

CHAPTER VII.

The Spanijh Army proceeds on its march to Mexico.

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AFTER a repose of feventeen days in Tlafcala, it was determined to profecute our march to Mexico. Upon this fubjed: much difference of opinion exifted, the rich fettlers of Cuba being very adverfe to it. The refolution which we had taken grieved our friends of Tlafcala, who earnelly advifed us by no means to truf Montezuma or his people, nor their fsmooth and courteous words and manners; for that they were treacherous in the extreme, and would either retain us to breed men for Montezuma*s fervice, or in a favorable hour, would fall upon, and defstroy us. But, in cafe of our having hoflilities with them, they advifed us to kill all, neither fparing the rifing youth, nor the aged counfellor. Cortes thanked, and propofed to them, an amicable treaty with their neighbours the Mexicans ; but they would not hear of this, faying, they could not truf: thofe, who would only under the veil of peace, better execute their treacherous defigns. In regard to our road, the Mexican ambaffadors earneilly recommended that by Cholula; but our friends of Tlafcala as flrongly advifed us by no means to go that way, but by Guaxocingo. Neverthelefs we determined to go by Cholula, intending to remain there, until we could by negotiation obtain a peaceable entry into Mexico. Cortes therefore fent meflengers to that place, to inform the chiefs of his intention, and exprefTing his diffatisfaction that they had not come to wait upon him.

At this time arrived four of the principal nobility of Mexico, with a rich prefent. It confifted of gold to the value of ten thoufand crowns, and ten bales of the fineft mantles of feathers. Having faluted Cortes with the profoundeft refped:, the ambaffadors delivered the meffage of

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their monarch, which was to this effecft. That he wondered at our ftay amongfl a people fo poor and bafe as the Tlafcalans, who were robbers, and unfit even for flaves ; and he earneftly requested that we would immediately vifit his capital. Cortes replied afTuring them that he would fhortly pay his refpedls to the great Montezuma, requesting their flay with him during the interval. He alfo determined to fend two cavaliers as ambaffadors, to wait on Montezuma, and view the city of Mexico. The pcrfons he pitched on were Pedro de Alvarado, and B. Vafquez de Tapia. They fet out on their journey, accompanying the former Mexican ambaffadors who had hitherto continued with us. I was at this time ill of my wounds, and of a fever; and therefore incapable of obferving exactly all that paffed, but I know, that their going thither appeared to us a very unwife meafure, and in confequence pf our remonflrances, they were recalled.

The chiefs of Cholula now sent us four men of low condition, with a very dry and uncourteous answer to our message, and without any present whatever. This evidently appeared to be done in contempt* and Cortes sent notice to them, that if their chiefs did not wait upon him in three days, they should be considered as rebels; but that in case x>{ their compliance, he would be happy to esteem them as brothers, and had much to tell them of great importance. They then sent word that they dared not to come amongst their enemies the Tlascalans, who they knew had misrepresented them and the great Montezuma to us ; but they requested that we would visit their city, where they would give us an honorable reception. When the Tlascalans saw our determination to accept this proposal they told us, that since we were resolved to neglect their advice, they expected that we would take with us ten thousand of their best warriors. This was thought too great a number for a peaceable visit; we however agreed to take two thousand, who were immediately ready to attend us.

Being well prepared against whatever might happen, we now set out on our march, and arrived in the evening at a river, distant a short league

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league: from Cholula, where a stone bridge is now built across it. Here some of the chiefs of the city came to congratulate us on our arrival. Continuing our march on the next day, when we came near the city, we were met by the chiefs and priests in a body,, all dressed in caftocks of cotton, resembling those of the Zapotecs. The chiefs presented their incense to Cortes, and after apologizing for not having gone to Tlascalala, requested that he would not permit so large a body of their enemies to enter the city. This appearing reasonable, Cortes sent Alvarado and De Oli, to desire our allies to shut themselves in the field, and we then marched on, attended only by the Indians of Cempoal, and those who drew the artillery. Before he entered the city he made known to these people the objects of his mission, as has been already frequently related. They replied without hesitation, that to our monarch they were perfectly ready to yield immediate obedience, which they did ; but that as to abandoning their ancient religion, they could not comply with any such demand. When we entered their city, we were conducted through an immense crowd . which filled the streets and terraces, to our quarters in some large apartments, which contained us, our allies of Cempoal, and those who conveyed the artillery and baggage.

During the time we stayed here, a plot was concerted by the ambassadors of Montezuma, for the entry of twenty thousand of his troops into this city, to fall upon us ; and several houses were filled with the poles and leathern collars, in which they were to have brought us prisoners to Mexico, but that God was pleased to foil their designs.

For the first two days, we were entertained as well as we could with, but on the third we received no provisions, nor did either chief or priest make his appearance. The few inhabitants that we saw, also, withdrew from us with a mysterious kind of sneer in their faces, and

Cortes at this time applying to the ambaffadors ro procure for us our provifions as ufual, all that we obtained was a little wood and water, conveyed by fome old men, who told us that no maize was to be had.

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'On this day ambafladors amvcd from Montezuma, who, in very dif-
 •rcfpedtftil terms, forbid our approach to Mexico, and required an im-
 mediate anfwcr. Cortes mildly exprefled his furprife at this alteration;
 he made them a prefent, and requeued a fhort delay, which they ac-
 ceded to. He then fummoning his foldiers, warned us to be aikrt, for
 :tliat he fufpedted fome great treachery. The chiefs having rcfulcd to
 attend him, he immediately fent fome foldiers to a great temple hard by
 our quarters, with orders to bring, as quietly as they could, two of the
 priefts. In this they fucceeded without any difficulty, and the priefts
 being brought before the general, he made a prefent to each, and then
 enquired the reafon of thefe extraordinary appearances. One of them
 was a perfon of rank, and authority over all the temples of the city, in
 the manner of a bilhop; this perfon aflured him, that if he had an op-
 portunity of fpeaking to the chiefs, he could perfuade them to come ;
 and being difmiffed for this purpofe, he was as good as his word, for
 he 'foon returned accompanied by feveral of them. Cortes firfl afked
 the caufe of the change in their behaviour ; he then demanded an im-
 jncdiate fupply of proviions, and alfo a number of their people for the
 enfuing day, to convey the baggage and artillery. The chiefs appeared
 confounded, but at length promifed to fend in provifions; though they
 faid they had been forbidden by Montezuma, and that he was not fati^-
 fied that we fhould go any farther. Juft at thistime three of our friends
 df Cempoal called out the general, and informed him, that they had
 difcovercd hard by our quarters, pitfdls covered with wood and earth,
 and that clearing away the earth, and looking into one of them, they
 had found it fet with fharp flakes; that the terraces of all the houfes
 were filled with flones and parapeted with fods, and that they had feen
 a barricade of ftrong timber in one of the ftreets. At this inflant ar-
 rived alfo eight Tlafcalans, from their army which was lying in the
 field; they warned Cortes againfl the intended attack, for it had come
 to their knowledge, that the people of the place had, oh the preceding
 night, facrificed to their war god feven victims, five of whom were
 children, and they had alfo obferved, that they were withdrawing their
 women, children, and effects, from the place.

Hereupon

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Hereupon Cortes fent orders to the Tlafcalans to hold themfelves in
 rcadinefs, and rejoining the chiefs and priefts of the town, he defired
 them to be under no apprehenfion, but warned them not to deviate
 from their obedience, on pain of inflant punifhment. He then de-
 manded of them two thoufand of their warriors to accompany him on
 his march, on the enfuing day ; this they readily promifed, thinking
 that it would tend to facilitate their projecfls ; they therefore took their
 leave very well contented, and fent notice of our intentions to all thofe

concerned with them. Cortes then sent Donna Marina to bring back the two priests whom he had before spoken to. In this (lie succeeded, and Cortes obtained from them the following intelligence.

They told him, that Montezuma, on our approach to Mexico, had become very unsettled in his mind, sometimes ordering that we should be received with honor, and at other times that we should not be permitted to pass; but that having lately consulted his gods, they had declared, that here in Cholula we were all to be put to death, or made prisoners, for which purpose he had sent twenty thousand of his troops, one half of which number was in the city, and the other concealed half a league from it. That the plan of their attack was settled, and that twenty of us were allotted to be sacrificed to the gods of Cholula, Cortes rewarded them handsomely, and enjoining strictly and secretly, desired them to bring to him all the chiefs, at the time he appointed. He then summoned a council of the able and wise soldiers of his army, some of whom were for returning immediately, and others proposed various measures, but at length all agreed in the necessity of severely punishing this treachery, as an example to other places. It was therefore determined, that we should carry on the appearance of our intended march, preparing our baggage, and concealing our other measures, and that within the high walls of the courts where we were quartered, punishment should be inflicted on the Cholulans. With the ambassadors of Montezuma it was thought most prudent to dissemble; we therefore told them of our having discovered the treason of the people, who had betrayed Montezuma, as being the author of it; and we proposed

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to them, to have no more intercourse with the inhabitants, but to retire to the apartment of Cortes. They solemnly declared their ignorance of the transaction, and contrary to their inclination we now put them under a good guard, for the night, during which our whole force remained under arms.

On this night, the wife of a cacique, an old woman, who was acquainted with the plot, came secretly to Donna Marina whose appearance had attracted her regard, and invited her to her own house, as a place of security from the danger which was ready to overwhelm us, making at the same time a proposal to her, to accept as a husband, her son, the brother of a boy who accompanied her. Donna Marina, with a profusion of thanks, and with her usual acuteness and preference of mind, agreed to all that he proposed, but said that he wanted some one with whom to entrust her effects. She then obtained information of every particular of the business, all which the old woman informed her (he had learned from her husband, who was chief of one of the divisions of the city, and was then with his warriors, giving directions for their junction with the Mexican forces. She added, that he had known it three days before, in consequence of presents which had been sent from Mexico to the different chiefs, her husband having received at that time a golden drum.* Donna Marina, desiring this woman and her son to remain where they were and take care of her effects, hastened to Cortes, and informed him of all that had passed, and that the person from

whom (he had the information was in her apartment ; in consequence of which, Cortes immediately sent for her, and the woman on being brought into his presence confirmed all that she had said to Donna Marina, and which exactly agreed with the other information he had received.

When day broke, the hurry of the chiefs, priests, and people, and the satisfaction which appeared in their countenances, were as great as

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A golden drum was borne by a general in chief.

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if they already had us in their cages. They brought many more of their warriors to attend us than we had required, inasmuch that the courts, which remain at this day as a memorial of the event, large as they were, could not contain them. We were all prepared for what was to be done, the soldiers armed with sword and buckler were placed at the gate of the great court, in order to prevent any one from escaping, and our general was on horseback, attended by a strong guard. When he saw how the people crowded in he exclaimed, ** How anxious are these traitors to feast: upon our flesh ! But God will disappoint them." He sent directions to the two priests who had given the information, to go immediately to their houses, and this he did in order to save their lives; then, causing the rest of the priests, and all the chiefs to be brought to him, he calmly asked them what was their reason for plotting to destroy us, and what we had done, more than require them to abandon their abominable customs, and endeavour to intrude them in the articles of our holy faith; and that for these reasons only, they had made preparations to cut us all off. That their evil intentions appeared by their having withdrawn the women from the town, and that when we required the provisions which they withheld from us, they had insulted us by sending in wood and water. He said that he knew of the ambuscade that was placed upon the road which they expected us to go, and that the recompense which they intended for our holy and friendly services was, to kill and eat us, for which purpose the pots were already boiling, and prepared with salt, pepper, and tomatas. That if they were determined to attack us, it was better to do it in a manly way, as the Tlascalans did; he added, that he also knew that twenty of us were to be sacrificed to their idols, to whom they had made a propitiatory offering of seven of their brethren; but to relieve the idols had promised them, it was not in their power to give, and the effects of their treason were now ready to fall on their own heads.

This being successfully explained to the natives by Donna Marina, they confessed the whole of the charge, but said that it was planned entirely by the orders of Montezuma. Cortes replied, that such crimes

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were never suffered to pass without punishment, and he then commanded a musket to be fired, as the signal for slaughter which was waited for by us, who were as I have related well prepared, and falling upon the multitude then inclosed within the courts, we executed their punishment on them in a manner that they will ever remember for a number of them were killed by us instantly, and many afterwards burned alive, very contrary to the expectations they had formed from the promises of their gods. Within two hours our allies the Tlascalans arrived, and made a desperate slaughter of them in the streets, and as soon as the Cholulans had ceased to make resistance, the former razed the city, plundering and making them slaves without our having it in our power to prevent them; and on the day after, when the intelligence had reached Tlascalala, fresh hordes crowded hither for the same purpose. It was now absolutely necessary to restrain them at all risks: Cortes therefore ordered the chiefs to withdraw their troops, which they immediately did, and soon after, some priests and chieftains who presided over other parts of the town, which they alleged not to have been engaged in the conspiracy, waited on us, and requested a remission of punishment. The two priests formerly mentioned, and the old woman who was so anxious to be the mother-in-law of Donna Marina, came also, and petitioned to the same effect. Cortes appeared greatly enraged, and calling for the Mexican ambassadors, declared in their presence, that if he did not destroy the whole city as it deserved, it was out of respect to the great Montezuma, whose vassals the inhabitants were; but that for his sake he pardoned them. He then commanded the Tlascalans to deliver up those whom they had made prisoners: this, however unwillingly, they in a great measure complied with, many persons being set at liberty, but after all they retained a good booty of gold, mantles, cotton, fait, and slaves. An amnesty for the past being proclaimed, and Cortes having reconciled the Tlascalans and Cholulans, the latter suggested that they were apprehensive our general would appoint their new chief, the former one having been put to death. Cortes upon

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t Above six thousand Cholulans were put to death on this occasion.

