***Source:* Díaz del Castillo, Bernal. Chap. 22-23 in *The Discovery and Conquest of***

***Mexico, 1517-1521.* 1585. Translated by A. P. Maudsley. Noonday Press, 1965.**

Early the next morning many Caciques and chiefs of Tabasco and the

neighbouring towns arrived and paid great respect to us all, and they brought a

present of gold, consisting of four diadems and some gold lizards, and two

[ornaments] like little dogs, and earrings and five ducks, and two masks with Indian

faces and two gold soles for sandals, and some other things of little value. I do not

remember how much the things were worth; and they brought cloth, such as they

make and wear, which was quilted stuff.

This present, however, was worth nothing in comparison with the twenty

women that were given us, among them one very excellent woman called Doña

Marina, for so she was named when she became a Christian. Cortés received this

present with pleasure and went aside with all the Caciques, and with Aguilar, the

interpreter, to hold converse, and he told them that he gave them thanks for what they

had brought with them, but there was one thing that he must ask of them, namely, that

they should re-occupy the town with all their people, women and children, and he

wished to see it repeopled within two days, for he would recognize that as a sign of

true peace. The Caciques sent at once to summon all the inhabitants with their women

and children and within two days they were again settled in the town.

One other thing Cortés asked of the chiefs and that was to give up their idols

and sacrifices, and this they said they would do, and, through Aguilar, Cortés told

them as well as he was able about matters concerning our holy faith, how we were

Christians and worshipped one true and only God, and he showed them an image of

Our Lady with her precious Son in her arms and explained to them that we paid the

greatest reverence to it as it was the image of the Mother of our Lord God who was in

heaven. The Caciques replied that they liked the look of the great Teleciguata (for in

their language great ladies are called Teleciguatas) and [begged] that she might be

given them to keep in their town, and Cortés said that the image should be given to

them, and ordered them to make a well-constructed altar, and this they did at once.

The next morning, Cortés ordered two of our carpenters, named Alonzo

Yañez and Alvaro López, to make a very tall cross.

When all this had been settled Cortés asked the Caciques what was their

reason for attacking us three times when we had asked them to keep the peace; the

chief replied that he had already asked pardon for their acts and had been forgiven,

that the Cacique of Champoton, his brother, had advised it, and that he feared to be

accused of cowardice, for he had already been reproached and dishonoured for not

having attacked the other captain who had come with four ships (he must have meant

Juan de Grijalva) and he also said that the Indian whom we had brought as an

Interpreter, who escaped in the night, had advised them to attack us both by day and

night

Cortés then ordered this man to be brought before him without fail, but they

replied that when he saw that the battle was going against them, he had taken to

flight, and they knew not where he was although search had been made for him; but

we came to know that they had offered him as a sacrifice because his counsel had cost

them so dear.

Cortés also asked them where they procured their gold and jewels, and they

replied, from the direction of the setting sun, and said "Culua" and "Mexico," and as

we did not know what Mexico and Culua meant we paid little attention to it.

Then we brought another interpreter named Francisco, whom we had captured

during Grijalva's expedition, who has already been mentioned by me but he

understood nothing of the Tabasco language only that of Culua which is the Mexican

tongue. By means of signs he told Cortés that Culua was far ahead, and he repeated

"Mexico" which we did not understand.

So the talk ceased until the next day when the sacred image of Our Lady and

the Cross were set up on the altar and we all paid reverence to them, and Padre Fray

Bartolomé de Olmedo said mass and all the Caciques and chiefs were present and we

gave the name of Santa Maria de la Victoria to the town, and by this name the town

of Tabasco is now called. The same friar, with Aguilar as interpreter, preached many

good things about our holy faith to the twenty Indian women who had been given us,

and immediately afterwards they were baptized. One Indian lady, who was given to

us here was christened Doña Marina, and she was truly a great chieftainess and the

daughter of great Caciques and the mistress of vassals, and this her appearance clearly

showed. Later on I will relate why it was and in what manner she was brought here.

Cortés allotted one of the women to each of his captains and Doña Marina, as

she was good looking and intelligent and without embarrassment, he gave to Alonzo

Hernández Puertocarrero. When Puertocarrero went to Spain, Doña Marina lived with

Cortés, and bore him a son named Don Martin Cortés.

We remained five days in this town, to look after the wounded and those who

were suffering from pain in the loins, from which they all recovered. Furthermore,

Cortés drew the Caciques to him by kindly converse, and told them how our master

the Emperor, whose vassals we were, had under his orders many to render him

obedience, and that then, whatever they might be in need of, whether it was our

protection or any other necessity, if they would make it known to him, no matter

where he might be, he would come to their assistance.

The Caciques all thanked him for this, and thereupon all declared themselves

the vassals of our great Emperor. These were the first vassals to render submission to

His Majesty in New Spain.

Cortés then ordered the Caciques to come with their women and children early

the next day, which was Palm Sunday, to the altar, to pay homage to the holy image

of Our Lady and to the Cross, and at the same time Cortés ordered them to send six

Indian carpenters to accompany our carpenters to the town of Cintla, there to cut a

cross on a great tree called a Ceiba, which grew there, and they did it so that it might

last a long time, for as the bark is renewed the cross will show there for ever. When

this was done he ordered the Indians to get ready all the canoes that they owned to

help us to embark, for we wished to set sail on that holy day because the pilots had

come to tell Cortes that the ships ran a great risk from a Norther which is a dangerous

gale.

