

History of the Spanish Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas.pdf/68



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nature, and so, confident in their great number, they surrounded the Spaniards, who, in no direction, could be reached by help." At length, seeing themselves faced with the choice of dying by inches from starvation or of being put to death fighting their enemies bravely, the Spaniards determined to make a sally when as good an opportunity as possible should present itself. Both sides were desperate: the invaders were fighting for their lives; the Indians for their liberty. The havoc wrought by the superior arms of the Spaniards was, however, more than counterbalanced by the overwhelming numbers of the Indians. At last, seeing the utter hopelessness of further efforts, Montejo gave the signal to retreat. One hundred and fifty soldiers died at the hands of the Indians in this engagement. An anecdote which Cogolludo tells as an explanation of the unity and determination of the Indians is a possible light upon the cause of their resistance. A cacique named Cupul, in the early days of the Spanish occupation of Chichen Itza, feigned friendliness toward the invaders and went about freely among them. One day, when Montejo was off his guard, Cupul went up behind him, snatched his sword away, and tried to kill him. Fortunately a Spaniard, one Blas Gonzalez, cut off Cupul's arm just in time to prevent the blow. It was to avenge the injury thus done to a chief that the Indians shut off the Spaniards' food supply.

Chichen Itza and Villa Real both Deserted. For our purpose it is unnecessary to give further details of the first expedition of Montejo. We need only say that both the settlements made by the Spaniards, Chichen Itza and Villa Real de Chetemal, were deserted for the time being. Cogolludo, after reviewing the various accounts of the further wanderings of Montejo and his son, Francisco Montejo the Younger, comes to the conclusion that the son remained at a port called Zilam, while his father went by sea to Campeche (Kin Pech), where he remained till 1534 without entirely deserting Yucatan. He did go, however, to New Spain in an effort to get more men so that he might continue the conquest. Those whom he already had remained at Campeche. Cogolludo's authority for these statements are the depositions written by Gonzalo

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