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this enquired who was the regular successor, and being informed that it was the brother of the late head cacique, he appointed him to the chieftainry. As soon as the inhabitants had returned, and order was restored, he summoned together all the priests and chiefs, in order to exhort them upon the subject of religion, advising them to renounce their odious practices, and as an instance of the inefficacy of their idols, he reminded them of the manner in which they had been lately deceived by their false promises. He therefore, proposed that they should be pulled down and broken to pieces, and an altar and crosses erected in their place. The latter was immediately done, but as to the profanation of the idols, by the advice of the reverend father it was postponed for a time, from motives of prudence, and a just consideration of the uncertainty of our situation.

The city of Cholula much resembled Valladolid, being in a fertile plain, very thickly inhabited; it is surrounded by fields of maize, pepper, and maguey. They had an excellent manufacture of earthenware, of three colours, red, black, and white, painted in different patterns, with which Mexico and all the neighbouring countries were supplied, as Castille is by those of Talavera and Plasencia. The city had at that time above a hundred lofty white towers, which were the temples of their idols, one of which was held in peculiar veneration. The principal temple was higher than that of Mexico, and each of these buildings was placed in a spacious court.

The Mexican troops which had been posted in ambuscade, with ramparts and trenches to oppose to the cavalry, hearing what had happened to their associates, made a rapid retreat to their city, and carried the news to their monarch; but he had already heard his misfortune from two of his ambassadors who had been with us. It is said that he immediately ordered a sacrifice to his gods, and shut himself up at his devotions for two entire days, with ten of his chief priests, in order to obtain an answer from them, relative to his future destiny. The reply which they gave was to this effect; that he should send an embassy to

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exculpate himself in regard to what had passed, and to invite us into Mexico, where, by cutting off the water, or raising the bridges, he could easily destroy us, or retain us for ever. The news of our late successes spread rapidly, and the natives were more than ever convinced that we were beings possessed of a preternatural power and intelligence. My readers will be perhaps by this time as tired of the detail of the transaction of Cholula, as I am of writing it. I must however mention the cages full of men and boys fattening for sacrifice, which were in this city. All these Cortes destroyed, and sent the poor prisoners to their homes, giving positive orders to the priests to desist from the practice in future, which they promised that they would, but what signified their promises!

This which I have related is the reality of the endless story of the Lord Bishop of Chiapa, F. Bart, de las Casas, who says we put these people to death merely for pastime; but I must observe, that certain reverend Franciscans, after the conquest of Mexico, being some of the first his Majesty sent to New Spain, went to Cholula on purpose to make the strictest enquiry; the result of which was, that they found the affair to have happened exactly as I have related it. If this punishment had not taken place our lives would have been in the greatest danger, and had we been destroyed this country of New Spain would not have been so easily gained, or a second expedition attempted; or if it had, it might have failed of success, as the natives would have defended their coats, and have thus remained for ever in their idolatry. I have heard a reverend Franciscan named Fray Torribio de Motilinea say, that if the punishment could have been avoided, and that there had been no cause given for it, it would have been better; but that since it was done, good effects had resulted, as the natives were thereby convinced of the

falfehood and deception of their idols, which they in confequence de-
 fpified, as a proof of which they afterwards took down the principal
 one, putting another in its place.

Having now pafled fourteen days in the city of Cholula, Cortes

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fummoned a council compofed of certain officers and foldiers, men of
 equal valour and wifdom, and his particular friends, for without our
 advice he entered upon no meafure of confequence, and it was thereby
 determined, to fend a refpedful meflage to the great Montezuma, and
 to inform him that in compliance with the orders of our king we were
 on our way to pay our refped:s to him in perfon. We then related the
 tranfadtion of Cholula, where the treafon which was meditated againft
 us had come in fufficient time to our knowledge, from which nothing
 that concerned us could be concealed, adding, that if we had not
 punifhed it to the full extent, it was only out of refped: to him, whose
 vail'als the people of that city were; that the chiefs and priefts had in-
 formed us, that what they did was at his infligation, which we could
 not believe of fo great a prince, after the proffers of friendfhip which
 he had made to us, for that had he been inclined to hoftiitiy, he would
 have met us in the field, but that in the cafe of a battle, field or town,
 day or night, was alike to us.

The Mexican monarch was very doubtful and penfive, when he
 confidered the events which had pafled. After a variety of determina-
 tions he at length fent to us fix of his firft nobility, with a prefent of
 gbold to the value of two thoufand crowns, and feveral bales of fine
 mantles. When the ambafladors came into the prefence of Cortes,
 fainting him with profound refped:, they delivered a meflage from their
 monarch, wherein he laboured to exculpate himfelf in regard to what
 had happened in Cholula, and concluded by inviting us to his court.
 Cortes entertained thefe perfons with his ufual politeneffs, and retaining
 three of them to go with us as guides, fent the others back to inform
 their monarch that he was fetting out upon his march. When the
 Tlafcalan chiefs heard our determination, they renewed to Cortes their
 warnings to beware of Mexican treachery, but added, that if he was
 determined to proceed, they would fend with him ten thoufand of their
 warriors. Cortes thanking them obferved, that fuch a body would
 not accord well with an amicable vifit, but requefted one thoufand men
 for the baggage and artillery, which number was inflantly provided.

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Out faithful allies of Cempoal being apprehenfive of the vengeance of
 the Mexicans, now petitioned for leave to return to their homes.
 Cortes difmiffed them with handfome prefents, and having written to
 Juan de Efcacante, informing him of his determination, we fet forward

on our march.

We quitted Cholula in great regularity, fending out our cavalry patrols to reconnoitre, supported by light infantry, our arms in order, and the cavalry by threes in front. Marching on thus, ** With the " heard always upon the shoulder," we arrived at a little place called the hamlet of Ifcalpan, in a mountainous ridge in the dillnd: of Guaxo- cingo, four leagues diflant from Cholula, where wc were met by the chiefs, accompanied by others who inhabit the fkirts of the volcano. They brought prefents of provifions and gold, of trifling value, telling Cortes he fhould receive it, not confidering how much it was worth, but the inclination of thofc who gave it. They advifed us againfi going to Mexico, as being a very flrong city and the inhabitants war- like, and they alfo told us^ that on afcending the next mountain, we (hould iind two roads, very broad, one whereof went to a place called Chalco, the other to Talmanalco, both, places fubjed: to the Mexicans. That the one road was very open and convenient, the other difficult, being obftrudted by large pine trees felled acrofs it, and that the fiffl: mentioned road, had an ambufcade of Mexicans laid hard by it, amcmg feme rocks, in order to fall upon us as we paiTed; they therefore recom- mended us to go by that where the trees had been felled, offering to fend a number of their people to clear it. Cortes exprefled his gratitude for their advice, faying that by God's permiffion he would purfue his route, accordingly.

Early on the morniiig of the next day we fet forward on our march, and reached the fummit of the ridge about twelve o'clock, where we found the roads as they had been defcribed to us, fome of the felled trees being to be fecn at this day. Here we halted a little in order to confider how we ihould proceed, and Cortes calling upon the ambafla-

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dors of the great Montezuma, enquired of tliem the meaning of thefe appearances. They replied, that we (hould take that road which led to Chalco, where we fhould be well received, and that the other road was longer and more difficult. Hereupon Cortes faid, that he would not- withftanding prefer it, and our Indian allies clearing the way before us, we proceeded up the mountain, where the weather was exceedingly cold, and prefently came a very heavy fall of fnow, fo that the whole country was covered with it. After fome time we arrived at certain houfes which are for the purpofe of lodging travellers, where we halted, and found provifions in plenty. Having placed our guards, we refted for that night, and continued our march in the morning, and at the hour of high mafs arrived at the town of Talmanaico, where we had an hofpitable reception. The people of the neighbouring diftridbs, that is to fay of Chalco, Mecameca, and Acingo where the canoes are kept, waited on Cortes here with a prefent of gold worth about a hundred and fifty crowns, fome mantles, and eight women. Cortes received them kindly, promifing them his friendfhip, and a number of the na- tives being now colle(5ted, he defired the reverend father of the order of mercy to explain to them the doctrines of our holy faith, and require them to renounce their idolatrous worfliip ; he alfo informed them of

the great power of our monarch, and that we came in his name to redress wrongs. When the people heard this, they began to make frequent complaints of the tyranny of Montezuma, who deprived them of their wives and daughters if handfome, and took the men to work like slaves, compelling them to convey for him, stones, timber, and corn, and seizing their lands for the service of his idols. Cortes consoled with them in kind words, desiring them to have patience for the present, and that they should soon be redressed. He then desired that some might go, and report to him the state of the road, but they told him there was no occasion, as it was perfectly clear.

Just as we were setting out attended by twenty Indians from this place, four of the principal nobility of Mexico arrived, and having paid their compliments, and delivered their presents, thus addressed

Cortes.

Cortes. ** Malintzin, this present our monarch sends you, saying, how grieved he is that you should take so much trouble in coming from a distant country to see him, and that he has already told you he will give you gold, silver, and chalchihuis for your Teules, on condition that you will not approach Mexico. He now repeats his request, and promises that he will send after you, a great treasure of gold, silver, and jewels, for your king, four loads of gold for yourself, and a load for each of your brethren, on condition you return immediately ; for as to advancing to Mexico, that, you cannot do, as the whole force of the Mexican warriors is in arms against you : and moreover, there is no good road thither, nor are provisions to be had." Cortes embraced the ambassadors with much urbanity, and returned his thanks for the present, saying, that he was surprised to find the great Montezuma so variable in his mind. In regard to his offers of treasure for the emperor, he thanked him, and for what had been received, said he hoped to pay in future services; but submitted to him, how he could possibly turn back, when so near his royal residence, without taking that opportunity of paying his respects, and obeying his majesty's orders ; and begged him also to consider, what opinion he would entertain of persons he had sent on similar business, should they act in the manner he required us to do. To his capital, our monarch expected we should go, and therefore it was useless to send any more such messages, for he must wait upon his Majesty, and deliver his message to him in person : and afterwards, if our remaining there was not agreeable, he would obey his orders, and return to the place from whence he came.

Having thus dispatched Montezuma's ambassadors we continued our march. Our allies had informed us that Montezuma was to permit us to enter the city, and there put us all to death; this we well knew, and being like other mortals fond of our lives, it filled us with melancholy thoughts. Recommending our souls therefore to our Lord Jesus Christ, who had brought us through our past dangers, we proceeded, and halted at a place called Iztapalatego, one half of the houses of

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.which is in the w^tcr, and thie othcj half on firm ground, hard by a little ridge of hills, where there U now an inn.

Early in the morning, when we were on the point of marching, a centinel came to inform us, that a great number of Mexicans, richly drefled, were upon the road. Cortes therefore ordered us to return into our quarters, and at that inflant four of the principal courtiers of Mexico arrived, and waiting on Cortes with great reapedt informed him, that Cacamat2in lord of Tezcuco, the nephew of the great Montezuma, was approaching, and requefled that he would wait to receive him. Caca-matzin followed in the greatefl pomp, carried in a magnificent litter adorned with green plumes, and enriched with jewels, fet in the branched pillars of folid gold. He was borne by eight lords, who affifted him out of the litter, and fwept the way by which he was to pafs. When he came intro the prefence of Cortes he faid to him, " Malintzin, here am I and thofe lords to attend you to your refidence ** in our city, by order of the great Montezuma." Cortes' embraced the prince, and prefented him with three jewels of that kind called margajitas, which arc figured in different colours. We then fet forward on the road to Mexico, which was crowded with multitudes of the na^tives, and arrived at the caufeway of Iztapalapa, which leads to that capital. When we beheld the number of populous towns on the water and firm ground, and that broad caufeway, running ilraight and level to the city, we could compare it to nothing but the enchanted fcenes we had read of in Amadis of Gaul, from the great towers and temples, and Other edifices of lime and fl:one which feemed to rife out of the water. To many of us it appeared doubtful whether we were afleep or awake ; nor is the manner in which I exprefs myfelf to be wondered at, for it mud be conidered, that never yet did man fee, hear, or dream of any Uiing equal to the fpedacle which appeared to our eyes on this day.

When we approached Iztapalapa, we were received by feveral great lords of that country, relations of Montezuma, who conducted us to our lodgings there, in palaces magnificently built of flone, and

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the timber of which was cedar, with fpacious courts, and apartments furniflied with canopies of the fineft cotton. After having contem- plated thefc noble edifices we walked through the gardens, which were admirable to behold from the variety of beautiful and aromatic plants, and the numerous alleys filled with fruit trees, rofes, and various flowers. Here was alfo a lake of the cleared: water, which communi- cated with the grand lake of Mexico by a channel cut for the purpofe^ and capable of admitting the largejft canoes. The whole was orna- mented with works of art, painted, and admirably plaiflered and whitened, and it was rendered more delightful by numbers of beautiful birds. When I beheld the fcencs that were around me, I thought within myfelf that this was the garden of the wprld ! This place, waj at the time of which I am fpeaking, with one half of the houfcs in the

water, and the other half on dry land ; but all is destroyed, atvi that which was a lake is now a trad: of fields of Indian corn, and fo entirely altered that the natives themfelves could hardly know it.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Mexico f Nov. Sth, 15 19. Defcription of that Court and City, TranfaElions and Occurrences there.

