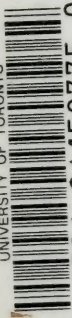


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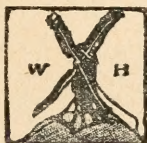
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# HERNANDO DE SOTO:

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT  
OF ONE OF HIS CAPTAINS,  
GONÇALO SILVESTRE. BY  
R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM



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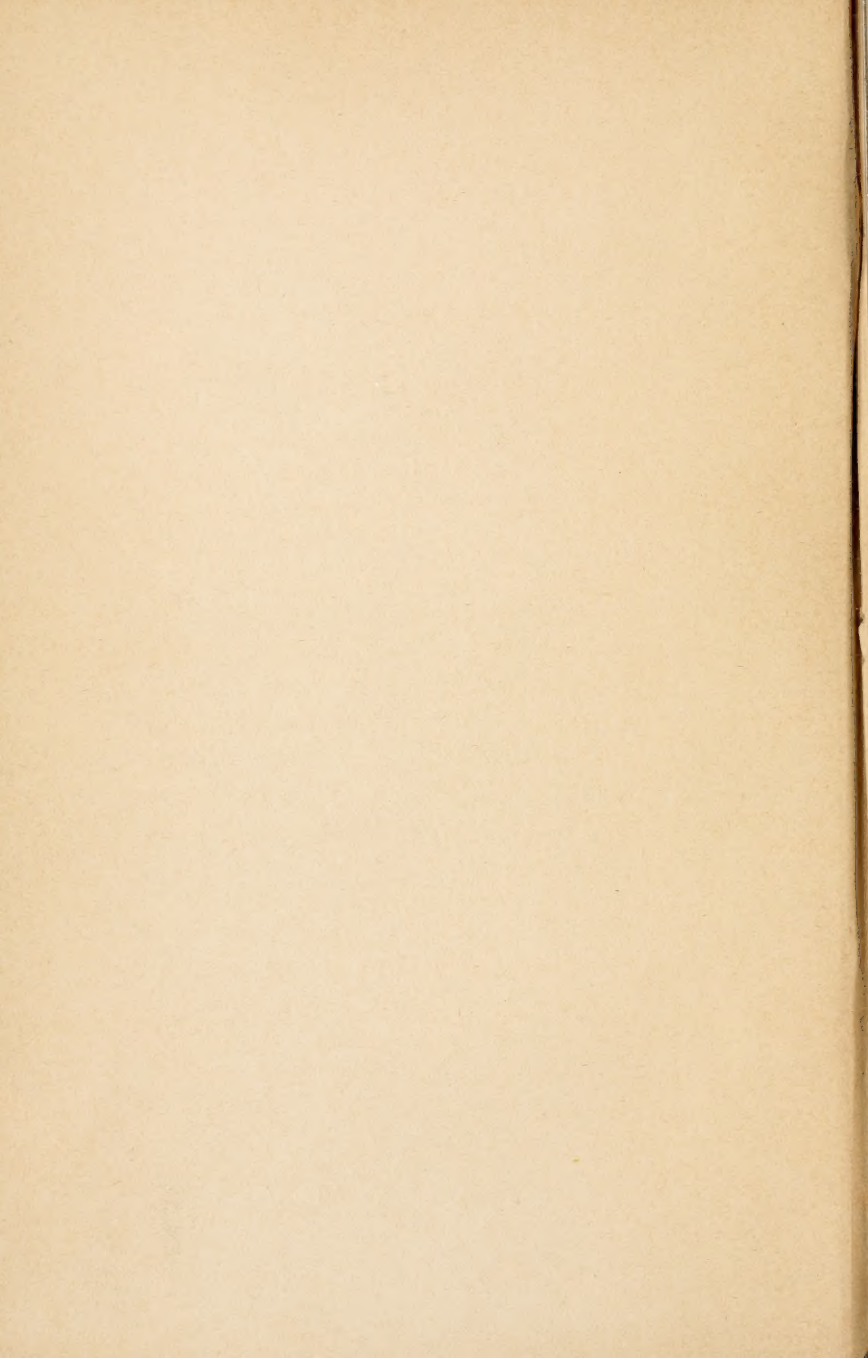
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TO

W. H. HUDSON

I DEDICATE THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF A 'CONQUISTADOR'. TO HIM, BEING HIMSELF A SON OF THAT GREAT WAVELESS SEA, THE PAMPA, THE SUBJECT OF THE BOOK (IF NOT THE HANDLING OF IT) WILL, I THINK, BE INTERESTING. HE KNOWS THE DISAPPEARING INDIANS, AND CAN FEEL WITH THEM. HE ALSO KNOWS THE DESCENDANTS OF THEIR CONQUERORS, AND, WHILST DOING JUSTICE TO THE GALLANTRY AND INDOMITABLE PERSEVERANCE OF THEIR ANCESTORS, CAN YET MAKE DUE ALLOWANCE FOR THEIR FAULTS.



## P R E F A C E

### TO CONQUISTADORES AND OTHERS

MANKIND, that dearly loves a scapegoat to bear the burden of its sins, has made the Spanish Conquest of America one of its favourite episodes at which to raise its eyes in horror to that Heaven that it tries vainly to deceive.

Pious historians, Protestant in creed, self-righteous, and agog to intensify the sins of other faiths, so that their co-religionists' withers may escape the pressure of their well-earned pack-saddles, have written of Pizarro and Cortés, describing them as fiends when they were merely conquerors at worst. Others, by piling adjectives on adjectives, have harrowed both our senses and our taste, filling the middle distance of their canvases so full that the whole picture seems less like a portrait than a brilliant palette, left ostentatiously about so that the unwary visitor to the studio may stand amazed and say, This is indeed a colourist before the Lord.

They have succeeded well, so that to-day the Conquest of America is the stock whetting-block on which all those who touch it sharpen up their wits.

Who that has not been horrified in reading, as a

boy, about the slaughter of the Indians, and has not clenched his little chubby Anglo-Saxon fist in indignation at the inhuman Spaniards, hell-hounds, ignorant alike of English and the most elementary notions of good faith?

All which is natural enough.

In the same way that men most commonly abhor those they have injured, so do all nations hate instinctively peoples which they have left behind them in the race for wealth.

No one supposes that the Spaniards of the days when men went out in crazy ships, taking three, four, five, six months, or a year, to sail the seas which we to-day cross delicately in a floating palace in a week, and then remained for life, cut off from everything that civilizes men, were angels either of mercy or of light.

The greater part of us forget that their first object was to conquer, and that a conqueror is of necessity a man of blood. Faith the *conquistadores* had, pushed to the verge of madness, as both their actions and their writings testify.

This ethically makes all that they did more odious, for if a man believes that, to win converts to his faith, that he is free to act as if he were a fiend, then is his god (as he discerns him) a mere devil, and scoffers, of whom the world holds ever an increasing store, shoot out their lips.

But personally the man has some excuse, though one to which his victims would not readily subscribe.



The love of God and gold was in so many of the conquerors of America so inextricably mixed up that it is almost an impossibility to say where one love ended and the other love began.

But in the main they strove to act as they thought right, doing their duty to the God of Battles, spreading the faith with unction and with blood, and broadening out the confines of the dominions of the crown of Spain. Gold they loved greatly, just as we do ourselves, but with a difference; for in their love they put it after what they considered honour, and each man in those days of ignorance had a strange point of honour, which, while it did not influence his actions, at least redeemed him from vulgarity, that sin by which so many angels of more modern times have fallen into the pit. But the mistake, in writing of the conquerors of America, has been to think that from some special circumstances, racial or personal, they were crueller or more blood-thirsty than other men who have been placed in similar positions to themselves.

No one can conquer any country but by force. So when a European army finds itself beset by savages, and far removed from help, it must strike terror, so as to make its own position safe.

Then when the natives rise in self-defence, the Europeans must again treat their just efforts to preserve their native land, as rank unnatural rebellion against the laws of progress and of God. Such crimes, of course, are only punishable with death,

for most of us seem to regard a savage as a man without a plea for his existence, forgetting usually that, by the tenets of the faith that we profess, all the dark races have immortal souls, and are held quite as dearly, it may be, by the Creator of both black and white, as even Englishmen.

From the beginning of the world most conquests have been undertaken from a love of greed, pursued with violence and secured by cruelty, and in all instances their records have been written with a blood-red ink.

Those who unchain their eloquence upon the manes of the Spaniards of the sixteenth century should not forget the massacre of the men, women, and the children of the Matabele in the Matoppo Hills. The smoking out of the Arabs in the caves of Mostagánem in Algeria by Marshal le Pelissier may stand against the slaughter of the Peruvians after the capture of the Inca Atahualpa, when he refused to embrace the faith presented to him in a book the language and the characters of which he saw for the first time.

The massacres in German Africa may be put beside the worst deeds of Cortés, and the inhuman bringing in of basketfuls of human hands in Belgian Congoland excels the atrocities of any Spaniard in the whole conquest of America. That which the Spaniards did in the green tree three hundred years ago in Mexico and in Peru, removed as they were far beyond restraint, and with no check but the self-

sacrificing efforts of the great Las Casas and a few monks, all Europe does to-day in the dry tree of modern Christianity and in full view of an indifferent world. But few protest, and their weak voices soon are swallowed up by the full chorus of self-approbation which accompanies our deeds.

But while the Conquest of America was stained with blood, so deeply that each ounce of gold brought from the Indies must have turned red in all its particles, there yet remains a charm about the whole impossible adventure which places it in the first rank of the romantic episodes that a dull world has seen.

The conquerors themselves, although in fact they were but filibusters, displayed such gallantry and perseverance, even in their worst actions, that one's reluctant admiration goes out to them as men, and one forgets the pity of it all.

Who that can read the history of Cortés, and see him burn his ships, and leave himself and all his followers with but the God of Battles for protector, and not reluctantly admire?

