

was received into the same favor. From this period we may date that secret, but deeply rooted jealousy which Velasquez felt towards Cortés, which increased with the growing favor of the young adventurer, and caused him many an anxious hour. The new colonies of the West Indian Islands were from time to time greatly excited by accounts of recent discoveries along the coasts of the New World. Velasquez, who was not destitute of enterprise and energy, resolved to send forth an armament to prosecute these discoveries. After various delays, Cortés was appointed Captain General of the expedition, and sailed in command, November 18th, 1518. The force which Cortés led seemed very insufficient for any great danger; they amounted to one hundred and ten mariners, five hundred and fifty-three soldiers, thirty-two cross-bowmen and thirteen arquebusiers, ten heavy guns and four lighter pieces. His cavalry consisted of sixteen horse. At this time Cortés little knew the great things he was destined to accomplish; it was only step by step the idea opened itself to his mind. Could he have seen at a glance all the difficulties he was about to encounter, all the dangers and hardships he must endure, even a courage inflexible as his own must have shrunk from the contest.

Cortés's mind was deeply imbued with the religious fervor of the day; and the conviction never left him that his mission was a sacred one,—that the abolition of the heathen worship of the Mexicans, and the establishment of Christianity, was an object to be attained at any expense. We are not at liberty to doubt the sincerity of Cortés any more than that of Paul, who once, in persecuting the people of God, verily thought he did God service. Cortés was ever ready to sacrifice a temporal advantage to ensure a religious one. He constantly placed before himself and his followers, that the great end of their undertaking was the demolition of the temples of idolatrous worship, and the planting of the sacred symbol of Christianity in their stead. In the prosecution of this object, Cortés owed much to Father Almedo, who united in a rare degree ardent zeal with wisdom and discretion. He ever opposed conversion by force, trusting more to the effect of example and the preaching of the gentle, peaceable doctrines of his faith,—too often, alas! opposed to the practice of his companions. Cortés also received much assistance from an