

not have been so lucky. There were other good imitation animals with boys inside of them. These were tame and Adam and Eve played with them and teased them. There were four streams or springs which flowed out of Paradise, each with its sign saying: Pison, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates.<sup>15</sup> In the middle of Paradise stood the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with many and very beautiful fruits made of gold and feather work.

Round about Paradise were three big cliffs and a great mountain all full of everything that one can find on great and verdant hills, and the particular things that one finds in April and May, for these Indians have a special knack of imitating things exactly. There was no lack of birds, either small or large, especially big parrots which are as big as Spanish cocks. There were many of these, and two wild cocks and a hen,<sup>16</sup> certainly the most beautiful birds that I have seen anywhere. One of these cocks would have as much meat as two Spanish peacocks. They have a tuft of bristles growing out of their wattles, coarser than horsehair, and, in some old cocks, more than a span in length. These bristles are made into hyssops which last a long time.

On the cliffs also there were animals, both natural and artificial. On one of the latter was a boy dressed as a lion, tearing and eating a deer which he had killed. The deer was real and was on a ledge between some big rocks. This was a thing that attracted much attention. When the procession arrived they began the performance of the play. It took a long time, because before Eve ate the fruit or Adam consented to do so, Eve went back and forth three or four times between her husband and the serpent, Adam always resisting and pushing Eve away as if he were indignant. She, beseeching him and worrying him, said that it was evident how little he loved her, and that she loved him much more than he did her and, throwing herself into his arms, importuned him so that finally he went with her to the forbidden tree and she, in his presence, ate some and gave him some also. As soon as they had eaten they realized the evil that they had done and though they hid themselves as well as they could, they could not prevent God from seeing them, and He came, accompanied by many angels. When he had called Adam, Adam excused himself by throwing the blame upon his wife, and she by blaming the

15. See Genesis 2. 10-14.

16. Turkeys. Gómara (p. 452) calls them *gallipavos*, and says: "I give them this name because they are much like the pavón (peacock) and much like *gallos* (domestic roosters)."

serpent; and God cursed them and gave to each his penance. The angels brought two garments, very clever imitations of the skins of animals, and they dressed Adam and Eve. The most striking thing was to see them go out into exile weeping, Adam escorted by three angels and Eve by another three; as they went they sang, in parts, the psalm *Circumdederunt me*. This was so well performed that no one who saw it could keep from weeping bitterly.

There was left on the stage a cherub guarding the gate of Paradise with a sword in his hand. Then there was represented the world—another land certainly very different from the one they had left, for it was full of thistles and thorns and many serpents. There were also rabbits and hares. When the new dwellers in the world reached here, the angels showed Adam how he was to work and till the soil; and to Eve they gave spindles for spinning and making clothes for her husband and children; and, consoling the disconsolate pair, they went off singing, in parts, by way of farewell, a *villancico* whose words were:

Oh, why did she eat  
—that first married woman—  
Oh, why did she eat  
The forbidden fruit?  
That first married woman  
—she and her husband—  
Have brought Our Lord down  
To a humble abode  
Because they both ate  
The forbidden fruit.

This play was performed by the Indians in their own tongue, and many of them grieved greatly and wept, especially when Adam was exiled and sent out into the world.

I quote another letter from the same friar to his prelate, writing him about the festival that was celebrated in Tlaxcallan in honor of the treaty of peace between the Emperor and the King of France.<sup>17</sup> The prelate was Fray Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo.

"As Your Grace knows, the news came to this land a few days before Lent, and the Tlaxcaltecas wanted to see first what the Spaniards and

17. The Treaty of Aigues Mortes, July 14, 1538. See above, note 4.

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the Mexicans were doing. Seeing that the latter represented the conquest of Rhodes,<sup>18</sup> they decided to stage the conquest of Jerusalem (and may God fulfill this prophecy in our day!). In order to give it greater solemnity they decided to leave it until Corpus Christi, which occasion they enlivened with such festivities as I shall here relate.