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N the next day we fet out, accompanied as on the former one, and proceeded by the grand caufcway, which is eight yards wide, and runs in a ftraight Hne to the city of Mexico. It was crowded with people, as were all the towers, temples, and caufeways, in every part of the lake, attrad:ed by curiofity to behold men, and animals, fuch as never had been before feen in thefe countries. We were occupied by very different thoughts ; our number did not amount to four hundred and fifty, we had perfed:ly in our recolle<ilion the accounts we had received on our march, that we were to be put to death on our arrival in the city which we now faw before us, approachable only by caufeways, whereon were feveral bridges, the breaking of one of which effed:ually cut off our retreat. And now let who can, tell me, where are men in this world to be found except ourfelves, who would have hazarded fuch an at<rnpt?

When we arrived at a place where a fmall caufeway turns off, which goes to the city of Cuyoacan, we were met by a great number of the lords of the court in their richeft dreffes, fent as they faid before the great Montezuma, to bid us welcome. After waiting there fome time, the nephew of Montezuma and other noblemen went back to meet their monarch, who approached, carried in a moil magnificent litter, which was fupported by his principal nobility. When we came near certain towers which are almoff clofe to the city, Montezuma who

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was then there quitted his littef, and was borne in the arns of the princes of Tezcuco, Iztapalapa, T^cuba, and Cuyoacan, under a canopy of the richeft materials, ornamented with green feathers, gold, and precious flones that hung in the manner of fringe; he was moft richly drclTed and adorned, and wore bulkins of pure gold ornamented with jewels. The princes who fupported him- were dreffed in rich habits, different from thofe in which they eame to meet us, and others who preceded the monarch fspread mantles on the ground, left his feet fhould touch it. All who attended him, except the four princes, kept their eyes fixed upon the earth, not daring to look him in the face.

When Cortes was told that the great Montezuma approached, he difmounted from his horfe, and advanced towards him with much re- fped: j Montezuma bid him welcome, and Cortes replied with a com- pliment, and it appeared to me, that he offered to yield the right hand to Montezuma, who declined it, and put Cortes on his right. Our general then produced a collar of thofe artificial jewels called margajitas^ which are of various colours, fet in gold, and threw it upon the neck of Montezuma; after which, he advanced to embrace him, but the lords who furrounded the monarch, taking him by the arm, prevented him, it appearing to them not fufHciently refped:ful. Cortes then faid, that he rejoiced in having feen fo great a monarch, and that he was highly honored by his coming out to meet him, as well as by the many other marks of his favor. To this Montezuma made a gracious reply, and gave orders to the princes of Tezcuco and Cuyoacan to attend us to our quarters. Attended by his nobility, he then returned to the city, all the people flanding clofe to the walls, without daring to lift up their eyes, and thus we pafTed, without obftrud:ion from the crowd. Who could count the multitude of men, women, and children, which thronged the ftreets, the canals, and terraces on the tops of the houfes, on that day ! The whole of what I faw on this occafion is fo ftrongly imprinted in my memory, that it appears to me as if it had happened only yefterday: glory to our Lx)rd Jefus Chrift, who gave us courage to venture upon fuch dangers, and brought us fafely through them f

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And praifed be he, that he has fuffered me to live, to write this m^ true hiftory, although not fo fully and fatisfadorily as the fubjed: defervcs.

Our lodgings were provided in the buildings which had been in^ habited by the father of Montezuma; here the monarch had the temples of his gods, and a feeret treafure of gold and valuables, which he had derived from his father Axayaca. We were lodged here, becaufe being confidered as Teules, they thought we were in our proper place amongft their idols. Be it how it may however, here they brought us to lodga in large apartments, a raifed platform being aftigned for our general, and mats for each of us, with little canopies over them, fuch as are ufed in that country. The whole of this palace was very light, airy, clean, and pleafant, the entry being through a great court. Montezuma here led Cortes by the hand to the apartment deftined for him, and taking a large collar of gold, placed it round the gcnearars neck. Cortes de-

clared his gratitude for these favors, and Montezuma said, "' Malintzin, ** here you and your friends are at home; now repose yourselves." With these words he departed. We were allotted to our quarters by companies, our artillery was posted in a convenient place, and all was arranged in such a manner as to be prepared for any contingency ; a very sumptuous entertainment was provided for us, which we sat down to with great satisfaction, and here ends the true and full account of our adventurous and magnanimous entry into Mexico, on the eighth day of November, in the year of our Lord 1519. Glory be to Jesus Christ: for all!

When the great Montezuma had made his repaid, and understood that we had done the same, attended by a great body of his nobility he came to our apartments. Cortes went out to the middle of the hall to receive him, where Montezuma took him by the hand, and seats richly ornamented being brought, they both sat down, by the desire of the king, who then began a very pertinent speech, wherein he observed, that he rejoiced to have in his dominions captains so brave as Cortes and

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his associates ; that he had before heard of one who had arrived at Champoton, and also of another who had come with four ships in the preceding year ; that he had been anxious to see them, but had been disappointed ; now however that we were arrived, he was happy to offer us all the favor he had in his power to bestow, for we were undoubtedly those who had been mentioned by his ancestors, who had predicted, that there would come certain men, from that part where the sun rises, to govern these countries ; and it could mean no other but us, who had fought so valiantly since our arrival in their country ; a representation of each of our battles having been sent to him. Cortes replied, that he and all of us never could repay the great favors we every day received from his hands : that we certainly were those of whom it had been prophesied, and that we were vassals of a potent monarch named Don Carlos, who had many and great princes subject to him, and had sent us, hearing of the fame and grandeur of king Montezuma, to request in his name, that the great Montezuma and his subjects would embrace the holy christian faith, which is the faith professed by our monarch, by doing which he would preserve the souls of him, his family, and subjects ; and that he should in good time be informed of more particulars, such as that we worshipped the only true God, with many other things highly edifying to the hearers. This conversation being concluded, Montezuma presented our general with a quantity of valuable ornaments of wrought gold ; to each of the captains he made a present of some gold and three loads of mantles, and to each soldier of two loads of richly wrought mantles; and all this he did in the most free and gracious manner, or to speak more properly, like a great monarch as he was. Montezuma then asked Cortes if his soldiers were all brothers, and vassals of our emperor. To which Cortes replied, that we were all brothers in love and friendship, persons of consequence in our own country, and servants of our sovereign lord the king. With mutual compliments Montezuma then departed, having given orders to his officers to provide us amply according to our demands,

with corn, stone mills, and women to make bread, together with fowls, and fruit, and plenty of gifts for the natives.

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The next day was fixed on by Cortes, for his visit to Montezuma. Accordingly, attended by Captains Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velazquez de Leon, Diego de Ordaz, Gonzalo de Sandoval, and five soldiers, he went to his palace, which as soon as Montezuma was informed of, he came as far as the middle of the hall to meet us, attended by his relations, no other persons being allowed to enter where he was, except on most important business. With great ceremony on each side, the king took Cortes by the hand, and leading him to the elevated part of the balcony, placed him upon his right, and with much affability, desired the rest of us to be seated. Cortes then proceeded to say, that he came to him for the service of the Lord God whom the Christians adored, who was named Jesus Christ, and who suffered death for our sakes. He also explained to him, that we adored the cross as the emblem of the crucifixion for our salvation, whereby the human race was redeemed, and that our Lord on the third day rose, and is in heaven, and that it is he who created heaven, and earth, and sea, and is adored by us as our Creator; but that those things which he held to be gods, were not such, but devils, which are very bad things, of evil countenances, and worse deeds; and that he might judge how wicked they were, and how little power they had, in as much as where ever we placed, crosses, they dare not view their faces. He therefore requested, that he would attend to what he had told him, which was, that we were all brothers, the children of Adam and Eve, and that as such, our emperor lamenting the loss of souls in such numbers as those which were brought by his idols into everlasting flames, had sent us to apply a remedy thereto, by putting an end to the worship of these false gods, to human sacrifices, and all other crimes; and that he now came to notify his Majesty's intentions, but our emperor would at a future period send holy men, fully capable of explaining them.

Here Cortes bowed, and Montezuma seemed to (show an inclination to reply, but Cortes observing that this was enough for the first time, proposed to us to retire, and we were preparing to do so, when we were prevented by Montezuma who spoke to him as follows.

•* Malintzin,

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'• Malintzin, I have already heard through my ambassadors of those
 ** things which you now mention, and to which hitherto we have
 *• made no reply, because we have from the first worshipped the gods
 ** we now do, and consider them as just and good. So no doubt are
 ** yours. In regard to the creation of the world, our beliefs are the
 *^ fame, and we also believe you to be the people who were to come to
 ** us from where the sun rises. To your great king I am indebted.

** There have been already perfons on our coafts, from your country;
 ** I wifli to know if you are all the fame people." To which Cortes
 having replied that they were all fubjedts of the fame prince, Mon-
 tezuma faid, that from the firft time he heard of them, it had been his
 wifh to fee them, which his gods had now granted him ; that we
 fhould therefore confider ourfelves as at home, and if ever we were re-
 fufed entrance into any of his cities, it was not his fault, but that of
 his fubjed:s, who were terrified by the reports they heard of us, fuch
 as that we carried with us thunder and lightning, that our horfes killed
 men, and that we were furious Teules, with other follies of that kind;
 adding, that he faw we were men, that we were valiant and wifc^
 for which he efteemed us, and would give us proofs thereof. For this
 condefcenfion we all exprcffed our gratitude. He then addreffed himfelf
 to Cortes in a laughing manner, for he was very gay in coaverfation
 when he was in his ftate, faying, ** Malintzin, the Tlafcalans your
 •* new friends have I know told you that I am like a god, and that
 ** all about me is gold, and filver, and precious ftones; but you now
 ** fee that I am mere flcfh and blood, and that my houfes are built like
 ** other houfes, of lime and ftone, and timber. It is true that I am a
 ** great king, and inherit riches from my anceftors; but for thefe
 ** ridiculous falfehoods, you treat them with the fame contempt, that
 ** I do the ftories I was told of your commanding the elements."
 To which Cortes good-humouredly replied, that the accounts of enemies
 were not to be relied on, paying him at the fame time a handfome com-
 pliment, upon his power and grandeur. During this converfation
 Montezuma had made a fign to one of his principal attendants, to order
 his officers to bring him certain pieces of gold, which he had laid apart

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to give to Cortes, together with ten loads of fine fluffs, which he
 divided between Cortes and his captains, and to every foldier he gave
 two collars of gold, each worth ten crowns, and two loads of mantles.
 The gold amounted in value to upwards of a thoufand crowns ; and he
 gave it with an affability, and indifference, which made him appear a
 truly magnificent prince. It being now pafl midday, Cortes took his
 leave, obferving that it was his Majeffy's hour of dinner, and that he
 heaped obligations upon us ; to which Montezuma replied, that on the
 contrary we had obliged him. We then retired, impreffed with rc-
 fpecfb for the great Montezuma, from his princely manners and
 liberality.

The great Montezuma was at this time aged about forty years, of
 good flat ure, well proportioned, and thin; his complexion was much
 fairer than that of the Indians; he wore his hair fliort, jufl covering
 his ears, with very little beard, well arranged, thin, and black. His
 face was rather long, with a pleafant countenance, and good eyes ;
 gravity and good humour were blended together when he fpoke. He
 was very delicate and clean in his perfon, bathing himfelf every evening.
 He had a number of miflrefles, of the firfl families, and two princefles
 his lawful wives: when he vifited them, it was with fuch fecrecy, that
 none could know it except his own fervants. He was clear of all fuf-
 picion of unnatural vices. The clothes which he wore one day, he did

not put on for four days after. He had two hundred of his nobility as a guard, in apartments adjoining his own. Of these, certain persons only, could speak to him, and when they went to wait upon him they took off their rich mantles, and put on others of less ornament, but clean. They entered his apartment barefooted, their eyes fixed on the ground, and making three inclinations of the body as they approached him. In addressing the king they said, "Lord, my lord, great lord" When they had finished he dismissed them with a few words, and they retired, with their faces towards him, and their eyes fixed upon the ground. I also observed, that when great men came from a distance about business, they entered his palace barefooted, and in a plain habit;

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and also, that they did not enter the gate directly, but took a circuit making going towards it.