The life and death of Alvarado, he whom the Indians called 'the Sun,' and how he leaped the chasm on his lance, covering the Spaniards' retreat in the disaster of the 'Noche Triste,' read more like fairy-tales than sober history in her hodden garb of gray.

Pizarro, when all his followers turned and fled, leaving him but with thirteen men to conquer the great Empire of Peru, makes one forget his cruelties, and

regret that such a man, so valiant, hardy, and so well endowed with all the qualities which compel respect, should by the love of gold, and by the lack of all humanity, so tarnish his fair fame.

Alonzo de Ojeda and Valdivia, whom it is said the Indians slew by pouring molten gold into his mouth, and good Fray Marcos of Nicea, he who set out from Cinaloa 'following his journey as the Holy Ghost did lead,' and many more, impart such interest and such colour to the Conquest of America that one forgets that their prime object was to conquer, and that all conquest is but robbery at best. Still, all the conquerors of America were not cast in the same mould, as the lives and actions both of the wise, humane, and virtuous Alvar Nuñez and of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa amply certify.

Midway between Cortes and Alvar Nuñez, Soto stands, 'a man full of good impulses, a gentleman, a soldier, and one who, had he not graduated (as Oviedo says) in the bad methods of the Pizarros' school, might have left almost an untarnished name.'

The writer of this brief memorial of his deeds does not lay claim to have discovered anything unknown about the hero of his book.

He does not come before the public with a theory of how history should be writ, or strive to make the actions of a man long dead serve as an illustration to some megrim of his own. All that he has attempted, is to give, out of contemporary authorities, a plain, unvarnished story, and then leave his readers (should



he have any) to draw their own conclusions, after the fashion of the Spanish chroniclers who wrote about the conquests both of Mexico and of Peru.

The life of Soto has been written both in this country and the United States, but in regard to his hard-riding captain, Gonçalo de Silvestre, nothing in English has ever come to the knowledge of the present chronicler of his adventures and his rides.

Of the contemporary chroniclers, the Inca Garcilasso, in general interest and for wealth of detail, is easily the first.

Most garrulous he certainly was, but in such matters how shall garrulity offend? For by its means all that is interesting to modern readers is alone preserved.

Battles, events, and records of the bad faith of politicians and of Kings, become uninteresting when the chief actors in them have gone off the stage; but personal details and the colour of a horse, the sayings of a man, and how he wore his armour and his cloak, are always interesting, and will remain so whilst the world endures.

All these in his 'Florida,'\* a curious and minute

\* Garcilasso de la Vega, Inca: 'La Florida. En la Oficina Real y á costa de Nicolas Rodriguez Franco Impressor de Libros, Año CD. DCCXXIII. Le hallarán en su casa. "Conversando mucho tiempo, y en diversos lugares, con un Cavallero, grande amigo mio que se halló en esta jornada . . . el cual era hombre noble, hijodalgo, y como tal se preciava tratar verdad en toda cosa. . . Sin la autoridad de mi autor, tengo la contestacion de otros dos soldados, testigos de vista; que se hallaron

account of Soto's expedition compiled from what he heard from eye-witnesses, the Inca has preserved and set them down with a most prolix and most careful eye upon posterity, and being as he was half Inca Prince, half Spanish gentleman ('porque soy hijo de un Español, y de una India,' he says), we may suppose he was impartial in his views.

Biedma, the factor for the King of Spain, who sailed with Soto, and on his death escaped with the survivors of the expedition into Mexico, has set down, with due official brevity, all that he thought he saw: not that I wish to say his vision was at fault, but that the official mind sees little, and that little in an uninteresting way. But even he occasionally nods and condescends to chronicle some interesting event.\*

The third contemporary authority is the unknown but 'pawky' Portuguese who has concealed himself behind the pseudonym of 'The Gentleman of Elvas,'† and whose account Hakluyt has done into the quaint and idiomatic English of the time.

The writer stands midway between the Inca Garcilasso and the official Biedma in general in-

en la misma jornada . . . El uno se dice Alonso de Carmona, natural de la Villa de Priego. . . . El otro soldado se dice Juan Colés, natural de la villa de Cañra."

\* Luis Hernandez de Biedma: 'Report to the Emperor Charles V.' Translated by Hakluyt and reprinted by Ryes. It is also to be found in Ternaux-Compans' 'Recueil des Pièces sur la Floride.'

† 'Relaçam verdadeira dos trabalhos do governador Don Hernando de Soto. Por um fidalgo Delvas, Evora, 1557.' So runs the title of his book in Portuguese.

terest, and his relation seems to be accurate. Though, as a Portuguese, he was opposed to Soto as a Spaniard, and as a junior officer he not unnaturally adversely criticised much his commander did, he yet does justice to his good qualities, both as a general and a gentleman.

Lastly, Oviedo,\* in his 'General History of the Indies,' inserts the fragment of a narrative of one Rodrigo Ranzel, a soldier who served throughout the expedition, in the cavalry.

These are the four known writings, either of contemporaries or taken from the mouths of eye-witnesses, which deal with Soto during his expedition and his death in Florida.

All of them agree in showing him as a man capable of great deeds, generous and open-handed, and to the last the idol of the soldiers whom he led. As to his exploits in his early life, under Pedrarias Dávila in Nicaragua, but vague accounts remain, but it is probable that both there and on the coast of Guatemala he saw much service in his youth.

His 'life and miracles' in the Pizarros' school, are chronicled at length, and commented on, by all the writers on the Conquest of Peru.

They in the main are creditable to him, especially his attitude at Atahualpa's death. His remonstrance with Pizarro, and the offer that he made to answer with his own life for the Inca, should he be sent to

\* 'Historia General y Natural de las Indias,' Oviedo, Madrid, 1157, cap. xxi., etc.

Spain to stand his trial at the Emperor's Court, shows him a gentleman, as the word was understood, before its modern prostitution into 'money-bag.'

All the *conquistadores* of America, almost to a man died miserably or in disgrace.

Cortés, fallen from his proud estate, still rich but broken-hearted, retired to die in the little Moorish-looking town of Castillejos de la Cañada, which gleams from the Giralda, white as a lily dropped into the sand.

Francisco Pizarro and Pedrarias Dávila both were assassinated, Gonçalo Pizarro, Almagro, and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, died on the scaffold, as did the greater part of the *conquistadores* of Peru. Pedro de Alvarado perished crushed beneath his horse, but, then, the horseman's grave is always open, and the bold swimmer's end is to be taken by the sea. Soto alone, although he failed, died as a conqueror should die, still struggling on.

His brief career was agitated and set as thick with wild adventures as is a porcupine with quills.

Alive he knew no peace—always on horseback (*à la gineta*), with his lance in hand, he passed his days; and now, sunk in the Mississippi, sleeps after his wild rides, taking the rest that a world, envious of ease, denied him in his life.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.



# HERNANDO DE SOTO

## CHAPTER I

IN the great gallery of vivid portraits of the *conquistadores* of America left to us by the contemporary writers, often themselves soldiers as well as chroniclers, few stand out more sharply than does that of him who, of all Europeans, first saw and spoke to Atahualpa, and whose bones lie in the bed of that great river on whose banks he wandered with his men.

Bold and adventurous, pious and cruel, as were the conquerors of the Indies almost to a man,\* Soto stands second only to the great Cortes. From the first moment of his landing to his death, worn out, at Guachoya, on the Mississippi, in the year 1542, his life was packed so full of wild adventures as to read like a dream. Born at the little town of Barcarrota†

\* Only Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca is quite free from all taint of cruelty; Vasco Nuñez de Balboa had lapses, but in the main treated the Indians well.

† Madoz, in his 'Diccionario Geographico de España' (Madrid, 1850), places Villanueva de Barcarrota in the province of Badajoz, district of Caceres, and jurisdiction of Jerez de los

in Estremadura, the part of Spain from which Almagro, Pizarro and Cortes, with the most part of those who 'sold their land to visit other men's,' had sprung. Soto was, so to speak, destined for a *conquistador*.

His family was noble, though impoverished, but, still, so well descended as to make him 'a gentleman on all four sides,'\* and of sufficient standing, and so unmixed with any taint of Moor and Jew, as to be eligible for a Knight of Santiago, a military order to enter which men had to prove the pureness of their blood.

Born between 1496 and 1500, the conquest of America was going on throughout his childhood, and his early youth must have seen 'conquerors' returning wealthy, or broken both in health and fortune, to the Estremadura which had sent so many forth.

No doubt his home was not unlike the house of the La Mancha gentleman Cervantes drew, with his lean horse and running greyhound, courageous ferret, and its meals of 'duelos y quebrantos,' that strange dish which has perplexed every translator of the immortal work.

Such as it was, the house in Barcarrota could not have been rich. Tradition says that the young Soto

Caballeros. He gives it 616 houses, a prison, two inns, and two elementary schools. Perhaps, in externals, it has little changed since the time of Soto.

\* 'Hidalgo de los cuatro costados.'

owed his education to the charity of Pedrarias\* Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro, the future Governor of Panama, he who in youth was known as *El Justador* (the Tilter) and *El Galan*, and in his four old age as '*furor domini*.' But be that as it may, Soto sailed with his benefactor for Panama, when Pedrarias Davila was sent to supersede the unlucky Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, and landed with him there about the year 1509, so poor that, as an ancient writer says, 'he had nothing but his sword and buckler' on his first coming to America. What were his actual deeds under the ruthless Governor of Panama is not set down by any chronicler, but certainly Pedrarias Davila was one of the greatest tyrants and most cruel persecutors of the Indians that ever sailed from Spain.