"In Tlaxcallan, in the city which they have recently begun to build down below on the plain, they left a big and very handsome plaza in the middle, and here they constructed Jerusalem on top of a building that they were erecting for the cabildo. The first story had already been completed, so they leveled off the top and covered the space with earth and built five towers, the principal one in the middle and one at each of the four corners, all enclosed with a battlemented wall. The towers also had battlements and were very handsome, with many windows and fine arches, all covered with roses and flowers. Our Lord the Emperor was stationed opposite Jerusalem, to the east and outside of the plaza. To the right of Jerusalem was the camp to be occupied by the army of Spain. Opposite to this was a place prepared for the provinces of New Spain, and in the center of the plaza was Santa Fé, where the Emperor was to be lodged with his army. All those places were surrounded by walls and painted on the outside to look like stone-work, with their embrasures for cannon, their loopholes and battlements, all very realistic.

"When the Blessed Sacrament reached the plaza, escorted by persons representing the Pope, cardinals, and bishops, they took their places upon a platform which had been prepared for this purpose and beautifully adorned. It stood near Jerusalem so that the entire festival should take place before the Blessed Sacrament. Then the Spanish army began to come in to lay siege to Jerusalem and, passing before the Host, crossed the plaza and pitched camp at the right. It took them some time to come in, because there were a great many people, divided into three squadrons. In the vanguard, bearing the standard with the royal arms, marched the men of Castile and León and the troops of the captain general, Don Antonio Pimentel, Count of Benavente,<sup>19</sup> with the banner with his armorial bearings. The main body was made up of Toledo, Aragon, Galicia, Granada, Vizcaya, and Navarre. The rear was brought up by Germany, Rome, and the Italians. There was little difference of costume between them, for as

18. For an account of this pageant, see Bernal Díaz del Castillo, ch. cci, and Las Casas, p. 165.

19. All of the personages mentioned as taking part in the pageant were, of course, represented by Indian actors.

the Indians have never seen them and do not know about the differences, they pay no attention to them; for this reason all these actors came in dressed as Spanish soldiers, with trumpets made in imitation of the Spanish ones and drums and fifes all very orderly, drawn up in columns of five and marching in time to the drums.

"When these had marched past and gone to their camp, the army of New Spain came in from the opposite side, divided into ten companies, each one dressed in the costume that they use in war. These were very striking; in Spain or Italy people would go out of their way and be delighted to see them. They wore all the best that they had in the way of beautiful feathers, devices and shields, and all the Indians who took part in this play were lords and important men whom they call *Teuhpiltin*. In the vanguard were Tlaxcallan and Mexico. These were very brilliantly arrayed and much admired. They carried the standard with the royal arms and the standard of their captain general, Don Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of New Spain. In the main army were the Huastecas, Zempoaltecas, Mixtecas, Colhuaques, and some companies that said they represented Peru and the Islands of Santo Domingo and Cuba. The rearguard consisted of the Tarascans and Cuauhtemaltecas.

"As soon as these had reached their camp the Spanish army came out into the field to give battle. They marched in good order straight upon Jerusalem and as the Sultan (the Marquis of the Valley, Don Hernando Cortés) saw them come, he ordered his people to go out in battle array. When they came out one saw that they were very finely dressed and differently from all the others, for they wore turbans such as the Moors use. The call to arms was sounded on both sides and the two armies met and fought with much shouting and noise of trumpets, drums, and fifes. At first victory seemed to be on the side of the Spaniards, the Moors retreating, some of them being taken prisoner and others left lying on the field of battle, although no one was wounded. When this was over the Spanish army returned in good order to its camp. Then the call to arms sounded again, the armies of New Spain and Jerusalem came out, and they fought a while; again the Moors were defeated and forced back into their city and some captives were taken back to the camp and some were left lying on the field.