His cooks' had upwards of thirty different ways of dressing meats, and they had earthen vessels so contrived as to keep them always hot. For the table of Montezuma himself, above three hundred dishes were dressed, and for his guards, above a thousand. Before dinner, Montezuma would sometimes go out and inspect the preparations, and his officers would point out to him which were the best, and explained of what birds and flesh they were composed; and of those he would eat. But this was more for amusement than any thing else. It is said that at times the flesh of young children was dressed for him; but the ordinary meats were, domestic fowls, pheasants, geese, partridges, quails, venison, Indian hogs, pigeons, hares, and rabbits, with many other animals and birds peculiar to the country. This is certain; that after Cortes had spoken to him relative to the dressing human flesh, it was not practiced in his palace. At his meals, in the cold weather, a number of torches of the bark of a wood which makes no smoke and has an aromatic smell, were lighted, and that they should not throw too much heat, screens, ornamented with gold, and painted with figures of idols, were placed before them. Montezuma was seated on a low throne, or chair, at a table proportioned to the height of his seat. The table was covered with white cloths and napkins, and four beautiful women presented him with water for his hands, in vessels which they call Xicales, with other vessels under them like plates, to catch the water; they also presented him with towels. Then, two other women brought small cakes of bread, and when the king began to eat, a large screen of wood, gilt, was placed before him, so that people should not during that time see him. The women having retired to a little distance, four ancient lords stood by the throne, to whom Montezuma from time to time spoke or addressed questions, and as a mark of particular favor, gave to each of them a plate of that which he was eating. I was told that these old lords, who were his near relations, were also counsellors and judges. The plates which Montezuma presented to them, they

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received with high respect, eating what was in them without taking their eyes off the ground. He was served on earthenware of Cholula, red and black. While the king was at table, no one of his guards, or in the vicinity of his apartment, dared for their lives make any noise. Fruit of all the kinds that the country produced was laid before him; he ate very little, but from time to time, a liquor prepared from cocoa, and of a stimulative, or corroborative quality, as we were told, was presented to him in golden cups. We could not at that time see if he drank it or not, but I observed a number of jars, above fifty, brought in, filled with foaming chocolate, of which he took some, which the women presented to him. At different intervals during the time of dinner, there entered certain Indians, hump-backed, very deformed, and ugly, who played tricks of buffoonery, and others who they said were jesters. There was also a company of singers and dancers, who afforded Montezuma much entertainment. To these he ordered the wafers of chocolate to be distributed. The four female attendants then took away the cloths, and again with much respect presented him with water to wash his hands, during which time Montezuma conversed with the four old noblemen formerly mentioned, after which they took their leave with many ceremonies. One thing I forgot, and no wonder, to mention in its place, and that is, that during the time Montezuma was at dinner, two very beautiful women were busily employed making small cakes with eggs and other things mixed therein. These were delicately white, and when made they presented them to him on plates covered with napkins. Also another kind of bread was brought to him in long loaves, and plates of cakes resembling wafers. After he had dined, they presented to him three little canes highly ornamented, containing liquid amber, mixed with an herb they call tobacco; and when he had sufficiently viewed and heard the singers, dancers, and buffoons, he took a little of the smoke of one of these canes, and then laid himself down to sleep; and thus his principal meal concluded. After this was over, all his guards and domestics sat down to dinner, and as near as I could judge, above a thousand plates of those eatables that I have mentioned were laid before them, with vessels of foaming

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chocolate, and fruit in an immense quantity. For his women and various inferior servants, his establishment was of a prodigious expence; and we were astonished, amidst such a profusion, at the wonderful regularity that prevailed. His major domo was at this time a prince named Tapia; he kept the accounts of Montezuma's rents, in books which occupied an entire house. Montezuma had two buildings filled with every kind of arms, richly ornamented with gold and jewels, such as shields large and small, clubs like two-handed swords, and lances much larger than ours, with blades six feet in length, so strong that if they fix in a shield they do not break, and (hard enough to use as razors. There was also an immense quantity of bows and arrows, and darts, together with flings, and shields which roll up into a small compass, and in action are let fall and thereby cover the whole body. He had also much defensive armour of quilted cotton ornamented with feathers

in different devices, and casques for the head, made of wood and bone, with plumes of feathers, and many other articles too tedious to mention.

In this palace was a most magnificent aviary, which contained every description of birds that the continent afforded, namely, royal eagles, -and a smaller species, with many other birds, down to the smallest parroquets, of beautiful colours. It was here that the ornaments of green feathers were fabricated. The feathers were taken from birds which are of the size of our pyes in Spain, and which they call here Quetzales, and other birds, whose plumage is of five different colours, green, red, white, yellow, and blue. The name of this species of bird I do not know. Here was also an immensity of parrots, and certain sort of fine plumage, and a species which resembled geese. All these bred here, and were plucked of their feathers every year at the proper season. Here was a large pond of clear running water, where were a number of great birds, entirely red, with very long legs; there are some like them in the Island of Cuba, which they call Ipiris. There was also a species which lives entirely in the water.

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We likewise saw another great building, which was a temple, and which contained those which were called the valiant or fighting gods, and here were many kinds of furious beasts, tigers, and lions of two species, one of which resembles a wolf, called here Adiva. Also foxes, and other smaller animals, but all carnivorous. Most of these were bred in the place, being fed with game, fowls, dogs, and as I have heard the bodies of Indians who were sacrificed, the manner of which as I have been informed is this. They open the body of the victim while living, with large knives of stone; they take out his heart, and blood, which they offer to their gods, and then they cut off the limbs, and the head, upon which they fasten, giving the body to be devoured by the wild beasts, and the skulls they hang up in their temples. In this accursed place were many vipers, and poisonous serpents which have in their tails somewhat that sounds like castanets; these are the most dangerous of all, and were kept in vessels filled with feathers, where they reared their young, and were fed with the flesh of human beings, and dogs; and I have been assured, that after our expulsion from Mexico, all these animals lived for many days upon the bodies of our comrades who were killed on that occasion. These beasts and horrid reptiles were retained to keep company with their infernal gods, and when these animals yelled and hissed, the palace seemed like hell itself.

The place where the artificers principally resided was named Escapuzalco, and was at the distance of about a league from the city. Here were the shops and manufactories of all their gold and silver smiths, whose works in these metals, and in jewellery, when they were brought to Spain, surprised our ablest artificers. Their painters we may also judge of by what we now see, for there are three Indians in Mexico, who are named, Marcos de Aquino, Juan de la Cruz, and Crepillo, who, if they had lived with Apelles in ancient times, or were compared with Michelangelo or Berruguete in modern times, would not be held inferior to them. Their fine manufactures of cotton and feathers, were

principally brought from the province of Coflitlan. The women of
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the family of the great Montezuma also, of all ranks, were extremely ingenious in these works, and constantly employed; as was a certain description of females who lived together in the manner of nuns.

One part of the city was entirely occupied by Montezuma's dancers, of different kinds, some of whom bore a flick on their feet, others flew in the air, and some danced like those in Italy called by us Mata-chines. He had also a number of carpenters and handicraft men constantly in his employ. His gardens, which were of great extent, were irrigated by canals of running water, and shaded with every variety of trees. In them were baths of cut stone, pavilions for feasting or retirement, and theatres for shows, and for the dancers and singers; all which were kept in the most exact order, by a number of labourers constantly employed.

When we had been four days in Mexico, Cortes wished to take a view of the city, and in consequence sent to request the permission of his Majesty. Accordingly, Aguilar, Donna Marina, and a little page of our general's called Orteguilla, who already understood something of the language, went to the palace for that purpose. Montezuma was pleased immediately to accede, but being apprehensive that we might offer some insult to his temple, he determined to go thither in person, which he accordingly did, in the same form, and with the same retinue, as when he first came out to meet us, but that he was on this occasion preceded by two lords bearing sceptres in their hands, which they carried on high, as a signal of the king's approach. Montezuma, in his litter, with a small rod in his hand, one half of which was gold, and the other half wood, and which he bore elevated like a rod of justice, for such it was, approached the temple, and there quitted his litter and mounted the steps, attended by a number of priests, and offering incense, with many ceremonies, to his war gods. Cortes at the head of his cavalry, and the principal part of our soldiers under arms, marched to the grand square, attended by many noblemen of the court. When we arrived there, we were astonished at the crowds of people, and the

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regularity which prevailed, as well as at the vast quantities of merchandise, which those who attended us were assiduous in pointing out. Each kind had its particular place, which was distinguished by a sign. The articles consisted of gold, (silver, jewels, feathers, mantles, chocolate, skins dried and undressed, sandals, and other manufactures of the roots and fibres of nequen, and great numbers of male and female slaves, some of whom were fastened by the neck, in collars, to long poles. The meat market was flocked with fowls, game, and dogs.

Vegetables, fruits, articles of food ready dressed, fait, bread, honey, and sweet pastry made in various ways, were also sold here. Other places in the square were appointed to the sale of earthenware, wooden household furniture such as tables and benches, firewood, paper, sweet canes filled with tobacco mixed with liquid amber, copper axes and working tools, and wooden vessels highly painted. Numbers of women sold fish, and little loaves made of a certain mud which they find in the lake, and which resembles cheese. The makers of flint blades were busily employed (haping them out of the rough material, and the merchants who dealt in gold, had the metal in grains as it came from the mines, in transparent tubes, so that they could be reckoned, and the gold was valued at so many mantles, or so many xiquipils of cocoa, according to the size of the quills. The entire square was inclosed in piazzas, under which great quantities of grain were stored, and where were also shops for various kinds of goods. I must apologize for adding, that boat loads of human ordure were on the borders of the adjoining canals, for the purpose of tanning leather, which they said could not be done without it. Some may laugh at this, but I assure the fact is as I have stated it, and moreover, upon all the public roads, places for passengers to resort to, were built of canes, and thatched with straw or grass, in order to collect this material.

The courts of justice, where three judges sat, occupied a part of the square, their under officers being in the market, inspecting the merchandise.

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From the square we proceeded to the great temple, but before we entered it we made a circuit through a number of large courts, the smallest of which appeared to me to contain more ground than the great square in Salamanca, with double inclosures built of lime and stone, and the courts paved with large white cut stone, very clean; or where not paved, they were plastered and polished. When we approached the gate of the great temple, to which the ascent was by a hundred and fourteen steps, and before we had mounted one of them, Montezuma sent down to us six priests, and two of his noblemen, to carry Cortes up, as they had done their sovereign, which he politely declined. When we had ascended to the summit of the temple, we observed on the platform as we passed, the large stones whereon were placed the victims who were to be sacrificed. Here was a great figure which resembled a dragon, and much blood fresh spilt. Montezuma came out from an adulatory in which his accursed idols were placed, attended by two priests, and addressing himself to Cortes, expressed his apprehension that he was fatigued; to which Cortes replied, that fatigue was unknown to us.

Montezuma then took him by the hand, and pointed out to him the different parts of the city, and its vicinity, all of which were commanded from that place. Here we had a clear prospect of the three causeways by which Mexico communicated with the land, and of the aqueduct of Chapultepec, which supplied the city with the finest water. We were struck with the numbers of canoes, passing to and

from the main land, loaded with provisions and merchandife, and we could now perceive, that in this great city, and all the others of that neighbourhood which were built in the water, the houfes flood feparate from each other, communicating only by fmall drawbridges, and by boats, and that they were built with terraced tops. We obferved alfo the temples and adoratories of the adjacent cities, built in the form of towers and fortreffes, and others on the caufeway, all white wafhed, and wonderfully brilliant. The noife and buftlc of the market-place below us could be heard almoll a league off, and thofe who had been

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at Rome and at Conitantinople faid, that for convcniencc, regularity, and population, they had never feen the like. Cortes now propofed to Fra. Bartholome to apply to Montezuma for permiffion to conftru<5t our church here, to which the father for the prefent objeded, thinking it ill-timed. Cortes then addreffing himfelf to Montezuma, requelfd that he would do him the favour to fhew us his gods. Montezuma having firft confulted his priefts, led us into a tower where was a kind of faloon. Here were two altars highly adorned, with richly wrought timbers on the roof, and over the altars, gigantic figures refembling very fat men. The one on the right was Huitzilopochtli their war god, with a great face and terrible eyes ; this figure was entirely covered with gold and jewels, and his body bound with golden ferpents; in his right hand he held a bow, and in his left a bundle of arrows. The little idol which flood by him rcprefented his page, and bore a lance and target richly ornamented with gold and jewels. The great idol had round his neck the figures of human heads and hearts, made of pure gold and filver, ornamented with precious ftones of a blue colour. Before the idol was a pan of incenfe, with three hearts of human vi(5tims which were then burning, mixed with copal. The whole of that apartment, both walls and floor, was fbiined with human blood in fuch quantity as to give a very offcnfive fraell. On the left was the other great figure, with a countenance like a bear, and great fhining eyes, of the polifhed fubflance whereof their mirrors are made. The body of this idol was alfo covered with jewels. Thefe two deities, it was faid, were brothers ; the name of this lafl was Tezcatepuca, and he was the god of the infernal regions. He prefided, according to their notions, over the fouls of men. His body was covered with figures reprefenting little devils with tails of ferpents, and the walls and pavement of this temple were fo befmeared with blood that they ftunk worfc than all the flaughter-houfes of Caftille. An offering lay before him of five human hearts. In the fummit of the temple, and in a recefs the timber of which was moft highly ornamented, we faw a figure half human and the other half refembling an alligator, inlaid with jewels, and partly covered with a mantle. This idol was faid to contain the

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gcnii» and origin of all created things, and was the god of harvefl, and fruits. The walls and altars were beilained like the refi:, and fo ofFen-five, that we thought we never could get out foon enough.

In this place they had a drum of moil enormous fize, the head of which was made of the (kins of large ferpents : this inftrument when flruck refounded with a noife that could be heard to the diftance of tw^o leagues, and fo doleful that it deferved to be named the mufic of the infernal regions; and with their horrible founding horns and trumpets, their great knives for facrifice, their human viiStims, and their blood befprinkled altars, I devoted them, and all their wickednefs to God's vengeance, and thought that the time would never arrive, that I fhould efcape from this fcene of human butchery, liorrible fmells, and more deteftable lights.