Stern and a gallant soldier, and having done his duty in the Italian wars, Pedrarias seems to have been one of those Governors who thought no man of colour could have rights. To him is due the slaughter—legal, of course (but what great difference is there how you kill a man, when he is dead?)—of his own son-in-law, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa,† the first man

\* Pedrarias, or Pedro Aras, of Avila was a scion of one of those celebrated fighting families of Avila who contributed so much to the overthrowing of the Moors from Spain and to the conquest of America. They were so renowned for their valiant qualities that they gave rise to the saying, '*El que habla es para la guerra, se llama Aviles en esta tierra.*'

† Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and Hernando de Soto were brothers-in-law, each having married a daughter of Pedrarias Davila.

who, from his mountain-top in Nicaragua, saw the Pacific Sea.

Oviedo, in his 'Historia General de las Indias,' talks of Soto having been trained 'in the bad school of Pedrarias Davila, in the destruction and dissipation of the Indians of Castilla del Oro, graduated in the deaths of the inhabitants of Nicaragua, and canonized in Peru, according to the order of the Pizarros.\*'

Certainly nothing in the methods of Pedrarias Davila was calculated to inculcate a spirit of kindness and of tolerance towards the failings of an 'inferior race.' The kind and relatively humane Vasco Nuñez complains that the Indians, 'who had been as gentle as hares, had now become as fierce as lions.'†

Thus all the early training of Soto's life, from his

\* 'Instruido en la mala escuela de Pedrarias Davila, en la disipacion y asolacion de los Indios de Castillo del Oro, graduado en las muertes de los naturales de Nicaragua, y canonizado en el Peru, segun la orden de los Pizarros' (Oviedo : 'Historia General y Natural de las Indias,' cap. xxiii. ; Madrid, 1851).

† Francisco Lopez de Gomara, in his 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. lxvi., p. 59, says : 'Llevaba ganas (Pedrarias Davila) de toparse conellos (los Indios), que havia estado en Oran, y otras tierras de Berberia.' A fine school for a Governor of Indians ! In 'Oran y otras tierras de Berberia' he had no doubt learned his cruelties, for he began at once, soon after landing in Panama, to throw the Indians to the dogs to be torn to pieces. 'Aperreó muchos Indios . . . atormantó ciertos caciques y hizo otras crueldades y demasias que causaron rebelion de Indios y muerte de muchos Españoles.'



first boyhood in Estremadura, with the perpetual persecution of the unfortunate Moriscos always going on, to his initiation in the methods of Pedrarias Davila, had been such as to render him insensible to suffering, and careless as to human life. In this he differed little from the other Spanish and English adventurers of the times, and the wonder is that the natural kind disposition of the man, which in his life showed itself markedly on several occasions, was not entirely blunted, and that he did not by degrees become as cruel and inhuman as were the Pizarros, Almagro, Pedrarias Davila, and others of the *conquistadores* who wrote their names in blood. No doubt the years he passed in 'dissipation' of the Indians of the coast of the Castillo del Oro prepared him for the great part he had to play, both in Peru and Florida. He learned, no doubt, to tie his horse at night, so that it did not stray, to mount immediately, all in one motion, without dwelling on the stirrup-leather, or stopping with the leg poised in the air over the back, as is the fashion with those who learn to ride in lands where horses are but rich men's toys, or by the rules of riding-schools. Tracking and following up a trail must have become as second nature to him. He learned command at the right moment, in his youth, when it alone can be acquired. Hunger and thirst, being a Spaniard, were as his birthrights, and perhaps before he left Estremaduran thyme wastes he had known them well. Patience in suffering and a cool head in danger he

had from nature, and an adventurous life\* did but intensify them both in after-years.

So in the usual fightings and marchings of a 'conqueror's' life the years between 1519 and 1532 slipped past. In them he explored the coasts of Guatemala and of Yucatan. Scant records can be gathered of his life, except the mention by Herrera and Oviedo of his presence at various times upon adventures on those coasts.

No doubt he saw the death of Vasco Nuñez, and met King Nicaragua; but the soft, sensuous life of intertropical America, which Peter Martyr sets forth with such skill as passing in Hispaniola and in Cuba, could not blunt the edge of one who seemed but born to fight.

In 1532, and when apparently not more than two or three and thirty, he appears leading reinforcements from Nicaragua† to the conquest of Peru. He arrived just in the nick of time, for Pizarro and Almagro had found themselves, to their amazement, face to face with a great empire,

\* Peter Martyr of Angleria says: 'For all the Spanish nation is so desirous of novelties that what way soever they be called with a becke only or a soft whispering voice to anything . . . they speedilie prepare themselves to flie and forsake certainties under hope of a higher degree to followe incertainties' (dec. vii., p. 2256, Lok's version).

† 'Llego el Capitan Hernando de Soto con gente de Pie y de Caballo, que de Nicaragua traia' (Augustin de Zarate, 'Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de Peru,' cap. ii., book ii., p. 19).

which they must either conquer or give up all the fruits of their long sacrifices in Panama.

By this time Soto was no longer the raw boy with but his sword and buckler for his fortune, for Herrera calls him 'a famous captain . . . and one who had fought in Nicaragua, and of the first who went to the conquest of Peru.'\*

Francisco de Pizarro was at Tumbez, and Soto, having landed at La Isla de Puna, on the Peruvian coast, found himself obliged to journey up the river on a raft with but a single follower in his train. As he went along, Diego de Aguero and Rodrigo Loçano, who knew the country, came running on the bank. They called to him that the Tumbez Indians had already killed several parties of the Spaniards, and thus put him on his guard. Had he not had their warning, the future conqueror of Florida would most likely have been killed. On his arrival at Tumbez he found Pizarro and the Bishop, Don Fray Vicente de Valverde, waiting to help him disembark his men.

Soto, with the Bishop and Gonçalo de Pizarro, who had arrived three or four days before him, sat on their horses all night long, wet to the skin; and so he made his entry to Peru, in danger of his life, and suffering hardship from the first day of his arrival in the land.

\* 'Famoso capitán, . . . y que aviendo militado en Nicaragua fue de los primeros que passaron á la conquista del Peru' (Herrera, 'Historia General de las Indias,' dec. vi., cap. ix., p. 206).

Almost at once Pizarro sent him, with his two brothers, Juan and Gonçalo, and Benalcazar, the future conqueror of Bogota, to surprise the Indians of Tumbes. They fell upon the camp, taking it by surprise, and put the Indians to the sword, to avenge the death of the three Spaniards who had been killed by treachery but a few days before, and whom the Spaniards thought the Indians had sacrificed before their idols, though it appears from other writers that there was even doubt about their death.

Pizarro at the time was in the most critical conjuncture of all his life. The Inca—Atahualpa (or Ataliba, as the Spaniards called him)—was camped at Caxamalca with an overwhelming force. Pizarro's own resources were of the scantiest, and his base was far away. He and his troops had landed on the coast of a great empire, of whose power they had no knowledge, except that gained from such prisoners as they might chance to take.

Had the Peruvians been half as warlike as the Mexicans, with whom Cortes fought so many battles with such varying success, no single Spaniard could possibly have escaped with life. Most fortunately, the Inca—Atahualpa—was engaged in war with his own brother Huascar for the sovereignty, and this delayed him in the interior, and stopped him from advancing on Pizarro with an overwhelming force. It thus became of great importance to send an embassy, and to endeavour to persuade the Inca to



negotiate a truce. No one could tell what fate awaited the ambassadors.

Soto at this time was in the prime of manhood, and his portrait in the frontispiece of Herrera's 'History of the Indies' depicts him, in half-armor, with a close, wavy crop of hair, a pointed beard, moustaches rather long and drooping, and, on the whole, more like a poet than a warrior. Herrera says of him, 'that he was rather above middle height, so graceful that he looked well both on foot and upon horseback, on which he was very skilful; cheerful of countenance, dark in complexion, an endurer of hardships, and valiant.'\* Who would not face all kinds of fate at thirty years of age, especially if of 'such grace' ('de tan buena gracia') as to look well on horseback and on foot, valiant, and an endurer of those hardships which *conquistadores* had to face? So that, as if quite naturally, the choice fell upon Soto as ambassador.

Pizarro, on arriving at Tumbez (the Inca Garcilasso usually spells it Tumbiz), found himself in a land the like of which no one in all the Spains had ever dreamed. The climate was balmy and delicious, the Indians humble and submissive, and the wealth of silver and of gold beyond belief.

The Inca Garcilasso, in his description of the

\* 'Soto era demas que mediano cuerpo de tan buena gracia que parecia bien a pié, y a caballo, en que era muy diestro, alegre de rostro, moreno de color, sufridor de trabajos y valiente' (Herrera, 'Historia General de las Indias,' dec. vii.).

Temple at Tumbez, describes the rooms all fitted up with golden furniture, and says: 'Even the pots and pans and kitchen jars were of gold and plate.'\* And further on 'they went into the gardens, where Pedro de Candia saw trees and other small plants and herbs, animals and other vermin ['*otras sabandijas*'] . . . imitated to the life in gold and silver.'† All these marvels (says Pedro Cieça de Leon, in his '*Cronica del Peru*') Pedro de Candia, one of the thirteen men who alone remained constant and faithful to Pizarro at his landing, was the first to see. The army had been encamped close to the valley of Tumbez, and no one having dared to enter it, Pedro de Candia was seized with one of those strange fits of fervour which attacked the conquerors. Cieça de Leon has preserved what he said, and it appears that Pedro de Candia first armed himself, placing a coat of mail, which fell down to his knees, over his clothes, and putting on his head an iron helmet, of the strongest ('*de las muy bravas*') and most gallant ('*galana*'), taking a buckler of fine steel, girt with his sword, and in his hand a wooden cross of more than a yard in length, as the insignia of our redemption

\* '*Hasta las ollas, y cantaros, tinajas, y tinajones de la cocina, eran de oro y de plata*' ('*Commentarios Reales del Peru*,' Garcilasso de la Vega, Inca, book i., part ii., cap. xii., p. 15).

