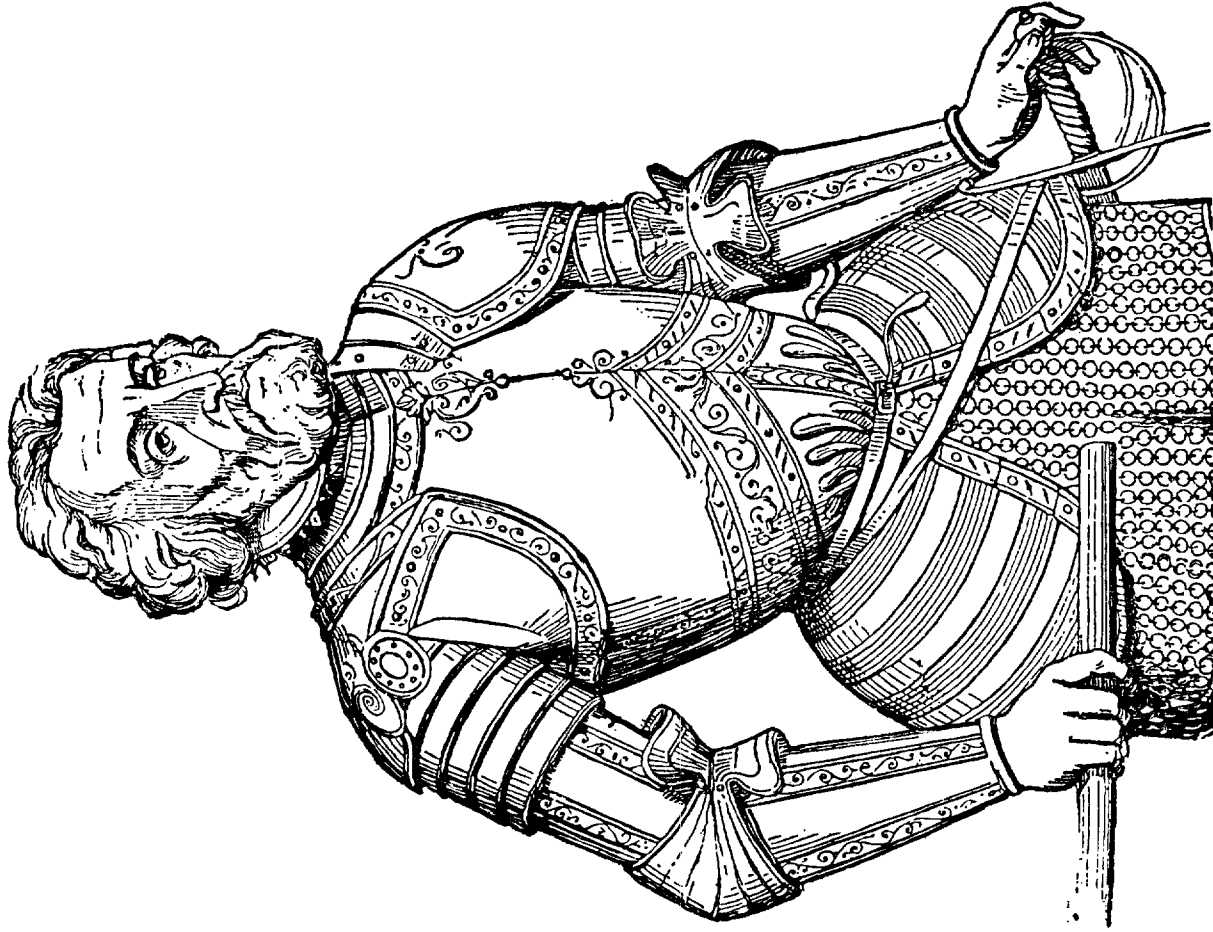


THE  
DISCOVERY  
AND  
CONQUEST  
OF  
MEXICO

1517-1521

by Bernal Díaz del Castillo

*Edited from the only exact copy of the original MS  
(and published in Mexico) by Genaro Garcia. 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

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## C O N T E N T S

*Introduction to American Edition, xi*  
*Extracts from Editor's Introduction, xix*  
*Prefatory Note, xxxii*  
*Preface by the Author, xxxiii*

### † BOOK ONE

#### THE DISCOVERY

- I The Expedition under Cordova, 3
- II The Expedition under Grijalva, 17

### † BOOK TWO

#### THE CONQUEST

- I The Expedition under Cortés, 31
- II The March Inland, 69
- III The War in Tlaxcala, 121
- IV The March to Mexico, 169
- V The Stay in Mexico, 197
- VI The Expedition under Narvaez, 255
- VII The Flight from Mexico, 295
- VIII The Halt at Tepeaca, 327
- IX The Return to the Valley, 339
- X Preliminary Expeditions, 355
- XI The Siege and Fall of Mexico, 391

### † APPENDIX

*Commentary by the Translator, 457*  
*Note on Spelling, 469*  
*Itinerary, 470*

### † INDEX, 473

possessed with the signatures of all who were in the conspiracy, and after he had read it and had seen that there were many persons of quality in it, so as not to dishonour them, he spread the report that Villafaña had swallowed the memorandum and that he [Cortés] had neither seen nor read it, and he at once brought him to trial. When Villafaña's statement was taken he spoke the truth and with the many witnesses of good faith and credibility whose evidence they took on the case, the regular Alcaldes jointly with Cortés and the Quartermaster Crisóbal de Olid gave sentence, and after Villafaña had confessed with the priest Juan Díaz, they hanged him from the window of a room where he had lodged.

Cortés did not wish that anyone else should be dishonoured in that affair, although at that time many were made prisoners in order to frighten them, and to make a show that he wished to punish others, but as the time was not suitable he overlooked it.

Cortés at once agreed to have a guard for his person, and the Captain of it was a gentleman named Antonio de Quiñones, a native of Zamora, with six soldiers, good and valiant men who guarded Cortés day and night. And he begged us, whom he knew belonged to his party, to look after his person. Although from that time forth he showed great kindness to those who were in the conspiracy, he distrusted them.

Let us leave this subject and say that he at once ordered it to be proclaimed that, within two days, all the Indian men and women that we had captured on those expeditions should be brought to be branded, and a house was designated for the purpose.

So as not to waste more words in this story about the way that they were sold at the auction (beyond what I have said at other times on the two other occasions when they were branded) if it were done badly before, it was done much worse this time, for, after taking out the royal fifth, Cortés took his fifth and further thefts for Captains, and if those we sent to be branded were handsome and good Indian women they stole them by night from the crowd, so that they should not reappear from then till doomsday and on this account many women were left out, who we afterwards kept as free servants.

