

was a city, with broad streets terminating in large squares or splendid gardens. The temples were magnificent, and in them monstrous deities were honored with solemn cult and human sacrifices.

After receiving the ambassadors of Moctezuma (Emperor of Mexico), Cortez arranged his entry into Mexico, and was amazed at the city's grandeur.

While Cortez started in search of an expedition sent against him by the governor of Cuba, the guarding of the city was entrusted to Alvarado. During Cortez' absence Alvarado destroyed some Indian idols. The Indians could not suffer the profanation of their deities, and waged war against the Spaniards. When Cortez returned to Mexico, Alvarado was closely besieged and in danger of perishing. Cortez, to terminate the struggle, forced Moctezuma, the emperor, who was his prisoner, to pacify the rebels. He obeyed, but the multitude broke into shouts, calling him a vile traitor, and he was fatally wounded by an arrow.

The Mexicans, commanded by the new emperor, Guatemozin, furiously attacked the Spaniards, who retreated, and in that awful night, known in history as the "Sad Night," perished some two thousand Tlaxcalans and more than two hundred Spaniards.

Reunited, the Spaniards besieged the City of Mexico, defended by Guatemozin and his warriors, the capital becoming a vast charnel-house. Guatemozin rejected every summons to surrender, and finally, when taken prisoner, he looked Cortez proudly in the face and said: "I have done all I could to save my realm, but have failed. Draw that dagger from your belt and set me free." The Spaniards were full of admiration at the undaunted hero of a vanquished race.

Their emperor captured, the Mexicans laid down their arms, and Cortez entered the city on the 13th of August, 1521. For three hundred years New Spain (the



MEXICO.—TREE OF THE SAD NIGHT.

Tradition says that Cortéz cried under this tree after having been defeated by the Aztecs.

name the Spaniards gave to Mexico) was under Spanish domination and was governed by viceroys.

On the 15th of September, 1810, the parish priest of Dolores, Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, commanding a few countrymen who were badly armed, initiated the struggle for independence. Eleven years rolled by before Mexican freedom was secured, but finally was realized by Guerrero and Iturbide, the army of independence entering Mexico on the 27th of September, 1821.

Iturbide was proclaimed emperor, but abdicated shortly afterwards in favor of a republican form of government. In 1845 Texas seceded from Mexico and sought annexation to the United States. The Americans protected the annexation, which was declared on May 13, 1846. Two years afterwards an arrangement was made whereby Mexico received a money consideration, but lost almost half of its territory.

For a number of years revolutions desolated the country. There were fifty-four presidents and one regency in sixty years, and nearly every change of government had been effected by violence.