

Chapultepec the name of "the royal burial place of the Aztecs." He was succeeded in office by Chimalpopoca ("Smoking Shield"), his brother. He died in 1427, a prisoner in the hands of the chiefs of the Tecpanecas and of Tenayucan. These two tribes had joined their arms against Tenochtitlan, — a breach of faith on the part of the Tecpanecas, for by the terms of their commercial treaty the Mexicans and the Tecpanecas were allied for their mutual protection in case of war.

Izcohuatl or Izcoatzin ("Obsidian-snake"), the son of Acamapichtli by a slave, was next elected tlaca-tecuhtli, and it was under his military leadership that the Mexicans overthrew the power of the Tecpanecas. For by this time the Mexicans had learned something of war, offensive as well as defensive, and besides wishing to punish the Tecpanecas for their treachery in taking up arms in collusion with Tenayucan against Tenochtitlan, they were anxious to free themselves from the burden of taxation imposed upon them by the Tecpanecas under the commercial treaty. Securing the assistance, therefore, of the Culhuas, who had suffered oppression at the hands of the Tecpanecas, and were willing to enter into any plan for their destruction, Izcohuatl

with his fighting-men overthrew the treacherous tribe, destroyed Atzcapotzalco (which was thenceforth made the slave market of Tenochtitlan), leaving a remnant of the tribe to settle at Tlacopan (a name now corrupted into Tacuba), thus giving rise to what has been considered the "*kingdom* of Tlacopan," supplanting the "*kingdom* of Atzcapotzalco." The local government of the Tecpanecas, established at Tlacopan was not disturbed, but they were made tributary to the Mexicans from whom they had before exacted tribute, and the Mexicans acquired unincumbered possession of the springs at Chapultepec, of which they had long had the use. The Mexicans furthermore controlled the military power of the conquered tribe.

The temporary alliance between Tenochtitlan and Culhuacan for the purposes of this war became a permanent military confederacy immediately afterwards, with the Mexicans as the leading power. The Tecpanecas, by the terms of the conquest, were a party to it. It was but natural that, a career of conquest being thus opened, and the power of the Mexicans having been strengthened by the federation of two other tribes, the effort should be made to extend it. The

Xochimilcas, the Chalcas, and the Chinampas (the families residing on the Chinampas, or floating gardens), were by a war wholly unprovoked on their part made to submit to the military control of Tenochtitlan and pay tribute to the Mexicans. Whereupon one tribe only in the Mexican Valley remained hostile to the Mexicans, — the Aculhuas of Tenayucan, — possibly their equals in military strength. These were brought into the confederacy by treaty, thus avoiding any loss of military strength to either which war would have involved. Tenochtitlan maintained the military supremacy in this confederacy, probably because of the superiority of its defensive position, and thus the Tlaca-tecuhtli of Tenochtitlan became the chief warrior of the confederacy. The local governments of Tenayucan and Tlacopan remained undisturbed, for a time at least, the tribute derived from subsequently conquered tribes being divided between the three confederated tribes in the following proportions, — significant of the relative importance of the three pueblos: to Tenochtitlan and Tenayucan each two fifths; to Tlacopan one fifth.

Izcohuatl — who is probably entitled to

no more than a portion of the credit for this consolidation of the military powers of the lake region of the Valley of Mexico equal with that of the other warrior legislators, but who nevertheless receives all of it in history by reason of the royal title conferred upon him by Spanish writers — died in 1436 at an advanced age. He was succeeded by Moteczuma ("Wrathy Chief") I., who was a son of Huitzilihuitl by his marriage with the daughter of the Quauhnahuac chief. He is also called Ilhuicamina, "who-shoots-his-arrow-heavenward," according to some, — "the scanner of the heavens," or "the star-gazer," according to others, — from which latter it is inferred that he added to his military skill the science of astrology. His election was the result of the distinction which he won in the wars with the Tecpanecas, the Xochimilcas, and the Chalcas. He died in 1464, and was succeeded in his office of "chief-of-men" by Axayacatl ("Face-in-the-Water,") the Terrible, a nephew of Acamapichtli. It had by this time become customary upon the induction of a new Tlaca-tecuhtli into office, to sacrifice captives obtained in war with neighboring tribes, and raids were accordingly made for that purpose immediately after the