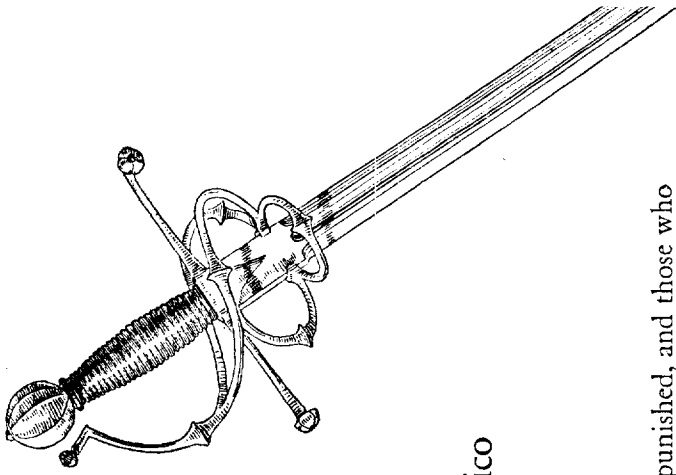
## XI

### The Siege and Fall of Mexico

† CVIII

After Antonio de Villafaña had been punished, and those who had joined with him in the conspiracy had quieted down, Cortés examined the sloops which were already built and had their rigging, sails and oars in place, and spare oars for each sloop. Moreover the canal by which the sloops were to pass out to the lake was already broad and deep. So Cortés sent to advise all the friendly pueblos near Texcoco to make eight thousand arrow heads of copper in each pueblo, and he also ordered them to make and trim for him in each pueblo eight thousand arrows of a very good kind of wood, and for these they also carried away a sample, and messengers and letters were then sent to our friend Xicotenga the elder, and to his son Xicotenga the younger and to his brothers, and to Chichimecatecle, informing them that when the day of Corpus Christi was passed, we were going to leave this city to proceed against Mexico and to invest it. He told them to send him twenty thousand warriors from their own people at Tlaxcala, and from those of Huexotzingo and Cholula, for all were now friends and brothers in arms, and they all knew the time of meeting and the plan, as he had informed them by their own Indians who were continually leaving our camp laden with the spoils from the expeditions we had made.

He also gave warning to the people of Chalco and Tlamanalco and their vassals, to be prepared when we should send to summon them, and he gave them to understand that we were



about to invest Mexico, and the time when we should set out, and he said the same to Don Fernando the Lord of Texcoco and to his chieftains and to all his vassals, and to all the other towns friendly to us. One and all replied that they would do exactly what Cortés sent to order them, and that they would come.

After the orders were given, Cortés decided with our Captains and soldiers that on the second day of the feast of Espíritu Santo (this was the year one thousand five hundred and twenty-one) a review should be held. This review was held in the great Courts of Texcoco and there were present eighty-four horsemen, six-hundred-and-fifty soldiers with swords and shields and many with lances, and one-hundred-and-ninety-four crossbowmen and musketeers. From these there were chosen to man the thirteen launches those that I will now mention—For each launch, twelve crossbowmen and musketeers; in addition to them there were also set apart another twelve men, six on each side as rowers for each launch. And besides these there was a Captain for each launch and an artilleryman.

Cortés also divided among them all the boat guns and falconets we possessed and the powder he thought they would need. When this was done, he ordered the following rules, which we all had to observe, to be proclaimed.

First, no man should dare to blaspheme Our Lord Jesus Christ, nor Our Lady, His Blessed Mother, nor the Sainted Apostles, nor any other saints under heavy penalty.

Second, no soldier should illtreat our allies, since they went to help us, or should take anything away from them even if they should be spoils gained by war, whether Indian men or women or gold or silver or Chalchihuites.

Another was, no soldier should dare to depart either by day or night from our camp to go to any pueblo of our allies, or anywhere else, either to fetch food or for any other matter, under heavy penalties.

Another, all the soldiers should wear very good armour, well quilted, a neck guard, head piece, leggings and shield, for we knew about the great number of javelins and stones and arrows and lances, and for all of them it was necessary to wear the armour which the proclamation mentioned.

Another, no one should gamble for a horse or arms on any account, under heavy penalty.

Another, no soldier, horseman, crossbowman, or musketeer should go to sleep unless he were fully armed and shod with his sandals, unless it were under the stress of wounds or because he was suffering from illness, so that we might be fully prepared whatsoever time the Mexicans might come to attack us.

In addition to these, the laws were proclaimed which were ordered to be observed in soldiering; that is, that anyone who sleeps when on guard or leaves his post should be punished with death, and it was proclaimed that no soldier should go from one camp to another without leave from his Captain under pain of death.

Another, that any soldier deserting his Captain in war or battle, should suffer death.

After the review had taken place, Cortés saw that not enough men who knew how to row could be found for the launches, although those who had been brought in the ships which we destroyed when we came with Cortés were thoroughly experienced and the sailors from the ships of Narvacz and those from Jamaica also knew how to row, and all of them were placed on the list and had been warned. Yet counting all of them, there was not a full supply, as many of the men refused to row. So Cortés made enquiries to find out who were seamen, or had been seen to go out fishing, and if they came from Palos or Triana or from any other port or place where there were sailors, and he ordered them under pain of heavy penalties to go on board the launches. However high-born they might say they were, he made them go and row, and in this way he got together one hundred and fifty men as rowers, and they were much freer from hardships than we were who were stationed on the causeways fighting, and they became rich from plunder as I will relate further on.

After Cortés had decided who should go in the launches, he divided the crossbowmen and musketeers and the powder, cannon and arrows and everything else that was necessary among them and ordered them to place in each launch the royal banners and other banners with the name that was given to each launch, besides other things which were needed, and

he named as Captains of the launches those whom I will now mention here:—Garcé Holguin, Pedro Barba, Juan de Linpias, Carvajal the deaf, Juan Jaramillo, Jerónimo Ruiz de la Mota, his companion Carvajal, and one Portillo who had just come from Castile, a good soldier who had a handsome wife and a Zamora who was a ship's mate, a Colmenero who was a seaman and a good soldier, a Lema, a Jnes Nórtés, one Briones a native of Salamanca, another Captain whose name I do not remember, and Miguel Díaz de Auz.

After he had named them, he gave instructions to each Captain what he was to do, and to what part of the causeways he was to go, and with which one of the Captains who were on land he was to co-operate.

When he had finished arranging all that I have mentioned, they came to tell Cortés that the Captains from Tlaxcala with a great number of warriors were approaching, and that Xicotenga, the younger, was coming as their commander in chief, and that he was bringing in his company his two brothers, sons of the good old man Don Lorenzo de Vargas. Xicotenga was also bringing a great force of Tlaxcalans under the command of Chichimecatecle and men from Huexotzingo, and another regiment of Cholulans, although they were few in number, because, from what I always observed after we had punished the people of Cholula, they never afterwards sided with Mexicans nor yet with us, but were keeping on the lookout [to see which side to take] and even when we were expelled from Mexico they were not found in opposition to us.

When Cortés knew that Xicotenga and his brothers and other Captains were approaching (and they were coming one day before the time he had told them to come) Cortés went out a quarter of a league from Texcoco to receive them with Pedro de Alvarado and others of our Captains, and as soon as he met Xicotenga and his brothers, Cortés paid them great respect and embraced them and all the other Captains. They approached in fine order, all very brilliant with great devices, each regiment by itself with its banners unfurled, and the white bird, like an eagle with its wings outstretched, which is their badge. The ensigns waved their banners and standards, and all carried bows and arrows, two handed swords, javelins and spear throwers; some carried macanas and great lances and others small lances. Adorned with their feather head-dresses,

and moving in good order and uttering shouts, cries, and whistles, calling out: "Long live the Emperor our Master," and "Castile, Castile, Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala," they took more than three hours entering Texcoco.

Cortés ordered them to be lodged in good quarters, and to be supplied with everything we had in our camp. After many embraces and promises to enrich them, he took leave of them and told them that next day he would give them orders what they were to do, and that now they were tired and should rest.

† cix

Cortés appointed Pedro de Alvarado Captain of one hundred and fifty sword and shield soldiers (and many of them carried lances) and thirty horsemen and eighteen musketeers and crossbowmen, and he named his brother Jorge de Alvarado, and Gutiérrez de Badajoz and Andrés de Monjaraz to go together with him, and these he appointed to be Captains of fifty soldiers and to divide among the three of them the musketeers and crossbowmen, as many in one Company as in the other. Pedro de Alvarado was to be Captain of the horsemen and General of the three companies, and he gave him eight thousand Tlaxcalans and their Captains, and he selected me and ordered me to go with him, and told us to go and take up our position in the City of Tacuba. He ordered that the armour we took with us should be very good headpieces, neck coverings, and leggings, for our defence was to go well armoured.