† '*Entraron en los jardines, donde vio Pedro de Candia, arboles y otras plantas menores, yervas, animales, y otras sabandijas . . . contra hechos al natural, de oro y plata*' (Garcilasso de la Vega, '*Commentarios Reales*,' book i., etc.).

and our faith. And thus accoutred (being a man of immense stature\*), he said: 'I have determined to go alone and see what is in that valley. If they kill me, you will have lost little or nothing by the loss of but a comrade, and if the thing turns out to my desire our victory will be great.'

What he saw in the valley, is it not set down in Zarate, Jerez, in Pedro Cieça de Leon, and, in more quaint and curious language than in all, by the half-Inca, half-Castilian gentleman, Garcilasso, he who sleeps in the great mosque of Cordoba, in the third chapel (entering by St. Catherine's Gate) on the right hand?

But that a miracle should not pass, even though chronicled by a heretic, without due honour and amazement, one thing I set down here. When, with his wooden cross in hand, Pedro de Candia marched alone into the valley before the Temple of the Sun, he saw a lion and a tiger keeping guard. And, says the Inca Garcilasso, when the fierce beasts saw Pedro and the sign he bore, they went to him, their natural ferocity quite laid aside, as they were dogs that he had reared, and fawned on him, lying down before his feet. And he, thinking the miracle was from God Himself, took heart, and, patting them, laid his tall cross upon those Gentiles ('aquellos Gentiles'), which by its virtue tamed them, taking away all their ferocity.

\* The Inca Garcilasso says, book i., cap. xi.: 'Era Pedro de Candia muy alto de cuerpo, segun dicen, no lo conoci.'

The Inca sees a miracle in the strange little story, and even heretics can see that which is quite as great as any miracle, good faith, both in the hero and the teller of the tale.

But to return to Soto, as the Inca Garcilasso might observe after one of those interludes of his, in which he treats of horsemanship, of female virtue, of the starry heavens, and other matters, which, if but comprehended in the right way (with faith), are part of history, giving a colour of reality even to solid facts.

The Inca Atahualpa had despatched an embassy with splendid gifts to wait upon Pizarro and the Spaniards, under the impression that they were children of the sun. Nothing in all the annals of the conquest of America equals the magnificence of this embassy. It was commanded by a brother of the Inca, and brought with it llamas, vicuñas, stags, deer, guanacos, honey, dresses of honour, and ornaments of gold, with services of plate, turquoises, emeralds, and samples of the riches of Peru of every kind.

Thinking the horses were to be appeased with gold,\* the Indians brought large quantities in baskets, and placed them in their mangers, decking them with flowers. So great, indeed, was the quantity of gold the Spaniards had, that they made bits and shoes for their horses of it, 'which,' says

\* Garcilasso de la Vega, 'Commentarios Reales,' book i., cap. xxvii.



the Inca, 'were cheaper to them, where they were, than those of steel.'

Pizarro, who was not without promptings of greatness in his heart—he wished, for instance, in all things to dress and to behave after the model of the 'Gran Capitan'\*—thought that, as the Inca Atahualpa had sent his brother, he, too, was bound to send a man of mark. First, he named his brother, Don Hernando de Pizarro, and then his choice fell upon Soto, and to them was given the task of explaining to the Inca everything about the Emperor Charles V. and of delivering a message from the Pope. The explanation as to things temporal, and of the consuming wish the Emperor had to know his cousin in majesty, the Inca of Peru, was not so difficult. But the Pope's message and his exhortation to the unknowing, and therefore unbelieving, King, to amend his former naughty life and straight turn Christian, and the attempt to indoctrinate him in all the mysteries of our faith through an interpreter, was difficult enough.

Still, that Pizarro pitched upon Soto to accompany his brother upon so delicate a task is proof that the young soldier had proved himself a man to be relied upon, during his short career. Accompanied by Felipe, the interpreter, who though, as it appears, not skilled either in Spanish or in Quichua,† yet was

\* Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova.

† 'Que aunque torpe en ambas lenguas, no podian pasar de el' ('Commentarios Reales,' cap. xxviii.).

indispensable, and with the hundred Indians sent by the Cacique of Casamarca, close to Tumbes, they set out on their way.

As they drew near to Caxamalca, where the Inca lay, messengers met them, and by degrees their fears evaporated, although they knew his body-guard alone was thirty thousand strong. They passed the Inca's baths, the palaces, marking the water running down in pipes (*caños*) beside the stone-made road, 'the like of which there was not in all Spain.' At last, in a small plain, they came upon the Inca's camp.

Francisco de Xerez, in his 'Conquista del Peru,' says 'it was quite a league in length, the tents of cotton,'\* and the position chosen with skill, upon the slope of a small hill. A body of infantry, having come forth to meet them, gave Soto his first recorded opportunity to show the man he was. The Inca Garcilasso says, on seeing them, 'Hernando de Soto, to make them understand if they were not friends that he alone was quite sufficient for them all, charged on his horse, and at full gallop stopped close to the general.' † The general, as it happened, was the Inca, who had come out in person to receive the messengers.

\* 'Las tiendas, que eran de algodón Tomaban una legua de largo' (Francisco de Xerez, 'La Conquista del Peru,' p. 196).

† 'Hernando de Soto, por darles a entender, que si no fueran amigos, bastaría el solo, para todos ellos, arremetió el caballo llegando a carrera dellos, y así corrió, y paró cerca del maese de campo' ('Commentarios Reales,' book i., cap. xxviii., p. 22).

Gomara,\* in his 'History of the Indies,' says that 'Soto arrived, making his horse curvet for bravery, or to amaze the Indians, close to the chair on which Atahualpa sat, who did not move although the horse snorted right in his face.'

Zarate † and Xerez ‡ are both agreed this was the case, and in truth the picture is a gallant one enough ; for if the Spanish captain proved his daring and self-confidence, the Inca, who had never seen a horse, and yet preserved his soul serene at the

\* 'Llego Soto haciendo corvetas con su caballo por gentilça ó por admiracion de los Indios, hasta junto la silla de Ataliba, que no hiço mudanza ninguna, aunque le resolló en la cara el caballo' (Francisco Lopez de Gomara, 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. cxiii., p. 105).

† Augustin de Zarate, 'Historia del Peru.' Zarate seems to have been a truthful man, for he says in his prologue, addressed to 'La Majestad del Rey de Inglaterra Don Felipe II.': 'No pudé en el Peru escribir ordenadamente este relacion . . . porque solo averla alla commençado, me huviera de poner en peligro de la vida con un maestre de campo de Gonçalo Pizarro, que amenaçaba de matar a qualquiera que escriviere sus hechos, porque entendió, que eran mas dignos de la ley de olvido . . . que no de memoria ni perpetuidad.' History written under such circumstances would have been an embarrassing task even to Gibbon or Herodotus.

‡ Francisco de Xerez, 'Conquista del Peru.' He, too, was a historian worthy at least of pity, for he says in finishing his book, where he relates all he had seen in Peru: 'Asi despues de veinte años por singular providencia de Dios Omnipotente, llegué al lugar de donde havia salido, pero en tantos, quantos, peligros de la vida, y cuerpo sufri y probé, quantas hambres, quantas miserias, cuidados trabajos y angustias en andar por las Provincias de las Indias.'

impetuous arrival of the seeming hippogriff, was not a whit inferior in bravery and strength of mind.

Xerez and Zarate both say that Atahualpa executed some of the Indians who had fled on Soto's charge, saying that no doubt in the land from whence he came horses were plentiful as sheep were in Peru.\*

The Inca Garcilasso, who, as a half-Peruvian himself, is naturally anxious to make the best of the behaviour both of Spaniards and Indians, treats the whole tale with scorn, and says that the Inca Atahualpa could not have been so ill-advised as to kill any of his own men before ambassadors, nor Soto, being as he was a gentleman, have been so inconsiderate and discourteous as to ride up to a great King, to whom he came as an ambassador, and let his horse snort in his face.

Weighing the matter up judicially, after the fashion of historians who write at least four hundred years after the facts they touch upon, it seems to-day as if the Inca Garcilasso, in his view of the story, may be justified, as it contains much of that much-bepraised sweet reasonableness to which rude facts so often give the lie. Imagination likes to dwell on the young Spanish captain thus riding into history, no doubt *á la gineta*,† with his lance in hand, his bridle

\* Gomara says that Atahualpa 'se enojó de el (Soto) porque se le llegó tanto con el caballo, caso de gran desacato para la gravedad de tan grandísimo rey' (Gomara, 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. cxiii.).

† To ride *á la gineta* was to ride with short stirrups, in the Moorish fashion. As Garcilasso de la Vega especially says



arm held high, after the Spanish-Moorish fashion, and the belief in fortune's steadfastness which youth alone and a good horse are able to impart.

But in whatever manner Soto made his approach, whether actually he stopped his horse just at the Inca's chair, its hoofs cutting into the grass as a sharp skate cuts into ice; or whether he wheeled gracefully a few feet off, bringing his horse's head into its chest, causing it to passage and curvet, one thing is sure. The charge once over, he seems to have remembered that he was not only an Ambassador, but a gentleman of Spain. Gomara says: 'Soto dismounted, made a deep bow, and told the Inca what he came about. Ataliba (Atahualpa) was very grave, and did not answer him directly, but spoke to a servant, and he to Felipillo, who repeated the answer to Soto.'\*

As Felipillo was a muddler in both languages, it may be reasonably supposed that the colloquy took some time before they mutually were made to understand. The details that we have to-day of what passed between Soto, Hernando de Pizarro, and Atahualpa, have been preserved alone by

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'Mi tierra se ganó á la gineta,' it is almost certain that Soto was riding in that fashion. The other style was called *á la brida*, and was the straight seat of the armour-clad knights.