Cortes, half in jeft, addrciTmg himfelf to Montezuma, expreffed his wonder how fo wife a prince could worfhip fuch abfurd and wicked powers ; and propofed to him to place on the fummit of that tower a crofs, and in thefe adoratories the image of the holy Virgin, afnd he allured him that he (hould then be foon convinced of the vanity and deception of his idols. Montezuma (hewed marks of difpleafure at thefe cxpreffions, laying, that he would not have admitted us into the temple, had hef thought. that we would have infulted their gods, who were kind to them, who gave them health and feafonable rains, good harvefls, fine weather, vicflories and whatever elfe they defired, and whom they were in duty, and in gratitude, bound to worfhip. Cortes dropped the difcourfe, obferving that it was time for us to go ; and Montezuma alTenting, faid, it was necelTary for him to remain, to expiate by fa^crifice the fin which he had committed, in admitting us there. Cortes then took leave, and thus we concluded our vilit to the great temple of Mexico, defcending the Heps with much pain to our invalids.

I will now proceed to relate other matters, in which, if I am not fo correct as I ought to be, let it be remembered thiat my iituation was

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that of a foldier, who was obhged to be more attentive to the orders of his officer, than to the objects of curiofity around him. The ground whereon this temple flood, was as much as fix of the largefl buildings of this country occupy. From the bafe it diminifhed to the fummit, whereon was a tower, in which the idols were placed, and from the middle of the afcct, to the top, were five concavities, like barbicans, but without parapets. However there are many paintings of temples in the pofTelTion of the conquerors, one whereof I have, and thofe who have feen them will eafily form an idea of the outfide of this temple. I have heard that at the time they laid the foundations of it, the natives of all that country made offerings of their gold, filver, and jewels, of the feeds of the earth, and of prifoners, all which were buried in the foundations of the building. The inquititive reader will naturally afk, how I came to know any thing of this, which happened upwards of a thoufand years ago. I will inform him. When we got pofTeffion of this great city, and that it vras to be built upon a new plan, it was dc-

terminated to place the church of St. Jago on the ground where this temple stood; and in sinking the foundations, we found great quantities of gold, silver, and other valuables, and a Mexican who obtained part of the same ground, discovered more treasure, about which there was a law-suit in support of his Majesty's right, the result of which I am ignorant of. The account was also confirmed by Guatimotzin who was then alive, and who said that the transaction was recorded in their ancient historical paintings. The church which now stands here is called St. Jago el Taltelulco. This temple I have before observed, was surrounded by courts as large as the square of Salamanca, inside of a double inclosure of lime and stone. At a little distance from it stood a tower, a true hell or habitation for demons, with a mouth resembling that of an enormous monster, wide open, and ready as it were to devour those who entered. At the door stood frightful idols; by it was a place for sacrifice, and within, boilers, and pots full of water, to dress the flesh of the victims, which was eaten by the priests. The idols were like serpents and devils, and before them were tables and knives for sacrifice, the place being covered with the blood which was

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(filled on those occasions*. The furniture was like that of a butcher's stall, and I never gave this accursed building any name except that of hell. Having passed this we saw great piles of wood, and a reservoir of water, supplied by a pipe from the great aqueduct; and crossing a court, we came to another temple, wherein were the tombs of the Mexican nobility; it was begrimed with foot and blood. Next to this was another, full of skeletons, and piles of bones, each kept apart, but regularly arranged. In each temple were idols, and each had also its particular priests, who wore long vestments of black, somewhat between the dress of the dominicans and our canons; their long hair was clotted together, and their ears lacerated in honor of their gods.

At a certain distance from the buildings of which I have last spoken were others, the idols of which were, as they said, the advocates, or superintendent deities of human marriages, and all round the great court were many houses, which were not very lofty, and wherein resided the priests, and others who had charge of the idols. Here was also a great reservoir of water, supplied with pipes, exclusively for the service of the two idols Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuca, and hard by, a large building, where were a number of the young Mexican women, who resided there as in a nunnery, until they were married. They worshipped two female deities, who presided over marriages, and to them they offered sacrifices, in order to obtain good husbands. I have been thus diffuse in my description of this great temple, because it was the most considerable in that city, amongst the many sumptuous buildings of that kind which it contained. The temple of Cholula however was higher than this, having a hundred and twenty steps; it was also held in great veneration, and was built on a plan different from that of Mexico. The temple at Tezcuco was very large, having a hundred and seventeen steps. All these were of different structure, but agreed in having a number of outer courts, and a double inclosure. One ridiculous circumstance is, that each province had its own peculiar

gods, who were supposed to have no concern with any other; so that the idols were innumerable in this country. Having fatigued ourselves

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with like examination of these scenes, (so new to us, we retired to our quarters.

Cortes perceiving how adverse the king was to the conversion of his temple into a christian church, applied to one of the principal officers of his palace, for materials to construct; a chapel and altar, within our quarters. His desire being made known to Montezuma, it was instantly complied with, and timber and workmen being provided in three days we had it completed. Here we said mass every day ; we had however to lament the total want of wine for the holy sacrament, it having been all used in the illnesses of Cortes, the reverend father, and others, during the wars in Tlafcala. However we were constant in our devotions, as well on account of our duty, as in order to impress a proper idea of our holy religion, on the minds of Montezuma and the natives. Being employed in looking out for a proper place to fix the holy crosses, one of our carpenters observed an appearance on the wall, as if a door had been there, and lately closed up. When this was made known to Cortes, it was privately opened, and on entering the apartment, they found riches without end ! The secret soon transpired, and we went, all of us, to view them. I was then a young man, and I thought that if all the treasures of the earth had been brought into one place, they could not have amounted to so much. It was agreed to close up the door again, and we determined to conceal the knowledge of it until the proper time should offer.

A council was now called, composed of Cortes as president, with four captains, and twelve soldiers whereof I was one, and having duly considered how evidently the Lord guided us, and what wise and valiant captains and brave soldiers we had, as also the fickle disposition of the Indians, who though now kind to us, might change, there was no saying how soon, and that notwithstanding the hospitality with which Montezuma treated us, he might at any moment fall into an opposite line of conduct; we resolved to follow the opinion of Cortes, by adopting the most effectual measure, which was, to seize, and make that

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monarch our prisoner ; as we could not know at what moment we might be perhaps poisoned in our food, and as no gift of his, nor all his father's treasure, could make compensation to us for the alarms, and distressing thoughts, which filled the minds of those of any reflection. For these reasons it was therefore agreed to adopt the measure without delay. The captains who were present proposed, that Montezuma should be induced by a plausible pretext to come into our quar-

ters, and when there, to seize him, and if he refused, to make his
 person answer it: and they urged, that of the two great dangers, this
 was much the least. It was then observed by some of our soldiers, that
 Montezuma's officers did not provide us so plentifully as at the first,
 and two of our Tlascalalan allies had told our interpreter, Aguilar, in
 confidence, that they observed a bad disposition on the part of the
 Mexicans towards us, for the two last days. This debate lasted a full
 hour; at length it was agreed to adjourn until the next day, and in the
 mean time we consulted our reverend father of the order of mercy,
 praying to God to guide us in this difficulty. On the day after this
 debate, arrived two Indians of Tlascalala very secretly, with letters from
 Villa Rica, whereby we were informed, that Juan de Escalante had
 fallen, together with six soldiers, in a battle with the Mexicans,* and
 that the inhabitants of the mountains and of Cempoala were in commo-
 tion, and refused to supply provisions, or to work, so that the garrison
 knew not what to do. These letters added, that the opinion of the In-
 dians were much altered since they found that the Spaniards could be
 killed like other men. God knows this intelligence afflicted us; it was
 the first defeat that we had experienced since we landed on that conti-
 nent; and here let the reflecting reader ponder upon the changes which
 fate makes in the affairs of men. We who yesterday were honored by
 Montezuma, in possession of wealth, and considered invulnerable like
 demigods, to day found ourselves lowered in the consideration of the
 natives to a level with them in whose power we were. We now

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Cortes received the intelligence of this event in Cholula.

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therefore saw in a wrong point of view than ever, how necessary it
 was for our very existence to seize Montezuma, and that if we failed,
 we might as well perish in this attempt as meet our certain fate in any-
 other way. But before I go farther I will give an account of the mis-
 fortune which befell Juan de Escalante.

I have already related, that in a town named Quiabuitlan, about
 thirty chiefs of the neighbouring districts had voluntarily come under
 our government. A Mexican garrison, it appears, attempted to levy
 contributions upon some of these people. When this was represented
 to Escalante the commandant in Villa Rica, he sent word to the officer
 of Montezuma to desist, threatening them in case they did not, but at
 the same time expressing his wishes to be on friendly terms with them.
 To this an abrupt reply was returned, that he should find them in the
 field. Escalante was a man who had blood in his eye, and on receiving
 this answer he immediately prepared forty of his own people, and two
 thousand of his allies, and put himself in march against the Mexicans,
 whom he met out upon a pillaging expedition, and attacked. Our
 allies who were always afraid of the Mexicans, fled at the first shower
 of arrows, and left the poor Spaniards to get out of the business as well
 as they could. With great difficulty they arrived at Almeria, where
 Escalante and six soldiers soon died of their wounds. One soldier they

took alive ; his name was Arguello, a native of Leon ; this man had a large head, and thick curled beard, and was of great bodily strength. Such is the truth of the affair at Almeria, which is entirely different from the account of the historian Gomara, where he says that Pedro de Ircio went to colonize Panuco with a party of soldiers, at a time when we had not a sufficiency of men to keep up our guards. In many things which that historian relates concerning the seizure of Montezuma, he ought to have recollected that eye witnesses to that transaction were yet alive, to contradict him.

The Mexican captains reported the affair to Montezuma, and presented him with the head of the Spanish soldier, who died of his wounds,

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wounds, as they were bringing him prisoner. It is said that Montezuma trembled when he beheld it, and ordered it to be sent elsewhere. He asked his captains why, being so numerous, they had not conquered such a handful of men ; they replied, that the reason was, because they beheld a supernatural being, who encouraged the Spaniards, and struck terror into their people ; and that Montezuma believed could be no other than the holy Virgin Mary, with her son in her arms, as we had explained to him that she was our patroness. This I cannot testify to, not having been there myself, but some of those who were there assured me of the truth of it, and it was the universal belief amongst us. Would to God that it were so ! Certain however it is, that the divine mercy was with us throughout, for which praise be God!

It having been decided that we should seize the person of the king, we passed the whole of the preceding night in praying to our Lord that he would be pleased to guide us so that what we were about to do should redound to his holy service, and in the morning * we proceeded to arrange the manner in which our determination was to be carried into effect. Our cavalry and infantry were as usual in readiness to turn out if called upon, and as it was always our custom to go fully armed, the appearance in that manner gave no suspicion. Cortes having left our whole force in readiness, proceeded to the palace, attended by the captains, P. de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, J. V. de Leon, Fra. de Lugo, and A. de Avila, with the interpreters Donna Marina and Aguilar ; sending before him to acquaint the king, that he was on his way to pay him a visit. This he did in order to prevent any effect arising from an unexpected appearance. The king concluded that it was on account of the affair of Almeria, and that Cortes was enraged about that which in reality he did not care the value of a chestnut for, and sent back word to Cortes that he was welcome. Accordingly, our X general.

* Eight days after the arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico*

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general, and we who attended him, having entered into the presence of Montezuma, after paying him his respects, he addressed the king through his interpreters, saying, he was astonished that a monarch who was so brave, and who had (shown himself so friendly to us, should have given orders to his troops in Tuzapan to attack the Spaniards, kill one of them, and his horse, and pillage and destroy our allies. Cortes wished to conceal the death of Escalante and the five others. He then charged the king with the treacherous attempt against us in Cholula, which he said he had hitherto been deterred from speaking of, by motives of esteem and regard; but that now, in addition to these provocations, his officers were plotting our immediate destruction, and he concluded by saying, that, in order to prevent the ruin of the city, it was necessary that his Majesty (should, peaceably, and without making any opposition or remonstrance, immediately go with us to our quarters, where he should be treated with the greatest respect; but that if he said one word, or gave the least alarm, the five captains then present would instantly put him to death. On hearing this Montezuma was at first so terrified that he appeared to have lost all sensation. Having recovered himself a little, he denied his having ever given any order to his troops to attack our countrymen, and taking from his wrist the signet of Huitzilopochtli with which he was used to confirm any order of great importance, he caused the officer of whom complaint had been made, to be sent for. He then replied to the proposal of leaving his palace, and summing up his dignity said, that he was not the person to be forced to take such a step, contrary to his inclination. The conversation was prolonged, Cortes giving him good reasons for what he proposed, and the king replying to him with better, inasmuch that above half an hour had now elapsed. The captains who were standing by began at last to grow very impatient, and J. V. de Leon cried out to Cortes in his rough voice, '* Why Sir do you waffle so many words? ** Let him yield himself our prisoner, or we will this instant plunge ** our swords into his body. Tell him this, and also, that if he says a ■*• word, he dies for it. Better for us to assure our lives now, or perishat _** once," The manner in which this was spoken struck the king, and he

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afkcd Donna Marina the meaning of it. She with her usual readiness answered by requesting that he would immediately consent to what was proposed to him» and go where he (should meet all respects: and honor, as (he perceived that if he hesitated, they were resolved to put him to instant death. He then addressed Cortes and said, ** I have a legitimate ** son, and two legitimate daughters; take them as hostages forme, ** but do not expose me as a prisoner to my own people." Cortes however replied saying nothing but what was originally proposed could do, and that remonstrances were unavailing. At length he was forced to consent, upon which our captains addressed him with every declaration of esteem. and respect (St, earnestly desiring that he would not be offended at what had passed, and that he would tell his officers and

guards that he went by his own free will, and by the advice of his gods and priests. His magnificent state litters were now brought, and attended by his usual guards he proceeded to our quarters, where our posts and sentinels being duly placed, he was received and entertained with every mark of respect. He was soon waited on by the princes of his family and the chief nobility of Mexico, who came to know the cause of the peril that he had taken, and also if it was his wish that they should attack us ; but he replied, that it was his intention to stay with us for a few days, and that whatever further commands he had for them, he would signify in due time ; but charged them to do nothing to disturb the city.

