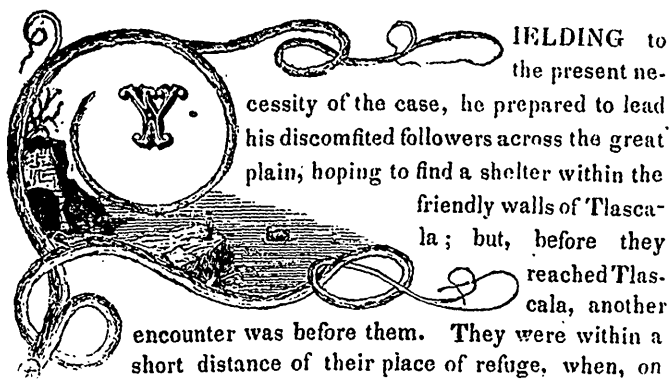


## Sketch of the Fall of the Aztec Empire, with the Destruction of Mexico.

(Concluded.)



IELDING to the present necessity of the case, he prepared to lead his discomfited followers across the great plain; hoping to find a shelter within the friendly walls of Tlascalala; but, before they reached Tlascalala, another encounter was before them. They were within a short distance of their place of refuge, when, on reaching the valley of Otompan, they beheld an immense army stretched out across the plain, evidently determined to dispute their passage. It seemed impossible that the little band of Cortés could stand for an hour against the vast array. Every soldier must have felt his last hour was come. The Spaniards fought with the energy of despair; and the victory of Otompan was to the few, and not to the many. By a dexterous manœuvre, Cortés killed the young chief at an early period in the action. A panic seized the whole Indian army, who fled in wild disorder, overthrowing and trampling in their haste numbers of their own adherents.

Within a few days, Cortés entered Tlascalala, where he was kindly received, and his jaded followers found that rest and refreshment they so greatly needed. For some time after their arrival in Tlascalala, Cortés was laid on a bed of sickness, the consequence of extraordinary fatigue and long sustained anxiety of mind. During this season of repose, he matured his plans for again taking the field, determined nothing should induce him to abandon his grand enterprise. It required much persuasion, and an appeal to all a soldier's feelings of honor and ambition, to induce his companions heartily to co-operate in his schemes. Many were for returning to Vera Cruz, and from thence to the islands. Cortés gave free permission to as many as wished it, to return, saying, "he felt stronger in the