\* 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. cxiii.: 'Apeóse Soto, hizo gran reverencia y dijole á lo que iba. Ataliba estaba muy grave, y no le respondió de el a el sino habló con un su criado, y aquel con Felipillo, que referia la respuesta al Soto.'

Garcilasso, and he took them from the papers of Father Blas Valera (whom he calls 'muy curioso y elegante'), who was with Atahualpa at his death.

After the compliments were over, the Inca took the two adventurous Estremenians into his tent, and seated himself upon a golden throne. The ambassadors made a low bow, after the Spanish style (*á la usança Española*), which pleased the Inca much. His short experience of the Spanish style did not turn out so pleasing as the first instalment, and as to bows, these were the last that he was destined to receive. He bade them welcome, and two stools of gold were placed for them, on which they sat.

Stout hearts they must have had, alone, and in the midst of thirty thousand men. Yet, looking at the matter without that cant which spreads its cataract over our mental vision, making us look at the outside alone, and give our praise alone to those who win, the odds were on their side. The Inca was persuaded that they were children of the Sun, the god he revered, and thus their guns and horses gave them what seemed to Atahualpa supernatural power.

So, turning to his courtiers, Atahualpa spoke, saying how like these strangers looked to their god Viracocha, both in features and in dress, as he appeared to their own ancestor. He finished speaking, and two maidens, 'beautiful as suns,' of the blood

royal, came into the room. They bore in golden cups the sacred beverage which only Incas drank. Four youths of the blood royal, but illegitimate, walked after them,\* carrying fresh and dried fruits, with bread, and wine made from the tree mulli. Rich towels of cotton (for they had no flax)† were hanging from their arms, and with the girls they came and stood before the throne. The Inca took one of the golden cups, and, tasting it, gave it to his brother to drink for him. And then a page, taking the other cup, passed it, first to Hernando de Pizarro, and then to Soto, in sign that they should pledge the Inca and be friends. The loving-cup despatched (by proxy), Hernando de Pizarro, who seems to have been no speaker, called upon Soto to disclose the object of his embassy; but this the Inca would not suffer till they had eaten, and walked about his gardens to admire the flowers.

‘The Spaniards’ (says Father Blas Valera) ‘were much astonished to see so much urbanity and courtesy in people who, in their imagination, lived in complete barbarity and rudeness; and, that the Indians should not think that they despised and held in little that which, with such goodwill and kindness, they had offered them, ate some of what they brought, and said it was sufficient, at which the

\* ‘*Accompañavalas cuatro muchachos de la misma sangre, aunque no de la legitima*’ (‘*Commentarios Reales,*’ book i., cap. xix., p. 29).

† ‘*Toallas muy ricas de algodón porque no tenían lino.*’

Indians received great content.’\* A curious and Arcadian picture, and an unfitting frontispiece for the chronicle of horrors which the then unwritten history of the conquest of Peru was to contain.

Hernando de Pizarro having again urged upon Soto to rise and speak—for it behoved them to return and sleep in their own camp—Soto stood up. Rising and bowing to the Inca, he reseated himself upon his golden stool, and, taking up his parable, began: ‘Oh, most serene Inca, you will know that in the world there are two most potent Princes above all the rest: one is the Supreme Pontiff, who has the vicegerency of God—this one administers and governs all those who keep His holy law and teach His Divine word; the other is the Emperor of the Romans, Charles V., the King of Spain.’†

For a young captain this was not a bad exordium to a speech. It much resembles the plan, well known in Scotland, of boldly laying down a premise which is false, and arguing from it as from a law divine. Soto, continuing, said: ‘These two

\* ‘Los Espanoles se admiraron grandemente de tanta urbanidad, y cortesania, en gente, que segun la imaginacion de ellos vivian en toda barbaridad, y torpeça; y porque no pareciese que desechavan y menospreciavan lo que con tan buen animo, y tanta gentilaça las ofrecian, comieron algo de lo que trajeron, y dijeron que les bastava; con que los Indios quedaron muy contentos’ (‘Relacion del Padre Blas Valera,’ preserved by Garcilasso de la Vega, ‘Commentarios Reales,’ book i., p. 24).

† ‘Relacion del Padre Blas Valera’ (‘Commentarios Reales,’ cap. xx.).

monarchs, knowing the blindness of the natives of these realms, with which, despising the true God, Creator of the heavens and of the earth, they adore His creatures, and even the devil, who deceives them, sent a Governor, Don Francisco de Pizarro, and his companions and some priests, ministers of God, to teach your Highness this Divine truth and Holy Law, for which they came to this land; and having enjoyed upon the road the royal liberality of your hand, they entered yesterday into Cassamarca,\* and to-day they send us to your Highness, so that we begin the treaty of concord, friendship, and perpetual peace, which should exist between us.' Only the addition of the words 'for all time coming' was wanted to complete the farce.

If Soto really spoke the words as Father Blas Valera has preserved them for us, he had a gift of speech which might have carried him high up in the hierarchy of his time. At any rate, it is remarkable so young a man was put forth by an old warrior (as was Pizarro) for such a trying task. Well can we see the Inca's face as the pious patter was reeled off; and though, according to Garcilasso, he answered in such wise as to draw tears from his own followers, calling the Spaniards children of the Sun, and saying they fulfilled a prophecy that his realm should be lost at the arrival of white, bearded men in ships, upon another day, and when he had rallied his forces, so

\* Garcilasso is not a constant speller, and the same word is often almost unrecognisable in different pages.



to speak, he made an excellent reply to a self-sufficient, dogmatizing priest.

The Spaniards, after securing another present of gold and silver, got on their horses and returned to their own camp, bearing the message that the Inca would come to see their chief. Pizarro, like a prudent captain, at daybreak got his men ready to await the Inca's host. The cavalry, which numbered sixty, he marshalled under his brother, Soto and Benalcazar marching their squadrons behind some walls, so that their onslaught should be more unsuspected and more terrible.

Borne in a golden litter high on his followers' shoulders, his cortège shining in the sun with gold, their drums all beating and their whistles blowing, slowly the Inca drew nigh to his doom. He came, as Garcilasso says, 'in peace,'\* and as his army slowly marched along, men ran in front to brush away the stones and clear the road. He himself, Garcilasso says, was quite persuaded that he was going to see the children of the Sun, people but little lower than the gods, kind and beneficent, and it appears that all his followers, with the exception of a chief called Rumiñami (Stone-eye) were of one mind in their opinion of the sacred nature of their guests. 'Tis true the Inca and Father Blas Valera are the only two historians who give this view; but, then, one of them was half a Peruvian himself, and the other spoke the language well, and neither Zarate,

\* 'No llevaba animo de pelear.'

Xerez, Gomara, nor the rest, could speak Peruvian, and, naturally, were not unwilling to present in the most favourable light the scene which soon ensued.

Just as the Inca reached the Spanish camp, Fray Vicente de Valverde, dressed in the habit of his Order, and in his hand a cross, stepped out into the way. In a long sermon he made plain the mysteries of our faith. The threefold Deity, who at the same time is but One, Creator of the heavens and the earth; the creation of the world; the fall of man, and how the serpent, creeping into the garden by the Tigris side, beguiled our mother Eve, he set forth at due length. Passing but lightly, as perhaps was wise, over the flood, and the exploits of Noah, by nice transition he just touched upon the Cities of the Plain, without a word, one may suppose, about Lot's daughters and their 'tangled Trinities.' Then with a skip he reached the Trinity, which he explained as best he could through his interpreter.\* The Saviour of the world and Calvary was his next theme, with some home truths directed at the Jews. Then, touching on St. Peter and St. Paul, he showed as clearly as could be that the then reigning Pope was the descendant of the first, by laying on of hands and by succession apostolical, as the whole world well knows, and about which no doubt is possible. This finished the first part of his discourse, and in the second heat he undertook to make an 'apologia'

\* It is to be remembered that the interpreter was 'torpe en ambas lenguas,' and quite possibly no theologian.

for the presence of himself, Pizarro, and the whole Spanish host.

‘The Pope,’ he said, ‘hearing that all the people of these realms have gone a-whoring after false and wicked gods, and worship idols made in the image of the devil, has yearned to save their souls. Wishing to bring them to the knowledge of the one true God, he gives the conquest of the country into the hands of his tried servant, the Emperor Charles V. That mighty potentate, the lord of all the earth, being detained by wars in Italy, has sent his trusty servant, Don Francisco Pizarro, to carry out the work. Embrace our faith and pay a tribute to our King, leave idols and turn to the true God, and peace and friendship will be yours; but if you still persist in your old courses, war shall be your part, with blood and slaughter, and your kingdom will be lost. Yourself shall perish with your Indians under our arms, in the same way as Pharaoh and his host.’

He closed, having said all he could have said under the circumstances. He then handed the puzzled Inca a book, in which he said that he would find an ample confirmation of the truths he had advanced. Historians, as usual in such circumstances, are divided as to the nature of the book. Some say it was the Word of God itself, others a breviary, whilst Pedro de Pizarro whittles it down to a mere history of the saints. In any case, the proof required for the imaginative and pious monk’s long statement was not likely to be found in it.

Gomara, Zarate, and Francisco de Xerez make Atahualpa cast the sacred book upon the ground almost without a word, but Garcilasso, either more anxious for the credit of his countrymen, better informed, or more imaginative, or perhaps more solicitous for continuity of history, endows him with a speech. If Atahualpa made the speech, it shows that Universities and colleges to teach theology have in the main been useless, and that logic, after all, is an inherent quality in uncivilized mankind. First he began with a complaint of the interpreter, whom he could hardly understand. Then, having got it into his head that the Spaniards were either gods themselves or messengers from God, he said: 'We have called you Viracochas,\* understanding that you are messengers from Viracocha, whose will, just indignation, arms, and strength, none can resist; but he has also pity and compassion. Therefore you who are messengers and divine ministers should act as such, and not allow the murders, thefts, and cruelties which have been done in Tumbes to proceed.'†

\* Viracocha was the god of the Peruvians.