Let us go on to the next division. He gave to Cristóbal de Olid, who was quartermaster, other thirty horsemen and one hundred and seventy-five soldiers and twenty musketeers and crossbowmen all provided with armour in the same way as the soldiers he gave to Pedro de Alvarado, and he appointed three other Captains who were Andrés de Tápia, Francisco Verdugo, and Francisco de Lugo, and between all three Captains were divided all the soldiers and crossbowmen and musketeers. Cristóbal de Olid was Captain General of the three Captains and of the horsemen, and he gave him another eight thousand Tlaxcalans, and ordered him to go and establish his camp in the city of Coyoacan, which is two leagues from Tacuba.

Cortés made Gonzalo de Sandoval, the chief Alguacil, Cap-

tain of the other division of soldiers, and gave him twenty-four horsemen, fourteen musketeers and crossbowmen, one hundred and fifty sword, shield and lance soldiers, and more than eight thousand Indian warriors from the people of Chalco and Huexotzingo and of some other friendly pueblos through which Sandoval had to pass, and he gave him as companions and captains, Luis Marin and Pedro de Ircio who were Sandoval's friends, and ordered the soldiers, crossbowmen and musketeers to be divided between the two captains, and that Sandoval should have the horsemen under his command and be the General, and that he should place his camp near to Iztapalapa, and attack it and do it all the damage he could, until Cortés should send him other orders. Sandoval did not leave Texcoco until Cortés, who was Commander in chief of the regiments and of the launches, was quite ready to set out for the lake with the thirteen launches.

So as to avoid confusion on the road, we sent on ahead all the regiments of Tlaxcalans, until they should reach Mexican Territory.

As the Tlaxcalans with their Captain, Chichimecatecle and other Captains with their men, marched carelessly, they did not notice whether Xicotenga, the younger, who was their Captain General, accompanied them and when Chichimecatecle asked and enquired what had become of him, and where he had stopped, they found out that he had that night returned secretly to Tlaxcala, and was going to seize forcibly the caciqueship and vassals and lands of Chichimecatecle himself. The Tlaxcalans said that the reasons for his so doing were that when Xicotenga, the younger, saw the Captains of Tlaxcala, especially Chichimecatecle, going to the war, [he knew that] there would be nobody to oppose him, for he did not fear his father Xicotenga, the blind, who, being his father would aid him, and our friend Mase Escasi was already dead, and the only man he feared was Chichimecatecle. They also said that they always knew that Xicotenga had no wish to go to the war against Mexico, for they heard him say many times that all of us and of them would be killed. As soon as the Cacique Chichimecatecle heard and understood this, he turned back from the march more than swiftly, and came to inform Cortés about it.

Cortés at once ordered five Texcocan chieftains and two

from Tlaxcala, friends of Xicotenga, to go and force him to return, and to tell him that Cortés begged him to come back at once and go against his enemies the Mexicans, and to reflect that if his father Don Lorenzo de Vargas were not so old and blind he would come against Mexico himself and as all Tlaxcalans were and are very loyal servants of His Majesty, that it did not become him to dishonour them as he was now doing. And he sent to make him many offers and promises that he would give him gold and cloths if he would return. The reply Xicotenga sent was that if the old man his father, and Mase Escasi would have believed him, that Cortés would not have so lorded it over them and made them do all that he wished, and not to waste more words, he said that he did not intend to return. When Cortés heard that answer he at once gave an order for an Alguacil and four horsemen and five Indian chieftains from Texcoco to go in all haste and wherever they should overtake him to hang him, and he said: "There is never any improvement in this Cacique, but he must be traitor and ill-disposed towards us and of bad counsel," and that there was no time to put up with him any longer, or to ignore what had passed. When Pedro de Alvarado knew of it he petitioned strongly on Xicotenga's behalf, and Cortés gave him a favourable answer, but secretly he ordered the Alguacil and the horsemen not to leave Xicotenga alive. And so it was done and in a town subject to Texcoco they hanged him, and thus his treason was put an end to. There were some Tlaxcalans who said that Don Lorenzo de Vargas, the father of Xicotenga, sent to tell Cortés that this son of his was a bad man and he would not vouch for him, and that he begged Cortés to kill him.

Let us leave this story as it is, and say that for this reason we remained that day without setting out from Texcoco, and the next day we set out, both divisions, together, for Cristóbal de Olid and Pedro de Alvarado had both to take the same road. We went to sleep at a pueblo subject to Texcoco named Aculman, and it happened that Cristóbal de Olid sent on ahead to that pueblo to secure quarters, and had green branches placed above the roof of each house as a sign. When we arrived with Pedro de Alvarado we found no place where we could lodge, and over this [matter] the men of our Company had already put hands to their weapons against those of Cristóbal

de Olid and even the Captains were defying one another, but there were not wanting on both sides gentlemen who got between us and somewhat appeased the clamour, yet not so much but that we still all remained dissatisfied, and from that place they sent to inform Cortés, and he at once despatched Fray Pedro de Melgarejo, and the Captain Luis Marin in all haste, and wrote to the Captains and all of us reproving us, and when they arrived we made friends, but from that time on, the Captains, Pedro de Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid were not on good terms.

† cx

The next day [Thursday, 23rd May] the two Divisions continued their March together and we went to sleep at a large town [Zitlaltepec] which was deserted, for we were already in Mexican territory. The day following we went to sleep at Cuautitlan, and it also was without inhabitants, and the next day we passed through Tenayuca and Atzacotalco, which were also deserted, and at the hour of vespers we arrived at Tacuba and at once took up our quarters in some large houses and rooms, for this town also was deserted, and there, too, all our friends the Tlaxcalans found quarters, and that very afternoon we went through the farms belonging to those towns and brought in food to eat. We slept there that night after stationing good watchmen, sentinels and scouts, for as I have already said, Mexico was close by Tacuba, and when night fell we heard great shouts which the Mexicans raised at us from the lake, crying out much abuse, that we were not men enough to come out and fight them. They had many of their canoes full of warriors and the causeways also were crowded with fighting men, and these words were said with the idea of provoking us to come out that night and fight; but as we had gained experience from the affair of the causeways and bridges we would not go out until the next day, which was Sunday [26th May].

After hearing Mass, which was said by Father Juan Díaz, and commending ourselves to God, we agreed that with the two Divisions together, we should go out and cut off the water

of Chapultepec by which the city was supplied which was about half a league distant from Tacuba.

As we were marching to break the pipes, we came on many warriors who were waiting for us on the road, for they fully understood that would be the first thing by which we could do them damage, and so when they met us near some bad ground, they began to shoot arrows at us and hurl javelins and stones from slings, and they wounded three of our soldiers, but we quickly made them turn their backs and our friends the Tlaxcalans followed them so that they killed twenty and we captured eighteen of them.