"Hearing of the straits in which Jerusalem now found herself, great reinforcements of the people of Galilee, Judea, Samaria, Damascus, and all the land of Syria came, with abundant supplies of provisions and

munitions, by which the people of Jerusalem were very much gladdened and so encouraged that they at once came out into the field and went straight toward the Spanish camp. The Spaniards came out to meet them and after they had fought awhile the Spaniards began to retreat and the Moors charged them, taking prisoner some of those who had not obeyed orders<sup>20</sup> and leaving some fallen upon the field of battle. After this the captain general dispatched a messenger to his Majesty with a letter to this effect:

“Your Majesty is hereby informed that the army arrived here before Jerusalem and pitched camp in a strong and secure position. Then we went out to battle against the city and those from within came out into the field; and the army of the Spaniards, servants of your Majesty, and your captains and veterans so fought that they seemed like tigers and lions; they certainly showed themselves to be valiant men, especially the people of the kingdom of León. After this there came a great reinforcement of Moors and Jews, with quantities of munitions and supplies, and the men of Jerusalem, finding themselves thus supported, came out to battle and we went out to meet them. It is true that some of our men fell, the ones who were not very well trained and had never been in the field against Moors; all the rest are full of spirit and await your Majesty’s orders, to obey you in everything. Your Majesty’s bondsman and servant, Don Antonio Pimentel.’

“Having seen the captain general’s letter, the Emperor replied as follows: ‘To my dear and well-beloved cousin, Don Antonio Pimentel, Captain General of the army of Spain. I have seen your letter by which I was very glad to learn how valiantly you have acted. You will take great care that from now on no help be allowed to reach the city, and to this end you will station all the necessary guards. You are also to let me know whether your camp is well supplied. Ascertain how I have been served by your knights, who shall receive very signal favors from me in return for their services, and commend me to all your captains and veterans, and may God guard you. Don Carlos, Emperor.’

“Hereupon the army of Jerusalem, with the help of the men who had come as reinforcements, made a sally against the army of New Spain to take vengeance for the previous encounter. As they were grieved by what had happened, they wished to avenge themselves, and joining battle, they fought valiantly until at last the people from the Islands began to

20. Spanish: *se desmandaron*.

weaken and lose ground to such an extent that, between the fallen and the captives, there was not a man left. Immediately the captain general dispatched a runner to his Majesty with a letter to the following effect:

“Sacred, Imperial and Catholic Majesty, ever august Emperor: this is to inform your Majesty how I arrived with the army before Jerusalem and pitched camp to the left of the city. We went out against the enemy, who were in the field, and your vassals of New Spain did very well, felling many Moors and forcing them back to the gates of their city, for your men fought like elephants and giants. After this the enemy received a great reinforcement of men and artillery, food and munitions. Then they made a sally against us and we went out to meet them; after having fought for the greater part of the day, the squadron from the Islands weakened and brought great shame upon the whole army, for as they were not skilled in war and had no arms of defense and did not know how to call upon God there was not a man of them who did not fall into the hands of the enemy. All the rest of the other companies are in very good condition. Your Majesty’s bondsman and humblest servant, Don Antonio de Mendoza.’

“The Emperor’s reply: ‘Beloved cousin and my great captain over all the army of New Spain: Take courage like the valiant warrior that you are and encourage all your knights and soldiers. If help has reached the city be assured that from Heaven above shall come our help and assistance. Fortune varies in battle and he who is victor today is vanquished tomorrow; and he who was vanquished, on another day is victor. I have determined at once, this very night, to march all night without sleeping and be at dawn before Jerusalem. You will be prepared and with all your army drawn up in order, and since I shall so soon be with you, be consoled and encouraged. And write at once to the captain general of the Spanish forces that he too may be ready with his people, so that as soon as I arrive, when the enemy think me weary from the march, we may fall upon them and lay siege to the city. I will take the center of the line and your army the left wing and the army of Spain the right wing, so that they may not be able to escape from our hands. May our Lord guard you. Don Carlos, Emperor.’

