

Meanwhile the rising fortunes of Cortés were threatened by new dangers; and he found the Aztecs were not the only enemies he must prepare himself to meet. It must not be forgotten, that Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, the originator of the expedition, had long viewed Cortés with no friendly eye; and when the tidings of his success and marvellous discoveries reached him, his jealousy was raised to the highest pitch, and he immediately fitted out an armament, consisting of 900 men, well supplied with ammunition, and stores of all kinds. The command was given to Narvaez, who accordingly set sail for the coast of Mexico, where he landed in April, 1520, with the intention of compelling Cortés to relinquish his unauthorized pre-eminence and submit to his dictation. It was not long before tidings of the arrival of Narvaez were communicated to Cortés. He prepared immediately, with his usual energy, to meet his rival, and bring the question to a speedy decision. Cortés could ill afford to divide his little force; but to withdraw his whole detachment from Mexico, was at once to lose all he had gained, and forego the hope of future conquest. He therefore left 140 men under Alvarado, in Mexico; and attended by 70 soldiers, set out to encounter his new opponent. They met in the plain of the Tierra Caliente; and while a short distance still intervened, night came; Cortés at once resolved to attack the enemy under cover of the darkness, trusting to its friendly shade to conceal the real weakness of his force. The result exceeded his most sanguine expectations;—Narvaez was wounded and taken prisoner at an early stage of the engagement; and Cortés found no difficulty in engaging the Spanish soldiers, who had commenced the campaign under a leader who neither secured their respect nor affection, to transfer their services to himself, and embark with him in an adventure he failed not to depict in rich and glowing colors. The reinforcements thus received were a most seasonable aid, for Cortés soon found his most strenuous efforts necessary to meet a new emergency. Alvarado wrote from Mexico, giving no flattering intelligence; he said the Aztecs were beginning to manifest much dissatisfaction; they had made several hostile attempts against the Spaniards; in short, the presence of Cortés in Mexico was absolutely necessary. When he arrived, it was only to find every thing in the utmost confusion, and the Spanish quarters in a state of siege. The Spaniards had certainly given some provocation, and the