We ventured to do this, however, on account of the stress in which Your Majesty was for want of money, and I, likewise, sent at the same time to Your Highness, with my servant Diego de Soto, everything I possessed, there not being one peso of gold left me, including a field piece which in its material and manufacture had cost me more than thirty-five thousand pesos in gold²⁶³; likewise certain jewels of gold and stones which belonged to me, and which I sent, not so much on account of their value, although this was not insignificant for me, but because the French had captured the first consignment I had sent, and it grieved my soul that Your Sacred Majesty should not have seen those things. Thus, in order that a sample might be seen, even though trifling in comparison with the things I first sent, I sent all I possessed of the kind. Hence, I cannot understand what reason there could be for keeping back anything belonging to Your Highness, when I have desired with pure zeal only to serve Your Catholic Majesty with all I possess. I am, likewise, told by the officials, that, during my absence, certain quantities of gold have been remitted, so that, in truth, the remittances have never ceased being sent every time an opportunity offered.

It has, likewise, been stated, most Powerful Lord, that Your Majesty has been informed that I received, from the Province allotted to me, profits amounting to an income of two hundred millions. As my desire neither is, nor has been, other than that Your Catholic Majesty should know beyond all doubt my zeal for Your service, and should be entirely satisfied that I have always told, and will tell the truth, I cannot manifest it better than to place this much revenue at Your Majesty's disposition, and there could be no better opportunity than the present to dispel any suspicions, which, according to public rumour, Your Majesty has concerning me; hence I beseech Your Majesty to accept for your service all that I possess here and to do me the favour of granting me instead a donation of twenty millions in Spain. In this way, Your Majesty will keep the remaining one hundred and eighty millions, and I shall live contentedly at Your Majesty's Court, where no one, I protest, will exceed me in fidelity, nor dare to doubt my services to the Crown. I shall, also, be better able to serve Your Majesty there, for, being an eye witness, I can inform Your Highness as to what will most advance Your Royal service, preventing any false accounts from deceiving Your Highness. I assure Your Sacred Majesty that my service there will not be of less importance, for my advice may help to preserve this land, and advance the conversion of the natives to our Catholic Faith, and increase Your Majesty's revenues in these parts, rather than see them diminished as has happened in the Islands and on the mainland for want of good government, when the Catholic Kings,

262) See Note to Fourth Letter, p. 159.

263) Already in the Fourth Letter, Cortes explained to the Emperor the exact cost of this unique piece of artillery; that he here repeats himself may be due to reasonable fear that his former letter never reached its destination; for many of those he wrote were lost. He has no delicacy about insisting upon the value of his gift to the Emperor.

grandparents of Your Majesty, not being properly counselled, but advised by interested people who misrepresented the true conditions, as indeed all those have done who have sent reports from those countries. For two reasons I do desire of Your Sacred Majesty so great a favour as to allow me to come and serve in Your Royal presence, the first and principal one being to satisfy Your Majesty and the rest of the world of my loyalty and fidelity in Your Royal service, because I esteem this more than anything else in the world; for, if I have exposed myself to so many fatigues and dangers, and have suffered such hardships, it was to gain the renown of being a servant of Your Majesty, and of Your Royal and Imperial Crown, and not from covetousness of treasures. Of treasures, indeed, I have had a sufficient quantity if they could satisfy me, — I mean for such a modest esquire as myself, — nor would I have spent them lavishly to advance that which I hold to be my first and most important object. If I have not obtained that favour, which I so much covet, doubtless my sins have been the cause, and I believe that nothing is capable of satisfying me if this immense favour which I implore, is not granted me by Your Majesty.

