

# History of the Spanish Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas.pdf/52



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outside of the village, they found no one, nor was there, in the *milpas* or farms, a single grain of maize or any other vegetable; so that the Spaniards were all the more confounded, and they marveled, asking one another what it could mean.

“While the Spaniards were in this suspense, fifteen Indians came from outside the town who, as it was learned afterward, were very important men; and when they arrived they went into the presence of Don Fernando Cortes. Placing their hands upon the ground, and kissing the earth with great humility, and half weeping, they begged Cortes to favor them by not burning their village, for they had come there but recently to fortify themselves against some other Indians called Lacandones,<sup>[1]</sup> who were their enemies. These had been making a cruel war upon them, killing many men and leveling and burning their villages, which they had formerly had on the plains, as the Spaniards would see for themselves....

“Don Fernando Cortes assured them by means of the Indian, Doña Marina (whom he had had with him ever since he entered Tabasco), that no harm should be done them, nor would he permit any of his men to misuse anything which was theirs. Thereupon the Indians recovered their upright position, and then Don Fernando Cortes asked, with great

curiosity, why so many turkeys and fowls and all sorts of food had been prepared for his coming.

**The Indians Explain why their Town was Deserted.** “The Indians replied promptly that it was because they had been expecting their mortal enemies, the Lacandonnes, who were coming to attack them. If the Lacandonnes won in battle, they knew that all their property and fowls would be taken away. If the outcome was of that sort, they did not want their enemies to enjoy and avail themselves of their goods, so they had intended to eat them themselves. For if they should conquer the Lacandonnes in battle, they would go to their villages and take away all that they had, so that they would feel no lack of what they had already eaten in their own houses.

**Cortes Takes Leave of them in a Friendly Spirit.** “Don Fernando Cortes said to them that he was much grieved by

1. [↑](#)For a description of the modern Lacandonnes, see Tozzer, 1907.



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