As soon as these squadrons had been put to flight we broke the conduits through which the water flowed to the city, and from that time onwards it never flowed into Mexico so long as the war lasted. When we had accomplished this, our Captains agreed that we should go at once to reconnoitre and advance along the causeway from Tacuba, and do what was possible towards gaining possession of a bridge. When we had reached the causeway, there were so many canoes on the lake full of warriors, and the causeways also were so crowded with them, that we were astounded at it; and they shot so many arrows and javelins and stones from slings that at the first encounter they wounded over thirty soldiers. Still we went on marching along the causeway towards the bridge, and from what I understand they gave way for us to reach it, so as to get us on the other side of the bridge. When they had got us there, I declare that such a host of warriors charged down on us, that we could not hold out against them; for on the causeway, which was eight paces wide, what could we do against such a great force as was stationed on one side and the other of the causeway, and struck at us as at a mark, for although our musketeers and crossbowmen never ceased loading and firing at the canoes, they did them but very little damage for they brought the canoes very well protected with bulwarks of wood. Then when we attacked the squadrons that fought on the causeway itself, they promptly threw themselves into the water, and there were so many of them that we could not prevail against them. Those on horseback did not make any progress whatever, for the Indians wounded their horses from one side and from the other, and as soon as they charged after

the squadrons the Indians threw themselves in the water. The enemy had raised breastworks where other warriors were stationed in waiting, with long lances which they had made like scythes from the weapons which had been captured from us when they drove us fleeing out of Mexico.

In this manner we stood fighting with them about an hour, and so many stones were showered on us that we could not bear up against them, and we even saw that there was approaching us in another direction a great fleet of canoes to cut off our passage, so as to turn our flanks, and knowing this, and because we saw that our friends the Tlaxcalans whom we had brought with us were greatly obstructing the causeway, and, if they went off of it, it was clear enough that they could not fight in the water, our Captains and all of us soldiers agreed to retreat in good order and not to go further ahead.

When the Mexicans saw us retreating and the Tlaxcalans escaping beyond the causeway what shouts and howls and whistles they gave us, and how they came on to join us foot to foot. I declare that I do not know how to describe it, for all the causeway was heaped up with javelins, arrows, and stones that had been hurled at us, and many more of them must have fallen in the water. When we found ourselves on dry land we gave thanks to God for having freed us from that battle, for by that time eight of our soldiers had fallen dead, and more than fifty were wounded. Through all this, they yelled out at us and shouted abuse from the canoes, and our friends the Tlaxcalans told them to come on land and even if they were double the number they would fight them. These were the first things that we did to cut off the water and reconnoitre the lake, although we gained no honour by them. That night we stayed in our camp while the wounded were attended to, and one horse died, and we posted a good force of sentinels and scouts.

The next morning Captain Cristóbal de Olid said that he wished to go to his station at Coyoacan, a league and a half away, and notwithstanding that Pedro de Alvarado and other gentlemen begged him not to separate the two divisions, but to keep them together, he would not do so; for as Cristóbal de Olid was very courageous, and in the reconnaissance which we made of the lake, the day before, we had not done well, he said that it was Pedro de Alvarado's fault that we had

advanced so rashly, so that he would not stay and went off to Coyoacan where Cortés had sent him. We remained in our camp, for it was not right to separate one division from the other at that time, and if the Mexicans had known how few soldiers we were during the four or five days that we were there apart before the launches could come, and had fallen on us and on the division of Cristóbal de Olid separately, we should have incurred great hardship and they would have done us great damage. So we stayed in Tacuba and Cristóbal de Olid in his camp, without daring to reconnoitre any further nor to advance along the causeways, and every day we had skirmishes with many squadrons of Mexicans who came on land to fight with us, and even challenged us so as to place us in situations where they could master us and we could do them no damage.

I will leave them there and I will tell how Gonzalo de Sandoval set out from Texcoco four days after the feast of Corpus Christi<sup>1</sup> and came to Iztapalapa; almost all the march was among friends, subjects of Texcoco, and when he reached the town of Iztapalapa he at once began to make war and to burn many of the houses that stood on dry land, for all the rest of the houses stood in the lake. However, not many hours passed before great squadrons of Mexicans came promptly to the aid of that city and Sandoval had a good battle with them and great encounters when they fought on land; and when they had taken refuge in their canoes they shot many javelins, arrows and stones at him and wounded his soldiers. While they were thus fighting they saw that on a small hill<sup>2</sup> that was close to Iztapalapa on dry land, great smoke signals were being made, and they were answered by other smoke signals from other towns standing in the lake, and it was a sign to assemble all the canoes from Mexico and all the towns around the lake, for they saw that Cortés had already set out from Texcoco with the thirteen launches.

<sup>1</sup> Friday, 31st May.

<sup>2</sup> Cerro de la Estrella.



[*The following description of Cortés's movements is taken from his third letter to the Emperor Charles V.*]

31st May: As soon as I had despatched Sandoval I embarked in the launches and set out using both sails and oars, and while Sandoval was fighting and setting fire to the city of Iztapalapa we came in sight of a lofty hill standing in the water, which was strongly fortified<sup>1</sup> where many people had got together both from the neighbouring pueblos round the lake as well as from Tenochtitlan, for they knew I should make my first attack on Iztapalapa, and they were stationed there in its defence as well as to attack us if they could do so. When they saw our fleet approach they began to cry out and make great smoke signals to warn the cities on the lake so that they might be on the alert. Although it was my intention to attack that part of the City of Iztapalapa which stood in the water I turned aside to that hill and landed on it with one hundred and fifty men, and although it was very steep and high with much difficulty we began the ascent and captured the barricades which they had raised on the summit for their defence, and fell on them in such a way that none but the women and children escaped.

In this combat twenty-five Spaniards were wounded, but it was a very beautiful victory.

As the people of Iztapalapa had made smoke signals from some Idol towers on a high hill<sup>2</sup> near the city, the people of Tenochtitlan and of the other cities which stand in the water were aware that I had already entered the lake with the launches, and they at once got together a great fleet of canoes, and as far as we could judge there were about five hundred of them, to come and attack us and to find out what the launches were like. When I saw that they were coming straight towards us, I and the men who had landed on that hill re-embarked in haste.

I ordered the captains of the launches to make no movement whatever, so that those in the canoes, in the belief that we were afraid to move against them, might be led to attack us. Thus they began to drive their fleet against us headlong, but at

<sup>1</sup> Tepopotco, the Peñon del Marqués.

<sup>2</sup> Cerro de la Estrella.

the distance of two crossbow shots they stopped short and remained still.

As I was very anxious that our first encounter should be a victorious one and should be made in such a way that they should be deeply impressed with fear of the launches, for the launches were the key of the whole war, and it was on the water that a decision would be come to, it pleased God that as we halted gazing at one another a favourable breeze should spring up from the land to enable us to join battle with them, and I promptly ordered the captains to fall upon the fleet of canoes and follow them until they were shut up in the city of Tenochtitlan. As the breeze was very strong, although they fled as fast as they were able we dashed into the midst of them and broke up numberless canoes and killed and drowned many of our enemies. It was the most wonderful sight in the world to behold! We pursued them fully three leagues and shut them in among the houses of the city. There it pleased our Lord to grant us even a greater and better victory than we had hoped and prayed for.

When the garrison at Coyoacan saw us pursuing the canoes most of the horsemen and foot soldiers who were stationed there set out on the march for Tenochtitlan and fought fiercely with the Indians on the causeway, and captured the barricades they had made; and with the help of the launches which came close to the causeway they captured and passed across many of the places where the bridges had been removed, both the foot soldiers and the horsemen. Our friends the Indians from Tlaxcala as well as the Spaniards followed up the enemy and slew them and forced them into the water on the other side of the causeway where the launches could not go. They followed up their victory for more than a league of the causeway until they reached the place where I had halted with the launches, as I will go on to tell.

We chased the canoes with our launches for a good three leagues; those that escaped us took refuge among the houses in the city, and as it was already past Vespers I ordered the launches to be recalled and we approached the causeway with them, where I decided to land with thirty men to capture two small Idol towers which were surrounded by a low masonry wall (Acachinango). As we jumped ashore they fought fiercely

to defend them from us, but we captured them with great effort, and risk to ourselves, and I promptly landed three large cannon I had brought with me.

