

BERNAL DÍAZ

THE CONQUEST OF  
NEW SPAIN

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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PENGUIN BOOKS

## *Montezuma's Captivity*

HAVING decided on the previous day that we would seize Montezuma, we prayed to God all night that His service would profit by the turn of events, and next morning we decided on our course of action.

Cortes took with him five captains, Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Juan Velazquez de Leon, Francisco de Lugo, Alonso de Avila, and myself, together with Doña Marina and Aguilar. He warned us all to keep very alert, and the horsemen to have their mounts saddled and bridled. I need not say that we were armed, since we went about armed by day and night, with our sandals always on our feet – for at that time we always wore sandals – and Montezuma was used to seeing us like this whenever we went to speak with him. He was neither surprised nor alarmed, therefore, when Cortes and the captains who had come to seize him approached him fully armed.

When we were all prepared, our captains sent to inform the prince that we were coming to his palace. This had always been our practice, and we did not wish to frighten him by making a sudden appearance. Montezuma guessed that the reason for Cortes' visit was his indignation about the attack on Escalante. But although apprehensive, he sent him a message of welcome.

On entering, Cortes made his usual salutations, and said to Montezuma through our interpreters: 'Lord Montezuma, I am greatly astonished that you, a valiant prince who have declared yourself our friend, should have ordered your captains stationed on the coast near Tuxpan to take up arms against my Spaniards. I am astonished also at their boldness in robbing towns which are in the keeping and under the protection of our King and master, and demanding of them Indian men and women for sacrifice, also that they should have killed a Spaniard, who was my brother, and a horse.'

Cortes did not wish to mention Escalante and the six soldiers who had died on reaching Villa Rica, since Montezuma did not know of their deaths, nor did the Indian captains who had attacked them. Therefore he continued: 'Being so much your friend, I ordered my captains to help and serve you in every possible way. But Your Majesty has acted in quite the opposite fashion towards us. In the affray at Cholula your captains and a host of your warriors received your express commands to kill us. Because of my great affection for you I overlooked this at the time. But now your captains and vassals have once more lost all shame and are secretly debating whether you do not again wish to have us killed. I have no desire to start a war on this account, or to destroy this city. Everything will be forgiven, provided you will now come quietly with us to our quarters, and make no protest. You will be as well served and attended there as in your own palace. But if you cry out, or raise any commotion, you will immediately be killed by these captains of mine, whom I have brought for this sole purpose.'

This speech dumbfounded Montezuma. In reply he said that he had never ordered his people to take up arms against us, and that he would at once send to summon his captains so that the truth should be known and they be punished. Thereupon he immediately took the sign and seal of Huichilobos from his wrist, which he never did except when giving some order of the first importance that had to be carried out at once. As to being made a prisoner and leaving his palace against his will, he said that he was not a person to whom such orders could be given, and that it was not his wish to go. Cortes answered him with excellent arguments, which Montezuma countered with even better, to the effect that he refused to leave his palace. More than half an hour passed in these discussions. But when Juan Velazquez de Leon and the other captains saw that time was being wasted, they became impatient to remove Montezuma from his palace and make him a prisoner. Turning to Cortes, Velazquez observed somewhat angrily: 'What is the use of all these words? Either we take him or we knife him. If we do not look after ourselves now we shall be dead men.'

Juan Velazquez spoke in his usual high and terrifying voice;

and Montezuma, realizing that our captains were angry, asked Doña Marina what they were saying so loudly, and she, being very quickwitted, replied: 'Lord Montezuma, I advise you to accompany them immediately to their quarters and make no protest. I know they will treat you very honourably as the great prince you are. But if you stay here, you will be a dead man. In their quarters the truth will be discovered.'

Then Montezuma said to Cortes: 'Lord Malinche, I see what is in your mind. But I have a son and two legitimate daughters. Take them as hostages and spare me this disgrace. What will my chieftains say if they see me carried off a prisoner?'

Cortes replied that there was no alternative, he must come with us himself; and after a good deal of argument Montezuma agreed to go. Then Cortes and our captains addressed him most ingratiatingly, saying that they begged him humbly not to be angry, and to tell his captains and his guard that he was going of his own free will, since on consulting his idol Huichilobos and the *papas* who served him he had learnt that for the sake of his health and the safety of his life he must stay with us. Then his fine litter was brought, in which he used to go out attended by all his captains, and he was taken to our quarters, where guards and a watch were put over him.

Cortes and the rest of us did our best to provide him with all possible attentions and amusements, and he was put under no restraint. Soon his nephews and all the principal Mexican chieftains visited him to inquire the reasons for his imprisonment, and to ask whether he wished them to make war on us. Montezuma replied that he was spending some days with us of his own free will and under no constraint, that he was happy and would tell them when he wanted anything of them. He told them not to disturb either themselves or the city, and not to be distressed, since his visit was agreeable to Huichilobos, as he had learnt from certain *papas* who had consulted that idol.

This is the way in which the great Montezuma was made prisoner; and there in his lodging he had his servants, his women, and the baths in which he bathed; and twenty good lords, captains, and counsellors remained continuously with him as before. He showed no resentment at being detained.

Ambassadors from distant lands came to him where he was, bringing their suits or tribute, and important business was conducted there.

I remember that when important *Caciques* came from far away to discuss boundaries or the ownership of towns or other such business, however great they might be, they would take off their rich robes and put on poor ones of sisal cloth. They had to appear before him barefoot, and on entering his apartments did not pass straight in but up one side. When a *Cacique* came before the great Montezuma he gazed on the ground; and before approaching him he made three bows, saying as he did so: 'Lord, my lord, my great lord!' Then he presented a drawing or painting upon sisal cloth, representing the suit or question upon which he had come, and pointed out the grounds for his claim with a thin polished stick. Beside Montezuma stood two old men, who were great *Caciques*; and when they thoroughly understood the pleadings, these judges told Montezuma the rights of the case, which he then settled in a few words, by which the ownership of the land or villages in question was decided. Thereupon the litigants said no more, but retired without turning their backs, and after making the customary three bows went out into the hall. On leaving Montezuma's presence, they put on other rich robes, and took a walk through the city of Mexico.

Leaving the subject of Montezuma's imprisonment, I will now tell how the messengers whom he sent with his sign and seal to summon the captains who had killed our soldiers brought them before him as prisoners. What he said to them I do not know, but he sent them to Cortes for judgement. Montezuma was not present when their confession was taken, in which they admitted the facts and agreed that their prince had ordered them to wage war, to recover tribute and, should any *Teules* take part in the defence of the towns, to fight and kill them.

When Cortes was shown this confession, he sent to inform Montezuma that he was deeply implicated, and the prince made such excuses as he could. Cortes answered that he himself believed the confession and that, since our King's ordinances prescribed that anyone causing others to be killed, whether they

were guilty or innocent, should himself die, Montezuma deserved punishment. But such, he protested, was his affection and concern for Montezuma, that, even if he were guilty, he would rather pay with his own life than allow the prince to forfeit his. Montezuma was alarmed by this message; and without further discussion Cortes sentenced the captains to be burned to death before the royal palace. This sentence was immediately carried out and, to prevent any interference, Cortes had Montezuma put in chains while they were being burned. The prince roared with anger at this indignity, and became even more alarmed than before. After the burning, Cortes went to Montezuma's apartment with five of his captains, and himself removed the chains; and so affectionately did he speak to the prince that his anger soon passed away. For Cortes told him that he looked on him as more than a brother and that though Montezuma was lord and master of so many towns and provinces, yet he, Cortes, would in time, if it were possible, give him domination over even more lands, which he had not been able to conquer and which did not obey him. He said that if Montezuma now wished to go to his palace he would allow him to do so. This he said through our interpreters, and while he was speaking the tears were seen to spring to Montezuma's eyes. The prince replied most courteously that he was grateful for this kindness. But he well knew that Cortes' speech was mere words, and that for the present it would be better for him to remain a prisoner. For his chieftains being numerous, and his nephews and relations coming every day to suggest they should attack us and set him free, there was a danger that once they found him at liberty they would force him to fight us. He did not want to see a rebellion in his city, he said, and feared that if he did not give in to their wishes they might try to set up another prince in his place. So he had put these thoughts out of their heads, he concluded, by informing them that his god Huichilobos had told him he must remain a prisoner. From what we understood, however, there seemed little doubt that Aguilar had said to Montezuma privately, on Cortes' instructions, that though Malinche might order his release the rest of us captains and soldiers would never agree to it.

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On hearing this reply, Cortes threw his arms round the prince and embraced him, saying: 'How right I am, Lord Montezuma, to love you as dearly as I love myself!' Then Montezuma asked Cortes that the page called Orteguilla, who already knew the language, might attend him, and this was of great benefit both to him and to us. For from this page, of whom he asked many questions, Montezuma learnt a great deal about Spain, and we learnt what his captains said to him. So useful was Orteguilla to the prince that he became very fond of him.

Montezuma was quite delighted by the great flattery and attention he received and the conversations he had with us all. Whenever we came into his presence, all of us – even Cortes himself – would take off our mailed caps or helmets – for we always went armed – and he treated us with great civility and honour.

Now when the news of the captains' execution spread through the provinces of New Spain, there was great fear; and the towns on the coast, where our soldiers had been killed, resumed the services they had previously rendered to the settlers who remained at Villa Rica.

Those readers who are interested by this history must wonder at the great deeds we did in those days: first in destroying our ships; then in daring to enter that strong city despite many warnings that they would kill us once they had us inside; then in having the temerity to seize the great Montezuma, king of that country, in his own city and inside his very palace, and to throw him in chains while the execution was carried out. Now that I am old, I often pause to consider the heroic actions of that time. I seem to see them present before my eyes; and I believe that we performed them not of our own volition but by the guidance of God. For what soldiers in the world, numbering only four hundred – and we were even fewer – would have dared to enter a city as strong as Mexico, which is larger than Venice and more than four thousand five hundred miles away from our own Castile and, having seized so great a prince, execute his captains before his eyes? There is much here to ponder on, and not in the matter-of-fact way in which I presented it. But I will go on to tell how Cortes sent another cap-

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tain to be stationed at Villa Rica in place of Juan de Escalante, who had been killed.

After justice had been done on Quetzalpopoca and his captains, and the great Montezuma had been tamed, our Captain decided to send, as his lieutenant at Villa Rica, a soldier named Alonso de Grado, a very intelligent man of good speech and presence, a musician and a great writer. This Alonso de Grado was one of those who had been in constant opposition to Cortes about the march to Mexico. At the time of the Tlascala affair, when factions had gathered in opposition, Alonso de Grado had been the chief agitator. If his prowess as a soldier had been as remarkable as his good manners, he would have been a great help to our enterprise. I mention his manners because of Cortes' remarks to him when offering him the appointment. Knowing that he was not a man to take offence, he said to him jokingly: 'Here, Señor Alonso de Grado, you have your wish fulfilled. Now you are going to Villa Rica as you wanted to, and you will take charge of the fortress. See that you don't go out on expeditions and get yourself killed, as Juan de Escalante did.' And as he was speaking Cortes winked at those of us who were standing near, and we well understood the reason for his remarks. For everyone knew that Alonso de Grado would never go on such an expedition even if he were threatened with penalties for refusing.

[Alonso de Grado played the great man at Villa Rica, collecting jewels and pretty women, and neglecting the fortress. He also began to plot an intervention by Diego Velazquez. Cortes therefore sent Gonzalo de Sandoval to relieve him, and brought him back as a prisoner. But after two days' confinement in some newly constructed stocks, 'the wood of which smelt of onions and garlic', Alonso made his peace with Cortes and afterwards received civilian employment as auditor. Bernal Diaz concludes this chapter on political intrigue with a note on some instructions given to Sandoval when he departed for Villa Rica.]

When Cortes sent Gonzalo de Sandoval to Villa Rica, as his lieutenant and as captain and chief constable, he ordered him immediately on arrival to send two blacksmiths with all their equipment of bellows and tools and plenty of iron from the

ships we had destroyed, also two iron chains [forged on instructions sent with Alonso de Grado] which were already made. He instructed his lieutenant to send also sails and tackle and pitch and tow and a mariner's compass, and everything else that was needed for the construction of two sloops to sail on the lake of Mexico. Sandoval sent all these things at once exactly as he had been told.

Our Captain was very thorough in every way. Fearing that Montezuma might be depressed by his imprisonment, he endeavoured every day after prayers - for we had no wine for mass - to go to pay him court in his captivity. He went accompanied by four captains, and usually Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velazquez de Leon, and Diego de Ordaz were of that number. They would ask Montezuma most deferentially how he was, and request him to issue his orders, which would be carried out, and beg him not to be distressed by his imprisonment. He would reply that, on the contrary, he was glad to be a prisoner, since either our gods gave us power to confine him or Huichilobos permitted it. In one conversation after another they offered him a fuller explanation of the tenets of our holy faith and of the great power of our lord the Emperor.