Lest Your Majesty should imagine that I ask too much, though the sum is hardly sufficient for my decent maintenance at Court, I will be contented with ten millions of yearly revenue.²⁶⁴ This would enable me to appear worthily after having held the charge of Governor in the Royal name of Your Majesty in these parts, and having extended the Royal patrimony and dominion of Your Majesty by bringing under Your Princely yoke so many provinces, peopled by so many and such great cities; and by destroying idolatries and offences against our Creator, and converting many natives to His knowledge by planting the true Catholic Faith in this land. If they are not prevented by those who look upon these things with evil eyes, and whose zeal is directed to other ends, a new Church will very certainly be raised shortly in these parts, where God, our Lord, will be better served and honoured than anywhere else in the world. I repeat, that, if Your Majesty will grant me ten millions of revenue in your realms, and allow me to serve you in Spain, I shall consider it a great favour, even leaving behind all I possess here; for thus my desire to serve Your Majesty in Your Royal presence will be satisfied, and Your Highness will likewise be convinced of my loyalty and zeal.

The other reason for wishing to appear before Your Majesty is that I may give information respecting the state of this country, and even of the Islands, which will advance the service of God, our Lord, and of Your Majesty; for, on the spot, my words, would be believed, which is not the case respecting what I write from here, as what I say has been attributed to my interested motives and not to my zeal as a vassal of Your Sacred Majesty.

My desire to kiss the Royal feet of Your Sacred Majesty, and to be promoted to serve in Your Royal Presence is beyond all expression. If Your Highness be not pleased to allow this, or deems it inopportune to grant me the favour I beg, by allowing me a set yearly income to support me at Court, I pray Your Highness to allow me to retain in this country what I now possess here, or what my agents will beseech Your Majesty, in my name, granting it as a perpetual pension for myself and my heirs, so that I may not be obliged to return to Spain, asking people for God's sake to give me food. I shall consider it a great boon if Your Majesty will grant what I so fervently desire, for I trust in my service and in the Catholic conscience of Your Sacred Majesty and that, beholding the purity of my intentions, Your Highness will not allow me to live poor.

The arrival of this judge of inquiry seemed to me to furnish a good occasion and sufficient cause for the accomplishment of my said wish; and I even began to put it into execution, but was hindered by two things; one of which was that I was without money, for my house in this city had been pillaged and robbed of all its contents, as Your Majesty is already apprised; and the other was the fear that, during my absence in this country, the natives might rebel, and dissensions might break out amongst the Spaniards; for the experience of the past may well serve to forecast the future.

While I, Most Catholic Lord, was engaged in preparing this despatch for Your Sacred Majesty, a messenger arrived from the South Sea, bringing me a letter that a ship had arrived on that coast, near a place called Tecoauntepeque, which, as it appeared from another letter addressed to me by the captain of

264) Meaning presumably the yearly revenue from a capital of ten millions, though it is expressed as here translated.

the said ship, and which I send to Your Majesty, belongs to the armada sent under command of the Captain Loaysa to the Malucco Islands.²⁶⁵ Your Majesty will learn from this captain's letter the incidents of his voyage, so I will not repeat them to Your Highness but limit myself to explaining what I did. I immediately sent a competent person to the place where the ship had arrived, to arrange for the said captain to return to Spain immediately if he so desired, providing him with everything necessary for his voyage; and to learn from him the particulars of his voyage so that I might make a full report of everything to Your Highness as soon as possible. Lest the ship might need repairs I also sent thither a pilot to bring her to the port of Zacatula, where I have three ships ready to start on a voyage of discovery in those parts and coasts, and I gave orders that she should be repaired and refitted for Your Majesty's service, and for the needs of her voyage. As soon as I receive information from the ship, I shall immediately forward it, so that Your Majesty, being fully informed, may give the orders most expedient for Your Royal service.

My ships in the South Sea, as I have told Your Majesty, are prepared to start on their voyage; for, as soon as I arrived in this capital, I began to hasten their departure; and they would already have sailed but that they were waiting for certain arms, artillery, and ammunition, which had come from Spain, for their service and that of Your Majesty. I hope, in Our Lord, that Your Majesty's good fortune will enable me to render good services by this voyage; for, even if a strait should not be discovered, I hope to find some route to the Spice Islands, so that Your Majesty may have yearly news of events there. Should Your Majesty be pleased to grant me the favours I have asked in a certain capitulation respecting that discovery, I offer myself to conquer all the Spiceries, and any other islands there may be between Malucco, Malacca, and China, and to arrange matters so that, instead of obtaining spices and drugs by trading with the king of Portugal, who now owns them, Your Majesty may obtain them as your own property, once the natives of those islands have acknowledged Your Majesty as their king and rightful sovereign. For, I pledge myself, if the said grants be made to me, to send such an armada thither, or to go myself personally, as will subdue those islands, settling Spaniards there whom I will provide with forts and the necessary artillery and war stores to defend themselves against all the princes of those parts or any other. Should Your Majesty be pleased that I undertake this business, granting me what I asked, I believe it will be for the good of Your service; and I propose that, should it not turn out as I have stated, Your Majesty shall order me to be punished as one who has reported falsely to his Sovereign.