“This done, from one side of the plaza the Emperor entered and with him the king of France and the king of Hungary with their crowns on their heads. As they began to enter the plaza they were met on one side by the captain general of Spain with half his men and on the other by

the captain general of New Spain, and from all sides they came with trumpets and drums, and many of them set off rockets, which served as artillery. He was received with much rejoicing and great pomp and escorted to his camp of Santa Fé. Meanwhile the Moors showed that they had conceived a great fear, and all stayed shut up in their city. When the bombardment began they defended themselves very well. Meantime the *maestre de campo*,<sup>21</sup> Andrés de Tapia, had gone with a squadron to reconnoiter the country behind Jerusalem, and he set fire to a village and drove into the middle of the plaza a herd of sheep that he had captured. Each army having withdrawn to its camp, the Spaniards sallied forth again alone, and as the Moors saw them coming and saw that they were few in number, they went out against them and fought for a while. As more and more men kept coming from Jerusalem they forced the Spaniards to retreat, won the battle, and took some prisoners whom they carried back into the city. When this became known to his Majesty he at once dispatched a runner to the Pope with this letter:

“To our most Holy Father. O well-beloved Father, who is like you that he should possess so lofty an office upon earth? I hereby inform your Holiness that I have gone to the Holy Land and that I have Jerusalem surrounded by three armies. I, in person, am with one of them; in the second are the Spaniards, and the third is made up of Mexicans. There have been many skirmishes and battles between my people and the Moors in which my people have captured and wounded many of the Moors. After this the city received a large reinforcement of Moors and Jews, with great quantities of supplies and munitions, as the messenger will tell your Holiness. At present I am very much worried about the outcome of my journey. I beseech your Holiness to assist me with your intercessions and to pray to God for me and for my armies, for I am determined to take Jerusalem and all the other holy places or to die in the attempt; wherefore, I humbly beseech you to send us all your blessing. Don Carlos, Emperor.”

“When the Pope had read the letter he called the cardinals, and having consulted with them his answer was:

“My well beloved son. I have seen your letter, which has greatly rejoiced my heart, and I have given thanks to God for having thus comforted you and given you courage to undertake this holy enterprise. What

21. The officer next in importance to the captain general. He was the commanding officer of a *tercio* or *regiment*.

you wish shall at once be done, and so I command my beloved brothers the cardinals, the bishops, and all other prelates, the orders of Saint Francis and Saint James<sup>22</sup> and all the sons of the Church to pray for you, and that this may be effective I decree and grant a great Jubilee for all Christians. The Lord be with your soul. Amen. Your beloved father, the Pope.”

“To return to our armies. When the Spaniards saw themselves twice driven back and that the Moors had surrounded their camp, they all knelt facing the place where the Blessed Sacrament was and called upon it for aid. The Pope and the cardinals did likewise, and while they were on their knees an angel appeared at the corner of their camp and consoled them: ‘God has heard your prayer and is much pleased with your determination to die for His honor and service in quest of Jerusalem, for He does not wish that so holy a place should be any longer in the possession of the enemies of the Faith. He has willed that you should encounter so many difficulties in order to test your constancy and fortitude. Fear not that your enemies shall prevail against you, and for greater surety God will send you your patron, the apostle Saint James.’ This consoled them all greatly and they began to shout ‘Santiago, Santiago, Patron Saint of our Spain!’ Whereupon Santiago rode in mounted upon a horse as white as snow and dressed as he is usually represented in paintings. As he entered the Spanish camp they all followed him and attacked the Moors before Jerusalem. The latter, pretending great terror, took to flight and shut themselves up in the city, leaving some who had fallen on the field of battle. Then the Spaniards began to attack the city, Santiago on his white horse riding here and there all over the battle-field, and the Moors, because of the great fear that they felt, dared not even appear on the battlements. Then the Spaniards with banners flying retired to their camp. Seeing this, the other army of the Nahuas, or people of New Spain, drew up their squadrons and marched quickly upon Jerusalem as the Spaniards had not been able to enter the city.

“The Moors did not wait for them to reach the city, but sallied forth to meet them. They fought for a while, the Moors gradually winning the field until they drove their opponents back into their camp, without how-