† 'Os avemos llamado Viracochas, entendiendo que sois mensageros del Gran Dios Viracocha, cuya voluntad, y justa indignacion, armas y potencia no se puedo resistir; pero tambien tiene piedad y misericordia. Por tanto deveis hacer como mensageros, y ministros divinos, y no permitir que pasen adelante las muertes, robos, y crueldades, que en Tumpiz y su comarea se han hecho' ('Commentarios Reales,' cap. xxiv., p. 32).

The Inca's faith and evident nobility might, one would think, have shamed a troop of fiends, but those who heard him, though perhaps not worse than others of their time (or ours), being convinced that they were instruments chosen on high to spread the faith and introduce the blessings of the Spanish rule, remained unmoved.

Then said the Inca, with real or unconscious irony: "Your herald tells me that you put forth five named men I ought to know. The first is God, the three and one, which added up make four. This one, you say, is the Creator of the universe. Perhaps he is the same as he whom we call Pachamac and Viracocha. The second is, you say, father of all mankind, on whom you say that all can cast their sins. The third is Jesus Christ, who did not throw his sins on the first man, because he was dead.\* The fourth you call the Pope. The fifth is Charles, whom, without taking all the rest into account, you call most powerful and monarch of the world, and say he is supreme above mankind."

It seems as if, allowing for his lack of theological education, the Inca had pretty fairly grasped what the good monk had said. That is, relying solely on himself, and without the aid (which the monk had) of

\* The involuntary blasphemy of the Inca is, I think, rather to be put down as ignorance than as design. The threefold Deity, Adam, and the other persons to be venerated, were, without doubt, not so distinct in his mind, bearing of them as he did for the first time, as one had want have rendered them in our own.



revealed truth, he did as well as one could wish, solely relying on his weak, erring, and human understanding, and upon reason, that blind leader of the blind.

'But,' said the Inca, with some show of logic on his side, 'if Charles is prince and lord of all the world, what need had he that the Pope should give him a new concession and donation to make war upon me and usurp these realms? And if he [the Pope] was thus obliged to act, then is the Pope a greater lord than he [Charles], and both more powerful and lord of all the world.'

This was a home thrust to the monk, who perhaps (though a good man) did not expect to encounter wisdom from babes' and Incas' mouths. But worse remained to come.

'I am much astonished,' said the heathen in his pride, 'that you say I am obliged to pay tribute to Charles, and not to the others;\* for you allege no reason for the tribute, nor can I find myself obliged to pay it by any means at all. For if I am obliged to pay tribute and service, it appears to me that it should be to God, who, as you say, made all of us, or to the first of men,† who was the father of all men. . . . But if you say that to those‡ I owe

\* That is, to the five (or eight) persons mentioned in Valverde's speech.

† The Inca meant Adam, and few people would object if a reasonable amount of the public money should be devoted to so worthy an object.

‡ The five personages as before mentioned.

nothing, still less do I owe anything to Charles, who was never lord of these realms, nor has even seen them. And even if, after this concession [by the Pope], he has a right over me, it should have been explained to me before you made the threats of war, and fire, and blood, and death . . . for I am not so stupid as not to obey him who can rule with reason, with justice, and with right.'

What must have been the feelings of the reasonable men, who, even in an army, must occasionally be found, on hearing what the Inca said, is hard to understand. But as the reasonable man is commonly either a timid or an unready animal, most likely such as there were kept silent, for the power of discipline is such that, were an army all composed of Quakers, once it had entered well into their souls, they at a word would massacre a Sunday-school, so that a stuttering officer but gave the word.

Finishing his remarks, the Inca said: 'Besides all this, I want to know more of the holy man called Jesus Christ, who, as you say, is dead, and if he died by illness or by the hand of foes. Also if he was placed amongst the gods before his death, or after it occurred. I likewise want to know if you esteem as gods all five of those whom I should honour. For if this be the case, you have more gods than we, for we adore Pachamac as the chief god, and then the Sun as his inferior; also the Moon, both as his sister and his wife. On this account I should be glad that you explained to me

these things, and by another and a better herald, so that I understand them and obey your will.’\*

That rarest of all men, the unprejudiced observer, had he been there, must have acknowledged that the Inca had the best of the dispute.

But Atahualpa, quite unwittingly, with his own hands gave his death signal and set the badge of slavery upon the whole Peruvian race.

Francisco Lopez de Gomara, in his ‘History of the Indies,’ † briefly relates what passed, and after the Inca’s speech was done Fray Vicente de Valverde asked what he thought about the book. Atahualpa opened it, looked at it, turned the pages over, and, saying that it said nothing to him of all the friar had said, threw it upon the ground. Naturally, not being a necromancer, and not having received the gifts of letters and of tongues, it said but little to him about anything; but, still, one wonders, even had he kept all his due terms at Salamanca, what he could have found in it about the Pope or of the tribute to be paid to Charles V. Moreover, Gomara even is not sure what the book was.‡

\* ‘Commentarios Reales,’ cap. xxiv., p. 32.

† ‘Historia de las Indias,’ cap. cxiii.

‡ ‘Llegó entonces á el Fray Vicente de Valverde, Dominico, que llevaba una cruz en la mano, y su breviario, o la Biblia, como unos dicen.’

Augustin de Zarate, ‘Historia del Peru,’ cap. v., p. 21, says : ‘Llego Fray Vicente de Valverde con un breviario en la mano.’

Francisco de Xerez, ‘Conquista del Peru,’ says : ‘Fué con una Biblia en la mano.’

Garci lasso de la Vega says : ‘El Inca se admiro grandemente

The friar took his breviary (or Bible), and went back to Pizarro, crying out: 'The Gospels [*sic*] are on the ground: vengeance, Christians! at them! at them! for they want neither our friendship nor our law.' A most sufficient reason for a massacre, given by a minister of God to a band of rough adventurers, whose minds were filled with a blind, stupid faith, powerful enough to move a mud volcano, and whose ruling passion was a thirst for gold.

Pizarro wanted nothing better, and he launched Soto with the cavalry upon the Indians, and opened fire with his artillery. Then passed the piteous tragedy about which all the historians of the Indies have given their account. In half an hour hundreds of Indians were slain,\* none of them offering any resistance, all those who stood round Atahualpa's litter suffering themselves to be slain like sheep without a blow, in their anxiety to shield him, and to prevent the litter coming to the ground.

So in an afternoon the Inca, having come in pomp, borne on men's shoulders, shining all with gold, almost a god, and ruling over a vast kingdom,

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de ver la forma del Fraile Dominico, de la barba, y corona raida como la traen los religiófos, y del habito largo, y de la cruz de palma, que en las manos llevaba; y un libro, *que era la suma de Silvestre*; otros dicen era el breviario; otros que la Biblia; tome cada uno lo que mas le agradáre.'

\* Francisco de Xerez, 'Conquista del Peru,' p. 198, says: 'En breve tiempo fueron los mas de ellos metidos á espada.'

was a prisoner in the Spanish camp, his pomp destroyed, his followers all slain, his kingdom given over to the spoiler, and his life only preserved for a brief season, as a means whereby to wring out gold.

In the tremendous slaughter, in which Soto led the van, no Spaniard was slain. Only a horse received a wound, and Pizarro had a sword-cut in his hand, dealt to him by a Spanish soldier in the mêlée, whilst aiming at the Inca, whom Pizarro was at the moment dragging from the litter by his long plaited hair. The duty which fell to Soto on that day was certainly after the canon of the Pizarros, but, for all that, it did not stamp all humanity out of his heart, as in a little time he nobly showed, after the Inca's death.

The sack of Atahualpa's camp almost transcends belief in the amount of riches that were found; but all the historians of the time agree in the same tale. 'What,' says Gomara,\* 'the Inca felt the most was the chains with which Pizarro loaded him, and he pathetically besought that now, as fortune willed that he should be brought low, he should not be so unworthily entreated by his conquerors.'

His fate indeed was hard. Hearing, as the historians agree, that sons of God had landed on his coast, he came to meet them peacefully ('*venia de*

\* Gomara, '*Historia de las Indias*,' cap. cxv., says that the plate of the Inca alone was worth one hundred thousand ducats, and that in the whole camp about eight arrobas of gold were found. The arroba is about twenty-five pounds.



paz'), to hear their mission from the Deity. He came, almost a god himself, so sacred was he in his subjects' eyes, and in a brief half-hour he found the sons of God were but mere money-grubbers, for at once, having gauged them, he made his famous offer to fill the room with gold.

## CHAPTER II

ALL that ensued is written in the history of Peru ; but when Pizarro looked about for one to go to Cuzco, two hundred leagues away, to see if the poor Inca's promises were likely to be valid, no one but Soto could be found to run the risk. At last one Pedro del Barco, also an Estremenian, volunteered, and, carried in hammocks, which the Peruvians called 'huantres,' they started on the way. So much respected were the Incas in Peru, that on the road, as Garcilasso says, 'they went with more security and comfort than they had been in Spain.'\* After one hundred leagues upon the road, they reached a town called Sausa, where an adventure happened which, had not Soto been an honest man, might have changed all the history of Peru. Bound fast in chains, and guarded like 'a stealer of the Sacrament,' Soto found Huascar Inca being taken to the coast. He learned that he was Atahualpa's brother, and that the two were struggling for the throne. Huascar,

\* ' Con mas seguridad y regalos y servicios que se fueran por su Patria ' ( ' Commentarios Reales, ' cap. xxviii., p. 37). Time has altered the ' security ' of the roads of Spain, but the *regalos* and *servicios* remain unchanged.

who very likely knew his fate was sealed did he once see his brother's face, pled hard with Soto to return with him, promising much more gold than Atahualpa had, if but his life was spared. Soto, who throughout his life was, above all, the slave of discipline, by signs\* refused him, and continued on his way, leaving the Inca Huascar 'more sad and more disconsolate than he had been before.'

