

ferred a feeble resistance, flying in all directions. They were vigorously pursued by the Spaniards, who followed them far into the heart of the city, when suddenly the Aztecs turned and commenced a fierce attack upon the troops, who saw too clearly their error. They were hemmed in on all sides; their position was most critical. Cortés was suddenly seized by six warriors, who endeavored to draw him on board their boat. Being wounded, he could make but a feeble resistance; a moment more, and he would have been beyond the reach of aid; but his work was not yet accomplished. Timely succor was sent. Christoval de Oba, seeing his General's danger, threw himself upon the Aztecs. He was immediately supported by other two, and by their means Cortés was extricated from his perilous situation. Not long after this crisis, Cortés was alarmed by the defection of an immense number of his allies. Guatemozin found means to act upon their superstitious fear, by spreading through the camp a report of a direct revelation from heaven, in which it was declared that the great war-god, affected by the late sacrifices, was about to descend, and in less than eight days deliver their enemies into their hands; but as the appointed time passed on, and the successes of the Spaniards were only more apparent, the allies recovered their panic and returned to the camp. By the 13th of August the troops had gained the market place. The citizens were suffering the last extremity of want; the houses were filled with the dead and dying; the streets lined with unburied corpses. Renewed efforts were made by Guatemozin; but without effect. At length a surmise gained ground that he had taken refuge in one of the Mexican vessels on the lake. A strict watch was kept, and shortly after, this valiant but unfortunate Prince was taken prisoner and led before the conqueror. No sooner did the tidings spread that their Prince was taken, than all resistance ceased, and Cortés remained undisputed master of Mexico. The day after the surrender, the great body of the people, by the permission of Cortés, left the city and wandered forth in search of a new home. The first care of Cortés was devoted to clearing the city from the various impurities which threatened to produce a pestilence. The heaps of dead which lay mouldering in the streets were consigned to the earth, and numerous fires kept burning night and day. It is supposed between one and two hundred thousand persons must have perished in the siege.