22. The Spanish text reads *San Diego*, but it should undoubtedly be *Santo Domingo*. If written in abbreviation in the manuscript, as is probable, the two would be very easy to confuse. The two Orders chiefly concerned in the conversion of the Indians at that time were the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

ever capturing any of them. Having done this, the Moors returned with much shouting to their city. The Christians, seeing themselves vanquished, had recourse to prayer, calling upon God to help them, and the Pope and the cardinals did likewise. Then another angel appeared to them over their headquarters and said to them: 'Although you are but young in the Faith, God has wished to prove you and willed that you should be vanquished so that you may realize that without His aid your efforts are of little avail. But now that you have humbled yourselves God has heard your prayer, and shortly there will come to your assistance Saint Hypolitus, the advocate and patron saint of New Spain, upon whose day the Spaniards, with you Tlaxcaltecas, took Mexico.' Then all the Nahuia army began to cry 'Saint Hypolitus, Saint Hypolitus!' Immediately Saint Hypolitus rode in, mounted on a very dark horse, and aroused and encouraged the Nahuas and went with them toward Jerusalem. From the other side also Santiago and the Spaniards came forth. The Emperor and his people took the center of the line and all together they began the bombardment, so that the people of the city, even in the towers, were helpless against the cannon-balls and arrows that were shot at them.

"Behind Jerusalem, between two of the towers there was a fairly long house of straw. At the time of the attack they set fire to this, and the attack was very vigorous on all sides of the city. The Moors were apparently determined to die rather than surrender to either Spaniards or Mexicans. Both assailants and defenders fought valiantly, hurling at each other large balls made of reeds and hollow balls of sun-dried clay filled with red ocher which made anyone whom they hit look as if he were badly wounded and covered with blood. They also used red cactus fruit. The archers had little sacks full of red ocher on the points of their arrows which made it look as if they drew blood wherever they struck. They also shot thick cornstalks at each other. While they were in the greatest heat of battle, the Archangel Saint Michael appeared upon the top of the central tower. At his appearance and his voice both Moors and Christians were filled with awe, ceased to fight, and fell silent. Then the archangel said to the Moors: 'If God considered your sins and wickedness and not His great mercy, He would already have hurled you to the depths of hell, and the earth would have opened and swallowed you alive. But because you have had reverence for the Holy Places He will show you mercy and allow you time for repentance if with your whole heart you turn to Him. Know therefore the Lord of Majesty, the Creator of all

things, and believe in His most precious Son, Jesus Christ, and appease Him with tears and true penitence.' Having said this he disappeared. Then the Sultan, who was in the city, spoke to all his Moors, saying: 'Great is the goodness and the mercy of God, since He has thus deigned to enlighten us when we were greatly blinded by our sins. The time has come for us to recognize our error. Up till now we have thought that we were fighting with men, and now we see that we are fighting with God and with His saints and angels; who can resist them?' Then answered his captain general, the adelantado, Don Pedro de Alvarado, and all the soldiers with him and said that they wished to put themselves into the hands of the Emperor and that the Sultan should at once make terms so that their lives might be spared, for the sovereigns of Spain were clement and merciful. They also said that they wished to be baptized. Then the Sultan made the signal of peace and sent a Moor to the Emperor with a letter to the following effect:

"'Roman Emperor, beloved of God. We have seen clearly how God has sent you help and favor from heaven. Before I saw this I thought only of guarding my city and kingdom and of defending my vassals, and I was determined to die in the attempt. But as the God of heaven has enlightened me I recognize that you alone are captain of His armies. I recognize that all the world must obey God and you who are His captain upon earth. Therefore into your hands we put our lives, and we beseech you to come near to this city to give us your royal word and grant us our lives, receiving us with your unfailing clemency, as your natural vassals. Your servant, the Great Sultan of Babylon and Tetrarch of Jerusalem.'

"As soon as he had read the letter, the Emperor went toward the gates of the city, which were now open, and the Sultan, well accompanied, came out to receive him. Kneeling before the Emperor he swore obedience to him and tried to kiss his hand. The Emperor raised him and took him by the hand and led him before the Most Blessed Sacrament, where the Pope was. There they all gave thanks to God and the Pope received him very affectionately. The Sultan brought with him many Turks (these were adult Indians whom they had planned to have baptized) and publicly they asked the Pope to let them be baptized. His Holiness at once ordered a priest to baptize them, and they actually were baptized. Then the Most Blessed Sacrament was removed and the procession went on in order.

