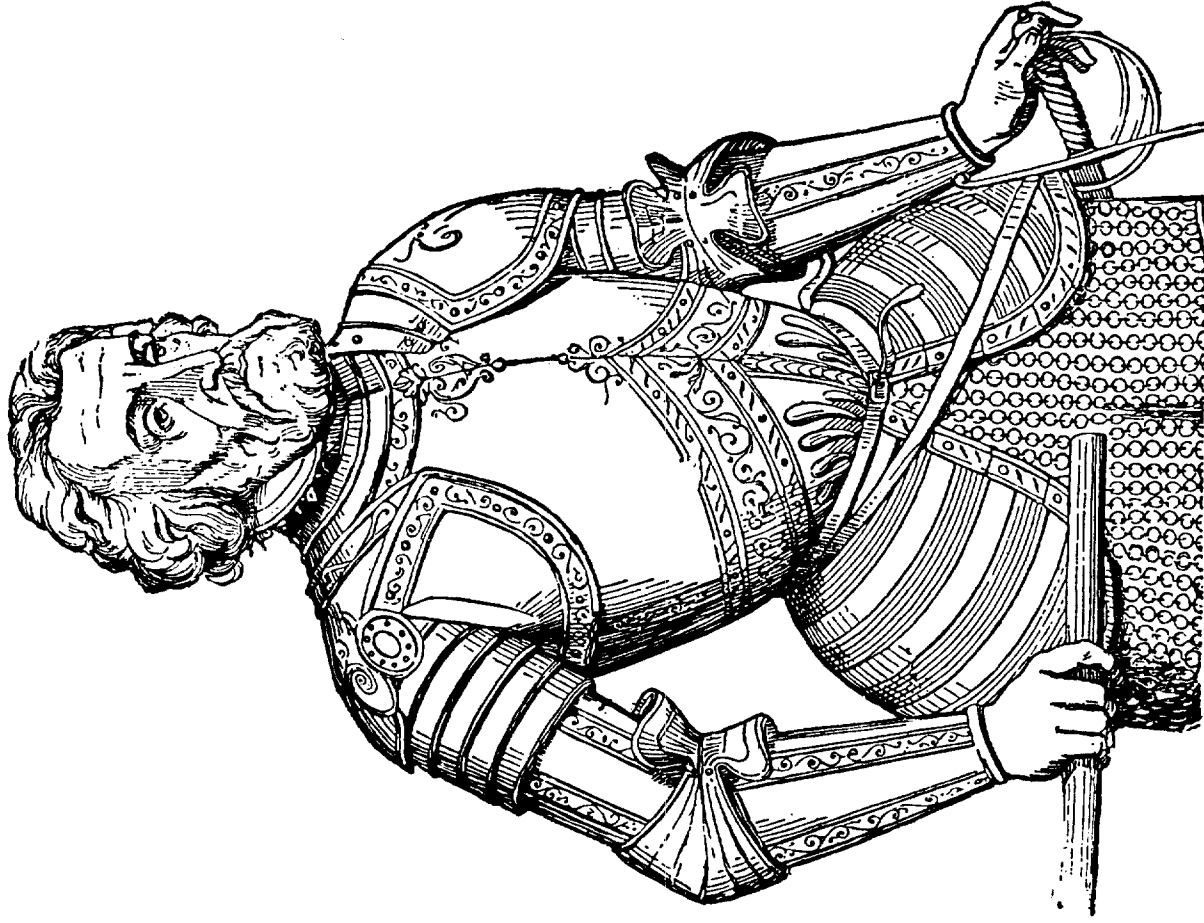


# THE DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF MEXICO

1517-1521

by Bernal Díaz del Castillo

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

## Prefatory Note

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

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

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

A. P. M.

## Preface by the Author

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