Since my return, I have, likewise, ordered people to go overland to settle on the River Tabasco, which is also called Grijalba, and to conquer many provinces in that neighbourhood, whereby God, our Lord, and Your Majesty, will be well served, and the ships navigating in those parts will derive much benefit. The port is a good one, and, if populated by Spaniards, and if the coast tribes be pacified, the vessels coming and going will be safe, whereas heretofore the natives there have been savage, and have killed the Spaniards who landed there.

As Your Majesty has already been informed, I have also sent three companies of men to the province of the Zapotecas²⁶⁶ to invade it in three different places, so as to complete its reduction in the shortest possible period; this will be of great service, not only because of the mischief which those natives work on the other peaceable ones in the neighbourhood, but also because they occupy the richest mining districts existing in New Spain, from which, when conquered Your Majesty will derive great profit. I have,

265) This fleet of some six vessels under command of Garcia Jofre de Loaysa sailed in August, 1525, for the Molucca Islands, a convention having been previously established with Portugal to avoid a conflict of claims. It encountered many misfortunes, and its commander, the navigator Sebastian del Cano, and other officers, died during the voyage. The vessel, of which Cortes writes, reached the Mexican coast under command of Fortunio de Alango, her captain, Santiago de Guevara, having succumbed to the privations of the voyage when in sight of port. Only one of Loaysa's ships reached its proposed destination, and founded a small struggling settlement on the Isla de los Reyes, which was later abandoned when the Spanish crown lost interest in the Spice Islands' ventures (Bancroft, *Hist. Mex.*, vol. ii., cap. xiii).

266) During this expedition against the Zapoteca and Mixi tribes, the Spaniards accumulated about one hundred thousand pesos of gold, partly by rifling the graves of chiefs. The leaders were inexperienced, and fell to quarrelling amongst themselves. One of their ships with some fifteen men, and all the treasure, foundered in a gale off Vera Cruz.

likewise, prepared an expedition to settle on the banks of the River Las Palmas,²⁶⁷ which is on the north coast, below Panuco, in the direction of Florida, for I have been informed that the land is good and that there is a seaport; all of which persuades me that God, Our Lord, and Your Majesty will not be less served there than in other parts.

Between the northern coast and the Province of Mechoacan, there is a certain tribe called Chichimecas.²⁶⁸ They are a very barbarous people, and not so intelligent as those of these provinces. I have, likewise, sent sixty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, and many native allies, against them, to discover the secrets of that province and its people. I have instructed them that, should they find the people there susceptible of civilisation and conversion to Our Faith, as these others have been, and showing a disposition for Your Majesty's service, to make some settlement in the country, and to bring them peaceably under the yoke of Your Majesty. But that if they did not find them as I have just said, but rebellious and disobedient, to make war on them and reduce them to slavery; for, there is nothing so superfluous in this country as those who refuse to acknowledge and serve Your Majesty. By making slaves of these barbarians, who are almost savages, Your Majesty will be served, and the Spaniards greatly benefited, as they will dig for gold, and perhaps through contact with us, some of them may save their souls.

I have learned that, in the midst of these Chichimecas, there are some thickly populated parts where there are large towns whose people live in the same manner as the Mexicans. Some of these towns have even been seen by Spaniards, and I am confident that the country will be settled, for I am assured that it abounds in silver mines.