Arrived in Cuzco safely, Soto was met with dances and with songs; Indians hung flowers round his neck, and he was lodged in a great palace, about which Garcilasso says that the roof of it 'equalled in height any tower in Spain that I have seen, the tower of Seville only taken out.' †

Upon the morning after their arrival, Indians escorted them, borne high in litters, to every quarter of the town. And as the Spanish captain passed along the streets, his hands still red in Indians' blood, all slain like sheep, without a blow struck in their own defence, the crowd bowed down and worshipped, thinking he was a god. Godship in every age seems to be bound up in men's minds with the power of taking life, whilst the god sits serenely safe in the possession of superior arms.

Spain in those days bred men whose heads were

\* 'Lo que hablaron no se entendio entonces por falta d interprete, sino fue lo que pudieron decir por señas' ('Comentarios Reales,' cap. xxxi., p. 40).

† 'Que igualava en altura a qualquiera torre de las que en Espana he visto, sacada la de Sevilla.' He also adds: 'Yo le alcancé'—that is, that he had seen it for himself.

hard to turn, for but ten years before the young adventurer had left his home in the wild prairies of Estremadura, where, in the great old house in the half-Moorish town, life must have been almost as narrow as it is to-day, and food as scarce; and yet he does not seem to have been puffed up unduly with the honours which the Indians paid.

In his report sent to Pizarro, he dwells upon the richness of the town, the size and beauty of the buildings, on the good manners of the nobles, and, above all, upon the fact that in the Temple\* of the Sun he found a jasper cross.

Soto and his companion, Pedro del Barco, about whom little more is known than that his native place was Villa de Lobon, and who was probably an uneducated man, at once fell on their knees before the cross. Then, their adoration over,† they placed small crosses upon all the temples and the palaces.

Motives are so deep-seated as to be practically quite unfathomable; but, still, in spite of all their greed for gold, zeal for the propaganda of what they thought the one religion in the world, and, above all, their simple piety and faith, neither of which, of course, as is quite natural, influenced their conduct in the least, places the Spaniards of the conquest of

\* Garcilasso de la Vega, in speaking of the Peruvian temples always uses the words *templo* or *sanctuario*. The other historians of the conquest of Peru almost invariably employ the word *mezquita*, which means a mosque.

† 'Hecha la adoracion' ('Commentarios Reales,' cap. xxxii., p. 41).

Peru and Mexico upon a pinnacle of virtue compared to the *conquistadores* of the present day in the base struggle to partition Africa. Hardly had Pizarro read Soto's report than he perceived the riches that were stored up in Cuzco, and at once determined to send off his brother, Don Hernando, back to Spain to tell the Emperor of all that had occurred, and that the Cæsarean Majesty of Charles V. should give him his support, he sent one hundred thousand dollars worth of gold, with the same sum in silver, and a collection of jars and drums, with statuettes of men and women, and of animals, all graven in pure gold.

Embassies which bring gold in due imperial quantity are usually benignantly received, and this one did not prove any exception to the rule, for it brought back a marquissate for Pizarro, and honours for the other 'conquerors.'

Soto and Pedro del Barco soon arrived at Pizarro's camp, and their accounts of all that they had seen most likely paved the way for the second act of the Peruvian tragedy.

How Atahualpa, notwithstanding all that he had done, was tried and executed for crimes which it seems quite unlikely that he had committed, and in respect of which the Spaniards had no jurisdiction, is told in all the histories of Peru.

Soto, to his credit, had no share in Atahualpa's death. Upon the contrary, he opposed it to the best of his ability, so strongly that Pizarro, fearing his



influence with the soldiers, sent him upon an expedition to a place called Huanchaco,\* where it was said the Indians were assembling to attack the camp.

On his return he found the Inca dead, and, as Oviedo says, he found Pizarro, who, to do him justice, was himself opposed to Atahualpa's death, 'showing great sentiment, with a great felt hat upon his head in sign of mourning, and much pulled down upon his ears.'† Without respecting either Pizarro's woe, or being in the least deceived by his melancholy great felt hat, Soto upbraided him hotly for his duplicity and for the Inca's death. He charged Pizarro with having sent him on a wild-goose chase, saying the roads were quiet, and that at Huanchaco there were no preparations for an attack upon the camp. He told Pizarro that he had had no right to bring the Inca to a trial, that all the testimony which was alleged was false, and that, if trial there had been, it should have been in Spain before the Emperor. Pizarro listened to him patiently, being no doubt wrapped in the frequent contemplation of his woe, and Soto said: 'Had it been necessary to send the Inca under guard to Spain, I would have pledged my life to see him safely on board ship.'‡ As Soto and

\* Oviedo, 'Historia General de las Indias,' part iii., book viii. Also Pedro Pizarro ('Descubrimiento y Conquista del Peru') confirms Oviedo's statement as to Soto's attitude.

† 'Hallaron le (Pizarro) mostrando mucho sentimiento con un gran sombrero de fieltro puesto en la cabeza por luto, é muy calado sobre las orejas.'

‡ Oviedo, 'Historia General de las Indias.'

Pizarro had not been friends since his first landing at the island of Puna, and expedition to Tumbez, where, as Herrera says, 'having found the office of Lieutenant-General already occupied by Hernando Pizarro, he was irritated, though, seeing no better remedy, he dissimulated his irritation for the time.'\*

However, let Soto's motives have been what they might, his conduct on the occasion did him honour, and marked him out as the one Spaniard of position at the conquest of Peru who acted as a man of honour and a gentleman,† though a few soldiers also

\* 'Llegó en este momento Hernando de Soto con algunos infantes y caballos, que se tuvo por buen socorro, aunque por hallar el oficio de Teniente General prevenido, con Hernando Pizarro se irritó, disimulandolo por entonces viendo que no tenia mejor remedio' (Herrera, dec. iii., lib. xi., p. 22).

† Eleven other honourable men supported Soto in his opposition to Atahualpa's death, but, as the Spanish proverb says of men in danger of their lives, 'A jump over a bush is better than the prayers of the good' ('Mas vale salto de mata que ruegos de buenos'), and, most unluckily, the poor Inca found no bush growing near.

The names of the 'good men who prayed' were: Francisco de Chaves, Diego de Chaves (these two were brothers, and came from Truxillo, in Estremadura, and were thus Pizarro's own townsmen; and anyone who knows Spain knows that to be 'mi paisano'—*i.e.*, 'from my town'—is to be almost a relation in a foreign place), Francisco de Fuentes, Pedro de Ayala, Diego de Mora, Francisco Moscoso, Hernando de Haro, Pedro de Mendoça, Juan de Herrada, Alonso de Avila, and Blas de Atiença.

The Inca Garçilasso has preserved their names in his most excellent and diffuse (and the two adjectives do not contradict each other) 'History of Peru.' He says that there were many

followed his honourable course. Pizarro, who seems to have been always anxious to get Soto as far as possible away, soon sent him on an expedition to the Sierra de Vilcaza, where Quisquiz, one of the Inca's captains, still held out. Soto, who was still young, and at the time of life when spirits rise as a good horse bounds underneath the saddle, trotted along the road leading his troops, and as he leaped his horse over the ditches in the way, the Indians marvelled, and wondered if the animal and he were one.\* But as he marched along, the Spanish soldiers, mounted high upon their Moorish saddles (*à la gineta*), their lances in their hands, the crossbowmen with their crossbows or harquebusses on their shoulders, and the hearts of all filled full of religious fervour and the thirst for gold, which, with the innate love of adventure of their race, made them invincible, Soto showed that he had other qualities besides those of a tilter at the ring. Herrera says of him, that he was 'not a whit more prudent than high-spirited,'† and he on this occasion stood in need of both these qualities.

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more ('y muchos otros'), but I doubt it; for, as he was of those who write their histories for human beings to read, and not for the entity known as 'the impartial man,' he would have set them down.

\* 'Le estaban mirando muchos Indios, que viendole passar un arroyo barrancoso, saltando el caballo quedaron admirados,' etc., etc. (Herrera, 'Historia de las Indias,' dec. v., lib. ii., cap. x.).

† 'Que era hombre no menos animoso que prudente' (Herrera, dec. v., lib. v., cap. iii.),

He found his men unwilling to advance into the hills, being few in number, and having received the general's orders to go slowly, so that he soon might overtake them on the march. But as speed was the one thing requisite in order to be able to attack the Indians before they had received more reinforcements, he said to his men 'that it was lawful and convenient, no matter what the orders were he had received from his superiors, to depart from them when circumstances made it necessary.' And he remarked, 'in cases such as these one saw the worth of people's heads.'\* A doctrine which warms men's hearts to read, and still essentially dangerous, and not to be acted on rashly by a member of a shielded calling, such as a soldier, who, from the day he first puts on his bag of buttons called a uniform, swaggers in leading-strings. The Indians in great numbers showed upon the hills an hour or two before the daylight went, and as night fell, enveloped him on every side, crowning the crags, and rolling down great boulders on the soldiers, which they called 'galgas' (greyhounds), so did they 'jump and skip.'

Soto, who had but seventy men, soon found himself hard-pressed. Those were the days in which a crossbow-shot was but effective at about one hundred yards, and harquebusses rarely carried up to two. So that a rush of overwhelming force could not be met, as nowadays, with a continuous stream of fire. He struggled on till close to Bilcas, a large place in

\* Herrera, dec. v.

which there was a Temple of the Sun. Being an important place, Soto knew both Almagro and Pizarro were on the march to the attack, so he held on till the town walls appeared.