Then sometimes Montezuma would play Cortes at *totoloque*, a game played with small, very smooth gold pellets specially made for it. They would throw these pellets a considerable distance, and some little slabs as well which were also of gold, and in five throws they either gained or lost certain pieces of gold or rich jewels that they had staked. I remember that Pedro de Alvarado was once keeping the score for Cortes, and one of Montezuma's nephews, a great chief, was doing the same for Montezuma; and Pedro de Alvarado was always marking one point more than Cortes gained. Montezuma saw this and observed with a courteous smile that he did not like Tonatio - which was their name for Pedro de Alvarado - marking for Cortes, because he made too much *ixoxol* in the score, which means in their language that he cheated by always adding an extra point. We who were on guard at the time could not help laughing at Montezuma's remark, nor could Cortes himself. You may ask why the remark amused us. It was because Pedro de

Alvarado, though handsome and good-mannered, had the bad habit of talking too much. Knowing his character so well we were overcome by laughter. But to return to the game. If Cortes won he gave the jewels to those nephews and favourites of Montezuma who attended him, and if Montezuma won he divided them among us soldiers of the guard. In addition to what we gained from the game, he unfailingly gave presents of gold and cloth every day to us and the captain on guard, at that time Juan Velazquez de Leon, who in every way showed himself Montezuma's true friend and servant.

I also remember that there was once on guard a certain Trujillo, a very tall and strong man of excellent health. He was a sailor, and when it was his turn for the night watch he was so inconsiderate - I apologize for mentioning it - as to commit a nuisance within Montezuma's hearing. As the valiant king of that country, Montezuma considered it both insulting and ill-mannered that this guard should do such a thing within his hearing and without consideration for his person. He asked the page Orteguilla who this dirty and ill-bred person was; and Orteguilla replied that he was a man used to travelling on the seas, with no knowledge of politeness or good breeding. He also told him something about the quality of each of us soldiers there, who was a gentleman and who was not. He was always telling Montezuma things that he wanted to know.

To return to the soldier Trujillo, as soon as it was day Montezuma sent for him and asked him why he was so ill-bred that he had no consideration for his presence and paid him no proper respect. He begged him never to do such a thing again, and then ordered him to be given a gold jewel worth five pesos. Trujillo took no notice of what he said, but next night deliberately did the same thing, believing that Montezuma would give him another present. But Montezuma reported the matter to Juan Velazquez, the captain of the guard, and the captain ordered that Trujillo should never again be put on guard and should be severely reprimanded.

There was another soldier called Pedro Lopez, a great crossbowman, who was put on guard over Montezuma. He was a decent man, though difficult to understand, and in the night he

had some words with the officer of the watch about whether it was time to go on duty. 'To hell with this dog!' he shouted. 'I'm sick to death of always guarding him!' Montezuma overheard this and brooded on it; and when Cortes came to visit him he told him about it. Cortes was so furious that, good soldier though Lopez was, he ordered him to be flogged in our quarters; and after that all soldiers of the guard performed their watch silently and with good manners. However, it was not necessary to instruct most of us who did guard duty about the civility that was due to this great chief. He knew us all, and our names and characters too. Indeed he was so kind that he gave us all jewels and to some of us he gave cloaks and beautiful girls. I was a young man in those days and I used to doff my helmet very respectfully every time I went on guard or entered his presence; and the page Orteguilla had told him that I had been on two voyages of discovery in New Spain before coming with Cortes. I talked to Orteguilla and asked him to beg Montezuma kindly to give me a very pretty Indian girl. When Montezuma received this message, he sent for me and said: 'Bernal Díaz del Castillo, they say that you are short of clothes and gold. But today I will tell them to give you a fine girl. Treat her well, for she is the daughter of an important man, and they will give you gold and cloaks as well.' I answered him most deferentially that I kissed his hands for the favour, and hoped that our lord God might prosper him.

Montezuma seems to have asked the page what I answered and, when Orteguilla told him, I believe he replied: 'Bernal Díaz seems to me to be a gentleman' – for he knew all our names, as I have said. He told them to give me three small slabs of gold and two loads of cloaks. We had discovered that from among the ladies he kept as his mistresses he would marry some to his captains or intimate favourites, or even give some to us soldiers. The girl whom he gave to me was one of these, and her bearing showed her distinction. We gave her the name of Doña Francisca.

When all the material for the two sloops had arrived, Cortes at once sent to inform Montezuma that he wanted to build two little boats in which we could take pleasure trips on the lake.

He asked him to send his carpenters to cut the wood and work with our master boat-builders, Martin Lopez and Andres Nuñez. And as there was oak about twelve miles away, the wood was quickly brought and the shapes constructed. As there were many Indian carpenters the boats were soon built and caulked and tarred, and their rigging was set up and their sails cut to the right shape and measurement, and an awning was provided for each one. They turned out as good and fast as if a month had been spent in making the shapes. For Martin Lopez was a very fine craftsman, and it was he who afterwards built the thirteen sloops that helped in the capture of Mexico, as I shall relate in due course. He was also a good soldier in battle.

Let us now go on to say that Montezuma told Cortes he wished to go to visit his temple, and make sacrifices, and pay the necessary devotion to his gods. He said that this must be done so that his captains and chiefs might observe it, especially certain nephews of his who came every day to tell him that they wished to free him and make war on us. He answered them that he was glad to stay with us, in the hopes of convincing them that what he had said before was true and his god Huichilobos had really commanded him to stay.

Cortes replied that, as for this request, he must take care not to do anything that would cost him his life. To prevent any disorders, or any commands to his captains or *papas* to release him to make war on us, he would send captains and soldiers with him who would immediately stab him to death if they detected any change in his bearing. Cortes said that Montezuma was welcome to go, but must not sacrifice any human beings, for this was a great sin against the true God, about whom we had preached to him, and that here were our altars and the image of Our Lady before which he could pray. Montezuma said that he would not sacrifice a single human being, and went off in his grand litter, in his usual great state, accompanied by his *Caciques*. They carried his insignia in front of him, a sort of staff or rod which denoted that his royal person was going that way, and the custom is still followed today by the viceroys of New Spain. With him as guard went four of our captains, Juan Velazquez de Leon, Pedro de Alvarado, Alonso de Avila,

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and Francisco de Lugo, with a hundred and fifty soldiers; and the Mercedarian friar also went with us to stop any attempt at human sacrifice. So we went to the *cue* of Huichilobos; and as we approached that accursed temple, Montezuma ordered them to lift him from his litter. He was then supported on the arms of his nephews and other *Caciques* up to the *cue* itself. As I have already stated, all the chiefs had to keep their eyes downcast while he passed through the streets, and could never look him in the face. When we reached the foot of the steps that lead to the shrine, there were many *papas* waiting to support him as he climbed.

Four Indians had already been sacrificed there the night before and, despite our Captain's protest and the discussions of the Mercedarian friar, Montezuma insisted on killing some more men and boys for his own sacrifice. We could do nothing at the time except pretend to overlook it, for Mexico and the other great cities were on the point of rebelling under Montezuma's nephews, as I shall in due course relate. When Montezuma had completed his sacrifices, which he did very quickly, we returned with him to our quarters. He was very cheerful and gave presents of jewels to us soldiers who had escorted him.

As soon as the two sloops were built and launched, and their masts and rigging set up and adorned with the royal and imperial banners, and when sailors had been chosen to navigate them, our men went out rowing and sailing in them, and found that they sailed very well. When Montezuma heard about this, he told Cortes he would like to go hunting on a rocky island in the lake, which was reserved for him, not even the greatest chieftains daring to hunt there, on pain of death. Cortes answered that he was very welcome to go, but that he must remember what had been said to him before, when he went to visit his idols, that if he raised any disturbance it would cost him his life. Moreover he could go in one of our sloops, for they sailed better than even the biggest of his canoes or pirogues.

Montezuma was delighted to sail in the faster of the two sloops, and took many lords and chieftains with him. The other sloop was filled with *Caciques* also, including one of Montezuma's sons, and the huntsmen were instructed to follow in

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canoes and *pirogues*. Cortes commanded Juan Velazquez de Leon, the captain of the guard, and Pedro de Alvarado, Cristobal de Olid, and Alonso de Avila, with two hundred soldiers, to accompany Montezuma and to be very vigilant in their duty of watching him. All these captains, being most scrupulous men, took the soldiers aboard, also four brass cannon with all the powder we possessed, and our two gunners, Mesa and Arbenga; and because of the weather they put up a highly decorated awning, under which Montezuma and his chieftains sat. As at that season there was a very strong breeze, and the sailors not only enjoyed working the sails, but were delighted to give Montezuma pleasure, the sloop went scudding along, leaving the canoes that contained his huntsmen and chieftains far behind, despite their large number of oarsmen. Montezuma was charmed and said it was a great art to combine sails and oars together. So he arrived at the island, which was not very far off, and after killing all the game he wanted, deer, hares, and rabbits, returned very contented to the city.

As we approached Mexico, Pedro de Alvarado and Juan Velazquez de Leon and the other captains ordered the cannon to be fired, and this too delighted Montezuma. Finding him so frank and pleasant, we treated him with the respect habitually paid to kings in those parts, and he treated us in the same way.

Meanwhile, however, the nephews and kindred of the great Montezuma agreed with other *Caciques* throughout the country that we should be attacked and Montezuma released, and that some of them should proclaim themselves kings of Mexico.

When Cacamatzin, lord of the largest and most important city in New Spain except Mexico, heard that his uncle Montezuma had been imprisoned for some days and that we were taking control in every way we could, and when he got news also that we had opened the chamber where the great treasure of his grandfather Axayacatl was kept, but had so far left it untouched, he decided that before we actually took possession of it something must be done. He called together all the lords of Texcoco, who were his vassals, and the lord of Coyoacan, who was his cousin and Montezuma's nephew, and the lord of

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Tacuba, and the lord of Iztapalapa, and another great chief who was lord of Matalcingo, a very close relative of Montezuma of whom it was even said that he was the rightful heir to the Caciqueship and kingdom of Mexico. He was a chieftain well known among the Indians for his personal bravery.

While Cacamatzin was arranging with them and other Mexican chieftains that on a given day they should come with all their forces and attack us, it appears that this chief, who was noted for his personal bravery but whose name I cannot remember, said that if Cacamatzin would assure him the kingdom of Mexico, which was rightfully his, he and all his relations, and the chiefs of the province of Matalcingo would be the first to take up arms and either expel us from Mexico or kill us to the last man. Cacamatzin appears, however, to have said that the Caciqueship of Mexico rightfully belonged to him, and that he himself must be king, since he was the nephew of Montezuma, also that if the lord of Matalcingo did not wish to take part he would attack us without him and his people. For Cacamatzin had already won over all the other towns and chiefs I have named, and had arranged the day on which they were to come to Mexico, where they would be admitted by the chieftains of his faction inside the city.

While these negotiations were going on Montezuma learnt all about them from his great relative who was refusing to give in to Cacamatzin's wishes. And to get further information, he sent for all the *Caciques* and chieftains of Texcoco, who told him how Cacamatzin was trying to persuade them all with promises and gifts to help him fight us and release his uncle. As Montezuma was cautious and did not want to see his city rise in armed insurrection, he told Cortes everything that was happening. We and our Captain already knew something about this unrest, but not so much as Montezuma now told us. The advice that Cortes gave him was to give us his Mexican soldiers, and we would then fall on Texcoco and take or destroy both the city and its surroundings. This plan, however, did not suit Montezuma. Cortes then sent a message to Cacamatzin that he must cease his war preparations, which would lead him to destruction, and offered him his friendship, saying that he would

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do all he could for him and paying him many other compliments.

Now Cacamatzin was a young man and found many others who shared his viewpoint and were eager for war. So he sent Cortes a message, that he understood his flatteries and wished to hear no more from him until they came face to face, when Cortes could say whatever he liked. Cortes then sent Cacamatzin a second message, warning him not to do a disservice to our lord and King, for he would pay for it in person and it would cost him his life. But Cacamatzin replied that he knew no king and wished he had never known Cortes, who by fair words had imprisoned his uncle.

