

Spaniards. Hernandez also availed himself of a collection of medicinal plants which he found still growing in the celebrated old Mexican garden of Huaxtepec, which, owing to its vicinity to a newly-established Spanish hospital,\* the Conquistadores had not laid waste. Almost at this time the fossil mastodon bones on the elevated plateaux of Mexico, New Granada, and Peru, which have since become so important with respect to the theory of the successive elevation of mountain chains, were collected and described. The designations of giant bones and fields of giants (*Campos de Gigantes*) sufficiently testified the fantastic character of the early interpretation applied to these fossils.

One circumstance which specially contributed to the extension of cosmical views at this enterprising period was the immediate contact of a numerous mass of Europeans with the free and grand exotic forms of nature, on the plains and mountainous regions of America, and (in consequence of the voyage of Vasco de Gama) on the eastern shores of Africa and Southern India. Even in the beginning of the sixteenth century, a Portuguese physician, Garcia de Orta, under the protection of the noble Martin Alfonso de Sousa, established, on the present site of Bombay, a botanical garden, in which he cultivated the medicinal plants of the neighborhood. The muse of Camoens has paid Garcia de Orta the tribute of patriotic praise. The impulse to direct observation was now every where awakened, while the cosmographical writings of

reigned from 1464 to 1477. The learned native historian, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, whose manuscript chronicle of the Chichimeque I saw in 1803, in the place of the Viceroy of Mexico, and of which Mr. Prescott has so ably availed himself in his work (*Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i., p. 61, 173, and 206; vol. iii., p. 112), was a descendant of the poet king Nezahualcoyotl. The Aztec name of the historian, Fernando de Alva, means Vanilla face. M. Ternaux Compans, in 1840, caused a French translation of this manuscript to be printed in Paris. The notice of the long elephants' hair collected by Cadamosto occurs in Ramusio, vol. i., p. 109, and in Grynæus, cap. 43, p. 33.

\* Clavigero, *Storia antica del Messico* (Cesena, 1780), t. ii., p. 153. There is no doubt, from the accordant testimonies of Hernan Cortez in his reports to the Emperor Charles V., of Bernal Diaz, Gomara, Oviedo, and Hernandez, that, at the time of the conquest of Montezuma's empire, there were no menageries and botanic gardens in any part of Europe which could be compared with those of Huaxtepec, Chapoltepec, Iztapalapan, and Tezcuco. (Prescott, op. cit., vol. i., p. 178; vol. ii., p. 66 and 117-121; vol. iii., p. 42.) On the early attention which is mentioned in the text as having been paid to the fossil bones in the "fields of giants," see Garcilaso, lib. ix., cap. 9; Acosta, lib. iv., cap. 30; and Hernandez (ed. of 1556), t. i., cap. 32, p. 105.