election. Moteczuma I. is recorded as having done this, and, following his example, Axayacatl descended upon the Pacific coast and penetrated the territories of the Tecuan-tepecas as far as Coatulco (Huatulco), a port frequented by Spanish ships the following century. He secured captives in Tochtepec and Huexotzinco, and levied tribute upon both of these pueblos. But the principal event of his military administration was the overthrow of the pretensions of the pueblo of Tlatelolco. It had been reckoned, in the military confederacy, as part of Tenochtitlan. But in the year 1473 Moquihuix, the last war-chief of Tlatelolco, attempted to organize a conspiracy to supplant Tenochtitlan and become, as it were, the capital of the confederacy. His wife was a relative of Axayacatl and divulged his plans to the Chief-of-Men, and sought refuge with him from her husband's wrath. Moquihuix accomplished no more than the destruction of one of the temples of Tenochtitlan, and fell in the battle which ensued. The Tlatelolcans were terribly punished for their leader's temerity. The body of Moquihuix being brought to Axayacatl, he opened the breast, took out the heart and held it up in triumph, then

offered it to the gods. The rights of separate government and of bearing arms were taken from the Tlatelolcans, and they were made *cargadores* (carriers of supplies) for the Mexicans. They were afterwards relieved from some of the degrading terms of their punishment, and because of a demand for more warriors to carry on the campaigns of the Mexicans for obtaining captives, they were allowed to bear arms.

Axayacatl the Terrible was succeeded in 1477 by Tizoc ("Wounded Leg"), his brother, whose military administration was brief and obscure. One event stands out prominently in the meagre annals of his times,—the defeat of the Mexicans in their attempts to carry their arms into Michoacan. Tizoc was poisoned in 1486, at the instigation of the war-chief of Ixtapalapan. His assassins were publicly executed in the great plaza of Tenochtitlan, and he was succeeded by Ahuizotl ("Water-rat"), another brother of Axayacatl, the first event of whose military administration was the completion of the great temple begun in the time of his predecessor. The ceremonies of dedicating this new temple and of inducting the new "chief-of-men"

into office were attended with a barbaric splendor eclipsing anything preceding it. It is said that seventy-two thousand slaves, taken by him in war against rebellious subjects in Tlacopan, and in raids upon the Zapotecas and other tribes, were sacrificed. Hence it is that he is called "Ahuizotl, the Cruel," and his name is even now used in Mexico as a synonym for cruelty.

It was in 1498 that Ahuizotl, deeming the waters of Lake Texcoco so low as to endanger the defences of Tenochtitlan, and also the free intercourse between that pueblo and Texcoco on the opposite shore, ordered the construction of an aqueduct that would refill the lake from the natural reservoirs in Chapultepec. He succeeded, not only in refilling the lake, but in inundating his city, — the floods rising even in his own bed-chamber and endangering his life; from which incident it might seem that his name, "Water-rat," was prophetic. This is the opening page of a long chapter of struggles with water in the Mexican Valley, wherein the attempt has been made to reduce, rather than increase, the quantity of water.

In 1502 Ahuizotl was succeeded by Mo-

teczuma<sup>1</sup> ("Wrathy Chief") II., who was the son of Axayacatl the Terrible, and was a truly remarkable character, with whom we have much to do. He was thirty-four years of age, and has been by some described as reared to the sacerdotal life, and hence filled with superstitions not without their influence upon the subsequent history of his tribe. But such a statement seems incompatible with the recorded distinctions won for himself in the wars conducted by his father. In the second year of his military administration he led the armies of Mexico-Tenochtitlan upon a campaign against the Tlaxcalans to obtain captives for sacrifice at the dedication of a new temple, built, or at least completed, at that time. The Tlaxcalans (not composing a republic, as has frequently been stated, but a populous tribe occupying such an admirably defended position in the mountains east of Tenochtitlan as to maintain their immunity from the incursions of the Aztecs) defeated the Mexicans, and in the war the son of Moteczuma was slain. Moteczuma

<sup>1</sup> This name, variously spelled by the early Spanish writers, finally settled down as "Moctezuma," and has been anglicized "Montezuma." Later Mexican writers have adopted the orthography used in this book.

succeeded, however, in leading his armies as far as Michoacan on the north and Nicaragua and Honduras on the south, and caused the Mexicans of Tenochtitlan to be feared everywhere throughout the land.