The next day, early in the morning, all the Caciques and chiefs came in their

canoes with all their women and children and stood in the court where we had placed

the church and cross, and many branches of trees had already been cut ready to be

carried in the procession. Then the Caciques beheld us all, Cortés, as well as the

captains, and every one of us marching together with the greatest reverence in a

devout procession, and the Padre de la Merced and the priest Juan Díaz, clad in their

vestments, said mass, and we paid reverence to and kissed the Holy Cross, while the

Caciques and Indians stood looking on at us.

When our solemn festival was over the chiefs approached and offered Cortés

ten fowls and baked fish and vegetables, and we took leave of them, and Cortés again

commended to their care the Holy image and the sacred crosses and told them always

to keep the place clean and well swept, and to deck the cross with garlands and to

reverence it and then they would enjoy good health and bountiful harvests.

It was growing late when we got on board ship and the next day, Monday, we

set sail in the morning and with a fair wind laid our course for San Juan de Ulua,

keeping close in shore all the time.

As we sailed along in fine weather, we soldiers who knew the coast would say

to Cortés, "Señor, over there is La Rambla, which the Indians call Ayagualulco," and

soon afterwards we arrived off Tonalá which we called San Antonio, and we pointed

it out to him. Further on we showed him the great river of Coatzacoalcos, and he saw

the lofty snow capped mountains, and then the Sierra of San Martin, and further on

we pointed out the split rock, which is a great rock standing out in the sea with a mark

on the top of it which gives it the appearance of a seat. Again further on we showed

him the Rio de Alvarado, which Pedro de Alvarado entered when we were with

Grijalva, and then we came in sight of the Rio de Banderas, where we had gained in

barter the sixteen thousand dollars, then we showed him the Isla Blanca, and told him

where lay the Isla Verde, and close in shore we saw the Isla de Sacrificios, where we

found the altars and the Indian victims in Grijalva's time; and at last our good fortune

brought us to San Juan de Ulúa soon after midday on Holy Thursday.

**†XXIII**

Before telling about the great Montezuma and his famous City of Mexico and

the Mexicans, I wish to give some account of Doña Marina, who from her childhood

had been the mistress and Cacica of towns and vassals. It happened in this way:

Her father and mother were chiefs and Caciques of a town called Paynala,

which had other towns subject to it, and stood about eight leagues from the town of

Coatzacoalcos. Her father died while she was still a little child, and her mother

married another Cacique, a young man, and bore him a son. It seems that the father

and mother had a great affection for this son and it was agreed between them that he

should succeed to their honours when their days were done. So that there should be

no impediment to this, they gave the little girl, Doña Marina, to some Indians from

Xicalango, and this they did by night so as to escape observation, and they then

spread the report that she had died, and as it happened at this time that a child of one

of their Indian slaves died they gave out that it was their daughter and the heiress who

was dead.

The Indians of Xicalango gave the child to the people of Tabasco and the

Tabasco people gave her to Cortés. I myself knew her mother, and the old woman's

son and her half-brother, when he was already grown up and ruled the town jointly

with his mother, for the second husband of the old lady was dead. When they became

Christians, the old lady was called Marta and the son Lázaro. I knew all this very well

because in the year 1523 after the conquest of Mexico and the other provinces, when

Crist’obal de Olid revolted in Honduras, and Cortés was on his way there, he passed

through Coatzacoalcos and I and the greater number of the settlers of that town

accompanied him on that expedition as I shall relate in the proper time and place. As

Doña Marina proved herself such an excellent woman and good interpreter

throughout the wars in New Spain, Tlaxcala and Mexico (as I shall show later on)

Cortés always took her with him, and during that expedition she was married to a

gentleman named Juan Jaramillo at the town of Orizaba.

Doña Marina was a person of the greatest importance and was obeyed without

question by the Indians throughout New Spain.

When Cortés was in the town of Coatzacoalcos he sent to summon to his

presence all the Caciques of that province in order to make them a speech about our

holy religion, and about their good treatment, and among the Caciques who

assembled was the mother of Doña Marina and her half-brother, Lázaro.

Some time before this Doña Marina had told me that she belonged to that

province and that she was the mistress of vassals, and Cortés also knew it well, as did

Aguilar, the interpreter. In such a manner it was that mother, daughter and son came

together, and it was easy enough to see that she was the daughter from the strong

likeness she bore to her mother.

*These relations were in great fear of Doña Marina, for they thought that she*

*had sent for them to put them to death, and they were weeping.*

*When Doña Marina saw them in tears, she consoled them and told them to*

*have no fear, that when they had given her over to the men from Xicalango, they*

*knew not what they were doing, and she forgave them for doing it, and she gave them*

*many jewels of gold and raiment, and told them to return to their town, and said that*

*God had been very gracious to her in freeing her from the worship of idols and*

*making her a Christian, and letting her bear a son to her lord and master Cortés and in*

*marrying her to such a gentleman as Juan Jaramillo, who was now her husband. That*

*she would rather serve her husband and Cortés than anything else in the world, and*

*would not exchange her place to be Cacica of all the provinces in New Spain.*

*Doña Marina knew the language of Coatzacoalcos, which is that common to*

*Mexico, and she knew the language of Tabasco, as did also Jerónimo de Aguilar, who*

*spoke the language of Yucatan and Tabasco, which is one and the same. So that these*

*two could understand one another clearly, and Aguilar translated into Castilian for*

*Cortés.*

*This was the great beginning of our conquests and thus, thanks be to God,*

*things prospered with us. I have made a point of explaining this matter, because*

*without the help of Doña Marina we could not have understood the language of New*

*Spain and Mexico.*