

CHAP. XV.

Describing the Country of Chiapa, with the chiefest Towns and Commodities belonging unto it.

THOUGH *Chiapa* in the opinion of the Spaniards be held to be one of the poorest Countrys of *America*; because in it as yet there have been no mines discovered, nor golden sands found in the rivers, nor any haven upon the South sea, whereby commodities are brought in and carried out, as to *Mexico*, *Guaxaca*, and *Guatemala*; yet I may say it exceedeth most Provinces in the greatness and beauty of fair Towns, and yieldeth to none except it be to *Guatemala*; nay it surpasseth all the rest of *America* in that one, and famous and most populous Town of *Chiapa* of the *Indians*. And it ought not to be much slighted by the Spaniards as it is, if they would look upon it as standing between *Mexico* and *Guatemala*, whose strength might be all *Americas* strength, and whose weakness may prove dangerous to all that flourishing Empire, for the easie entrance into it by the river of *Tabasco*, or for its near joyn- ing and bordering unto *Yucatan*. Besides, the commodities in it are such as do uphold a constant trading and commerce amongst the Inhabitants themselves, and with other neighbouring Countries, and from no one part of *America* doth *Spain* get more *Cochinil* then from one of the Provinces of *Chiapa*; the Towns also being great and populous, by their yearly pole tribute, do add much to the King of *Spains* Revenues.

This Country is divided into three Provinces, to wit, *Chiapa*, *Zeldales*, and *Zoques*; whereof *Chiapa* it self is the poorest. This contains the great Town of *Chiapa* of the *Indians*, and all the Towns and farms North-ward towards
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