The distance along the causeway between this place and the city was about half a league, and it was crowded with the enemy and the water on either side of the causeway was covered with canoes full of warriors, so I had one of the cannon aimed and fired along the causeway, which did much damage to the enemy. Through the carelessness of the gunner, at the moment of firing he set fire to the gunpowder we had with us. However, it was only a small quantity. That same night I despatched a launch to Iztapalapa where Sandoval was stationed, a distance of about two leagues, to bring back all the gunpowder he possessed.

Although it was originally my intention when I set out with the launches to go to Coyoacan, yet when I landed on the causeway and captured those two towers I decided to make my headquarters (Acachinango) there and to keep the launches there near the towers, and that half the force from Coyoacan and fifty of Sandoval's men should join me there the following day.

Having arranged for this, that night we kept on the alert, for we were in great danger, and at midnight a great host of men came in canoes and along the causeway to attack our camp, and truly they caused us great surprise and alarm, because they came by night and up to that time they had never done such a thing, nor have they ever been known to fight by night unless sure of victory.

However, as we were keenly on the look-out we began to fight with them as did those on the launches, for each one carried a small field piece and they began to fire them, and the crossbowmen and musketeers did likewise.

So the enemy did not dare to advance any further, nor did they approach close enough to do us any damage. So they left us for the rest of the night without troubling us any further.

*1st June:* The next day at dawn fifteen crossbowmen and musketeers, and fifty men armed with swords and shields and seven or eight horsemen from the Coyoacan garrison arrived at my encampment on the causeway. When they reached us we were already being attacked by the enemy in such numbers that both on land and water we could see nothing but men

and they raised such cries and yells that it seemed as though the world were sinking.

We began to fight with them along the causeway and captured an opening where they had removed the bridge, and a barricade which had been raised at the approach to it. However with our cannon and horsemen we did them so great damage that we almost shut them in among the first houses of the city.

Because many canoes gathered on the other side of the causeway and did us great harm with darts and arrows which they shot at us on the causeway, and as our launches were not able to pass through I had a portion of the causeway broken through near our camp and sent four launches through to the other side, and they drove all the canoes back among the houses of the city, and they followed in after them which up to that time they had not dared to do, for there were many shallows and stakes to impede them. When they found canals where they could enter safely they fought with the canoes and captured some of them and set fire to many of the houses in the suburbs. Thus we passed all that day fighting.

*2nd June:* The next day Sandoval with the men he had with him in Iztapalapa, both Spaniards and allies, left for Coyoacan. From Iztapalapa to the mainland there is a causeway about a league and a half in length, and as Sandoval began his march of about a quarter of a league along it he reached a small city which also stands in the water, but through a good part of it one can ride on horseback, and the natives of the town began to attack him. He defeated and killed many of them and destroyed and burnt the town. As I knew that the Indians had broken down many parts of the causeway and our men would not be able to pass along it I sent two launches to aid them in the passage and they used them as bridges and they went to lodge at Coyoacan. Sandoval himself with the horsemen took the road along the causeway on which we were camped, and when he reached us found us fighting, and he and those with him dismounted and began to fight with those on the causeway whom we were driving back. As Sandoval began to fight the enemy pierced his foot with a dart, and although they wounded him and others that day, what with the cannon, crossbows and muskets we did so much execution that neither those in the canoes nor those on the causeway dared to ap-

proach us and they showed more fear and less pride than was usual.

During the following six days we went on fighting in this way and the launches went about burning all the houses they could in the neighbourhood of the city, and they discovered a canal by which they could enter the suburbs and even reach the main part of the city, which was very fortunate as it put a stop to the coming of the canoes so that not one of them dared to show themselves within a quarter of a league of our camp.

One day Alvarado who was in command of the garrison at Tacuba sent to tell me that on the other side of the city the people of Mexico came and went as they pleased along a causeway which led to some towns on the mainland and by another small causeway near to it, and in order that the city should be completely invested I sent Sandoval (though he was wounded) to fix his camp at a small pueblo [Tepeyac, now Guadalupe] at the end of the causeway, so he set out with twenty-three horsemen, one hundred and ten foot soldiers and eighteen crossbowmen and musketeers and set up his camp where I told him. As I had at my camp on the causeway two hundred Spanish foot soldiers including twenty-five crossbowmen and musketeers, and more than two hundred and fifty men in the launches and many friendly Indian warriors, I decided to push along the causeway into the city as far as I was able with the launches protecting our flanks, and I ordered some of the troops from Coyoacan to join me at my camp and ten horsemen to remain at the entrance of the causeway and the remainder of the garrison of Coyoacan and ten thousand Indian allies to protect our rear, for some of the pueblos in the lake were still hostile. I also ordered Sandoval and Alvarado to attack in force on the same day.

I set out from the camp along the causeway in the morning and soon came upon the enemy at one of the breaches they had made in the causeway, a lance in length and two lance lengths in depth, and a barricade they had raised to defend it. Both sides fought stoutly but in the end we prevailed and followed along the causeway until we reached the entrance to the city where stood one of their Idol towers<sup>1</sup> and at the foot of it a

<sup>1</sup> Xolucco.

great bridge<sup>1</sup> which spanned a broad canal. The bridge had been raised and the place defended by a very strong barricade. They began to attack us as we approached, but with the launches on both sides of us we captured it without loss, which would have been impossible but for the help of the launches. As soon as they began to abandon the barricade the men from the launches jumped ashore and we crossed the canal with more than eight thousand of our allies from Tlaxcala, Huexotzingo, Chalco and Texcoco.

While we filled in the place of the bridge with stones and adobes the Spaniards captured another barricade in the street which is the broadest and most important street in the city; as there was no canal at this barricade it was easier to carry it. They pursued the enemy along the street until they reached another canal<sup>2</sup> where the bridge had been removed excepting one broad beam across which the enemy passed in safety and then promptly removed it. On the other side of the canal they had raised a great barricade of earth and adobes. When we reached it we could not advance unless we threw ourselves in the water, and this would have been very dangerous as the enemy were fighting very valiantly and a countless number of them were attacking us fiercely from the azoteas on either side of the street. However, when the musketeers and crossbowmen came up and we fired with two cannon up the street we did the enemy great damage, and observing this some of the Spaniards threw themselves in the water and got to the other side, but it took us more than two hours to overcome the defence.

When the enemy saw us crossing over they abandoned the barricade and the azoteas and took to flight along the street. Then all our men got across and I made them fill in the site of the bridge and destroy the barricade. Meanwhile the Spaniards and our Indian allies went ahead along the street a distance of two crossbow shots to another bridge<sup>3</sup> which was close to the Plaza and principal buildings of the city. This bridge had not been removed nor had any barricade been raised, for they never thought that we should gain as much as we had done that day, nor did we think we should get half so far.

<sup>1</sup> Puente de San Antonio Abad.

<sup>2</sup> Huitzlau (Hospital de Jesus Nazarino).

<sup>3</sup> Puente de Palacio.