About two months before leaving this capital for the Gulf of Hibueras, most Powerful Lord, I despatched a captain to the town of Coliman, which is on the South Sea, one hundred and four leagues from here, ordering him to follow that coast, for a hundred and fifty or two hundred leagues, for the sole purpose of learning all about it, and of discovering if there were any ports. He executed my orders, penetrating one hundred and thirty leagues inland, and bringing me an account of many ports he had found on the coast. This was of no small advantage, on account of the general dearth of them up to the present time; he had visited many and very considerable towns, and several numerous and warlike tribes, with whom he had encounters, and many of whom he pacified; his small force and the want of pasturage for his

267) The territory of Rio de las Palmas just north of Panuco had been granted to Panfilo de Narvaez, and was reputed to be extraordinarily rich in gold and precious stones. Cortes's proposed expedition was withdrawn to avoid encroaching on the rights of Narvaez, and a free hand was thus left to Nufio de Guzman, a man of noble birth from Guadalajara, who had been for some years at Puerta de Plata in San Domingo, until, through Diego Velasquez's influence, he was appointed Governor of Panuco. For cruelty, rapacity, and violence, he was among all the Spaniards in Mexico, either before or after him facile princeps. In his Governorship of Panuco, he had already violated all the conventions with the natives, and, in defiance of the royal ordinances, had so hunted down the Indians, branding them and shipping as slaves to the Islands, that his province was almost depopulated. He was just as violent in his treatment of the Spaniards, directing his severities, especially towards all who were known as friends of Cortes.

He invaded neighbouring provinces, and, when the settlers resisted, his superior force enabled him either to drive them out, seize their lands, or to capture them, and, without even a trial, condemn them to torture and death. He nailed one Spaniard to a tree by a nail through his tongue for using impertinent language to him.

Promoted to the Governorship of Mexico, the field for carrying on his sinister exploits was enlarged, and no oppression, extortion, or outrage, which his fiendish ingenuity could devise, or his avarice suggest, was omitted to subjugate all alike to his will; later his expedition into the north-west left the same trail of robbery and murder behind. He was finally arrested and sent to Spain for trial, where, in 1540, Cortes had the magnanimity to interest himself in behalf of his old enemy, who was penniless, friendless, and in prison at Torrejon de Velasco, some eight leagues distant from the capital, even sending him money for his wants. Guzman died, however, before his trial was finished. Bustamente moralises on the strange contradiction in the character of Cortes, which prompted such generosity to the most inveterate enemy he had ever had, one who since years had worked him every injury in his power, while he showed himself so heartless in his treatment of the brave King Quauhtemotzin, whom he hanged in the dead of night, in the wilds of Yucatan, for no fault whatever after having robbed and tortured him in Mexico.

268) The Chichimecas were the most ancient of Mexican nations, and were savages dwelling in caves, living by the chase, and having nothing of the Aztec civilisation, and yet, according to Motolinia (Toribio de Benevente) they were monogamists, sun-worshippers, and made no human sacrifices, their offerings being snakes and butterflies.

horses prevented his going further. His account also described a very large river, which the natives told him was ten days' march from its source, and about which, and the people inhabiting its banks, they told me many strange things. I am about to send him again with a larger force and better equipment, so that he may explore the secrets of that river, which, judging from the size and importance the natives attribute to it, I would not be surprised if it turned out to be a strait; as soon as he returns I shall relate to Your Majesty what I have learned.

All these captains are on the point of starting on their expeditions: may God be pleased to guide them according to His Will. For my own part, even should Your Majesty visit Your displeasure on me, I shall not cease to devote myself to Your service, holding it impossible that Your Majesty should fail, for any length of time, to recognise my services; but, even if this should happen, I shall remain satisfied with having done my duty, and knowing that all the world is aware of the loyalty with which I have performed it, nor do I wish for any other inheritance for my children.

Most Invincible Caesar may God, Our Lord, preserve the life, and augment for long years the power of Your Sacred Majesty according to Your desires. From this city of Temixtitan, on the third day of September, 1526.

Hernando Cortes.