Thus was the seizure of the great Montezuma effected. He was attended while with us in the same manner as in his own palace, his wives, family, and officers, were with him, and he bathed every day: he appeared calm and resigned, and had always in his presence twenty counsellors or chiefs. Ambassadors came to him on affairs of importance from distant countries, either to deliver tribute, or with offerings which he dispatched. I recollect that however great the prince or chief might be, before he entered the king's presence he took off his rich dresses, and put on a plain one of the coarse manufacture of nequen, and in this habit, and barefooted, approached the royal apartments,

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which he entered, not directly, but making a circuit by the wall : and having come, with his eyes cast down upon the ground, into the presence of the king, he made three profound bows, and addressed him, calling him, " Lord, my lord, great lord." He then displayed before him a cloth, whereon was painted and represented the business on which he came, the particulars of which he pointed out to him with little rods, or wands, delicately wrought and polished. During this time two old lords floundered by the king, and as soon as they had attentively considered all the particulars, they gave their opinions upon it to Montezuma, who dispatched the affair with a few words. The person who had brought it, then, without making any reply, withdrew from the king's presence, making three profound bows, and keeping his face towards the throne till out of sight ; and as soon as he was out of the royal apartments, he put on his rich dresses, and walked about the city.

The messengers, who, as it has been mentioned, were dispatched with the royal signet, to arrest and bring to Mexico the officers of whom our general had complained, soon returned with them. On their arrival and being brought into their monarch's presence, I do not know what passed, but he immediately sent them to Cortes to do with them as he thought fit. Being examined when the king was not by, they avowed all that had happened, and said they did it by the orders of Montezuma, which were, that they should if necessary recur to force, to obtain the tribute due, and attack the Spaniards if they appeared in support of his refractory subjects. Montezuma being charged by Cortes with this which now appeared, he endeavoured to exculpate himself as well as he could; but Cortes told him, that although his participation in the guilt of his officers was evident, and although the

orders of our monarch were to punish with death all who inflicted death, yet such was his regard for him, that he would sooner lose his own life than do his Majesty an injury. All these assurances however could not remove the fears of Montezuma.

As to the officers, Corpses sentenced them to be burnt alive in front of

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of the palace of their king; this was immediately proceeded upon, and during the time of its taking place, and in order to prevent any impediment occurring, he also ordered that Montezuma should be put in irons. When this was doing, the unfortunate king could no longer suppress his emotions at the indignity, but wept aloud. In this situation he remained until the execution was over, at which time Cortes, attended by his five captains, went to his apartment, and with his own hands freed him from the irons, assuring him that he was dearer to him than even a brother, and that he trusted soon to be able to make his dominions exceed double their present extent ; and also, that if he wished to go to his palace, he was at perfect liberty to do so. Montezuma's spirit was now broke, and the tears ran down his cheeks while Cortes was speaking ; he declined the offer with thanks, knowing well the emptiness of his words, and added that he considered it most prudent to remain where he was, in order to prevent disturbance and insurrection in the city. What we understood and certainly was the case, was, that Cortes had caused the interpreters to say that though he was inclined to release him, the other officers never would allow it. As soon as Montezuma had given his answer, Cortes threw his arms round his neck, and protested that he loved him as himself. The king then asked of him his page Orteguilla, a youth who had already learned the language, and Cortes immediately complied with his request, whereby Orteguilla afterwards remained about the person of the king, a circumstance very useful both to him and to us. Montezuma was very partial to the youth, from whom he was constantly used to enquire particulars relative to Europe, and Orteguilla from his knowledge of the language, was able to communicate to us whatever he observed, that was of importance for us to know. Thus Montezuma remained anxious to us, seated with the greatest respect, no officer or soldier, nor even Cortes himself, coming into his presence, or passing him, without pulling off his helmet, and he always treated us most kindly and courteously.

The officers of Montezuma who were publicly executed as I have

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related, were four in number. -f* Their names were Quetzalpopoqt was the principal, Coatl, Quiabuitle, and another whom I have forgotten, nor is it of much importance. As soon as this circumstance was known through the different provinces of New Spain, it struck universal terror, and the people on the coast returned to their submission. Now let the curious consider upon our heroic actions ; first, in destroying

ing our (hips and therewith all hope of retreat, fecondly, in entering the city of Mexico after the alarming warnings that we had received^ thirdly, in daring to make prifoner the great Montezuma king of all that country, in his own capital, and in the centre of his own palace, furrounded by his numerous guards, and fourthly, in publicly burning his officers in front of his palace, and putting the king in irons during the execution. Now that I am old, I frequently revolve, and reflect upon the events of that day, which appear to me as fre(h as if they had jufl pafTcd, fuch is the impreilion they have made upon my mind. I fay, that it was not we who did thefe things, but that all was guided by the hand of God, for what men on earth would otherwife have ventured, their numbers not amounting to four hundred and fifty, to have feized and put in irons a mighty monarch, and publicly burned his officers for obeying his orders, in a city larger than Venice, and at a diftance of a thoufand and five hundred leagues from their native country !!! There is much matter for reflection in this, and it merits to be detailed otherwife than in the dry manner in which I relate it.

Cortes now thought it neceffary to appoint a commandant at Villa Rica. For this purpofe he chofe Alonzo de Grado, an indifferent foldier, but a perfon of good underftanding, who fpoke well, and was of a handfome appearance; he was alfo a rnufician, and an excellent penman. He was always in oppofition to Cortes relative to our advance to Mexico, and was the principal orator on thofe occafions. Cortes

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+ They were fevcnteen in all : Quetzalpopoca lord of Nauhtlan, his fon, and fifteen other noblemen.

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w^en he gave him the appointment good-humouredly faid to him,
 ** Now Senior de Grado, go and poffeffs your wilhes; you are com-
 ** mandant of Villa Rica, and fee that you fortify it well; and mind I
 " charge you on no account to go out and fight the wicked Indians,
 ** nor let them kill you as they did Juan de Efcacante.** This Cortes
 laid ironically, knowing the condition of the man, and that all the
 world could not have got him to put his nofe out of the town. We
 who were liftening to this, and perceived his drift, could hardly for-
 bear laughing aloud. He then gave him his inftrudtions to behave
 kindly to his Indian neighbours, and not permit them to be robbed or
 opprdled : he alfo defired him to caufe the fmiths who were in that
 fettlement to make two large chains, out of the old iron of the (hips,
 and fend them to him immediately, and to lofe no time in proceeding
 with the conftru(5tion of the wooden fort. When De Grado arrived
 at his government, he afFed:ed to carry on bufinefs with a lofty de-
 meanour, and fent to the neighbouring Indians who were at peace with
 us, requiring them to give him gold, and female Haves ; paying no at-
 tention whatever to the fortifications, but pacing his time in feafting
 and play. What was worfe, he combined with the adherents of Ve-
 lafquez, offering to put him in poffeffion of the poft he was entrusted
 with. Thefe things being foon communicated to Cortes, he repented

of his imprudent step in appointing to such a place a man whose bad disposition he well knew : he also foresaw that Velafquez must sooner or later find out that he had sent agents to Old Castille, and would probably send a force against us. For these reasons it was necessary that he should have a person of confidence in the command at Villa Rica ; he therefore sent Sandoval, who was now alguazil mayor, with whom went Pedro de Ircio already mentioned, who gained the confidence of Sandoval, a goodnatured man, by diverting him with anecdotes of the families of the Count de Urena, and Don Pedro Giron, in which he had served. De Ircio by these means gained his favor so completely, that he never ceased promoting him, till he had got him the rank of captain: instead of which promotion, for the licenses he gave his ^ngue, and for which Sandoval at times reprehended him, he deserved

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to have been well punished. Sandoval on his arrival at Villa Rica immediately arrested De Grado and sent him prisoner to Mexico, under a guard of Indians, according to the orders of Cortes. The new governor soon made himself very popular among all the natives by his affability and humanity, and he immediately began to put the fort into proper repair. Cortes would not see De Grado on his arrival, but confined him in the stocks, where he remained two days. I recoiled; that the timber whereof these were made has a strong smell of garlic. De Grado, who was a man of great plausibility at last made his peace, and was employed, not in a military capacity, but in one conformable to his talents, being given the office of contador, which had been held by Avila, who was sent as procurador to the Island of St. Domingo. Sandoval had orders to send the iron-work necessary for the construction of two vessels, which he punctually executed, and the various articles arrived safely in Mexico.

Cortes, regularly every day after mass, went to wait on Montezuma, attended by all his officers, and asked him what he would be pleased to order that they could execute; to which the king used to answer, thanking him, that he found himself perfectly to his satisfaction. Thus, from one subject to another they usually fell into discourse about our holy faith, and the power of our emperor. At other times, Montezuma and Cortes used to play at a certain game which they call Totoloque, in which they take aim with golden balls at certain objects made also of gold. I remember once in particular, when Cortes and Alvarado were playing against Montezuma and his nephew, Montezuma jocularly said that he would not allow Tonatiuh, meaning Alvarado, to call on account of his handsome person, that word meaning the sun, to mark, expressing himself in such a manner as to imply, that Alvarado did not say that which was true ; at which we all burst laughing, because Alvarado was a little addicted to exaggeration. When Cortes gained, he gave his winnings to those about Montezuma, and when the king gained he did the same to our soldiers of the guard. Indeed he never let a day pass, without making presents of some kind

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to'all of U9, but more particularly to Velafquez deXeon who was the captain of his guard, and always paid him great attention. One night a foldier named Truxillo, was guilty of a certain piece of difrefped: within his hearing,, at which Montezuma was highly offended, and enquired of the page who the perfon was. The page told him that he was a man of low birth, who knew na better. He tlicn proceeded to tell him of our different ranks and qualities, about which he was very curious. On the next day he ordered Truxillo to be brought into his prefence, and after having reproved him, he made him a prefent worth about five crowns. The words of Montezuma made lefs impieffion on the foldier than his gold, and on the next night the fellow was guilty of the fame piece of impolitenefs, in order to get more. Of this Montezuma complained to Velafquez, who ordered the man to be relieved, and feverely reprimanded him. Another foldier one night complained that he was ill, curfing this dog of an Indian,, meaning Montezuma, yiho gave them fb much trouble. This being overheard by the king, who difcovered ^what he had faid, he complained thereof to Cortes, by whofe command the man was immediately whipped, notwithstanding he was a very good foldier; his name was Pedro Lopez. After this example ftri<5l difcipline and filence were kept by the guard, to the great fatifad:ion of the king, who was very kind to us , knew us all, and fpoke to us by our names. I was at this time a ftripling, and always behaved to him with great refpedt ; his page had told him that I had been twice upon his coafts before the arrival of Cortes, and I had defired the page to mention to him, that inftead of gold or mantles, he would oblige by giving me a handfome Indian girl. This requeft he graciously complied with, calling me to him and faying, '* Bernal ** Diaz del Caffillo, the young woman I prefent to you is the daughter ** of one of my principal nobility; treat her well, and her friends will ** give you gold and mantles, as much as you can defire." I kifled his Majefty*s hand, thanking him for his favors, and praying God to proffer him; to which Montezuma replied faying, ** It feems to me ** that Del Caffillo is of noble condition." Wherewith he ordered me three plates of gold, and two loads of mantles.

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I will now relate fome more particulars of his courfe of life. In the morning, having paid his devotions, he eat a flight breakfafl, not of meats but vegetables, fuch as agi or pepper, and then remained a full hour hearing buinefs, in the manner I have already defcribed. The number of judges or counfellors who attended upon him at thofe times amounted to twenty. His numerous miftrelle* he ufed to marry to his officers and particular friends ; fome of them fell to our lot ; mine was called Donna Francifca; a lady of high birth, as (he (hewed by her manners. Thus fometimes amuling himfelf, and fometiracs meditating on his iituation, the great Montezuma paffed the days of his confinement amongft us.

The materials being arrived, Cortes requested that the king would give him permission to construct: two vessels, for the purpose of amusing, himself upon the water, and also that he would order his carpenters to assist. The oak timber was only at the distance of about four leagues, and Montezuma having given his consent, the work went on so expeditiously, by the number of Indian carpenters, and was so ably conducted by our principal builder Martin Lopez, that in a very short space of time, they were built, launched, and rigged, with an awning over each,

Montezuma at this time requested permission from Cortes to pay his devotions, and perform sacrifices, in order that his friends and subjects might see that he lived among us by the order of his gods, and his own choice. Cortes returned for answer, that in so doing, it was his business: to beware how he did any thing whereby to lose his life; for that he would send a guard of officers and soldiers with him, giving them strict orders to kill him instantly in case there appeared any thing like a commotion. With this caution he gave him his permission to visit his temple. It was also at the same time signified to him, that no human sacrifice would be permitted; to which Montezuma having agreed, he set out in his usual pomp, and accompanied by four of our captains, Velazquez de Leon, Alvarado, Avila, and De Lugo, with a

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hundred and fifty soldiers. Our reverend father of the order of mercy also attended for the purpose of preventing human sacrifice, Montezuma on his arrival near the temple came out of his litter, and was supported up to it as usual, being met by a number of priests. They had on the preceding night sacrificed four Indians, nor could all our endeavours prevent that inhuman practice, which we were for the present obliged to connive at, fearing to do any thing which would cause an insurrection. After Montezuma had passed a short time at his devotions he came down from the temple, and returned to our quarters with great good humour, making presents to all of us who attended him upon the occasion.