The Tlaca-tecuhtli of Tenochtitlan, though by no means an emperor or king, was the most prominent personage in the land, and the man of the greatest influence when the advent of the Europeans changed the entire aspect of affairs. In the year 1517 Francisco Hernandez de Cordova discovered Yucatan, and the following year news was brought to the Chief-of-Men at Tenochtitlan of ships sailing along the Gulf coast, containing a different race of men from any before seen in Mexico. They comprised the exploring expedition of Juan de Grijalva, the Cuban navigator. While the public mind was exercised over this sudden appearance of the white men, there were signs in the earth and in the sky which led the Aztecs, naturally superstitious as they were, to look forward to some dread calamity, some important crisis in the affairs of their race and government. There were hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions in the Valley of Mexico. A comet appeared in the heavens.

There was an eclipse of the sun. The great temple in Tenochtitlan burned without any cause being ascertained. Ominous dreams afflicted the Tlaca-tecuhtli, and it is even soberly stated that one of his near relatives who had died returned from the grave to visit him. All these signs filled the Aztecs with uneasiness, and they could not avoid connecting these phenomena with the extraordinary appearance of the European ships. The uneasiness increased when in the following spring (1519) a small army of Europeans landed upon the coast, directed their march toward Tenochtitlan, and began the series of events which together comprise that fascinating chapter in the history of the New World, known as THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO.

Before entering upon the history of the Conquest, it would be well to look at the city of Tenochtitlan, as it appeared to the Spaniards in the early part of the sixteenth century. Nearly two centuries of occupation by the Mexicans had wrought great changes in the marshy banks of Lake Texcoco, where they had taken up their permanent abode in 1325. The poor pueblo of Tenochtitlan had

become verily and indeed a city, comparable — according to the Spanish visitors — with the fairest European capital. The first settlement had undoubtedly consisted of four buildings, each capable of sheltering a large division of the tribe after the defection of the Tlatelolco and Chapultepec factions. The pueblo preserved up to the time of the conquest four divisions, undoubtedly built up around and upon the four communal houses first erected, these divisions being known as Moyotlan, Teapan, Aztacalco, and Cuepapan, — probably meaning, respectively, “the place of the mosquito,” “the place of the god,” “the place of the heron’s house,” and “the place of the dike.” These four divisions were succeeded, upon the rebuilding of the city after the conquest, by the wards or parishes of San Pablo, San Juan, Santa Maria la Redonda, and San Sebastian.

To the limited amount of ground first occupied, more was added from time to time by filling in, and at the same time the waters were, as we have seen, deepened and broadened on all sides of the pueblo by means of the causeways, designed not so much to provide means of access to the mainland as to isolate the pueblo and increase its defences.

The earliest built of these causeways was known as Acachananco, and was that running south and connecting with the mainland at Huitzilopocho (Churubusco). From a point on this causeway named Xoloc (near what is now known as San Antonio Abad) another causeway ran to Cuyuacan. A causeway running nearly in direct continuation of the first connected the pueblo with the mainland at Tepeyacac (Guadalupe-Hidalgo) on the north, while the most famous as well as the shortest was that running westerly, nearly at right angles to the other two and connecting Tenochtitlan with Tlacopan (Tacuba). Most probably this last-named causeway divided Moyotla from Teapan, while the other two causeways formed the dividing line between those two quarters and Aztacalco and Cuepapan. Each of these quarters contained a *teocalli* or temple, and at the meeting-place of the three great causeways, and belonging equally to each of the four quarters, stood the great teocalli, pyramidal in form, with its due apportionment of ground surrounded by its great wall of stone, — the *coatapantli*, or serpent wall. Tepeyacac, Huitzilopocho, and Cuyuacan, the termini of two of the causeways, as well as