APPENDIX

On August 27, 1529, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, bishop of Mexico, addressed a lengthy report to Charles V., recapitulating the events of the conquest, and exposing the actual condition of the country, notably the official anarchy prevailing in the capital during the absence of Cortes in Honduras. The bishop's impartiality in all that concerns the conduct of Cortes and that of his enemies gives great value to his testimony, and I have thought well to translate that part of his letter which deals particularly with the state of things in Mexico up to the time of Cortes's visit to Spain. Read in connection with the narrative of the Fifth Letter, these passages will be seen to confirm the latter's statements in his various letters to the Emperor, many of which they also complete and elucidate.

I know of no English translation of this important document, but in the valuable collection of *Voyages, Relations, et Memoires* of Ternaux-Compans an excellent French translation of the entire letter may be found.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM BISHOP ZUMARRAGA TO CHARLES V. INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The grace, the peace, and the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Majesty, and may Your Majesty read attentively this letter, which is written with the sincere and loyal intention of serving God and Your Majesty. I write dispassionately, and to make myself useful to the inhabitants of this country, both Spaniards and natives, and for the discharge of my conscience and the fulfilment of the duties of my office, which I have accepted as a cross and a martyrdom. I shall state the truth, even should it cost me my life, which is said to be menaced by the hatred of my enemies. He who shall judge us all will take account of the persecutions I suffer for His cause.

Immediately upon my arrival in this country, and after consulting the most serious religious men, as well as the conquerors and the oldest inhabitants, I addressed to Your Majesty a report on the condition in which I found it. But now that I have acquired more experience and have been able to inform myself by conversing with the natives, I am able to make known the Spaniards' manner of viewing things and all that has happened since the arrival of the royal *Audiencia* with which I came, and it is in God's name that I entreat Your Majesty to graciously correct the abuses.

Your Majesty knows that when Fernando Cortes first came to this country, he was sent by the Governor of Cuba, Diego Velasquez, to search for Grijalba, who had been sent by the governor with a fleet on a voyage of discovery. Velasquez ordered Cortes to return with Grijalba in case he found him, as he had no permission from your Majesty to undertake conquests. In case he did not find him, the governor's orders were that Cortes should trade along the coast, exchanging the merchandise he had brought from Cuba for that purpose, for gold; after which he was to return to Cuba. As Grijalba was already back before Cortes set sail, the latter should have abandoned his expedition for, with the cessation of the cause, the effect should cease. Cortes, however, seeing himself in command of men and ships, and led doubtless by an inspiration of God, who wished to deliver this country from the devil, did not obey the instructions of Velasquez. He left, and guided by divine Providence he soon reached the first harbour of Mexico, which is called San Juan de Ulua. The country pleased him greatly, and he thought to render Your Majesty a great service in colonising it. He therefore landed, contrary to the orders he had received, and wrote to Your

Majesty and likewise to Diego Velasquez, to explain his conduct. Some approved of his addressing himself directly to Your Majesty and sending the gold he had obtained, but others blamed him, declaring he should have sent it to Velasquez. Thus the force of Cortes was divided into two parties, but his friends prevailed and proclaimed him captain-general. He succeeded in reducing the partisans of Velasquez to obedience, though only after much trouble, for they even tried several times to assassinate him. Providence preserved him for the conquest of this country, for according to all impartial people it would never have been accomplished without him. He obtained possession of all Mexico and its capital. Your Majesty knows the details of this achievement.

As soon as the country was subdued, Cortes, in response to the prayer of Your Majesty's treasurer, Julian de Alderete, and of all the conquerors, made a repartition of the Indians. The country was on the verge of destruction, for under pretext of seeking provisions, the Spaniards took possession of everything they found. This was the reason why he decided to make that repartition, in making which he however secured for himself and his friends everything most worth having. Many of the conquerors, and especially those who had shown themselves partisans of Diego Velasquez, were little satisfied with the share he allotted them. He had assigned the most important towns and provinces to Your Majesty, but afterwards he took them away from the royal officials who were already in possession of them, saying that by giving them as Encomiendas to individuals, one fifth of the tributes which the holders would be obliged to pay would bring more to the royal treasury, while all the profit went to the royal officials and their servants. He took for himself the royal city of Texcoco, which formerly belonged to the royal domain, and distributed the rest as he pleased. A short time after the conquest and partition of Mexico, Your Majesty's officers, Alonso de Estrada, Rodrigo de Albornoz, Gonzalo de Salazar, and Pero Almendez Chirino, arrived. Cortes gave them the best reception, installing them in their offices and overwhelming them with favours. They all made him the greatest demonstrations of friendship, including even the factor Salazar.