On receiving this answer Cortes implored Montezuma, as he was a great prince, to arrange with the people of Texcoco for Cacamatzin's arrest. For Montezuma had great *Caciques* and kinsmen among his captains in Texcoco who were on bad terms with Cacamatzin and disliked him for his pride. In Mexico itself Montezuma had a young prince in his household, a brother of Cacamatzin and a good-natured lad, who had fled to avoid being killed by him, since he was the next heir to the kingdom of Texcoco. Cortes begged Montezuma either to organize Cacamatzin's arrest with the help of his people in Texcoco, or to send him a secret summons to Mexico and, should he come, to seize him and keep him under restraint until he calmed down. Cortes suggested further that since his other nephew was obedient to him and a member of his household, he should make him lord over Texcoco and take the title away from Cacamatzin, who was working against him and stirring up all the *Caciques* and cities in the land so that he might usurp Montezuma's city and kingdom.

Montezuma promised to send him a summons immediately, and to organize his arrest with his captains and relations should he refuse to come, as he feared he would. Cortes thanked him warmly for this and went so far as to say : 'My lord Montezuma, believe me, you are free to go to your palace if you wish. I see how well disposed you are towards me, and I myself feel great love for you. Were our position not so difficult, indeed, I should not insist on accompanying you, were you and all your nobles

to return there. If I have kept you here till now it has been on account of my captains, who contrived your arrest and do not want me to release you, and because Your Majesty says that you prefer to remain in confinement in order to prevent the revolt by which your nephews would attempt to obtain control over your city and deprive you of your authority.'

Montezuma replied by expressing his thanks. But he was getting to understand Cortes' flattering speeches, and saw that his intention was not to release him but to test his good will. Moreover the page Orteguilla had told him that it was really our captains who had advised his arrest, and he must not expect Cortes to release him without their consent. Montezuma said therefore that it would be as well for him to remain a prisoner until he saw what his nephews' plots would lead to, and promised to send messengers to Cacamatzin immediately, asking him to come to Mexico, as he wished to speak to him about making friends with us. As for his imprisonment, he would tell Cacamatzin that he need not worry about it, since had he wanted to free himself many opportunities had been offered, and Malinche had already told him twice that he might return to his palace. However, he did not wish to do so, but to obey the commands of his gods, who had told him that he must remain a prisoner, for if he did not he would soon be dead. This he had learnt some days ago from the priests who ministered to his idols, and for this reason it would be as well to keep friendly with Malinche and his brothers. Montezuma sent the same message to the captains of Texcoco, telling them that he was summoning his nephew to make friends with us, and that they must be careful not to let this youth turn their heads and persuade them to attack us.

Let us return to Cacamatzin, who understood this message perfectly, and held a consultation with his chiefs as to what should be done. Here he began to brag that he would kill us all within four days, and to call his uncle chicken-hearted for not having attacked us when he was advised to do so, as we came down the mountain towards Chalco where he had his troops all posted and everything prepared. Instead of this, he protested, Montezuma had received us into his city in person

as if he supposed we had come to confer some benefit on him, and had given us all the gold that had been brought to him as tribute. What was more, we had broken into the treasure-house of his grandfather Axayacatl, and taken Montezuma himself prisoner, and now we were telling him that he must remove the idols of the great Huichilobos so that we could set up our own in their places. Cacamatzin begged his chieftains to help him prevent bad from becoming worse, and to punish these acts and insults. For all that he had described to them they had seen with their own eyes, and they had even seen us burn Montezuma's own captains. Now, he said, the people had reached the end of their endurance. They must all unite and make war on us.

Cacamatzin promised his hearers then and there that if the lordship of Mexico fell to him he would make them great chieftains, and he gave them many gold jewels as well. He told them also that he had already arranged with his cousins, the lords of Coyoacan and Iztapalapa and Tacuba, and with his other relations, that they should assist him, and there were other chieftains in Mexico itself who would both help him and admit him to the city at any hour he might choose. Some of them could go along the causeways and all the rest across the lake in their pirogues and small canoes, and they would enter the city without opposition. For his uncle was a prisoner, and they need have no fear of us, since, as they well knew, in the affair at Almeria only a few days ago his uncle's captains had killed many *Teules* and a horse, and they had themselves seen the head of the *Teule* and the body of the horse.<sup>1</sup> He said they could finish us all off in an hour, and feast on our bodies till they were full.

They say the captains looked at one another after this speech, and waited for those who usually spoke first at councils of war to begin, and that four or five of them replied by asking how they could possibly go without their lord Montezuma's permission and make war in his own palace and city. First, they said, he must be informed of the proposal. If he consented they would accompany Cacamatzin very gladly indeed; but if he did not they did not wish to act as traitors. It seems that Cacamatzin

i. This had been sent round the towns after the attack on Escalante.

got angry with these captains and ordered that three of them who had given this reply should be imprisoned. There were other captains present at this debate, however, who were relatives of his, and anxious for trouble, and they promised to support him to the death. So he decided to send his uncle the great Montezuma a message that he ought to be ashamed of himself for commanding him to make friends with men who had done him so much harm and dishonour as to keep him a prisoner, and that such a thing was only possible because we were wizards and had robbed him of his great strength and courage with our witchcraft, or because our gods and the great woman of Castile whom we spoke of as our advocate gave us strength to do what we did. And in this last remark he was not wrong. The long and the short of it was that Cacamatzin was coming, in spite of us and in spite of his uncle, to talk to us and kill us.

When the great Montezuma heard this insolent reply, he was greatly annoyed, and at once sent to summon six of his most trusted captains, to whom he gave his seal, also some golden jewels, ordering them to go to Texcoco immediately and secretly show the seal to certain captains and relations of his who resented Cacamatzin's pride and were on bad terms with him. They were then to arrange for the arrest of Cacamatzin and those in his confidence, and to bring them before him at once. The captains departed and explained Montezuma's orders in Texcoco, and Cacamatzin, who was extremely unpopular, was arrested in his own palace while discussing war-preparations with his confederates, five of whom were arrested with him.

As Texcoco lies beside the great lake, Montezuma's captains prepared a large pirogue with awnings, put Cacamatzin and the five others aboard, and with a numerous crew of oarsmen rowed them to Mexico. Then, when he had disembarked, they put him on a rich litter befitting his kingly rank, and most respectfully brought him before Montezuma.

It seems that when conversing with his uncle, Cacamatzin was more insolent than ever. Montezuma already knew of the plots he had hatched to make himself lord of Mexico, but learnt

further details about them from the other prisoners. If he had been angry with his nephew before, he was now doubly so. So he sent him to our Captain to be kept as a prisoner, and released the other captains.

Cortes went at once to Montezuma's chamber in the palace to thank him for this great favour, and orders were given that the young brother of Cacamatzin, who was in Montezuma's company, should be made king of Texcoco. To solemnize the appointment and win the city's approval, Montezuma summoned the principal chieftains of the whole province before him, and after a long discussion they elected the youth king and lord of that great city. He was afterwards named Don Carlos.

When the *Caciques* and petty kings who were lords of Coyoacan, Iztapalapa, and Tacuba, heard of Cacamatzin's imprisonment, and learnt that the great Montezuma knew of their share in the plot to deprive him of his kingdom in favour of Cacamatzin, they were frightened and ceased to make their customary visits to the palace. Meanwhile Cortes was urging and persuading Montezuma to order their arrest and, at the end of a week, to the considerable relief of ourselves and our Captain, they were all in prison secured to a great chain.

When Cortes heard that these three kinglets were in prison and all the cities peaceful, he reminded Montezuma that before we entered Mexico he had twice sent word that he wished to pay tribute to His Majesty, and that since he now knew how powerful our King was and how many lands paid him tribute as their overlord, and how many kings were his subjects, it would be well for him and all his vassals to offer him their obedience, for it is customary first to offer obedience and then to pay tribute. Montezuma answered that he would call his vassals together and discuss the matter with them, and within ten days all the many princes of that territory assembled. But the *Cacique* who was most closely related to Montezuma did not come. He had, as I have already said, a reputation for great valour, which his bearing, body, limbs, and face confirmed. He was also somewhat rash, and at that time he was at one of his towns called Tula. It was said that he would succeed to the kingdom of Mexico on Montezuma's death.

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On receiving his summons, this prince replied that he would neither come nor pay tribute, for the income from his provinces was not enough for him to live on. This answer infuriated Montezuma, who sent some captains to arrest him. But as he was a great lord and had many relatives, he received warning in advance and retired to his province, where they could not then lay hands on him.

Montezuma's discussion with the *Caciques* of all the territory was attended by none of us except the page Orteguilla. The prince is said to have asked them to reflect how for many years past they had known for certain from their ancestral tradition, set down in their books of records, that men would come from the direction of the sunrise to rule these lands, and that the rule and domination of Mexico would then come to an end. He believed from what his gods had told him that we were these men. The *papas* had consulted Huichilobos about it and offered up sacrifices, but the gods no longer replied as of old. All that Huichilobos vouchsafed to them was that he could only reply as he had done before and they were not to ask him again. They took this to mean that they should offer their obedience to the King of Spain, whose vassals these *Teules* proclaimed themselves to be.

'For the present,' Montezuma continued, 'this implies nothing. In the future we will see if we get another reply from our gods, and then we will act accordingly. What I command and implore you to do now is to give some voluntary contribution as a sign of vassalage. Soon I will tell you what is the most suitable course, but now I am being pressed for this tribute by Malinche. I beg therefore that no one will refuse. Remember that during the eighteen years that I have been your prince you have always been most loyal to me, and I have enriched you, extended your lands, and given you power and wealth. At present our gods permit me to be held a prisoner here, and this would not have happened, as I have often told you, except at the command of the great Huichilobos.'

On hearing these arguments, they all replied with many tears and sighs that they would obey, and Montezuma was more tearful than any of them. However, he sent a chieftain to us at

## Montezuma's Captivity

once to say that next day they would give their obedience to His Majesty.

After this talk Montezuma discussed the matter once more with his *Caciques*, and in the presence of Cortes, our captains, many of our soldiers, and Cortes' secretary Pedro Hernandez, they swore fealty to His Majesty, showing much grief in doing so. Indeed, Montezuma himself could not restrain his tears.

When Cortes and his captains were paying court to Montezuma they asked him among other things where the mines lay, and from which rivers they collected the gold they brought him in grains, also how and by what means they got it. For Cortes wanted to send two of our soldiers, both experienced miners, to inspect the place. Montezuma answered that there were three places, and that the district from which they got most gold was the province of Zacatula, which is on the south coast about ten or twelve days' journey from Mexico. He said they collected it in gourds by washing away the earth, and that when the earth was washed away some small grains remained. He added that at present they also brought it from another province called Tuxtepec, where it was gathered from two rivers, near the place where we disembarked on the north coast. Near that province also there were other good mines in the country of the Chinantecs and Zapotecs, who were not his subjects and did not obey him, and that if Cortes wanted to send his soldiers there he would give him chieftains to escort him.

Cortes thanked Montezuma for the offer and immediately sent a pilot called Gonzalo de Umbria with two other soldiers experienced in mining to the mines of Zacatula.<sup>1</sup> This Gonzalo de Umbria was the man whose feet Cortes had ordered to be cut off when he hanged Pedro Escudero and Juan Cermeño and had the 'Men of the Rock' flogged for their attempt to steal a ship at San Juan de Ulua. These men then set out, and Cortes allowed them forty days for their journey there and back.

To examine the mines on the north coast Cortes sent a captain called Pizarro, a lad of twenty-five, whom he treated as a relative. At that time there was no rumour of Peru, and the name Pizarro was unknown in these lands. He set out with four

<sup>1</sup> On the Pacific coast.

soldiers and was also given forty days for his journey, for these mines were about two hundred and fifty miles away. He received four Mexican chiefs as an escort.

After these expeditions had departed Montezuma gave our Captain a sisal cloth on which all the rivers and bays on the north coast from Panuco to Tabasco – about four hundred miles – were faithfully painted. Among the rivers marked was the Coatzacoalcos, which was said to be very strong and deep. This was the only river on this cloth that we did not know from the time of our expedition under Grijalva, so Cortes decided to send and explore it, and take soundings of the harbour and the entrance. That very prudent and valiant captain Diego de Ordaz, whom I have so often mentioned, volunteered to make this journey and investigate the nature of the country and people, and he asked for Indian chieftains to accompany him. Cortes at first refused his offer, since he was a man of sound sense and Cortes preferred to have him at his side. However, so as not to displease him, in the end he gave him leave to go.

Montezuma told Ordaz that his authority did not extend over Coatzacoalcos, and that the people there were very unruly and he must be careful what he did. He said that if anything happened to Ordaz, he would not be to blame. However, on his way to the province he would find a garrison of Mexican warriors stationed on the border, whom he might take with him if he needed them. And Montezuma paid Ordaz many other compliments.