Ixtapalapan and Mexicalzingo, were military outposts, none of them containing much population. Chapultepec was a sacred spot. As we have seen, it furnished the fresh-water supply of Tenochtitlan, and was also used as a place of sepulture. Tlatelolco was the equivalent of a fifth ward of the city, though probably larger than any of the other four. The Chinampas produced the vegetables necessary for the subsistence of the population of Tenochtitlan, and the tributary pueblos far and near furnished the other necessaries of life and all that constituted the wealth of Mexico.

The houses of Tenochtitlan were constructed at first of reeds and bamboo, such as are now seen in some parts of Mexico, even as near the capital as the Chinampa pueblos of Santa Anita and Ixtacalcó. Later turf and *adobe* (sun-dried brick) were used, and as we have seen, stone began to be used for buildings in the time of Acamapichtli. We learn from Peter Martyr, of the seventeenth century, that the houses of the common people were commodious, each being designed to shelter several families,—residence by families being characteristic of the Aztecs. They were of one story only, and

had thatched roofs. They were built of stone to the height of several feet, as a protection against the rising waters of the lake. The superstructures were of adobe and timber. Canals to some extent took the place of streets, a broad canal separating Tenochtitlan from Tlatelolco.

Besides the *teocallis* there was in each quarter of Tenochtitlan and in Tlatelolco a *tecpan*, or house for the public business of the quarter, and there was a *tecpan* devoted to the business common to all the quarters of the city. Buildings were also provided for the residence of the Tlaca-tecuhtli and his family. Gardens probably surrounded the *teocallis* and the *tecpanes*. But there could have been no such pleasure-grounds in Tenochtitlan as have been described by some writers. In fact we may well be at a loss to account for the existence of sixty thousand families in Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco, or even sixty thousand souls (as has been otherwise more modestly reported as the population at the time of the conquest) within the acknowledged bounds of that ancient place.

By reason of its peculiar position and its artificial isolation, Tenochtitlan was at the

time of the conquest the strongest military position ever occupied by the Indians. To reduce it a mode of warfare was required altogether superior to that of the Aztecs.

Probably the most widely circulated accounts of the civilization to which the Aztecs had attained at the time of the conquest are, like those of their national government, greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, they were certainly well advanced in the constructive and decorative arts, and were in the possession of methods unknown to the artisans of the present day.

## CHAPTER II.

### "THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO."

Landing of Cortés. — His previous exploits on the Coast. — La Marina. — Cortés sets out to visit Tenochtitlan. — Incidents at Cempoalla. — Arrival in Tlaxcala. — Conquest of and Treaty with the Tlaxcalans. — Arrival in Cholula. — Massacre of the Cholultecas. — Vacillation of Moteczuma. — Meeting of Cortés and Moteczuma. — Cortés established in Tenochtitlan. — Arrest of Moteczuma. — Arrival of Narvaez in Cempoalla. — Defeat of Narvaez, and reinforcement of army of Cortés. — Rash act of Alvarado, and its consequences. — The Spaniards besieged in Tenochtitlan. — Daily battles. — Citlhuatzin elected Chief-of-Men. — Death of Moteczuma. — Cortés resolves to evacuate the city. — Noche Triste. — Escape of Alvarado. — Cortés takes Otoncalpolco. — Battle of Otumba. — Cuauhtemoc. — Retreat to Tlaxcala. — Reorganization of the expedition. — Arrival in Texcoco. — Ixtlilxochitl. — Siege of Tenochtitlan. — The Brigantines. — Surrender of Cuauhtemoc and capitulation of Tenochtitlan.

IT was on the morning of Good Friday, April 21, 1519, that Hernando Cortés landed at San Juan de Ulua, now the fortified island off the coast from Vera Cruz. He had left the Island of Cuba under stress of circumstances on the 10th of February, with a force composed of 553 infantry, 16 horsemen, with their horses, 110 sailors, and 200 Cuban

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