At that time Cortes sent captains commanding a good number of men to explore the country in all directions and to examine which provinces would it be most suitable to colonise. Among these there was Cristobal de Olid, whom he furnished with a fleet and an army to colonise the province of Hibueras and the Cape of Honduras, which was reputed to be a very rich country. The preparations for this expedition cost Cortes a good deal of money. But Cristobal de Olid, who had served under Cortes, no sooner observed the wealth of the country than he resolved to become independent. As soon as Cortes learned this, he despatched several officials to summon him to recognise his authority, but as Olid obstinately refused to do this, Cortes decided to go in person, nothing daunted by the difficulties such a long overland journey offered.

Cortes set out therefore, leaving the licenciado Zuazo as chief justice of the entire country, and giving him power to decide all contentions. He associated the treasurer, Alonso de Estrada, and the accountant, Albornoz, with him in the government.

Hardly had Cortes left the city when Estrada and Albornoz quarrelled, abusing one another, and even drawing their swords. Informed of these disorders by letters which he received from Mexico, Cortes sent back from Guazacalco, where he then was, the factor Gonzalo de Salazar and the inspector Peralmindez Chirino, charging them to quell the disturbances. He gave them two sets of instructions. According to one they were, should they find Albornoz and Estrada reconciled, merely associated with the government, and all four were to govern in accord with the licenciado Zuazo, who, as jurisconsult, retained the exclusive administration of justice. But if the discord still continued, Salazar and Chirino were authorised by the other set of instructions to assume the reins of government alone. Urged by their ambitions, these two came to an understanding with Albornoz who so thoroughly detested Estrada that he consented to be deprived of his own power if only the other were involved in his fall and punished, as the author of all the troubles.

In agreement with Albornoz, the envoys of Cortes destroyed the first instructions, and only produced the others which provided that since Estrada and Albornoz could not agree, the envoys were to replace them in the government. At first Estrada submitted, but becoming then reconciled with Albornoz and

learning from him the history of the destroyed papers, they both went to complain to the licenciado Zuazo, and demanded to be recognised once more as members of the government. Zuazo decided in their favour, but many troubles and disorders ensued on account of this affair, and several times a civil war was on the verge of breaking out.

Salazar astutely attached himself to a certain Rodrigo de Paz, who was a relative of Cortes, and held the office of alguacil mayor. The latter exercised great influence in the country because the partisans of Cortes regarded him as their chief. Sustained by such an one Salazar ordered the arrest of the treasurer and the accountant, and holding them prisoners in their own houses, he began to proceed against their friends and partisans upon whom he inflicted a shameful punishment in public. Again a civil war was imminent and was only avoided, thanks to God and to the sermons of Father Martin de Valencia and some other holy religious men.

As soon as Salazar and Chirino found themselves masters of the government, and the municipal body had taken the oath to them, they began to steal right and left. They arrested and tortured the Indian chiefs to extort their gold and jewels from them. They distributed important repartimientos to all their adherents. Rodrigo de Paz having ventured to make some observations, and having sent some religious men to make them understand that they were ruining and losing the country, they arrested him to free themselves from the importunate censures. This arrest provoked a tumult, and for the third time civil war threatened. In spite of all, they tried him, and a few days later they hanged him after inflicting the most cruel tortures on him. Some time before this, they had already, on I know not what pretext, seized the person of the licenciado Zuazo whom they exiled, together with many of the principal adherents of Cortes, so that nobody could oppose their will, and they might be absolute masters of the government, which, in their hands, was the most disorderly imaginable. About this time Salazar and Chirino spread the report that Cortes had been killed by the Indians, and all those who accompanied him on his expedition to Hibueras as well. The friends of Cortes contradicted this news which so irritated the others that they had public proclamation made to the effect that any one bold enough to say that Cortes still lived should receive one hundred lashes. Salazar showed himself especially violent against Cortes, whom he publicly described as a heretic, a traitor, and an usurper. He added that even were Cortes still living, he would never allow him to return to the country; that he had not come to Mexico as factor, but that he carried a secret order from the king to arrest Cortes, and that he would have done this had the latter not left for Hibueras.