The first to return to Mexico and give an account of his mission was Gonzalo de Umbria. He and his companions brought three hundred pesos' weight of grains which the inhabitants of Zacatula had extracted before their eyes. According to Umbria's account, the *Caciques* of that province took many Indians to the rivers, who washed the earth in vessels like small troughs, and collected the gold. They said there were two rivers, and that if good miners were to wash the earth as they did in Santo Domingo and Cuba they would be a rich source of gold. They also brought back with them two chiefs sent by the province who brought a present of gold jewels worth about two hundred pesos, and freely offered themselves as servants of His

Majesty. Cortes was as delighted with the gold as if it had been thirty thousand pesos, for he was now certain that there were good mines. He treated the chieftains who brought the present very cordially, and ordered them to be given some green beads from Castile. Then after friendly speeches they returned to their country well pleased.

Umbria said that not far from Mexico there were some large towns with a civilized population, which must have been those that belonged to the aforementioned relative of Montezuma's, and that there was another province there called Matalcingo. As we all saw, Umbria and his companions came back with plenty of gold and riches, which was the purpose for which Cortes had sent him. For he wanted to make him a friend, on account of what had happened in the past.

Diego de Ordaz in his turn reported that he had passed through very large towns, whose names he gave, on his three-hundred-and-sixty-mile journey. He said that all the inhabitants paid him honour, and that on the way, near Coatzacoalcos itself, he had found Montezuma's frontier garrisons, and the whole neighbourhood complained of them for their robberies and for taking their women and demanding other tributes. Ordaz and the Mexican chiefs with him had reprimanded the captains who commanded this garrison and threatened that if they committed any more robbery they would inform Montezuma, who would then send for them and punish them as he had punished Quetzalpopoca and his companions for robbing our allies' towns. These speeches had frightened the commander of the garrison.

Then Ordaz continued his journey to Coatzacoalcos, taking only one Mexican chief with him, and when the *Cacique* of that province, whose name was Tochel, heard he was coming, he sent his chieftains out to receive him and made him very welcome. For they knew a good deal about us from the time of the Grijalva expedition. So when the *Caciques* of Coatzacoalcos heard Ordaz' purpose they gave him many big canoes, and the *Cacique* Tochel himself with many other chieftains took soundings of the river mouth. They found the depth at ebb tide in the shallowest place to be three full fathoms, and a

little higher up the river there was room for large ships to navigate. Indeed the higher up they went the deeper it became, and just near what was at that time an inhabited town carracks could ride at anchor.

After Ordaz had taken the soundings and visited this place with the *Caciques*, they gave him some gold jewels and a very beautiful Indian girl, and offered themselves as servants of His Majesty. They too complained of Montezuma and his garrison, saying that recently they had fought a battle with them, near a small town where many Mexicans had been killed. For that reason they now call this place Cuylonemquis, which in their language means Where-the-Mexican-swine-were-killed.

Ordaz thanked them heartily for their reception and presented them with some beads from Castile which he had brought for the purpose. He then returned to Mexico, where he was joyfully welcomed by Cortes and the rest of us. He said there was good farming and grazing land there, and the port was convenient for Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Jamaica, but it was far from Mexico and there were great swamps close by. For this reason we never made much use of it as a port for trading with Mexico.

Let us now turn to Captain Pizarro and his companions, who had gone in the direction of Tuxtepec to look for gold and examine the mines. Pizarro returned to make his report accompanied by a single soldier, and brought with him over a thousand pesos in gold grains. They said that in the provinces of Tuxtepec and Malinaltepec<sup>1</sup> and other neighbouring districts they had visited the rivers accompanied by many people who were sent with them, and there they had gathered a third part of the gold they brought. They had then gone up into the hills of another province, that of the Chinantecs, and when they got there many Indians had come to meet them fully armed, carrying lances longer than ours and bows and arrows and small shields. These men had said that not a single Mexican should enter their country, for they would kill him if he did, but the *Teules* were very welcome. So they went on, but the Mexicans were left behind and proceeded no further. When the *Caciques* of

i. In the present State of Oaxaca.

Chinanta understood the purpose of their journey they assembled a lot of people to wash gold, and took them to some rivers where they gathered all the rest of what they brought, which was in curly grains. The miners said that this source would have the longest life because the gold originated there. Pizarro also brought two *Caciques* from that country who came to offer themselves as vassals to His Majesty and make friends with us. They too gave us a present of gold, and all these *Caciques* abused the Mexicans, who were so heartily loathed in those provinces for the robberies they committed that no one could bear to see them or mention them by name.

Cortes welcomed Pizarro and the chiefs he brought, and accepted the present they gave him – I cannot remember what it was worth, since it is long ago. He made the Chinantecs a generous speech offering to help them and be their friend. He then told them to go back to their country, and, to save them from being molested by the Mexicans on the road, commanded two Mexican chiefs to escort them and not to leave them till they reached safety. So they went away well contented.

Cortes asked about the other soldiers whom Pizarro had taken with him, namely Barrientos and the elder Heredia, the younger Escalona, and Cervantes the jester, and Pizarro answered that as it seemed a very good country, and rich in mines, and as the towns through which they passed had been very peaceful, he had ordered them to plant a large farm of cocoa and maize and to make cotton plantations, and collect plenty of the local birds, also to examine all the rivers and see what mines there were.

Although Cortes said nothing at the time, he was displeased with his kinsman for thus exceeding his instructions. We heard privately that he gave him a good scolding, telling him that it showed a weak character to spend your time breeding birds and planting cocoa. He at once sent a soldier with a peremptory order to the soldiers whom Pizarro had left behind, calling on them to return immediately. What actually happened I will relate in due course.

When Diego de Ordaz and the other soldiers arrived with samples of gold and reports that the whole land was rich,

Cortes, on the advice of Ordaz and others, decided to demand from Montezuma that all the *Caciques* and people of the land should pay tribute to His Majesty, and that he himself, as the greatest chieftain, should also give some of his treasures. Montezuma replied that he would send to all his towns to ask for gold, but that many of them possessed nothing more than some jewels of small value that they had inherited from their ancestors. He at once dispatched chieftains to the places where there were mines and ordered each town to give so many ingots of fine gold of the same size and thickness as they usually paid in tribute, and the messengers carried two ingots as samples. Some places, however, only contributed jewels of small value.

Montezuma also sent to the province whose *Cacique* and ruler was that close kinsman who refused to obey him, which was about thirty-five miles from Mexico; and the messengers returned with the answer that he would give neither gold nor obedience to Montezuma, that he too was lord of Mexico and had as much right to the title as Montezuma himself who was sending to ask him for tribute.

This answer so enraged Montezuma that he immediately dispatched some loyal captains with his seal and insignia to bring his kinsman back as a prisoner. Even when he came into the royal presence, however, this prince spoke boldly and disrespectfully, without the least sign of fear. They said that he suffered from attacks of mania, and he certainly seemed quite uncontrolled. On hearing of his behaviour, Cortes sent a request to Montezuma that he should hand the prisoner over to him for safe keeping, for he had heard that Montezuma meant to kill him. When the *Cacique* came before Cortes, our Captain spoke to him most amicably, telling him not to act like a madman against his prince, and wanted to set him free. However, when this came to Montezuma's ears he said that the *Cacique* must not be freed, but must be attached to the same stout chain as the other imprisoned kinglets.

Within twenty days all the chieftains whom Montezuma had dispatched to collect the gold tribute returned, and as soon as they arrived Montezuma sent for Cortes and our captains, also for certain of us soldiers whom he knew, because we belonged

to his guard, and made us a formal address in words like these:

'I wish you to know, my lord Malinche and my lords Captains and soldiers, that I am indebted to your great King and bear him good will, both for being such a great king, and for having sent from such distant lands to make inquiries about me. But what impresses me most is the thought that he must be the one who is destined to rule over us, as our ancestors have told us and even our gods have indicated in the answers they have given us. Take this gold which has been collected; only haste prevents there being more. What I myself have got ready for the Emperor is the whole of the treasure I received from my father, which is under your hand in your own apartments. I know very well that as soon as you came here you opened the door and inspected it all, and then sealed it up again as it was before. When you send it to him, tell him in your papers and letter: "This is sent by your loyal vassal Montezuma." I will also give you some very precious stones to be sent to him in my name. They are *chalchihuates* and must not be given to anyone else but your great prince, for each one of them is worth two loads of gold. I also wish to send him three blowpipes with their pellet-bags and moulds, since they have such beautiful jewel-work that he will be pleased to see them. And I should also like to give him some of my own possessions, though they are small. For all the gold and jewels I had I have given you at one time or another.'

On hearing this speech we were all amazed at the great Montezuma's goodness and liberality. Doffing our helmets most respectfully, we expressed our deep thanks, and in a most cordial speech Cortes promised that we would write to His Majesty of the magnificence and liberality with which he had given us this gold in his own royal name. After a further exchange of compliments Montezuma dispatched his stewards to hand over all the gold and treasure in the sealed chamber. It took us three days to examine it and remove all the embellishments with which it was decorated; and to help us take it to pieces Montezuma sent us silversmiths from Atzcapotzalco. There was so much of it that after it was broken up it made three heaps of gold weighing over six hundred thousand pesos

in all, not counting the silver and many other valuables, or the ingots and slabs of gold, or the grains of gold from the mines. With the help of the Indian goldsmiths from Atzcapotzalco we began to melt this down into broad bars a little more than two inches across, and no sooner was this done than they brought another present, the one which Montezuma had promised to give for himself. It was marvellous to behold so much gold, and the richness of the jewels he gave us. Some of the *chalchihuites* were so fine that among these *Caciques* they were worth a vast quantity of gold. The three blowpipes and their pellet-moulds, all encrusted with pearls and precious stones, and the feather-pictures of little birds set with mother-of-pearl and even smaller birds, were things of very great value. I will not mention the plumes and feathers and other valuables or I shall never bring my recollections to an end. Let me say that all this gold was stamped with an iron die made by order of Cortes and the King's officers appointed by him in His Majesty's name, and with our general consent, to act until further orders. These were at this time Gonzalo Mejia, treasurer, and Alonso de Avila, accountant, and the die was the royal coat of arms as it appears on a *real* and the size of a four-*real* piece. The rich jewellery, however, was not stamped, since we did not think it ought to be broken up.

For weighing all these bars of gold and silver and the jewels which were not broken up, we had neither weights nor scales. Cortes and these same officers of the King's treasury thought it would be proper, therefore, to make some iron weights, some as heavy as twenty-five pounds, and others of twelve and a half, two, one and a half, and a pound, also of four ounces and other ounce weights. In this way we could not hope to be very exact, but would not be more than half an ounce out in each weighing.

After the weight was taken the King's officers said that the bars and grains and ingots and jewels, all together, came to more than six hundred thousand pesos, and this did not include the silver and the many other jewels which were not yet valued. Some soldiers said there was more. All that remained to be done was to take out the royal fifth, and then give each captain

and soldier his share, preserving their shares for those who had remained at Villa Rica. It seems, however, that Cortes attempted to postpone the division until we had more gold, good weights, and a proper account of the total. But most of us said that the division must be made at once. For we had noticed that when the pieces taken from Montezuma's treasury were broken up there had been much more gold in the piles, and that a third of it was now missing, having been taken away and hidden for the benefit of Cortes, the captains, and the Mercedarian friar. We also saw that the gold was still diminishing. After a good deal of argument what was left was weighed out. It amounted to six hundred thousand pesos without the jewels and bars, and it was agreed that the division should be made next day.

First of all the royal fifth was taken. Then Cortes said that another fifth must be taken for him, a share equal to His Majesty's, which we had promised him in the sand-dunes when we made him Captain-General. After that he said that he had been put to certain expenses in Cuba and that what he had spent on the fleet should be deducted from the pile, and in addition the cost to Diego Velazquez of the ships we had destroyed. We all agreed to this and also to pay the expenses of the advocates we had sent to Spain. Then there were the shares of the seventy settlers who had remained at Villa Rica, and the cost of the horse that died, and of Juan Sedeño's mare, which the Tlascalans had killed with a knife-thrust. Then there were double shares for the Mercedarian friar and the priest Juan Diaz and the captains and those who had brought horses, and the same for the musketeers and crossbowmen, and other trickeries, so that in the end very little was left, so little indeed that many of us soldiers did not want to touch it, and Cortes was left with it all. At that time we could do nothing but hold our tongues; to demand justice in the matter was useless. There were other soldiers who took their shares of a hundred pesos and clamoured for the rest. To satisfy them, Cortes secretly gave a bit to one and another as a kind of favour and by means of smooth speeches made them accept the situation.

At that time many of the captains ordered very large golden chains to be made by Montezuma's goldsmiths from Atzcapot-

zalco, and Cortes too ordered various jewels and a great service of plate. Some soldiers too had laid hands on so much that ingots marked and unmarked and a great variety of jewels were in public circulation. Heavy gambling was always going on with some cards which Pedro Valenciano had manufactured out of drum-skins, and which were as well made and painted as the real thing. Such was the state we were in.