"For the procession of this Corpus Christi festival they had the whole road and streets so much adorned that many Spaniards who were present said: 'If any one should try to tell this in Castile they will say that he is mad and is exaggerating and embellishing it.' For the Sacrament was carried along streets all made of three rows of medium-sized arches covered with roses and flowers very well arranged and fastened. There were over fourteen thousand of these arches, not to mention ten big triumphal ones under which the whole procession passed. There were six chapels with their altars and altarpieces. The whole roadway was covered with many sweet-smelling herbs and roses. There were also three mountains, very realistically constructed, with the appropriate cliffs, and on these mountains they performed three very good plays.

"On the first, which was immediately below the upper courtyard in a lower courtyard, where there is a big open square, they represented the Temptation of Our Lord. There was a great deal in it that was very noteworthy, especially to see these things acted by Indians. One striking scene was the consultation held by the devils to see how they should tempt Christ and who should be the tempter. When they decided that it should be Lucifer, he went disguised as a hermit, but there were two things that he could not conceal, that is, his horns and his claws, for from each finger and each toe there stuck out bone claws half a span long. After the first and second temptations, the third took place on a high cliff from which the devil very proudly told Christ all the special characteristics and all the wealth of New Spain. Then he shifted to Castile, where, he said, besides many ships and great fleets that brought across the sea great riches and enormous cargoes of cloths and silks and brocades, there were other special characteristics, and amongst them many and very good varieties of wine—at which every one, both Indians and Spaniards, pricked up their ears, for the Indians are crazy for our wine. After he had spoken of Jerusalem and Rome, Africa, Europe, and Asia and had said that he would give it all to him, Christ answered: 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' and the devil fled. Although he remained concealed in the cliff, which was hollow, the other devils made such a noise that it seemed as if the whole mountain was falling down, with Lucifer, into hell. Then the angels came with food for the Lord, apparently from heaven, and after doing reverence to Him they set the table and began to sing.

"When the procession went on to the other square, they represented on another mountain how Saint Francis preached to the birds, telling

them all the reasons why they should praise and bless God: because He provides them with food without need of their reaping or sowing as men have to do who earn their living with great labor; also because of the garment of beautiful and varied feathers with which God adorns them without their spinning or weaving, and because of the place which He has given them, that is, the air, through which they move and fly. The birds coming up to the saint seemed to be asking for his benediction, and he, giving it to them, charged them to sing praises to God both morning and evening. They were going away and the saint was descending the mountain when there came out across his path a savage wild beast, so ugly that it rather frightened those who saw it thus suddenly. When the saint saw it he made the sign of the Cross over it and then went up to it. Realizing that it was a beast which was destroying the flocks of the land, he scolded it gently and brought it to the town, where the principal lords were sitting on their dais, and the beast made a sign that it would obey and promised never to do any more damage in that land, and then it went away to the mountain.

"The saint, remaining there, began his sermon, saying that they should observe how the wild animals obeyed the word of God, and that men were endowed with reason and were under greater obligation to keep the commandments of God . . . As he was saying this there came out an actor pretending to be drunk, singing just as the Indians do when they are intoxicated, and as he would not stop and was disturbing the sermon, Saint Francis warned him to stop or else he would go to hell. As he persisted, the saint called the devils of a very fearful and terrible hell that was near him and they came and with much din they seized the drunkard and threw him into hell. Then the saint went on again with his sermon and there came some witches, very cleverly imitated, of the kind who with their native drugs very easily produce abortions, and as they too disturbed the sermon and would not stop, the devils came and put them also into hell.

"In this way certain vices were represented and censured in this play. Hell had a secret door by which those inside went out, and when they got out the place was set on fire and burned so terribly that it seemed as if no one had escaped and that devils and damned were all burning up. The devils and the souls of the damned cried out and shrieked, which produced a feeling of horror and fear even in those who knew that no one was really being burned. The Blessed Sacrament went on its way

and another play was performed which represented the sacrifice of Abraham, of which, to be brief and as it is late, I will merely say that it was well acted. And with that the procession went back to the church."<sup>23</sup>

23. Las Casas (p. 165) mentions another play which he saw in Tlaxcala in 1538, representing the Assumption of the Virgin, and one representing the Last Judgment, which was given in Mexico.

## BOOK TWO