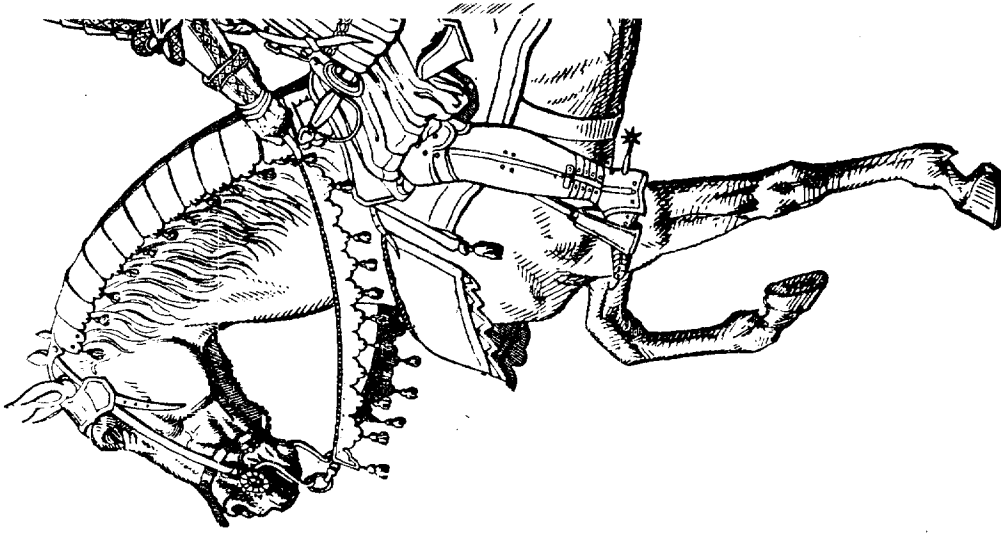
At the entrance to the Plaza we placed a cannon and with it did great execution, for the enemy were so numerous that the Plaza would not hold them all. The Spaniards seeing that there was no water there (which was our greatest danger) determined to enter the Plaza, and when the enemy saw this carried into effect and observed the multitude of our allies (although they had no fear of them unless they were in our company) they fled with our allies after them until they were shut up in the court of the Temple, which was enclosed with a masonry wall.

This enclosure would be large enough to hold a town of four hundred houses. However, a breach was made and the Spaniards and allies captured it and remained there and on the Towers for a good while. When the people of the city saw that there were no horsemen with us they turned again on the Spaniards and drove them from the towers and courts, and as our men were in great danger, for it was worse than a retreat, they took refuge in the porticoes of the courts; however, the enemy had chastened them so severely that they abandoned these and retreated to the Plaza whence they were driven out into the street and were obliged to abandon the cannon which had been placed there.

The Spaniards, unable to withstand the onset of the enemy, retreated in great danger and would have suffered great loss had it not pleased God that at that moment three horsemen should arrive who entered the Plaza, and when the enemy beheld them they thought that there were more of them and began to flee and the horsemen killed some of them and we regained the courts and enclosure. On the most important and highest tower which has over a hundred steps to reach the summit, ten or twelve Indian chieftains had sheltered themselves, and four or five of the Spaniards clambered up, and, although the Indians fought bravely, they gained the summit and slew them all.

Five or six more horsemen had now arrived, and they and the others arranged an ambushade by which they killed over thirty of the enemy.

As it was already late I got the men together and ordered a retreat, and as we retired such a host of the enemy fell upon us that had it not been for the horsemen the Spaniards must have suffered great loss. However, as I had had all the bad



places in the street and causeways thoroughly filled in and repaired by the time we retired, the horsemen were able to come and go over them, and as the enemy attacked our rearguard so the horsemen charged back on them and speared and killed many of them, and as the street is a long one they did this four or five times.

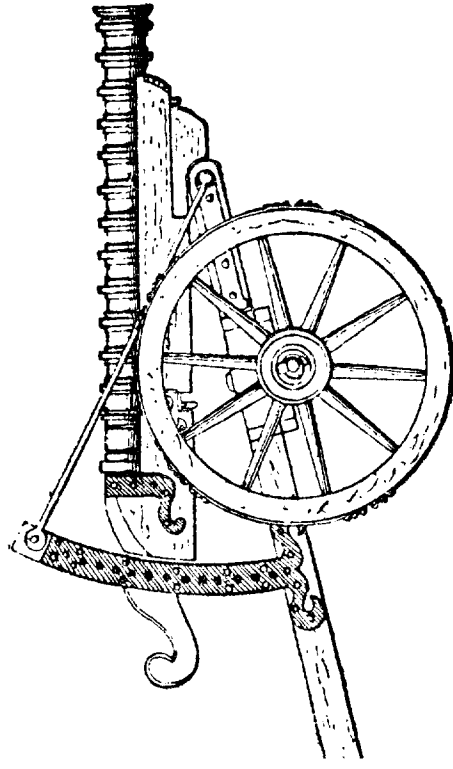
Although the enemy knew how much they were suffering they came like mad dogs, and nothing could check them or prevent them pursuing us. In this way we returned along the causeway to our camp without losing any Spaniards, although some were wounded. We set fire to most of the houses bordering that street, so that when we should return again they could do no harm from the azoteas.

*[At this time Cortés was joined by a great number of Indians from Texcoco and Xochimilco who threw in their lot with the Spaniards.]*

As the launches had burnt many of the houses in the suburbs of the city and no canoe dared to venture out, it seemed as though six launches would suffice for the protection of our camp, so I decided to send three launches each to the camps of Sandoval and Alvarado. This proved a most successful plan, for they performed some wonderful exploits, capturing many of the enemy's men and canoes.

When this was arranged and the reinforcements had arrived I gave out that in two days' time I was going to enter and attack the city.

*Sunday, 16th June:* When the day came, after hearing Mass and giving instructions to my captains I left our camp with fifteen or twenty horsemen, three hundred Spaniards and a huge host of our allies, and soon came on a yelling crowd of our enemies. As we had not attacked them for three days they had removed all our fillings from the breaches in the causeway and made the openings much more dangerous and difficult for us to capture. As the launches on either side of the causeway could get close up to the enemy they did great execution with their cannon, muskets and crossbows. Moreover, the men leapt ashore and carried the barricade and breach and we all got across in pursuit of the enemy. Again and again the Indians made stands behind breaches and barricades, but we carried



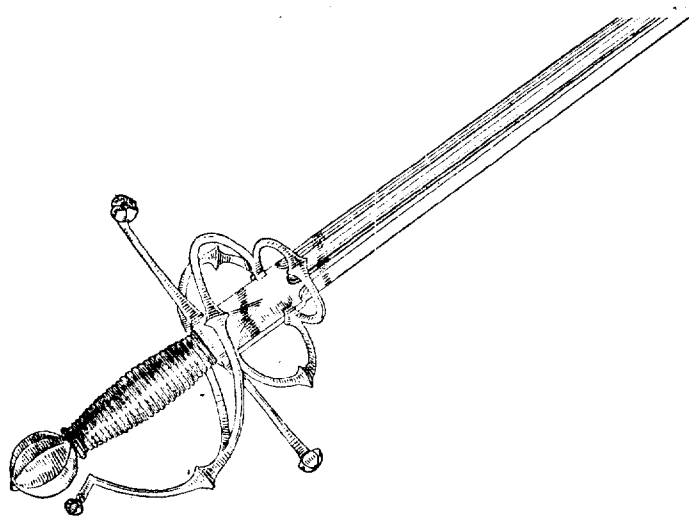
them all and drove the enemy from the street and from the Plaza where stand the principal houses of the city. I ordered the Spaniards to advance no further, as I was busy with the help of ten thousand allies in filling in the water openings and breaches in the street and causeway.