The vessels were now afloat upon the lake, fully equipped, and manned with expert sailors, and they obeyed both sail and oar, so as to answer our utmost expedition. When Montezuma was informed of it, he requested Cortes to permit him to go hunting in a certain district, which was prohibited to all others on pain of death. Cortes assented, warning him that his life paid the forfeit of any attempt at a rescue, and he offered him the use of his ships to go there, which Montezuma was greatly pleased with, and accepted.

The swift sailing vessel conveyed the king and his suite, the other was occupied by his son and a number of the nobility. They were attended also by a vast number of boats, great and small. Cortes ordered out a party composed of Velazquez de Leon, Alvarado, De Oli, and Avila, all men who had blood in their eyes, and two hundred soldiers, giving them orders to be very watchful over Montezuma: four brass guns with their ammunition and artillery-men, were also

embarked.

The wind blew very fresh, our failors took delight in exhibitmg their fkill, and the fliips fecmed to fly acrofs the lake, leaving the veflfels of the natives far behind. Montezuma being arrived where he was to hunt, landed for that purpofe, and as the place abounded with game,

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lie had foon killed a great quantity of various kinds, fuch as deer, hares, and rabbits. After having amufed himfelf for fome time in this manner, he returned on board the veflel, and fet fail for Mexico. We difcharged our artillery during the voyage, which afforded him amufement and fatifad:ion, and he delighted us all by his affable and friendly behaviour ; nor is it poffible to defcribe, how noble he was in every thing he did, nor the refpedl in which he was held by every one about him. One day, three of our captains were in his prefence when a hawk entered the apartments purfuing a quail, which kind of birds, as well as doves, bred in and about the palaces. As our officers and foldiers were admiring the beauty and flight of the hawk, and talking upon the fubjedt in general, Montezuma was curious to know what we were faying, which being explained to him, and alfo how we could tame hawks and Ay them from our hands, Montezuma faid that he 'would order the bird to be caught for us, and giving immediate directions to that purpofe, by the next morning his hunters had caught and ^brought to us the identical bird.

Cacamatzin the king's nephew, and prince of the city of Tezcuco, the largefl next to Mexico in the empire, having received information that the king had been now many days kept prifoner by the Spaniards, and that they had alfo opened the treafury of his anceftors, in order to fecure it by a timely effort, convoked his vafals, and alfo the neighbouring princes. Amongft them was the lord of Matakingo, a great warrior, and near relation of Montezuma, who was faid to have pretcnfion to the throne. Thefe princes and chiefs he fummoned, in order to induce them to affemble their forces, and fall upon us in a body. When they were met in confultation upon this propofition, the prince whom I before mentioned to have had pretenfions to the throne, made the fupport of them the condition of his entering into the confederacy, Cacamatzin then brought forward a fimilar claim, declaring that he would go through the bulinefs with his own force, for which purpofe he made arrangements with his friends in the city of Mexico. This coming to the knowledge of Montezuma, he immediately forbid any

fuch

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Jfuch fteps being taken, and communicated to Cortes the information- which he had received. The tranfa<5tion was akeady in a certain degree known to us, but not to the full extent. Cortes in confequence thereof

propofed to take with him a body of Mexicans to attack and deflroy the city of Tezcuco, but this determination not being fatifad:ory to Montezuma, Cortes fent to Cacamatzin, defiring him to defifl from his warhke preparations, as he wiflied him for his friend. Cacamatzin repUed that he was not to be duped hke others by plaufible words ; that he exped:ed foon to fee us, and then we might fay to him what we would. Cortes once again fent to Cacamatzin warning him not to proceed to hoflilities, the confequence of which would be the lofs of the king's life; to which this chief returned for anfwer, that neither the king nor Cortes were of any confequence to him, for that he was determined to pejfeverc in his intentions.

He had at this time a brother in Mexico, who had been obliged to fly thither on account of a family quarrel. This being known to us, our general propofed to Montezuma to call the reigning prince to his court, where we could feize on and detain him until he became more amenable, or if we thought proper elevate the brother now in Mexico to his place. Montezuma agreed to fend for him, adding, that if he refufed to come, he would give dire(5tions for having him brought by force. For this Cortes returned him thanks with many profeillions of fincere regard, affuring him that he ftaid by him entirely for his prote<5lion, and that for his part he fliould be happy to accompany him to his palace, but that he could not get his captains to confent to it. The king thanked him, and faid that he would immediately fend to inform Cacamatzin of his true fituation, and how it was adopted of his own free will, and by the advice of his gods 5 for Montezuma was perfe<5lly well acquainted with the diiTimulation pradifed by Cortes, and that it was only done in order to found him. Montezuma according to his promife fent a meffage to the prince, who perfedly underftood the manner in which it was obtained, and declared his determination to Attack us in four days, faying, that his uncle the king was a pitiful

monarch,

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monarch, and no better than a hen, for not -having attacked us as he advifed him at the pafs of Chalco. That for his part he was determined to avenge the wrongs that had been committed by us upon Montezuma and the country, and that if in fo doing the throne of Mexico fell to his lot, he would liberally reward thofe who fupported him.

Some of the chiefs who heard thefe declarations had fcruples upon the fubjed:, obje<5ting to go to war without the orders of their fove-reign. This filled the prince with rage, efpecially when they propofed to fend to him for his inftrudtions ; he caufed three of them to be taken prifoners, and the others who were prefent intimidated thereby, declared their determination to fupport him. He then fent a melTage to Montezuma, repreffenting the difgrace in which he was fallen, by con-neding himfelf with wizards and magicians, and that he would come and put us all to death. Montezuma was highly offended at this, and taking off his feal, he entrufled it to the care of fix of his captains, commanding- them to go and fhew it to certain perfons whom he' named, as knowing they were not on terms of friendfliip with the prince, and to fignify to them his orders, that they fhould feize Caca-

matzin and fend him into his prefence. Accordingly they entered where the prince was, difcourring with fome of his chiefs, relative to his expedition, and having fecured him, together with five others, embarking them in a piragua, they brought them to Mexico, where Cacamatzin was placed in one of the royal litters, and conducted into the prefence of Montezuma. The king, after having reproached him for his difobedience and treafon, delivered him to Cortes, to do what he thought proper with him, releafing the other prifoners. Cortes thanked the great Montezuma, and made arrangements, that the brother of Cacamatzin fhould fucceed to the principality, by the name of Don Carlos, and he was accordingly invell:ed with this dignity in the prefence of Montezuma. The other chiefs who had joined in the meal urcs of Cacamatzin abfented thcmfelves from court through fear, but were fhortly made prifoners, and brought to Mexico in chains. Thus was. concluded this important bufincfs, to our entire f^tisfa(5lion. -We con-

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tinned ftill paying our court to Montezuma, in the manner fo great and generous a prince deferved, never fitting down, not even Cortes himfelf, in his prefence, until the king commanded it. The converfation frequently turned upon our holy religion, and the truths thereof feemed to be every day making more imprelhon upon the king's mind.

Cortes now entered again upon the fubje(5l of Montezuma's acknowledging the fovcreignty of our Emperor, to which Montezuma replied, that he would fummon the princes his vaffals, which he accordingly did, and nearly the whole of them attended within the fpace often days. Among the few who abfented themfelves was that relation of Montezuma's already fpoken of, as of extraordinary prowefs in > war, who returned for anfwer, that he would neither come, or pay any more tribute. The king was incensed at this, and fent officers to apprehend him, but without fuccefs. The princes being aiTembled and the little page prefent, Montezuma reminded them of the ancient prophecies, whereby they were told that from thofe parts where the fun rifcs, men wefe to come to rule the country, and that with their arrival fhould ceafe the empire of the Mexicans. The king added, that for his part he believed we were the people fpoken of; that he had facrificcd to his gods, requefting in vain an anfwer from them, but they referred him to the former ones, and commanded him to afk no more, whereby he concluded their will to be that obedience fhould be yielded to the king of Caftille, to whom thcfe ftrangers were vaiTals. '* I '* now," continued he, ** befcech you to give them fome token of ** fubmiffion; they require it of me, let no one refufe. For eighteen ** years that I have reigned, I have been a kind monarch to you, you *• have been faithful fubjecSts to me j fince my gods will have it fo, ** indulge me by this one inftance of obedience." The princes, with many iighs and tears, promifed Montezuma, who was ftill more aiFenSled than them, that they would do whatever he defircd. He then fent a meftage to Cortes, telling him, that on the enfuing day, he and his princes would tender their allegiance to his Majefty our Emperor. This thtry accordingly did at the time appointed, in the prefence of all

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our officers, and many of our soldiers, not one of whom could refrain from weeping, in beholding the agitation and distresses of the great and generous Montezuma.

Cortes and his captains being in the presence of Montezuma, conversing about indifferent subjects, the general took an opportunity to ask some questions relative to the gold mines. Montezuma told him that the richest were in the province of Zacatula, and he gave an account of the manner in which the gold was obtained, which was, by washing the earth, the small grains of metal sinking to the bottom. He also informed Cortes that they obtained it in two rivers in the province of Guztepeque, where the natives did not obey him, but that if Cortes would send some troops thither, he would order his officers to conduct them. Cortes thanked the king, and pitched upon the pilot Umbria, and two soldiers to examine the mines of Zacatula. To those in the Chinantecan and Zapotecan territories he sent a captain named Pizarro, a young man, his relation; but at that time the names of Pizarro and Peru were equally unknown. The latter took with him four soldiers used to mining, and four noble Mexicans. Montezuma then presented Cortes with a map, admirably painted on cloth, of the whole northern coast as far as Tabasco, an extent of a hundred and forty leagues. Among the rivers was that of Guacacualco, which Cortes determined to have examined, and Diego de Ordaz offering himself, was accepted by Cortes contrary to his own inclination, as he was a person from whose advice and judgment he derived great advantage. Montezuma told De Ordaz on his departure, that his power did not extend where he was going, but that if he wished for the assistance of his frontier governors, he was welcome to take them.

The first who returned was Gonzalo de Umbria. He brought with him gold to the value of three hundred crowns, and reported that the mines would be very valuable, if they were as expert at the business there, as in St. Domingo or Cuba. Two principal persons of that country also attended him to Mexico, and brought a present of gold of

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about a hundred crowns value, offering to become his Majesty's subject. The having ascertained the situation of the mines was matter of great satisfaction to Cortes. Umbria described the country in which he had been as very rich and populous, and indeed he and his companions seemed to have returned no way the worse for their journey, and Cortes intended that it should be so, in order to make up their former differences.

Diego de Ordaz reported that he had passed through very populous districts, and had been universally well received; that he had met with

bodies of the troops of Montezuma on the frontiers, of whose outrage^ the inhabitants made heavy complaints, for which De Ordas feverely reprehended the military chiefs, threatening them with the punifliment of the lord of Nauhtlan. Proceeding towards the river he was hof-pitably received, by the caciques and inhabitants of the neighbouring country. On founding the mouth of the river they found three fathom water at low-tide, in the fhalloweft part, and within the bar, water * fufficient for large iliips, it ftill deepening as they went higher up. He alfo found a place fit for a naval eflablifhment, where the natives came to him, and offered themfelves as vafals to his Majeily, complaining bitterly of Montezuma and his officers ; they alfo pointed out to our people the place, where, in a late ad:ion they had killed many of his troops, And which they had in confequence named **Cuilonemequi," that is to fay the place of the flaughter of the Mexicans, giving them a moil opprobrious epithet. He further reprented the foil of the country as fit for cattle and tillage, and the port as well fituated for trade with Cuba, St. Domingo, and Jamaica, but difadvajitagcous in regard to its diftancc from Mexico, and the MoralTes in its neighbourhood. Pizarro returned from Tuftepeque with gold in grains to the value of a thoufand crowns. He jrelated how he afcended into the mountains inhabited by the iChinantecans, who fallied out under arms, and refufed to fuffer the Mexicans to come among them, vowing that they would kill .them all if they attempted it; but our people were admitted willingly, and they there obtained gold in its native ftate with a jopgh furface. Pizarro

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brought with him certain of the chiefs of the country, who wifhed to renounce the Mexican yoke, and become fubje(5ts of his Majefty. Thefe Cortes received moPt kindly, and difmilTed to their homes with a promife of fupport and protediion. He then enquired for the other foldiers; to which Pizarro repUed that the country being rich, and the people well inclined to us, he had left them to make a plantation of cocoa and to colledl ftock and birds ; as alfo for the purpofe of exploring the rivers and mines. Cortes faid nothing at the time, but feverely reprimanded him in private, for going beyond his orders, and employing the foldiers in fuch ridiculous purfuits. He alfo immediately fent off a meffcnger, with orders to them to return to th^ir head quarters.