It reached Cortes' ears, however, that many of the soldiers were dissatisfied with their share of the gold and said that the heaps had been robbed, so he decided to make them a speech that was all honeyed words. He said that what he had was for us, and that he did not want his fifth but only the share that came to him as Captain-General, and that if anyone needed anything he would give it to him. He said that the gold we had got so far was only a trifle, and that they could see what great cities there were, and what rich mines, and that we should be lords of them all and very rich and prosperous. He used other arguments too, well couched in the manner of which he was a master. In addition he secretly gave golden jewels to some soldiers and made great promises to others, and he ordered that the food brought by Montezuma's stewards should be divided equally among all the soldiers, receiving no greater share himself than the rest.

Now all men alike covet gold, and the more we have the more we want, and several recognizable pieces were missing from the heaps. At the same time Juan Velazquez de Leon was employing the Atzcapotzalco goldsmiths to make him some large gold chains and pieces of plate for his table. Gonzalo Mejia, the treasurer, privately requested him to deliver this gold to him, since it had not paid the royal fifth and was known to belong to the treasure Montezuma had given us. Juan Velazquez, being Cortes' favourite, refused to give up anything, on the plea that he had not taken any share of what had been collected or anything else, but only what Cortes had given him before the bars were cast.

Gonzalo Mejia answered that what Cortes himself had taken and hidden from his companions was enough, and that as treasurer he demanded all the gold that had not paid the royal

fifth. One thing followed another, till both men lost their tempers and drew their swords. Indeed if we had not quickly separated them they would have killed one another, for they were men of great character and brave fighters. As it was they emerged from the battle with two wounds apiece.

When news of this came to Cortes he ordered them both to be put in prison, and each to be attached to a heavy chain. But, as many soldiers reported, he privately told his friend Juan Velazquez that he would only be imprisoned for two days and that Gonzalo Mejia, as treasurer, would be released at once. Cortes arrested them to prove to us that justice would be done and Velazquez imprisoned, even though he was hand in glove with him.

The affair of Gonzalo Mejia was rather more complicated. For the treasurer accused Cortes of having secretly taken much of the missing gold. He said that all the soldiers were complaining to him about it, and asking him why as treasurer he did not demand restitution. But this is a long story and I will not pursue it.

Juan Velazquez was imprisoned in a room not far from Montezuma's apartments. Being a large man and very strong, he dragged the chain after him as he moved about the hall, which made a great noise; and when Montezuma heard it he asked the page Orteguilla who it was that Cortes had bound in chains. The page answered that it was Juan Velazquez, who had once been Montezuma's personal guard – and had now been replaced by Cristobal de Olid. Montezuma then asked the reason, and the page answered, on account of some missing gold.

Later in the day, when Cortes was paying him a visit, Montezuma asked him, after the usual civilities and a little preliminary conversation, why he had imprisoned Juan Velazquez, for he was a good and valiant captain. As I have already said, Montezuma knew us all very well, even to our personal characteristics. Cortes answered him half laughingly that it was because he was a bit touched, by which he meant out of his senses, and because, not having received much gold, he wanted to go to Montezuma's towns and cities and demand it of the

*Caciques.* For this reason, and to prevent him from killing anyone, he had been put in prison.

Montezuma begged Cortes to release Juan Velazquez and send him to look for more gold, promising that he would give him some of his own, and Cortes pretended that it went against the grain to release him. But at last he said that he would do so to please Montezuma. I believe he sentenced him to be banished from the camp and sent to Cholula with some of Montezuma's messengers to demand gold. Before this, however, he and Gonzalo Mejia were reconciled. Velazquez returned from his banishment, as I observed, within six days, bringing more gold with him, and I observed also that from that time Gonzalo Mejia and Cortes were no longer good friends. I have recorded this although it is outside my story, to show that, under colour of doing justice and striking fear into all, Cortes was capable of great cunning.

One day Montezuma said to Cortes: 'See, Malinche, how much I love you. I should like to give you one of my daughters, a very beautiful girl, to marry and have as your legal wife.' Cortes doffed his helmet in gratitude, and said that this was a great favour Montezuma was conferring on him, but he was already married, and that among us it was not permissible to have more than one wife. He would however treat her with the honour to which the daughter of so great a prince was entitled, but first of all he desired her to become a Christian, as other ladies, the daughters of chieftains, had done. To this the prince consented.

The great Montezuma continued to show his accustomed good will towards us, but never ceased his daily sacrifices of human beings. Cortes tried to dissuade him but met with no success. He therefore consulted his captains as to what we should do in the matter, since he did not dare to put a stop to this practice for fear of arousing the city and the *papas* of Huichilobos. The advice he received was that he should announce his intention of overthrowing the great images of that god. Then if we saw they were prepared to defend them or rise in revolt, he should merely ask permission to set up an altar in one part of the high *cue* with a crucifix and an image of Our

Lady. When this plan was agreed Cortes went to the palace where Montezuma was imprisoned, taking seven captains and soldiers with him, and said to him: 'My lord, I have often asked you to give up sacrificing human beings to your gods, who are false gods, but you have never done so. Now I must tell you that all my companions, and these captains who have come with me, beg you for permission to remove the gods from your temple and put Our Lady and a cross in their place. But if you refuse they will go and remove them just the same, and I should not like them to kill any *papas*'.

When Montezuma heard these words and saw that the captains were somewhat excited, he said: 'Malinche, how can you wish to destroy our whole city? Our gods would be enraged against us, and I do not know that they would even spare your lives. I pray you to be patient for the present, and I will summon all the *papas* and see what they reply.'

On hearing this, Cortes made a sign to Montezuma that he wished to speak with him in private, without the presence of the captains he had brought with him, and ordered them to depart and leave him alone. When they had gone he told the prince that, to prevent this matter from becoming public and causing a disturbance, and so as not to offend the *papas* by overthrowing their idols, he would persuade our people to refrain from action, provided they were given a room in the great *cue* where they could set up an altar on which they could put an image of Our Lady and a cross. Then, in course of time, his people would see how good and advantageous it was for their souls, and for their health, prosperity, and good harvests. Sighing deeply and with a very sad face, Montezuma promised to consult his *papas*; and after a good deal of discussion our altar was set up some distance from their accursed idols, with great reverence and thanks to God from us all. Thereupon mass was sung. Cortes picked an old soldier to remain there as a guard, and begged Montezuma to order his *papas* not to touch the altar, but to sweep the floor and burn incense, and keep wax candles burning, night and day, and to decorate the place with flowers and branches.

## Cortes in Difficulties

THERE was never a time when we were not subject to surprises so dangerous that but for God's help they would have cost us our lives. No sooner had we set up the image of Our Lady on the altar, and said mass, than Huichilobos and Tezcatlipoca seem to have spoken to their *papas*, telling them that they intended to leave their country, since they were so ill-treated by the *Teules*. They said that they did not wish to stay where these figures and the cross had been placed, nor would they stay unless we were killed. This, they said, was their answer, and the *papas* need expect no other, but must convey it to Montezuma and all his captains, so that they might at once attack us and kill us. Their gods also observed that they had seen us break up the gold that was once kept in their honour and forge it into ingots, and warned the Mexicans that not only had we imprisoned five great *Caciques* but were now making ourselves masters of their country. They recited many more of our misdeeds in order to incite their people to war.

Wishing us to hear what his gods had said, Montezuma sent Orteguilla to our Captain with the message that he wished to speak to him on very serious business. The page said that Montezuma was very sad and agitated, and that on the previous night and during much of the day many *papas* and important captains had been with him, holding secret discussions which he could not overhear.

On receiving this message Cortes hurried to the palace where Montezuma was, taking with him Cristobal de Olid, the captain of the guard, and four other captains, also Doña Marina and Jeronimo de Aguilar. All paid great respect to the great Montezuma, who addressed them in these words: 'My lord Malinche and captains, I am indeed distressed at the answer which our *Teules* have given to our *papas*, to me, and to all my captains. They have commanded us to make war on you and kill you and drive you back across the sea. I have reflected on this command,

and think it would be best that you should at once leave this city before you are attacked, and leave no one behind. This, my lord Malinche, you must certainly do, for it is in your own interest. Otherwise you will be killed. Remember that your lives are at stake.'

Cortes and our captains were distressed and even somewhat alarmed; which was not surprising, for the news was so sudden and Montezuma was so insistent that our lives were in the greatest and immediate danger. The matter was clearly urgent. Cortes replied by thanking him for the warning, and saying that at the moment he was troubled by two things: that he had no ships in which to depart, since he had ordered those in which we came to be broken up, and that Montezuma would have to accompany us so that our great Emperor might see him. He begged him as a favour therefore to restrain his *papas* and captains until three ships could be built in the sand-dunes. This course, he argued, would be to their advantage, for if they began a war they would all be killed. And to show that he really meant to build these ships without delay, he asked Montezuma to tell his carpenters to go with two of our soldiers who were expert shipbuilders, and cut wood near the coast.

On hearing Cortes say that he would have to come with us and visit the Emperor, Montezuma was even sadder than before. He said he would let us have the carpenters, and urged Cortes to hurry up and not waste time in talk but get to work. In the meantime he promised to tell his *papas* and captains not to foment disturbances in the city, and to see that Huichilobos was appeased with sacrifices, though not of human lives. After this excited conversation Cortes and our captain took their leave of Montezuma and we were all left in great anxiety wondering when the fighting would begin.

Cortes immediately sent for Martin Lopez, the ship's carpenter, and Andres Nuñez, and the Indian carpenters whom Montezuma had lent us, and after some discussion about the size of the three vessels to be built, he ordered Lopez to start work at once and get them ready. For all that was necessary in the way of iron and blacksmith's tackle, tow, caulkers, and tar was to be found at Villa Rica. So they set out and cut the wood

near the coast, and after making calculations and templates hastily began to build the ships.

Meanwhile we in Mexico went about in great depression, fearing that at any moment we might be attacked. Our Tlascalan auxiliaries and Doña Marina told Cortes that this was imminent, and the page Orteguilla was always in tears. We all kept on the alert and placed a strong guard on Montezuma. I say that we were on the alert, but I do not have to repeat this so often, since we never took off our armour, gorgets, or leggings by night or day. Some may ask when we slept, and what our beds were like. They were nothing but a little straw and a mat, and anyone who had a curtain put it underneath him. We slept in our armour and sandals with our weapons close beside us. The horses stood saddled and bridled all day, and everything was so fully prepared that at a call to arms we were already at our posts, and waiting. We posted sentinels every night, and every soldier did his guard-duty. There is something else I would say, though I do not like to boast: I grew so accustomed to going about armed and sleeping in the way I have described that after the conquest of New Spain I kept the habit of sleeping in my clothes and without a bed. I slept better that way than on a mattress.

Even when I go to the villages of my *encomienda* I do not take a bed or, if I sometimes do, it is not because I want it, but because some gentlemen are travelling with me, and I do not wish them to think I do not possess a good bed. But I always lie down fully dressed. What is more, I can only sleep for a short time at night. I have to get up and look at the sky and stars and walk about for a bit in the dew; and this without putting a cap or a handkerchief on my head. I am so used to it that, thank God, it does me no harm. I have said all this so that my readers shall know how we, the true conquistadors, lived, and how accustomed we became to our arms and to keeping watch.

[Meanwhile, with backing from Spain, Diego Velazquez went about organizing a fleet which was to follow Cortes and either kill or capture him and his soldiers. The fleet was nineteen ships strong and carried fourteen hundred soldiers, under the command of Pan-

filo Narvaez. Narvaez met and was joined by the three soldiers whom Pizarro had left behind to farm and prospect, and was then visited by some secret envoys of Montezuma's, who were impressed by the size of his expedition. Montezuma sent presents to Narvaez, and for three days Cortes knew nothing at all about it.]

One day when our Captain went to make his usual state visit to Montezuma, he noticed, after the usual civilities, that Montezuma appeared more cheerful and happy. He asked him how it was, and Montezuma replied that his health was better. But when Cortes paid him a second visit on the same day the prince was afraid that he had learnt about Narvaez' ships. So to get the advantage of our Captain and to avoid suspicion, he said: 'Lord Malinche, just a moment ago some messengers came to tell me that eighteen or more ships with a great many men and horses have arrived at the port where you disembarked. They brought me a picture of it all painted on cloths; and seeing you visiting me for a second time today I thought you had come to bring me the same news, for now you will not need to build ships. But you have told me nothing about it. So I have been annoyed with you, on the one hand, for keeping me in ignorance, and delighted, on the other hand, at the arrival of your brothers. For now you can all return to Spain without more discussion.'