The Spaniards were thus again divided into two parties: the one to which Salazar belonged was composed of the former friends of Velasquez; the other, of those of Cortes. Salazar had all of these latter whom he could catch arrested, and the others took refuge in the forests when the news of their chief's death was spread in Mexico. Salazar and Chirino forced the municipal body to recognise them as governors in Your Majesty's name. To confirm the rumour of the death of Cortes, they celebrated pompous funeral rites in his honour, in the convent of St. Francis. They took possession of and inventoried all he owned, and sold everything at the lowest price, for they were careful to have the appraising done by one Hernando Lopez, one of their warmest partisans. When the sale was finished, they got him to lend them a large sum of gold pesos which they sent to Spain for safety. Salazar also pillaged the house of the king of Texcoco, who had accompanied Cortes to Hibueras, saying that he had likewise perished in the expedition. It is certain that he obtained at least five or six thousand gold pesos, though it is said that there were more than thirty thousand.

When Cortes and his friends returned to Mexico, they could never learn exactly what had been taken from them, because the man who had made the inventory had fled to Spain where he died in prison at Seville. As for the king of Texcoco he could never recover anything of all they had taken from him.

A respectable woman whose husband had accompanied Cortes, having declared in her grief that the news was false, and that all were well, was ordered by Salazar to receive twenty lashes in public, as a sorceress. He was absolute master of the country, which he governed like a tyrant, and he had enriched his partisans with the Indians and spoils of Fernando Cortes and his companions: for he counted upon their self-interest to defend and support him should the latter reappear; all of which the former friends of Diego

Velasquez who had joined his party were quite ready to do. The friends of Cortes, afflicted and despoiled of everything, took refuge in the convents awaiting such help as God might send them. Every week Salazar reviewed his soldiers, the meanest of whom bragged that, if Cortes was still alive, he would either take him prisoner or kill him with his spear.

Cortes during all this time was completely ignorant of all that was happening. He learned finally from a ship that reached Honduras, of Salazar's tyranny, and how he had treated his friends. As he could not leave the country, he sent one of his pages to Mexico bearing a revocation of his former patents and another by which he annulled all the powers of the royal officers who had by their abuses produced such a conflagration. He appointed his kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, governor in their stead. But when the page reached Mexico Francisco de las Casas had long since disappeared, for Salazar had sent him a prisoner to Spain, in order to get rid of him. The page, fearing that the tyrant might hang him, took refuge in the convent of St. Francis. When the news of his arrival spread through the town, Estrada, Albornoz, Salazar, Chirino, and their partisans were greatly astonished, for there was hardly any one left who believed Cortes to be still alive. When the former of these saw the letter of Cortes revoking all the powers he had given, they thought it a favourable opportunity to revenge themselves on Salazar, for all the affronts he had inflicted on them. They assembled secretly in the convent of St. Francis, summoning together all the friends of Cortes who had taken refuge there. The latter did not dare to disobey Your Majesty's principal officers, who ordered them to follow them. They assembled all the alcaldes and regidores in a house and made them deliver to them the staff of justice as lieutenants of the governor, although they had no powers to show. Then they adjourned uproariously to the house of Cortes, where Salazar was installed. The latter had intrenched himself, and had with him many of his friends, well armed, though many had already deserted him. The assailants broke down the doors of the house by means of artillery and captured Salazar amidst such disorder that it is really a miracle that everything was not lost on that day, for the Indians had resolved to profit by that occasion to fall upon the Spaniards, massacre them to the last man, and liberate their country.

Estrada and Albornoz, masters of the person of Salazar and liberators of Chirino who had fled, began to govern in such wise as to fill their pockets. They took a large number of Indians for themselves, distributed others amongst their friends, and began legal proceedings against those who had sided with their enemies. Several of these latter were decapitated or hanged, and the others took refuge in convents, though some were even dragged out from them to be executed. All were deprived of their Indians and persecuted in every possible manner.