This occupied us until Vespers, meanwhile the Spaniards were skirmishing with the people of the city and killing many of them. I rode through the city for a short time with the horsemen, charging along the streets which were free from water, and the enemy no longer dared approach us on dry land. All I had seen forced me to two conclusions, the one that we should regain little of the treasure the Mexicans had taken from us; the other that they would force us to destroy and kill them all, and this last weighed on my soul. I began to wonder how I could terrify them and bring them to a sense of their error. It could only be done by burning and destroying their houses and the towers of the Idols, and so as to impress it on them this day I set fire to the great houses round the Plaza where before we were driven from the city the Spaniards and I had been lodged, and they were so extensive that a prince and six hundred of his household and followers might have been lodged in them.

Near these there were others, which although smaller were newer and more elegant, and Montezuma kept all kinds of birds in them and although I suffered in doing it, in order that they should suffer more I decided to burn them, and this scared both them and their allies.

As it was already late I ordered the troops to return to camp, and as we retired a numberless host of the enemy fell on the rearguard, but as the street was now in good condition for charging, the horsemen turned on them and speared many of them.

*17th June:* The next day I returned to the city in the same way so that the enemy should not have time to open the breaches and raise barricades, but early as we set out, two of the canals which cross the street had been opened just as they were the day before, and it was very difficult to pass them so that the fighting lasted until an hour after noon, and we had used up almost all our arrows and ammunition. It may seem that after being exposed to so great danger in crossing these canals and capturing the barricades that we were negligent in



not holding them so as to avoid having to repeat the work every day, but it was not possible, for we should have had either to move the camp into the Plaza or to have left guards at the bridges. By placing our camp in the city we should have been exposed to attacks from all sides both by day and night, and as we were few in number and they were many the strain would have been unbearable.

As to guarding the bridges by night, the Spaniards were so exhausted by day that they could not have endured night guards in addition, so we were forced to do the work over again each time we entered the city.

As it was late we did not do much more this day than capture and fill in the site of the two bridges and set fire to many fine houses on the main road which goes from the city to Tacuba. Although the enemy well knew the loss they suffered when following us as we retired, yet they never omitted to follow and attack us until they saw us clear of the city.

The natives of Iztapalapa, Churubusco, Mexicaltzingo, Culucan, Mixquic and Cuiclahuac, all towns on the fresh water lake, seeing that we were victorious over the people of Tenochtitlan and on account of the injury they were receiving from our allies, came to beg for peace and freedom from attack from our friends at Chalco. I received them favourably and told them that my only enmity was against the people Tenochtitlan and said that they could show the sincerity of their friendship by aiding me with their canoes, and as it was the rainy season and we were lodged in wretched huts, by building houses for us on the causeway.

This they did so well that on either side of the two towers on the causeway they built so many that they extended for the distance of three or four crossbow shots. The causeway was so wide here that there was space between the houses for a road where footsoldiers and horsemen could freely pass.

For several days in succession we entered the city and were always victorious over our enemies. I then arranged to enter the city in three or four divisions and summoned all the people from the towns on the lake to come in their canoes.

*23rd June:* That morning there were more than a hundred thousand allies at our camp and I ordered four launches with half the canoes (which must have numbered fifteen hundred) to go in one direction and the other three launches and half

the canoes to go in another direction and scour the city and burn and destroy all they could.

I myself entered by the principal street and found everything clear as far as the Plaza and none of the breaches re-opened. I went on to the street which goes to Tacuba in which there were other six or seven bridges. There I arranged that one captain should advance along another street with sixty or seventy Spaniards and six horsemen to guard the rear, and with them went ten or twelve thousand of our allies, and I ordered another captain to do the same along another street while I advanced along the Tacuba street, where I captured three bridges and filled them in. The other three bridges we left for another day as it was already late.

I was very anxious to clear that street so as to communicate with the camp of Pedro de Alvarado and pass from one camp to the other. However, it was a day of great victory on land and water both for us and the companies under Sandoval and Alvarado.

*[We must now return to Bernal Diaz who was with Pedro de Alvarado at Tacuba, and go back to the 31st May, when Cortés fought his first battle on the lake.]*

† cxi

I will now relate what we did in our camp at Tacuba, for, as we knew that Cortés was going about the lake, we advanced along our causeway with great caution, and not like the first time, and we reached the first bridge, the crossbowmen and musketeers acting in concert some firing while others loaded. Pedro de Alvarado ordered the horsemen not to advance with us but to remain on dry land to guard our rear, fearing lest the pueblos I have mentioned through which we had passed, should attack us on the causeway. In this way we stood sometimes attacking, at others on the defensive so as to prevent the Mexicans reaching land from the causeway, for every day we had encounters and in them they killed three soldiers, and we were also engaged in filling up the bad places.

When we saw ourselves reinforced with the four launches sent by Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado ordered two of them to go

on one side of the causeway and two on the other side, and we began to fight very successfully, for the launches vanquished the canoes which were wont to attack us from the water, and so we had an opportunity to capture several bridges and barricades, and while we were fighting, so numerous were the stones from the slings and the javelins and arrows that they shot at us that although all the soldiers were well protected by armour they were injured and wounded, and not until night parted us did we cease contending and fighting.

From time to time the Mexicans changed about and relieved their squadrons as we could tell by the devices and distinguishing marks on their armour. Whenever we left a bridge or barricade unguarded after having captured it with much labour, the enemy would retake and deepen it that same night, and construct stronger defences and even make hidden pits in the waters, so that the next day when we were fighting, and it was time for us to retire, we should get entangled among the defences. To prevent the launches from coming to our assistance, they had fixed many stakes hidden in the water so that they should get impaled on them.

When we drew off in the night we treated our wounds by searing them with oil, and a soldier named Juan Catalan blessed them for us and made charms, and truly we found that our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to give us strength in addition to the many mercies he vouchsafed us every day, for the wounds healed rapidly.

Wounded and tied up in rags as we were we had to fight from morning until night, for if the wounded had remained in camp without coming out to fight, there would not have been twenty men in each company well enough to go out.

Then I wish to speak of our captains and ensigns and our standard bearers, who were covered with wounds and their banners ragged, and I declare that we had need of a fresh standard bearer every day for we all came out in such a condition that they were not able to advance fighting and carry the banners a second time.

Then with all this did we perchance have enough to eat? I do not speak of want of maize cakes, for we had enough of them, but of some refreshing food for the wounded. The cursed stuff that kept life in us was some herbs that the Indians eat,

and the cherries of the country while they lasted, and afterwards tunas,<sup>1</sup> which came into season at that time.

Tlatelolco and the towns on the Lake had been warned by Guatemala that on seeing a signal on the great Cue of Tlatelolco they should hasten to assist some in canoes and others by land; and the Mexican captains had been fully prepared and advised how and when and to what points they were to bring assistance.

When we saw that however many water openings we captured by day the Mexicans returned and closed them up again, we agreed that we should all go and station ourselves on the causeway<sup>2</sup> in a small plaza where there were some Idol towers which we had already taken, and where there was space to erect our "ranchos," although they were very poor ones and when it rained we all got wet, and they were fit for nothing but to cover us from the dew.

We left the Indian women who made bread for us in Tacuba, and all the horsemen and our friends the Tlaxcalans were left to guard them, and to watch and guard the passes so that the enemy should not come from the neighbouring pueblos and attack our rearguard on the causeway while we were fighting.

So when once we had set up our ranchos where I have stated, thenceforward we endeavoured quickly to destroy the houses and blocks of buildings and to fill up the water openings that we captured. We levelled the houses to the ground, for if we set fire to them they took too long to burn, and one house would not catch fire from another, for each house stood in the water, and one could not pass from one to the other without crossing bridges or going in canoes. If we wanted to cross the water by swimming they did us much damage from the azoteas, so that we were more secure when the houses were demolished. As soon as we had captured some barrier or bridge or bad pass where they offered much resistance, we endeavoured to guard it by day and by night. This was the way in which all our companies kept guard together during the night. The first company, which numbered more than forty soldiers, kept watch from nightfall until midnight, and from midnight

<sup>1</sup> Fruit of the *Nopal cactus*, prickly pears.