When Cortes heard about the ships and saw the painting on the cloth, he rejoiced greatly. 'Thank God, who provides for us at the right time,' he said. And we soldiers were so pleased that we could not keep quiet. The horsemen rode skirmishing round, and musket shots were fired. But Cortes grew very thoughtful, for he knew quite well that the fleet had been sent against him and us by the Governor Diego Velazquez. Being a wise man, he told us soldiers and captains what he felt, and by great gifts of gold and promises to make us rich persuaded us to stand by him. He did not yet know who was in command of the fleet, but we were highly delighted with the news, and with the gold he had given us by way of gratuity, since it came from his own property and not from what should have fallen to our share. Our Lord Jesus Christ was indeed sending us help and assistance.

[Having learnt all Cortes' dispositions from Pizarro's three followers who had joined him, Narvaez demanded the surrender of Villa Rica.

### The Conquest of New Spain

Sandoval, however, sent away his old and crippled soldiers in preparation for a fight, and arrested Narvaez' three envoys when they threatened him. He then bundled these three, the priest Guevara, the notary Vergara, and a relative of Diego Velazquez called Amaya, off to Mexico under escort. Dazzled by the richness of the country they passed through, they were even more overwhelmed by the gracious reception which Cortes gave them and the sight of Mexico itself. Wheedled by bribes and flattery, on their return to Narvaez' camp they began to persuade Narvaez' men to come over to Cortes' side. At the same time Cortes wrote putting himself at Narvaez' disposition and begging him not to let the Indians see any divergence of view among the Spaniards. Bribes and presents of gold soon produced dissension among Narvaez' followers, but the captain himself obstinately persisted in his hostility to Cortes. A few of his men deserted to Sandoval. Narvaez then moved on to Cempoala, where he extracted from the fat chief all the treasure that Cortes had left in his charge, and from there began to march on Mexico. Cortes then decided to attack him, leaving Pedro de Alvarado and the least reliable soldiers to guard Montezuma. The Mexican prince, who was playing a double game, sent gold and supplies to Narvaez and attempted to dissuade Cortes from attacking him. After an argument with a notary who attempted to serve writs on him, Cortes sent first the Mercedarian friar and then Juan Velazquez to win him friends in Narvaez' camp. His guile succeeded. But at the same time he bought a number of long copper-tipped lances from the Chinantecs to be used against Narvaez' horsemen, and trained his men to handle them. He then made a surprise attack on Narvaez, whose men quickly lost their artillery. The night was wet and they were not used to the country. Narvaez himself was wounded and lost an eye, and his men failed to defend the *cues* at Cempoala which seemed to offer them a natural stronghold. Five men were killed on Narvaez' side and four on Cortes'. Narvaez' men then passed with greater or less willingness to Cortes' side, and many of them were permitted to settle in the country. Cortes insisted that his men should return the horses and other valuables which they had captured, a demand which provoked some resistance on his own side. One of Narvaez' followers, a black man, was suffering from smallpox, and a severe epidemic spread among the Indians, who did not know this disease. The victory of Cempoala, however, was quickly followed by very bad news from Mexico.]

Just at the moment of victory news came from Mexico that

### Cortes in Difficulties

Pedro de Alvarado was besieged in his quarters, which the Mexicans had set alight in two places, killing seven of his men and wounding many others. He sent to demand assistance in great urgency and haste, and entrusted the message to two Tlascalans who brought no letter. The letter, however, was brought shortly afterwards by two other Tlascalans. God knows how this bad news depressed us!

We began our journey back to Mexico by forced marches, leaving Narvaez and his captain Salvatierra as prisoners at Villa Rica, in charge of Rodrigo Rangel, who was made commander of the place and was left to look after not only the prisoners but many of Narvaez' followers who were recovering from their wounds.

As we were about to start four important chieftains arrived whom the great Montezuma had sent to Cortes to complain about Pedro de Alvarado. With tears streaming from their eyes, they said that Alvarado had come out of his quarters with all the soldiers whom Cortes had left him, and for no reason at all had fallen on their *Caciques* and dignitaries, who were dancing and celebrating a festival in honour of their idols Huichilobos and Tezcatlipoca, for which they had Alvarado's permission. Many Mexicans had been killed and wounded, and in defending themselves they had killed six of our soldiers. In reply to their bitter complaints against Alvarado, Cortes merely said in some disgust that he would go straight to Mexico and put things right. When the messengers brought their answer to the great Montezuma, he is said to have taken it very badly and flown into a great rage.

Cortes also promptly sent letters to Pedro de Alvarado, advising him to make sure that Montezuma did not escape, and telling him that we were coming by forced marches. At the same time he informed him of our victory over Narvaez, about which Montezuma knew already.

## *The Flight from Mexico*

WHEN the news came that Pedro de Alvarado was besieged and Mexico in revolt the captaincies that had been given to Juan Velazquez de Leon and Diego de Ordaz over settlements to be formed at Panuco and Coatzacoalcos were revoked. Neither of them went, everyone stayed with us. Feeling that Narvaez' followers would not willingly assist us in the relief of Alvarado's garrison, Cortes implored them to forget their hostility, and promised to make them rich and give them commands. Since they had come to seek a livelihood, he told them, and were in a country where they could both serve God and His Majesty and enrich themselves, now was the chance. He was so persuasive in fact, that every one of them offered to come with us. But if they had known the Mexicans' strength, not one of them would have volunteered.

We quickly set out for Tlascala by forced marches, and on getting there learnt that Montezuma and his captains had attacked continuously until the news came that we had defeated Narvaez, and had killed seven of Alvarado's men as well as setting fire to his quarters. The messengers added that Alvarado's men were exhausted through want of food and water, for Montezuma had ceased to send them supplies.

This news was brought to us by Tlascalan Indians at the very moment of our arrival, and Cortes immediately ordered a parade to be held of the men who had come with him. There were over thirteen hundred soldiers, counting Narvaez' people and his own, also some ninety-six horses, eighty crossbowmen, and as many musketeers. This force seemed to him sufficient for us to make a safe entry into Mexico, and in addition the Tlascalan chiefs gave us two thousand warriors. So we set out at once for Texcoco by forced marches, but when we came to that great city we received no welcome. Not a single chieftain was to be seen. They were all hostile and in hiding.

We arrived at Mexico on St John's Day in June 1520. No

*Caciques or captains or Indians whom we recognized appeared in the streets, and all the houses were empty. When we reached the quarters where we had formerly lodged, the great Montezuma came out into the courtyard to embrace and speak to Cortes. He welcomed him and congratulated him on his victory over Narvaez. But Cortes, arriving as the victor, refused to listen to him, and Montezuma returned to his lodging very sad and thoughtful.*

Cortes was anxious to find out the cause of the Mexican revolt. It was quite clear to us that Montezuma was distressed about it. Many of those who had been with Pedro de Alvarado through the critical time said that if the uprising had been desired by Montezuma or started on his advice, or if Montezuma had had any hand in it, they would all have been killed. Montezuma had pacified his people and made them give up the attack.

Pedro de Alvarado's account of events was that the Mexicans had revolted in order to free Montezuma, and at the command of Huichilobos, who was angry because we had placed the image of Our Lady and the cross in his house. He said that a crowd of Indians had come to remove the image from the altar, but had been unable to do so. They had looked on this as a great miracle, and had reported it to Montezuma; and he had told them to leave it on the altar and do nothing more about it. It was therefore left in place.

Pedro de Alvarado gave other reasons for the revolt also: the fact that Narvaez' message to Montezuma that he was coming to release him and capture us had turned out untrue; and a similar disillusionment in the matter of Cortes' specious promise to Montezuma that as soon as we possessed ships we would go aboard and leave the country entirely. For not only were we not going, but many more *Teules* were arriving. The Mexicans thought, therefore, that they had better kill Pedro de Alvarado and his soldiers and release Montezuma before we returned to Mexico with all Narvaez' followers. After this they would turn on Cortes' forces and kill us to the last man. For they had taken it for granted that Narvaez' men would conquer us, but now all their hopes had proved vain.

When Pedro de Alvarado had told his story, Cortes asked him

why he had attacked the Mexicans while they were dancing and holding their festival. He said he had received positive information that when the feasts and dancing were over and the sacrifices had been made to Huichilobos and Tezcatlipoca, they would attack us at once. This and all the rest he had learnt from a *papa* and two chieftains and certain other Mexicans. 'But they told me,' said Cortes, 'that they asked your permission to hold their feast and dances.' Alvarado agreed that this was so, and said that, to surprise and scare them and prevent them from attacking us, he had got his attack in first.

On hearing this Cortes exclaimed very angrily that it was a bad thing and a great mistake, and that he wished to God Montezuma had escaped and he had never had to listen to this story. He then turned away and said no more on the subject.

When Cortes found that we were no better received than we had been in Texcoco, and that no market was being held and the whole place was in revolt, and when he heard Pedro de Alvarado's account of his uncontrolled attack on the Mexicans, he was very sad. Moreover, it seems that on the march he had boasted to Narvaez' captains of the great respect and authority he enjoyed among the Indians, saying that they would come out on the road to meet him and welcome him with presents of gold, as they always did. When nothing turned out as he had promised, therefore, and they did not even bring him food to eat, he was greatly irritated, and most haughty in his behaviour to the many Spaniards in his company.

Soon after the discussion with Alvarado, Montezuma sent two chieftains to beg Cortes to pay him a visit, since he wanted to speak to him. The reply they received was: 'Visit him? Why, the dog doesn't even keep a market open for us, or see that they send us food to eat!'

When our captains, Juan Velazquez de Leon, Cristobal de Olid, Alonso de Avila, and Francisco de Lugo, heard Cortes speak in this way, they protested: 'Calm yourself, sir. Do not be so angry. Remember how well and honourably the king of this country has treated us. He is a good man. If it had not been for him we should all of us be dead by now, and they would have eaten us. Remember he has even given us his daughters.'

This infuriated Cortes more than ever, for he took it as a reproof. 'Why should I be civil,' he exclaimed, 'to a dog who was holding secret negotiations with Narvaez, and now, as you can see, does not even give us any food?' 'That he certainly should do,' replied the captains, 'you are quite right.' Having so many Spaniards with him in the city, our own men and Narvaez' followers, Cortes did not restrain himself at all. Turning to the chieftains, he told them to tell their master to have the fair and markets opened immediately, or he would not answer for the consequences.

The chieftains understood Cortes' insulting remarks, and the captains' reproof of their commander. Knowing all our captains well from the time when they had guarded Montezuma, and thinking of them as good friends to the prince, they repeated the conversation to Montezuma, in so far as they understood it. Perhaps, their report infuriated the Mexicans. Perhaps, on the other hand, the attack was already planned. Be that as it may, within a quarter of an hour a soldier appeared, in great haste and severely wounded, saying that he had come from the town of Tacuba, not far away, and had been escorting some Indian women who belonged to Cortes, among them a daughter of Montezuma. It seems that Cortes had left them in charge of the lord of Tacuba, whose relations they were, when we went on the expedition against Narvaez. This soldier said that the whole city and the road by which he had come was crowded with warriors, carrying arms of every kind, and that they had taken the Indian women from him and wounded him twice. If he had not let the women go, he said, they would already have had him in a canoe and taken him off to be sacrificed. They had laid hands on him, in fact, and had broken down a bridge.

This news greatly distressed Cortes and those of us who heard it. We who were used to campaigning against the Indians knew very well what great hosts they always collected, and that however hard we fought, even with our numbers we should be in great hazard of our lives, and of hunger and hardships, since the city around us was so strong.

Cortes immediately ordered Diego de Ordaz to go with four hundred soldiers, among them most of the crossbowmen and

musketeers and some horsemen, to examine the situation described by the wounded soldier, and if he found he could pacify the Indians without fighting or disturbance, to do so. He set out to obey these instructions, but had hardly reached the middle of the street down which he was to march when he was attacked by a great number of Mexican bands, while an equal number shot at him from the roofs. The attack was so fierce that at the first assault eight of our soldiers were killed and all the rest wounded, including Diego de Ordaz himself, who received three wounds. They could not advance a single yard, but had to retreat step by step to their quarters. On the way back another good soldier called Lezcano was killed, after doing valiant deeds with his broadsword.

While many bands were attacking, even more came to our quarters, and discharged so many javelins and sling-stones and arrows that in the single attack they wounded forty-six of our men, twelve of whom died of their wounds. So many warriors assailed us that Diego de Ordaz was unable to retire into our quarters because of the fierce attacks made on him from front and rear and from the rooftops. Our cannon, muskets, crossbows, and lances were of little use; our stout sword-thrusts and our brave fighting were in vain. Though we killed and wounded many of them, they pushed forward over the points of our swords and lances and, closing their ranks, continued to fight as bravely as before. We could not drive them off.