While Mexico was being devoured by this conflagration, Cortes came back. When it was known that he had left the port and was approaching the capital, an incredible dismay spread through the city. Everybody wanted to file complaints of the executions, robberies, and vexations which had taken place. Some accused Salazar and Chirino who were prisoners, while others accused Estrada and Albornoz who were governing.

When Cortes beheld the skein he had to untangle, he retired to the convent of St. Francis, where he confessed, received the communion, and afterwards consulted the Superior, and the wisest religious men concerning all that had happened, and the attitude he should adopt. But just at that time, the licenciado Luis de Leon, whom Your Majesty sent as judge of residencia, arrived in New Spain. As soon as he had exhibited his powers all the officers of justice consigned their wands of office to him. But a few days later God called him hence. Judging from the good report I have had of him from those who knew him, his death was beyond doubt a punishment which it pleased Providence to inflict on this country. He had designated the licenciado Marcos de Aguilar as his successor, but as the latter was very old, his infirmities prevented him from accomplishing anything. He died within a short time, after having named the treasurer, Estrada, to succeed him.

During the government of Alonso de Estrada and Gonzalo de Sandoval, Nuno de Guzman arrived in the province of Panuco, where Your Majesty sent him as governor. He had been to the island Hispaniola and Cuba, where he stopped for some time. The inhabitants of these islands, who were for the most part

enemies of Cortes and envious of the high position he had obtained, took advantage of Nuno de Guzman's stay there to prejudice the latter against him. Guzman warmly espoused the side of Velasquez, influenced by his kinsman, Gonzalo de Guzman, who is now governor of Cuba, and had been a long time in his service.

As soon as he took possession of his government, he began to show his ill-will by writing a most insolent letter to Cortes, while to the factor, Salazar, who was then in prison, he wrote another filled with proofs of friendship towards him. He kept up a constant correspondence with Salazar and even went to the length of considering as his own personal enemies, all those who maintained that Cortes, far from being a traitor, had rendered very great services to your Majesty. Some of these people he caused to be whipped, and he smashed the teeth of others with a stick, though they were guilty of no other crimes. He even dared to seize some persons on Mexican territory, whom he hanged. He infringed on the jurisdiction of Cortes, taking possession of a number of villages which were held in encomienda by inhabitants of Mexico; he inflicted tortures and vexations on the caciques, and established garrisons among them to force them to acknowledge his authority. So irritated were the inhabitants of Mexico by Guzman's conduct that one of the greatest proofs of respect and obedience they could have given Your Majesty was to refrain from taking arms and marching against him. Before leaving for Spain, Cortes exhausted every effort to tranquillise Estrada and Sandoval, who were both very much irritated. They consequently confined themselves to notifying Guzman that he need write them no more such letters as they would neither receive nor read them. Guzman had become the chief of Velasquez's partisans, and the foremost enemy of Cortes both because of the impressions he had already received before he landed in Mexico and also in consequence of the influence which the factor, Salazar, exercised upon him after his arrival. He hoped, with the latter's aid, to succeed in expelling Cortes from his government, and to obtain possession of it himself, for it is the demon of ambition and avarice that has been the cause of all the crimes which have ravaged this unhappy country.

The remainder of the letter deals with the conduct of Nunez de Guzman, Delgadillo, and others during the absence of Cortes in Spain.

“In the letters of Cortés we have a clear picture of Mexico through the simple eyes of the conqueror who admires his enemies. . . . He could write a masterly report. The second and the third letters are the clearest piece of narrative that we could ask for. We see the advance into the country, the conscientious determination to penetrate by peace, diplomacy or the sword to Montezuma’s capital, leading up to the final dramatic meeting with Montezuma himself.”

New Statesman

These five letters by the Spanish conqueror, Hernando Cortés, were written to the Emperor Charles V of Spain between 1519 and 1526. They describe the earliest discoveries of the mainland, the perilous trek into hostile country, the capture of the Aztec capital, the extension of Cortés’ power throughout Mexico, the expedition to Honduras, and the organization and ordering of the Spanish empire in the new world.