<sup>2</sup> About Thursday, 20th June. Alvarado must have turned off from the Tacuba Causeway to the left on entering the outskirts of the city, and followed a causeway leading direct to Tlatelolco, making his camp about half-way between the Tacuba Causeway and the great Tzocalli of Tlatelolco.



until two hours before dawn another company, also of forty men, kept watch, and the first company did not leave their post but we slept there on the ground; this second watch is called the *modorra*,<sup>1</sup> and soon another forty soldiers came and kept the *alba* [dawn] watch, which is the two hours until daylight, but those who watched the *modorra* could not leave, but had to stay there, so that when dawn came there were over one hundred and twenty soldiers all on watch together. More-over on some nights, when we judged that there was special danger we kept watch together, from nightfall until dawn, awaiting a great sally of the Mexicans in fear lest they should break through.

On several nights great squadrons came to attack us and break through at midnight, and others during the *modorra* and others during the dawn watch, and they came sometimes without commotion and at others with loud yells and whistles, and when they arrived where we were keeping night watch, what javelins and stones and arrows they let fly, and there were many others with lances, and although they wounded some of us, yet we resisted them, and sent back many of them wounded. Then, notwithstanding all the precautions we took, they would turn on us and open some bridge or causeway which we had captured, and we could not defend it from them in the night so as to prevent them doing it, and the next day it was our turn again to capture it and stop it up, and then they would come again to open it and strengthen it with walls, until the Mexicans changed their method of fighting which I will tell about in its proper time.

The Mexicans still brought in much food and water from the nine towns built on the lake, so to prevent these supplies being brought to them, it was arranged between all the three camps that two launches should cruise in the lake by night and should capture all the canoes they were able, and destroy or bring them to our camps. But even with all this, many laden canoes did not fail to get in, and as the Mexicans went about in their canoes carrying supplies, yet there was never a day when the launches did not bring in a prize of canoes and many Indians hanging from the yards.

The Mexicans then armed thirty *piraguas*, which are very large canoes, with specially good rowers and warriors, and by

<sup>1</sup> *Modorra* = the drowsy time, before dawn.

night they posted all thirty amongst some reed beds in a place where the launches could not see them; then they sent out before nightfall, with good rowers, two or three canoes covered over with branches as though they were carrying provisions or bringing in water. In the track which, in the opinion of the Mexicans, the launches would follow them when they were fighting with them, they had driven numerous strong timbers made pointed like stakes so that they should get impaled on them. Then as the canoes were going over the lake showing signs of being afraid and drew near to the reed beds, two of our launches set out after them, and the two canoes made as though they were retreating to the land, to the place where the thirty *piraguas* were posted in ambush, and the launches followed them and as soon as they reached the ambush all the *piraguas* together sallied out and made for the launches and quickly wounded all the soldiers, rowers, and captains, and the launches could go neither in one direction or another on account of the stakes that had been fixed. In this way the Mexicans killed a captain named de Portilla, an excellent soldier who had been in Italy, and they wounded Pedro Barba who was another very good captain, and they captured his launch, and within three days he died of his wounds. These two launches belonged to the camp of Cortés, and he was greatly distressed about it.

Let us leave this and say that when the Mexicans saw that we were levelling all the houses to the ground and were filling up the bridges and openings they decided on another way of fighting, and that was, to open a bridge and a very wide and deep channel which we had to pass wading through the water, and it was sometimes out of our depth, and they had dug many pits which we could not see under the water and had made walls and barricades both on the one side and the other of the opening, and had driven in many pointed stakes of heavy timber in places where our launches would run on to them if they should come to our assistance when we were fighting to capture this fort, for they well knew that the first thing we must do was to destroy the barricade and pass through that open space of water so as to reach the City. At the same time they had prepared in hidden places many canoes well manned with warriors and good rowers. One Sunday morning [23rd June] great squadrons of warriors began to approach

from three directions and attacked us in such a way that it was all we could do to hold our own and prevent them from defeating us.

At that time Pedro de Alvarado had ordered half the horsemen who used to stay in Tacuba to sleep on the causeway, for there was not so much risk as at the beginning, as there were no longer any azotecs, for nearly all the houses had been demolished. To go back to my story, three squadrons of the enemy came on very fearlessly, the one from the direction of the great open space of water, the other by way of some houses that we had pulled down, and the other squadron had taken us in the rear from the direction of Tacuba, and we were surrounded. The horsemen with our Tlaxcalan friends broke through the squadron that had taken us in the rear and we all of us fought very valiantly with the other two squadrons until we forced them to retreat. However, that seeming flight that they made was a pretence, but we captured the first barricade where they made a stand, and we, thinking that we were victorious, crossed that water at a run, for where we passed there were no pits and we followed up our advance among some great houses and temple towers. The enemy acted as though they were still retreating, but they did not cease to shoot javelins and stones from slings and many arrows and when we were least expecting it a great multitude of warriors who were hidden in a place we were not able to see, and many others from the azotecs and houses joined the combat, and those who at first acted as though they were retreating, turned round on us all at once and dealt us such treatment that we could not withstand them. We then decided to retreat with great caution, but at the water opening which we had captured, that is to say at the place where we had crossed the first time, where there were no pits, they had stationed such a fleet of canoes that we were not able to cross at that ford, and they forced us to go across in another direction, where the water was very deep, and they had dug many pits. As such a multitude of warriors were coming against us, and we were in retreat, we crossed the water by swimming and wading, and nearly all the soldiers fell in the pits; then the canoes came down upon us and there the Mexicans carried off five of our companions, and took them alive to Guatemoc, and they wounded nearly all of us. Moreover, the launches which were guarding us could

not come to our assistance because they were impaled on the stakes which had been fixed there, and from the canoes and azotecs the Mexicans attacked them so fiercely with javelins and arrows that they killed three soldiers and rowers and wounded many of us. To go back to the pits and the opening, I declare it was a wonder that we were not all killed in them. Concerning myself, I may say that many Indians had already laid hold of me, but I managed to get my arm free, and our Lord Jesus Christ gave me strength so that by some good sword thrusts that I gave them I saved myself, but I was badly wounded in one arm, and when I found myself out of that wound in safety, I became insensible and without power to stand on my feet and altogether breathless, and this was caused by the great strain that I exerted in getting away from that rabble and from the quantity of blood I had lost. I declare that when they had me in their clutches, that in my thoughts I was commending myself to our Lord God and to our Lady His Blessed Mother and He gave me the strength I have spoken of by which I saved myself; thank God for the mercy that He vouchsafed me.

There is another thing I wish to mention, that Pedro de Alvarado and the horsemen, when they had thoroughly routed the squadrons that came on our rear from Tacuba, did not any of them pass that water or the barricades, with the exception of one horseman who had come only a short time before from Spain, and there they killed him, both him and his horse. The horsemen were already advancing to our assistance when they saw us coming back in retreat, and if they had crossed there, and should have then had to retreat, there would not have been one of them, nor of the horses, nor of us left alive. Flushed with the victory they had gained, the Mexicans continued during that whole day, which as I have said was a Sunday, to send so vast a host of warriors against our camp, that we could not prevail against them, and they expected for certain to rout us, but we held our own against them by the help of some bronze cannon and hard fighting, and by all the companies together keeping guard every night.