At last, thanks to our cannon, muskets, and crossbows and the damage we did them with our swords, Ordaz was able to enter our quarters. Not till then, hard though he tried, could he force a passage with his badly wounded soldiers, who were reduced by fourteen. Still many bands continued to attack us, crying that we were like women, and calling us rogues and other abusive names, and the damage they had done us till then was as nothing to what was to come. They were so bold that, attacking from different directions, they forced a way into our quarters and set them on fire, and we could not stand up to the smoke and flames till we found the remedy of throwing heaps of earth on top of them and cutting off those rooms from which the fire was coming. Indeed, they believed they would burn us alive

in there. These battles lasted all day, and during the night, too, many bands attacked us, hurling javelins, sling-stones, arrows, and stray stones in such numbers that they covered the courtyard and the surrounding ground like corn on a threshing floor.

We spent the night dressing our wounds, repairing the breaches the enemy had made in the walls, and preparing for next day. As soon as dawn broke our Captain decided that we and Narvaez' men combined should sally out and fight them, taking our cannon, muskets, and crossbows, and endeavouring to defeat them, or at least to make them feel our strength and valour better than the day before. I may say that when we were forming this plan the enemy was deciding on similar measures. We fought very well, but they were so strong and had so many bands which relieved one another by turns, that if we had had ten thousand Trojan Hectors and as many Rolands, even then we should not have been able to break through.

I will describe the whole of the battle. We were struck by the tenacity of their fighting, which was beyond description. Neither cannon, muskets, nor crossbows were of any avail, nor hand-to-hand combat, nor the slaughter of thirty or forty of them every time we charged. They still fought on bravely and with more vigour than before. If at times we were gaining a little ground or clearing part of a street, they would pretend to make a retreat, in order to lure us into following them. By thus attacking at less risk, they believed they would prevent us from struggling back alive, for they did us most damage when we were retiring.

Then, as to going out and burning their houses, I have already described the drawbridges between them, which they now raised so that we could only get across through deep water. Then we could not stand up to the rocks and stones which they hurled from the roofs in such numbers that many of our men were hurt or wounded. I do not know why I am writing so calmly, for some three or four soldiers of our company who had served in Italy swore to God many times that they had never seen such fierce fighting, not even in Christian wars, or against the French king's artillery, or the Great Turk; nor had they ever seen men so courageous as those Indians at charging with closed ranks.

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With great difficulty we withdrew to our quarters, hard pressed by many bands of yelling and whistling warriors, who blew their trumpets and beat their drums, calling us rogues and cowards who did not dare to meet them in a day's battle but turned away in flight.

Ten or twelve more soldiers were killed that day, and we all returned badly wounded. We spent the night coming to the decision that in two days' time every able-bodied soldier in the camp would sally forth under the protection of four engines, which we would construct. These were to take the form of strong timber towers, each capable of sheltering twenty-five men, and provided with apertures and loopholes which were to be manned by musketeers and crossbowmen; and close beside them were to march the other soldiers, musketeers and crossbowmen, and the artillery and all the rest; and the horsemen were to make charges.

After settling on this plan, we spent the next day building the machines and strengthening the many breaches they had made in the walls. We did not go out to fight that day. I cannot describe the bands of warriors who came to attack us in our quarters, not just at ten or twelve points but at more than twenty. We were divided among them all, and stationed in many other places too. While we bricked ourselves in and strengthened our fortifications, many other bands openly endeavoured to break into our quarters, and neither guns, crossbows, nor muskets, neither frequent charges nor sword-thrusts, were enough to drive them back. Not one of us, they shouted, would remain alive that day. They would sacrifice our hearts and blood to their gods, and with our legs and arms they would have enough to glut themselves at their feasts. They would throw our bodies for the tigers, lions, vipers, and serpents to gorge on; and for that reason orders had been given that for the last two days the beasts in their cages should be given no food. As for the gold we had, we would get little pleasure from that, or from all our cloth; and as for the Tlascalans who were with us, they would put them into cages to fatten, so that their bodies could be offered one by one as sacrifices. They shouted also, in less violent language, that we must surrender their great

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lord Montezuma, and they shouted other things as well. At night too, they went on yelling and whistling in the same way, and discharging showers of darts, stones, and arrows.

When dawn broke we commended ourselves to God and sallied forth with our towers. The cannon, muskets, and crossbows went ahead, and the horsemen made charges. But, as I have said, it was to no purpose. Although we killed many of them we could not drive them back. Bravely though they had fought on the previous two days, they were much more vigorous on this occasion and brought up even greater forces. Nevertheless we were determined, even at the cost of our lives, to advance with our towers as far as the great *cue* of Huichilobos.

I will not give a full account of the fighting in one fortified house, or tell how they wounded our horses, which were useless to us. For though they charged the enemy bands, they received so many arrows, darts, and stones that, well-armoured though they were, they could not break the enemy's ranks. If they caught up with any Mexicans, these warriors would quickly jump for safety into the canals or the lake, beside which they had raised fresh walls against the horsemen. There many other Indians were stationed with very long lances to finish them off. If our horses were useless, it was equally useless to turn aside and burn or demolish a house. For, as I have said, they all stood in the water with drawbridges between them. To swim across the gap was very dangerous, for they had so many rocks and stones on their fortified flat roofs that it meant certain destruction to attempt it. In addition to this, when we did set fire to some houses, a single one would take all day to burn, and one did not catch light from the other, because their roofs were flat and because of the water between. It was no good our risking our lives in this direction, therefore, so we made for the great *cue*.

Suddenly more than four thousand warriors ascended it, to reinforce the bands already posted there with long lances and stones and darts. Then all of them together took up a defensive position, and for a long time prevented our ascending the steps. Neither our towers, nor our cannon or crossbows, nor our muskets were of any avail; and although our horsemen tried to charge, the horses lost their foothold and fell down on the great

slippery flagstones with which the whole courtyard was paved. While those on the steps of the *cue* prevented our advance, we had so many of the enemy also on both our flanks that although ten or fifteen of them might fall to one cannon-shot, and many others were killed by sword-thrusts and charges, the hosts against us were overwhelming. For a long time we could not ascend the *cue*, although we most persistently pressed home our attacks. We did not take the towers, for they were already destroyed, but in the end we reached the top.

Here Cortes showed himself the brave man he was! The battle was fierce and the fighting intense. It was a memorable sight to see us all streaming with blood and covered with wounds; and some of us were slain. It pleased Our Lord that we should reach the place where the image of Our Lady used to stand, but we did not find it there. It appears, as we afterwards learnt, that the great Montezuma paid devotion to it, and he had ordered it to be kept safe. We set fire to their idols, and a large part of the hall in which Huichilobos and Tezcatlipoca stood was burnt down. In all this we received great help from the Tlascalans. And when we reached the top, some of us fighting and some of us lighting the fire, the *papas* who belonged to that great *cue* were a sight to see! As we retired, however, four or five thousand Indians, every one a leading warrior, tumbled us down the steps, six or ten at a time. Then there were some enemy bands posted on the battlements and in the embrasures of the *cue*, who shot so many darts and arrows at us that we could face neither one group of squadrons nor the other. So we resolved, with much toil and risk of our lives, to return to our quarters. Our towers had been destroyed, all of us were wounded, we had lost sixteen men, and the Indians constantly pressed on our flanks and rear. We captured two of their chief *papas* in this battle, whom Cortes told us to bring back with great care.

The Mexican bands continued to attack our quarters most obstinately and tenaciously all the time we were fighting outside. On our laborious return, indeed, we found as many of the enemy in the fortress as in the force that was pursuing us. They had already demolished some walls to force an entry, but they broke off their attacks when we arrived. Nevertheless during

what remained of the day they never ceased to fire darts, stones, and arrows, and during the night they not only fired them but yelled also.

We spent the night dressing the wounded and burying the dead, preparing for going out to fight next day, strengthening and adding parapets to the walls they had pulled down and the breaches they had made, and discussing some method of fighting which would cost us less in dead and wounded. But much though we talked we found no remedy at all.

I must mention the abuse which Narvaez' followers hurled at Cortes. They cursed him and the country, and Diego Velazquez too, who had sent them here when they were peacefully settled in their homes in Cuba. They were quite crazy and uncontrolled.

To return to our story, we came to the conclusion that we must ask for peace, in order that we might retire from Mexico. As soon as it was dawn many more bands of warriors arrived and very effectually surrounded our quarters on every side. The stones and arrows fell even thicker than before, the howls and whistles were even louder, and new bands endeavoured to force an entrance in new places. Cannon and muskets were of no avail, though we did them plenty of damage.

In view of this situation, Cortes decided that the great Montezuma must speak to them from the roof and tell them that the attacks must cease, since we wished to leave the city. When they went to give this message to the prince, it is reported that he said in great grief: 'What more does Malinche want of me? Fate has brought me to such a pass because of him that I do not wish to live or hear his voice again.' He refused to come, and he is even reported to have said that he would not see Cortes again, or listen to any more of his false speeches, promises, and lies. Then the Mercedarian friar and Cristobal de Olid went and talked to him most respectfully and tenderly, and Montezuma answered: 'I do not believe that I can do anything towards ending this war, because they have already chosen another lord, and made up their minds not to let you leave this place alive. I believe therefore that all of you will be killed.'

While the fighting continued, Montezuma was lifted to a battlement of the roof with many of us soldiers guarding him,

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and began to speak very lovingly to his people, telling them that if they stopped their attacks we would leave Mexico. Many of the Mexican chiefs and captains recognized him and ordered their people to be silent and shoot no more darts, stones, or arrows, and four of them, coming to a place where Montezuma could speak to them and they to him, addressed him in tears: 'Oh lord, our great lord, we are indeed sorry for your misfortune and the disaster that has overtaken you and your family. But we must tell you that we have chosen a kinsman of yours as our new lord.' And they named Cuitlahuac, the lord of Iztapalapa - for it was not Guatemo, who was lord soon after. They said moreover that the war must be carried on, and that they had promised their idols not to give up until we were all dead. They said they prayed every day to Huichilobos and Tezcatlipoca to keep him free and safe from our power, and that if things ended as they hoped, they would undoubtedly hold him in greater regard as their lord than they had done before. And they begged for his forgiveness.

Barely was this speech finished when a sudden shower of stones and darts descended. Our men who had been shielding Montezuma had momentarily neglected their duty when they saw the attack cease while he spoke to his chiefs. Montezuma was hit by three stones, one on the head, one on the arm, and one on the leg; and though they begged him to have his wounds dressed and eat some food and spoke very kindly to him, he refused. Then quite unexpectedly we were told that he was dead.

Cortes and all of us captains and soldiers wept for him, and there was no one among us that knew him and had dealings with him who did not mourn him as if he were our father, which was not surprising, since he was so good. It was stated that he had reigned for seventeen years, and was the best king they ever had in Mexico, and that he had personally triumphed in three wars against countries he had subjugated.

I have spoken of the sorrow we all felt when we saw that Montezuma was dead. We even blamed the Mercedarian friar for not having persuaded him to become a Christian, but he excused himself by saying that he had not supposed that Montezuma would die of these wounds, though he ought to have

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ordered them to give him something to deaden the pain. After much discussion Cortes ordered a *papa* and a chief from among our prisoners to go to tell the chief Cuitlahuac and his captains that the great Montezuma was dead, and that they had seen him die, and of the manner of his death and the wounds he had received from his own people. They were to say how grieved we all were, and that they must bury him like the great king that he was, and raise his cousin who was with us to be king in his place, since the inheritance was rightfully his; or else one of his sons, for the prince they had chosen had no right to the succession; and that they should negotiate a peace, so that we could leave the city. Failing that, our messengers were to say that we would sally out to fight them and burn all their houses and do them great damage, since only our respect for Montezuma had prevented us from destroying their city, and he was now dead.

To convince them of Montezuma's death, Cortes ordered six Mexicans, all important men, and the rest of the *papas* whom we held prisoner, to carry him out on their shoulders and hand him over to the Mexican captains, to whom they were to convey Montezuma's orders at the time of his death. For those who carried him out had been present at his deathbed, and they told Cuitlahuac the whole truth, that his own people had killed the prince with three stones.

When they saw Montezuma dead they wept, as we could see, very bitterly, and we clearly heard their shrieks and lamentations. But for all this their fierce attack did not cease; darts, stones, and arrows continued to fly, and they came on again with greater force and fury, crying: 'Now you shall indeed pay for the death of our king and lord, and for your insults to our gods. As for the peace you ask for, come out here and we will settle the terms!'