Cortes now demanded of Montezuma a general contribution of gold to be made through the whole extent of his territories, to our emperor, and alfo that the king fhould deliver to us his treafurc for the fame piu'pofe. Montezuma immediately fent officers to thofc diftrids where the mines were, requiring a quantity of plates of gold, of the tifual fize paid in tribute, two of thefe being fent as a ftandard. He at this time however remarked to Cortes, that from many of his diftrids gold was not to be cxpcdled in any confiderable quantity, the people only poffeffing fuch toys as had been tranfmitted to them from their anceffors. Much gold was immediately tranfmitted from the rich provinces, but when the order was received by the refractory lord who was nearly related to Montezuma, the anfwer which he returned was, that he would pay no tribute, for that he had as good a right to the

throne of Mexico as Montezuma himself. This greatly enraged the king, who immediately sending trusty officers with his token, they apprehended and brought this chief to Mexico. When he came into the presence of the king he behaved with such insolence to him as appeared to border upon madness, and Cortes learning these particulars, and also that Montezuma had ordered him to be put to death, interceded in his favor, and obtained leave to keep him in his custody. As soon as he had an interview, he addressed this chief very kindly.

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and endeavoured to make a friend of him, offering him his liberty, which however Montezuma would not accede to, but desired he should be put in chains as the others had been.

In twenty days from the time of the orders being issued, the tribute was collected. The king then summoned Cortes, with the captains and soldiers who usually formed his guard, and addressed us saying, ** Know, that I am indebted to your great king, and esteem him, for ** having sent an embassy to me from such a distance, and also because *' I am convinced that according to what we have heard from our ancestors, he is to rule us; a prophecy which is confirmed by the declarations of our gods. Take this gold, which is all that could be *' collected on so short a notice, and also the treasure which I derive *' from my ancestors, and which I know you have sent to ** your monarch, and let it be recorded in your annals, that this was ** the tribute of his vassal Montezuma. I will give you for your ** emperor some most valuable jewels named calchihuis, each of which ** is worth two loads of gold; I will also send three tubes used for *' (hooting darts or pellets, so richly adorned with jewels that he will ** be pleased to see them, and this which I now give is the rest of the " treasure which has remained with me." We all took off our helmets, and returned thanks to the great Montezuma for his liberality and munificence, which Cortes promised that he would represent in the strongest terms to his Majesty.

After some more conversation, Montezuma commanded his officers to deliver to us the treasure which was in the concealed apartment. This was accordingly done, and we were for the space of three days constantly employed in taking it to pieces, from the various manners in which it was worked up ; in this we were also assisted by the royal goldsmiths from Efcapuzalco. When thus separated, the articles of gold were formed in three heaps, weighing upwards of six hundred thousand crowns, exclusive of the various other valuables, the gold in plates and bars, and the metal in its rough state from the mines. The

22 goldsmiths

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goldsmiths melted down the metal which was in the heaps, and ran it

into bars of the breadth of three fingers. When this was done, another present was received from Montezuma, so rich that it was worthy of admiration, exclusive of the jewels called calchihuis, the ornamented tubes covered with jewels and pearls, the beautiful embroideries of pearls and feathers, and the penaches, and plumage, a recital whereof would be endless. The bars of gold were stamped with the imperial arms by the approbation of us all, and as to the rich ornaments, it was judged best that they should not be taken to pieces. We also caused weights to be made of iron for the purpose of ascertaining the quantity of gold in the bars. They were not perfectly exact, but perhaps an ounce more or less, being arrobas, half arrobas, and down to four ounces. The officers of his Majesty valued the gold, altogether, and exclusive of silver and ornaments, at six hundred thousand crowns; but some said that it amounted to more. Nothing farther was then thought necessary, than to divide his Majesty's fifth, and distribute the shares to the officers and soldiers; Cortes however proposed that the division should be postponed until more treasure was brought in, and more exact weights made, but the soldiers were clamorous for an immediate division, for they perceived that since the various articles had been taken to pieces, above a third part was already gone; for Cortes, the captains, and others, were conveying it off and concealing it. At length it was determined to weigh it, and to postpone the division until the ensuing day. It was accordingly so done, and exclusive of the ornaments and plates of gold, it was found to amount to upwards of six hundred thousand crowns. I will now relate how it was divided, and how the moiety of it remained with Cortes and certain others.

In the partition of the treasure Cortes first laid aside his Majesty's fifth; secondly, for himself, another fifth; thirdly, a portion of the gold to reimburse the expenses in the Island of Cuba, and also for the naval expenditure incurred by Velazquez, and the contribution of the ships; fourthly, for the expenses of our agents in Spain; fifthly, for our soldiers in Villa Rica; sixthly, for the losses of killed horses; seventhly,

eightly,

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ninthly, for the reverend father and the captains; tenthly, double shares for the cavalry, musketeers, and crossbow-men. Thus by the time all these drafts were made, what remained for each soldier was hardly worth stooping for!! Many refused to take their shares, and the whole, nearly, remained with Cortes. We were obliged to be silent, for to whom could we appeal for justice? Some at length took their shares at a hundred crowns, and then cried out for more; these men's mouths Cortes flopped, giving privately a little to one, and a little to another, with promises in abundance on condition that they kept themselves quiet. That which was allotted to the soldiers in Villa Rica went no better, as shall be related in its place, and such was the refusal of the division of Montezuma's treasure.

Our captains got chains of gold made for them by the king's workmen; Cortes had also similar works executed for him, together with a service of plate. Many of our soldiers who had lined their pockets well did the same, and deep gaming went on, day and night,

with cards made out of the heads of drums ; and thus we pafTed our time in Mexico.

Quitting for the prefent the fubjedt of Montezuma's gold, badly divided, and worfe employed, I will relate what happened to a poor fellow, one Cardenas a pilot and a native of Triana. He had ai wife and children, and like many others of us little or nothing to give them. When he perceived that all this immenfe treafure of Montezuma's had dwindled into a fhare of a hundred crowns, and that he, after all his battles, had nothing to expert in future but hard blows, it made fuch an impreffion on him, and he expreffed himfelf fo loudly, that it could not but come to the ears of Cortes. Accordingly when he heard all that, and much more, which had been faid, he called us together, and in a long fet fpeech gave us a great many honied words, which he had an extraordinary facility of doing, wondering how we could be fo fo-licitous about a little paltry gold, when the whole country would foon be ours, with all its rich mines, wherewith there was enough to make

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us great lords and princes and I know not what. To the more loud he gave fome fmall prefents, and to Cardenas, he fecretly promifed to fend three hundred crowns for his wife and children. This Cardenas was afterwards very troublefome to him.

As all men are avaricious, as with moft the delire of acquiring increafes with what they poffefs, and as it was well known that a great quantity of valuable pieces of gold was taken out of the treafury, fufpicion naturally fell on feveral. Juan Velafquez de Leon had then fome large chains of gold, and trinkets and ornaments of that metal, in the hands of the king*s workmen, and the treafurer Mexia knowing of it, and alfo how he had procured the gold, laid claim to them; but De Leon refufed, faying it had been given him by Cortes, before it was ran into bars; to which the treafurer replied, that Cortes had concealed enough, and taken enough from his foldiers already, without giving him fo great a quantity. The quarrel rofe fo high between them, being both valiant men, that they drew their fwords, and before they could be parted each had received two wounds. Cortes on hearing it ordered them to be put in arrell, and in chains ; this he did to keep up appearances, having privately fpoken to De Leon who was his particular friend, and defired him to fubmit quietly; and the other he releafed in confideration of his office as treafurer. Velafquez was a ftrong man, and ufed to walk much backwards and forwards in the apartment where he was confined. Montezuma hearing the rattling of his chains, enquired who it was; and being told, he interceded with Cortes for him, on the nrft opportunity. Cortes laughing replied that Velafquez was a mad fellow, who if he did not keep him confined, would go up and down the country robbing his majefly's fubjecSts of their gold. The good king faid, if it was only on that account he was detained, he would fupply his wants, and begged that he might be releafed. Cortes affected to make a favpr of it, but at length agreed, declaring that he would banifh him from head quarters. Accordingly he went as far as Cholula, but in fix days returned, richer, by the king's gold, than

when he went. After this Cortes and Mexia were never great friends.

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The king at this time made a propofal of marriage to Cortes, offering him one of the princeſſes his daughters. This offer Cortes received as it merited, and fuggeſted the propriety of her being previouſly initiated into the myſteries of our holy religion, by being baptized ; to which the king who was on all occaſions compliant, immediately affented. He however continued as attached as ever to his worſhip and facriſſices, which put Cortes and his captains to a dilemma; but it wa[^] thought moſt confiſtent with their duties as chriſtians to incur the danger of infurre⁽⁵tion, and deſtroy the idols of the Mexicans, in order to plant the true croſs in their place, or if that was found; impoſſible[^] [^]c reſolved to content ourſelves for the preſent with making a chapel for the chriſtian worſhip in the temple. Seven officers and foldiers attended Cortes, when he waited on Montezuma to ſignify to him our reſolution. When it was made known to him, and he ſaw the violence with which the meaſure was determined to be carried into eſſed:, he earneſtly begged permiffion to conſult his prieſts, and Cortes appearing touched with his ſituation, made ſigns to the officers and foldiers to retire, and leave the king with him and the reverend father. He then told him, that in order to accommodate the matter more to his ſatisſaction, he would endeavour to prevail with his officers, for the preſent to offer no violence to the idols, provided a part of the great temple was appropriated to the purpoſe of a chapel, and an altar and crucifix allowed to be placed there; which being once done, his Majeſty would in a ſhort time be convinced of the errors and falſehood of his worſhip. To this Montezuma with much agitation, and the appearance of deep ſorrow, heavily conſented; and in conſequence, an altar and crucifix being ere⁵led, maſs was ſolemnly ſaid, and [^] pcrſon was appointed to take care of the chapel.

The time of our ſtay in this city was one ſeries of alarms, ſufficient in themſelves to have deſtroyed the lives of thoſe who were not ſupported by the divine interpoſition. It appeared, that in conſequence of our late meaſure, and the repreſentations of the prieſts ading upon the prejudices of the people, our dangers were now thickening on us.

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Their gods threatened to leave them unleſs we were put to death, for having violated their temple, and it was the determination to obey their will. This reſolution was communicated to Montezuma by his prieſts, and all his chief warriors, who added to their religious ſubje⁶t of complaint, every other which they could colled:, relative to our condu⁶l ſince we arrived in Mexico. The page Orteguilla alſo at this time came to inform Cortes of ſome alarming circumſtances, [^]uch as a number of ſecret conferences which he had obſerved, between Montezuma and his

nobility and chiefs, the angry and melancholy countenance of the king, and other circumstances highly important and interesting to us. Cortes immediately on hearing this, taking with him five of his captains, and his interpreters, waited on Montezuma. The king seemed much distressed, and informed him, that he was grieved to have lately learned, that it was the determination of his gods that we should all be put to death, or expelled from Mexico; he, therefore, being our sincere friend, recommended to us on no account to run the risk, but to save our lives, whilst it could be done, by a speedy retreat. Cortes and the rest could not conceal their uneasiness on hearing this, and no wonder. The general, however, immediately replied, that he was on that occasion much grieved at two things; one was, his not having vessels ready for the purpose of returning, the other, that in case of his doing so, he should be under the necessity of taking his Majesty with him, in order to present him to his sovereign the Emperor. He therefore intreated Montezuma, that he would restrain his priests and warriors, until he should have time to build three ships, saying if this were not acceded to, we were all resolved to die to the very last man; and as a proof of the sincerity of his determination to depart, he declared, that he would immediately send his shipbuilders to fell wood and construct the vessels, on the coast. The determination of Cortes to bring Montezuma with him, made that monarch more distressed and dejected than ever; Cortes then repeated his assurance of no unnecessary delay, and desired the assistance of the king's carpenters in constructing the vessels; at the same time requesting his influence with the priests and nobility, to prevent any insurrection in the city, and his endeavours

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to appease his gods, provided it were not by human sacrifices.

Cortes immediately proceeded to execute his determination of building the three ships, contrary to what is related by Gomara, who says that the whole was a feint, in order to lull Montezuma and his subjects. But on the contrary, Martin Lopez, the principal carpenter, who is now living, has assured me that he really, and in good earnest, did set about the work, and that the vessels were actually on the stocks. During this time we remained very uneasy and sad, in the city of Mexico, from the precariousness of our situation, expelling every moment to be attacked. Our apprehensions were increased by the informations obtained by Donna Marina, and the terror and tears of the page, who, understanding the language, obtained hints which escaped our knowledge. We kept however good and constant watch on Montezuma, and guard on our quarters, never sleeping out of our armour, and our horses were constantly bridled and saddled all night.

Without meaning to boast: I may say of myself, that my armour was to me as easy as the fofteft down, and such is my custom, that when I now go the rounds of my district, I never take a bed with me unless I happen indeed to be attended by strange cavaliers, in which case I do it only in order to avoid the appearance of poverty, or penuriousness, but by my faith, even when I have one I always throw myself on it in my clothes, such it is to be a true soldier! another peculiarity I have is, that I cannot sleep through the night, but always awaken and get up in order to contemplate the heavens and stars, and

thus I amufe myfelf, walking backwards and forwards, as I ufed to do when on guard, for a good fpace of time, without hat or cap; and glory be to God, I never yet caught cold, nor was a jot the worfe for it. And this the reader mufl pardon me for mentioning, it not being from vanity, but that I wifli him to know what kind of men we, the true bred foldiers, and real conquerors of Mexico were.