They said much else that I cannot now remember, about how they had chosen a brave king, who would not be so faint-hearted as to be deceived by false speeches like their good Montezuma. As for his burial, we need not trouble about that, but about our own lives, for in two days not one of us would be left to send them any more messages. With these words came loud yells

and whistles and showers of stones, darts, and arrows; and other bands continued their attempts to set fire to our quarters in many places.

In face of all this, Cortes and the rest of us agreed that we would all come out of our camp next day and attack in another direction, where there were many houses on dry land. Then, doing them all the damage we could, we would make for the causeway. First, however, our horsemen would break through their bands, and spear them or drive them into the lake, even at the cost of losing the horses. This plan was made in the hope that the death and wounds we should inflict on them might make them abandon their attack, and arrange some sort of peace that would let us go free without more destruction. But though we all fought bravely next day and killed many of the enemy, and burnt some twenty houses and almost reached the mainland, it was all to no purpose because of the heavy casualties we suffered. We could not hold a single bridge, for they were all half broken down. Many Mexicans charged down on us, and they had set up walls and barricades in the places which they knew our horses could reach. Great though our trials had been before, we found much greater ones ahead of us.

But let us turn from the subject and repeat that we decided to get out of Mexico.

Now we saw our forces diminishing every day, and the Mexicans increasing in numbers. Many of our men had died, and all the rest were wounded. Though we fought most valiantly, we could not drive back the many bands which attacked us by night and day, or force them to a standstill. We became short of powder, and then of food and water. We had sent to ask them for a truce, but because of Montezuma's death they would not leave us in peace. In fact we stared death in the face, and the bridges had been raised. It was therefore decided by Cortes and all of us captains and soldiers that we should depart during the night, choosing the moment when their warriors were most careless. And to put them off their guard, on that very afternoon we sent one of their *papas* whom we had captured, a man of great importance among them, with some other prisoners, to propose that they should let us retire within eight days, leaving

them all the gold. But this was only in order to distract their attention, so that we could get out that night.

In our company was a soldier called Botello, who seemed a very decent man and knew Latin and had been in Rome. He was reputed, however, to be a sorcerer. Some said that he had a familiar spirit, others called him an astrologer. Now, four days before, this Botello had claimed to have learnt, by casting lots or by astrology, that if we did not leave Mexico on that particular night, but delayed our departure, not one of us would escape with his life. He had said also, on other occasions, that Cortes was to suffer many hardships and lose both position and honour, but that he would afterwards become a great lord, rich in wealth and reputation. He made other prophecies as well. But enough of Botello, whom I shall mention again later on.

An order was now given that a bridge should be made of very strong beams and planks. This we were to carry with us and use in the places where the bridges had been broken. Four hundred Tlascalans and a hundred and fifty soldiers were chosen to carry this bridge and place it in position, and to guard the passage until the army and all the baggage had crossed. Two hundred Tlascalans and fifty soldiers were chosen to carry the cannon, and Gonzalo de Sandoval and Diego de Ordaz to lead the men and do the fighting, while a company of a hundred picked and valiant young soldiers under Francisco de Saucedo and Francisco de Lugo were to march in two equal companies and rush to any place where there was a heavy attack. Cortes himself, Alonso de Avila, Cristobal de Olid, and other captains were to go in the middle, and Pedro de Alvarado and Juan Velazquez de Leon in the rear, behind two of Narvaez' captains and their soldiers. Finally the three hundred Tlascalans and thirty soldiers were ordered to guard the prisoners and Doña Marina and Doña Luisa. By the time these dispositions had been made it was already night, and the gold could be divided among those who were to carry it.

Cortes ordered Cristobal de Guzman his steward, and other soldiers who were his servants, to have all the gold and jewels and silver brought out. He gave them many Tlascalans to do the work, and it was all placed in the hall. Cortes then told the

King's officials, Alonso de Avila and Gonzalo Mejia, to take charge of the royal portion. He gave them seven wounded and lame horses and one mare and more than eighty of our Tlascalan allies, and they loaded men and animals alike with as much as each could carry. It was, as I have said, made up into very broad ingots, but much gold still remained piled up in the hall. Then Cortes called his secretary, and others who were the King's notaries, and said: 'Bear witness for me that I can do no more with this gold. Here in this hall we have more than seven hundred thousand pesos' worth, and as you have seen, it cannot be weighed or brought to safety. I now give it over to any soldiers who care to take it. Otherwise we shall lose it to these dogs.'

On hearing this, many of Narvaez' men and some of ours loaded themselves with it. I had no desire, I assure you, but to save my life. Nevertheless I picked up four *chalchihuites* from the little boxes in which they lay, and quickly stowed them in my bosom, under my armour. The price of them afterwards served to cure my wounds and buy me food.

As soon as we knew Cortes' plan that we should escape during the night, we prepared to move towards the bridges. Since it was rather dark and there was some mist and drizzle, we began before midnight to transport the bridge and the baggage; and the horses, the mare, and the Tlascalan who were carrying the gold started on their way. The bridge was quickly put in place, and Cortes crossed over with those of the leading detachment and many of the horses. While this was happening the shouts and cries and whistles of the Mexicans rang out, and they called in their language to the people of Tlatelolco: 'Bring out your canoes at once. The *Teules* are departing. You must cut them off, so that not one remains alive.' Then all of a sudden we saw many bands of warriors descending on us, and the whole lake so thick with canoes that we could not defend ourselves, since many of our men had already crossed the bridge. While we were in this position, a great crowd of Mexicans charged down on us to remove the bridge and kill and wound our men, who could not help one another. And since misfortune is cruel at such times, one disaster followed another. Because of the

rain two of the horses slipped and fell in the lake. Just as we saw this, I and some others of Cortes' detachment struggled to the other side of the bridge, but we were borne down on by so many warriors that, hard though we fought, no further use could be made of it. The channel, or water-gap, was soon filled up with dead horses, Indians of both sexes, servants, bundles, and boxes.

Fearing that we should inevitably be killed, we pushed ahead along the causeway, where we found many bands with long spears awaiting us. They shouted abuse at us. 'Villains,' they cried, 'are you still alive?' Although six of my companions were wounded, we cut and hacked our way through. They seemed to have concocted some accursed plan, just as we had. For though Cortes and the captains and soldiers who rode first spurred along the causeway, and did not fail to reach dry land and save their lives, and the horses with the gold and the Tlascalan reached safety also, I declare that if the horsemen had waited for the soldiers at each bridge, it would have been the end of us all: not one of us would have survived. For as we passed along the causeway, charging the Mexican bands, the water was on one side of us and flat roofs on the other, and the lake was full of canoes. There was nothing we could do. Moreover all the muskets and crossbows had been left behind at the bridge, and it was night. What more could we have attempted than we did, which was to charge and deal sword-thrusts at those who tried to seize us, and push ahead till we were off the causeway?

Had it been day-time things would have been even worse. Those of us who escaped only did so by the grace of God. It must be terrifying merely to read of the hosts of warriors who descended on us that night, and the canoes that bore down to seize our soldiers. As we advanced along the causeway towards the town of Tacuba, which Cortes had already reached with Gonzalo de Sandoval, Cristobal de Olid, and the other horsemen who had gone ahead, there were cries of: 'My lord Captain, let us halt here. They say that we are running away and leaving them to die at the bridges. Let us go back and help them, if any of them survive and cannot get away.' But Cortes replied that

it was a miracle any of us had escaped. He turned back, however, with the horsemen and those soldiers who were unwounded. But they did not go far, for Pedro de Alvarado soon met them, badly wounded, on foot and with a spear in his hand, since they had killed his sorrel mare. With him he brought four soldiers as badly wounded as himself and eight Tlascalans, all of them pouring blood from many wounds.

While Cortes was on the causeway with the other captains, we took refuge in the square at Tacuba. Many bands had already reached there from Mexico and were shouting orders to the people of that town and another called Atzcapotzalco. Then they began to hurl darts, stones, and arrows at us, and to attack us with their long lances. We engaged them several times, attacking them and defending ourselves.

To return to Pedro de Alvarado. When Cortes and the other captains met him and saw that no more soldiers were coming down the causeway, tears sprang to their eyes. Pedro de Alvarado told them that Juan Velazquez de Leon lay dead at a bridge, with many other gentlemen both of Narvaez' company and our own, more than eighty in all. He said that he and the four soldiers had crossed the bridge in great peril after their horses had been killed, treading on the dead men, horses, and boxes with which the approach to it was choked. He said also that all the bridges and causeways were crowded with warriors. That unhappy bridge was afterwards called Alvarado's Leap. But no soldier stopped at the time, I assure you, to see whether his leap was long or short. We had enough to do to save our lives, for so many Mexicans were charging down on us that we were in great danger of death. I never heard anything about the leap of Alvarado's until after the capture of Mexico, and then it was in some satirical verses by a certain Gonzalo Ocampo, which I will not print here, since they are somewhat scurrilous. In one line he says: 'You should remember the leap which you took from the bridge.' But I will dwell no more on this delicate subject.

While we remained in Tacuba, many Mexican warriors from the lakeside towns gathered and killed three of our soldiers. So we decided to leave the place as quickly as possible, and five Tlascalans, who found a path to Tlascala without following

the road, guided us with great precautions until we reached some small houses built on a hill, and beside them a fortress-like *cue* that was their shrine. Here we halted.

During our retreat we were followed by the Mexicans, who hurled arrows and darts at us, and stones from their slings. The way they surrounded us and continually attacked us was most terrifying. I have already said this many times, and am tired of repeating myself, but my readers must not think me prolix, for each time they attacked and wounded us I am forced to speak of it again.

Let us tell how we defended ourselves. We took refuge in that fortified *cue* and attended to our wounded, and made many fires, but there was not so much as a morsel to eat. Later on, after the great city of Mexico was finally captured, we built a church on the site of that *cue*, which is called Nuestra Señora de los Remedios,<sup>1</sup> and is now much visited. Many citizens and ladies of Mexico go there on pilgrimages, and to make *novenas*.

Let me now say that it was pitiable to see our wounds dressed and bandaged with cotton cloths, for being both chilled and swollen they were very painful. But more deplorable was the loss of the gentlemen and brave soldiers who were missing, namely Juan Velazquez de Leon, Francisco de Saucedo, Francisco de Morla, Lares 'the good rider', and many others of Cortes' followers. I mention these few only, since it would be a long business to write down the names of our many missing comrades. Of Narvaez' company, the majority fell at the bridge, weighed down with gold.

I will now speak of Botello the astrologer. His astrology did not help him, for he too died there with his horse. But let me go on to say that after we got to safety some papers, bound together like a book, were found in his box, marked with figures, lines, notes, and symbols; and beside them were the words: 'Whether I shall die in this wretched war, murdered by the Indians.' And further on there were other lines and figures, beside which it said: 'You will die.' But beside others it said: 'You will not die.' In another place were the words. 'Whether they will kill my horse,' and a little further on it said: 'They

i. Our Lady of Succours.

will kill him.' There were other figures in these papers, apparently for fortune-telling, and other pairs of contradictory statements. Also in the box was an object four inches long and made of leather, in the shape of a man's genitals. The resemblance was remarkable, and it was stuffed with flock.

Among those who perished at the bridge were the sons and daughter of Montezuma, the prisoners we were bringing with us, and Cacamatzin, lord of Texcoco, also some other provincial rulers. But enough of our disasters. We were thinking of the prospect before us. We were all wounded, only twenty-three horses survived, we had saved no muskets, cannon, or powder, and had very few crossbows. These we promptly mended with cord, however, and we made new arrows. But the worst thing of all was that we did not know in what state of mind we should find our Tlascalan allies. Moreover, once darkness fell we were continuously surrounded by shouting Mexicans who fell on us with their darts, arrows, and slings. So we decided to leave the place at midnight, with the Tlascalans as guides, and taking every precaution. We then placed the wounded in the middle and provided the lame with staffs; and those who were very ill and could not walk went on the croups of such horses as were lame and unfit for fighting. Those horsemen who were not wounded went ahead, or in bands on one flank or the other. The wounded Tlascalans walked in the middle of our squadron, and the rest of them who were unwounded faced the enemy with us.

The Mexicans continually harassed us with loud shouts and cries and whistlings. 'You are going to a place where you will perish to a man,' they shouted. We did not understand why, but it will be seen later on. I have forgotten to record how glad we were to see our Doña Marina, and Doña Luisa, Xicotenga's daughter, still alive. They had been rescued at the bridge by some Tlascalans, as had also the only Spanish woman in Mexico, María de Estrada. Some of Xicotenga's sons, the brothers of Doña Luisa, had been the first to escape across the bridges. But most of the women servants we had been given in Tlascala and in Mexico were left behind.

To continue the story of our march, that day we reached