Built upon craggy hills, it held a population of about forty thousand souls, besides the Temple of the Sun, in which were several hundred priests and sacred virgins, there were magazines of corn and palaces. The houses were ranged around a central square, flat-roofed, massive, and well adapted for defence, whilst in the middle of the open space was set a throne from which the Incas used to watch the priests and virgins dance to the honour of the Sun. Beside the throne there was a stone, shaped like a font,\* on which the natives sacrificed, so says Herrera, children and animals.

Inside the temple was a room with a stone pillar hollowed out, and which, after the place was sacked, proved full of jewels and of valuables. Who would not fight for such a prize, especially if he were placed, as Soto found himself, between the devil and the sea?

All night the fight raged on, the Indians' torches casting a ruddy glare upon the road, by which the bowmen aimed. At the great height they were above the sea the cold was cruel, and all the puddles froze, making the men, clad in their armour, miserable. Two horses, slain by the 'galgas' bounding from the hills, blocked up the path, making a front attack impossible. Dismounting from his horse, Soto led

\* 'À manera de pila,' Herrera, dec. v.



on his men, when a great rush of Indians swept in and cut him off, leaving him fighting all alone, beset by enemies. Seeing his peril, two of his men, Juan Renger and Pedro Ortiz, fought their way to him and drove the Indians back. Herrera says 'the Indians' cries, and the rage with which they fought, were terrible';\* and by this time, out of the little force, almost one-third was wounded, and many horses dead.

Soto, who probably had never been in such dire peril of his life, took up position on a river-bank, about a crossbow-shot off from the road.

The Indians, after their custom, almost invariable throughout America, did not attack at night, but kept upon the hills, shouting and anxiously waiting for the dawn. Soto at once brought up his wounded, 'both men and horses,' and cured them as he could. Having no medicines, all he could do was to press tight the wounds, and grease them with the fat taken from Indians who had fallen in the fight. A roughish mode of surgery, and not nice even to read about, but which, no doubt, was efficacious, for, as Herrera says, 'they lost neither a wounded man nor horse.'

Hungry and tired out, they slumbered at their posts, whilst Soto kept the watch, thinking, no doubt, that it would be his last. Just about midnight, in the far distance, through the hills, he heard a trumpet sound, and knew at once that he was saved.

\* 'La grita de los Indios era temerosa, y su porfia y rabia en el pelear.'

In an hour or two Almagro marched into his camp, and when day broke great was the Indians' rage to see that their expected victory was lost.

Shouting and beating war-drums, they disappeared into the mist, and Soto with Almagro marched on to sack the town.

This fight, the hardest that he had during the conquest, was Soto's last adventure in Peru.

Seeing, Herrera says, the divisions which arose between Almagro and Pizarro in Peru, he set his mind to return home to Spain.\* In this he acted wisely, for, of the conquerors of Peru, few lived beyond the civil wars which raged between Almagro and Pizarro and their two factions for several years to come. Most of the older men were slain in battle, and the rest died on the scaffold or of the hardships which they underwent.

After the sack of Cuzco and the division of the spoil, Soto returned to Spain, rich, 'but yet not so rich,' Herrera says, 'as his deserts and services required.'† Few of us, luckily, are rewarded as our deserts require; and as for services, they are their own reward, for even 'sweet religion' is degraded when it is made a peddling matter of rewards.

Soto, although perhaps not adequately rewarded for his services, still, for his share of the loot of the

\* 'Viendo Soto las divisiones que avieron entre Almagros y Pizarros, determinó de venirse à Castilla' (Herrera, dec. vi., cap. ix., p. 206).

† 'No tan rico como merecieron sus servicios' (Herrera, dec. vi., lib. vi.).

great Temple of the Sun at Cuzco, received one hundred and fourscore thousand ducats,\* which was not bad for one who landed in the New World 'with nothing but his buckler and his sword.'†

So finished the first part of Soto's life, having looked on, perhaps, the greatest mass of wealth in gold and plate that the world's eyes have seen. He bore himself as a brave soldier, suffering cold and heat, and marches in the frost and sun across the '*paramos*'‡ of the high country of Peru, unflinch-

\* 'La Florida,' Garcilasso de la Vega, lib. i., p. 2.

† Garcilasso makes the ransom alone of Atahualpa amount to four million six hundred and five thousand and seventy ducats, and he says, 'Mucho mayor fue lo que havieron en Cusco.'

Fray Blas Valera puts the ransom at from four million eight hundred thousand ducats. The ducat was worth about three shillings and eightpence to four shillings.

All this immense wealth was shared, according to both Xerez and Zarate, between but seventy horsemen and one hundred and twenty foot soldiers.

Pedro de Cieça de Leon, in his most accurate 'Chronicle of Peru,' brings the infantry down to one hundred.

In his prologue he says: 'So great a multitude of tribes as there is in those Indies was brought into the bosom of the holy Mother Church by the exertions of the Spaniards. These exertions were such that no other nation could have endured them. Thus God chose us for so great a work before any other nation.'

'God gie us a guid conceit o' oursels' is a proverb which might be applied to other nations beside the Spaniards.

‡ *Paramos* are high, wind-swept plains in Peru, and lie between the tropical and the snow-covered country of the higher Andes.

ingly, being, as we know, 'a sufferer of privations' and a valiant man.

He saw, but probably did not observe, the curious polity of the Incas, with its semi-communism; saw, but marked not, the wonders of the Temple of the Sun, apart from its mere gold. The devotion of the Indians slain round the Inca's litter—a devotion as intense as was the Spaniards' ferocious zeal for Christianity—most likely did not move him, nor perhaps did the paved, bridged roads on which he travelled from Tumbez to Cuzco excite his admiration in the least. The wondrous change from the bananas and the chirimoyas of the coast, in a day's ride, to oats and barley on the mountain plains, may not have stirred him, and again, perhaps, may have been stored in the recesses of his brain, and stamped upon his mental retina for the rest of his adventurous days.

One thing he did for certain, that is, made friends of all he met with in his path. The Inca Atahualpa liked him, no doubt struck with his gallant bearing, even although the charger snorted in his face. The soldiers loved him to a man, and followed him in evil and in good report, bearing the heat and cold as stoically as their half-fed descendants of to-day bear both without complaint.\*

Upon the one occasion that he had to show

\* 'Ca fue su aficionado (Atahualpa) por haber sido el primer Español que vió y habló' ('La Florida,' Garcilasso de la Vega, book i., p. 2).

humanity, he proved himself humane, and that he was so is proved by the fact that he was sent away during the trial of the Inca and at his death. What he learned in Peru was, as Oviedo says, 'learned in the bad school of the Pizarros,' and no doubt it stuck to him for life.

Soto had for *amiga*, as the phrase went in those days, the Indian Princess, Curicuillor, who had been married to Hernando Yupanqui. Balboa, in his 'Historia del Peru,' gives their curious history. Curicuillor, after Yupanqui's death, was baptized as Doña Leonor. By her Soto had a daughter, Doña Leonor de Soto. Balboa, in his history, says that she was living in Quito in 1586, married to one Carillo, a notary of the King. As she had several children, it may be that descendants of Soto still exist in Peru, as those of Montezuma still exist in Spain.

Prudence and courage in no small degree Soto had by nature, and no doubt responsibility, that undoer of weak men, in him but strengthened both.

On his return to Spain he straight became a personage, rich and respected (as all rich men are), perhaps more for his riches than his worth, for wealth has always had the property of belittling him who owns it, making him but a guardian of itself, a sort of caretaker, whom every man, whilst envying at heart, tries to depreciate.



### CHAPTER III

GREAT wealth being in the early sixteenth century a new thing in Spain, it certainly attracted much attention to its possessor, especially if, as in the case of Soto, it had been acquired at peril of one's life. Money for which you risk your life at the sword's point, even if the risk you run is in a bad cause, is not so brutalizing as wealth for which you lose your honour and risk other people's lives.

Soto seems to have left Peru not long after the sack of Cuzco (1533), and on his return to Spain, a wealthy man, married the daughter of his old patron and general, Pedrarias Davila. The lady, who was very young and beautiful,\* was called Isabel de Bobadilla y Peñalosa, bearing, after the Spanish fashion, the name of both her parents, a custom in which Spaniards show themselves at least as human as the other nations, who think, apparently, that the mother's record in a child is not worth keeping up. She was the daughter of a mother fit to be ancestress of a whole line of conquerors. Herrera says that

\* 'De estremada hermosura,' but this may only have been because she became the wife of a rich man.

when her husband, Pedrarias Davila, wished to leave her behind in Spain, as he was going out as Governor to Panama, she would not hear of it, but 'like a brave matron followed her husband everywhere by sea and land.'\*

Soto and his young wife must have made a pair from whom *conquistadores* should have sprung, but fate, which seldom works in a judicious way, ordained it otherwise, and though the greater part of all the fools and knaves who passed into the Indies prospered and multiplied exceedingly, the union of these two conquering families had no result.

After the conquests of Peru and Mexico, the Spanish passion for adventure rose to its greatest height, but still the largest portion of the Indies was quite unknown. Fate might reveal more Mexicos or more Perus, and, in fact, the eyes of all men turned to Florida, both on account of the adventures of Alvar Nuñez,† and from the strange reports about the magic fountain which restored lost youth.

This, rumour—ever more credited by reasoning mankind than facts, in the same way that quacks obtain belief passing the power of scientific men to win—had placed in Florida.

There was a cavalier at that time Governor of Puerto Rico, one of the companions of Columbus,

\* 'Pero ella como varonil matrona, no quisó, pero por mar y por tierra seguia su marido' (Herrera, dec. i., book x., cap. xvii.).

† Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca.

a man passably versed in troubles\* and who had passed the grand climacteric. He was a gallant soldier, having served in all the wars of Hispaniola at the first conquest and discovery.†

But even to a 'gentil soldado' there is apt to come a time when the lance seems a burden and the sword a weariness, and the fresh war-horse, when he sidles down the street, an animal as fearful as a unicorn.

So he resigned his generalship, and on March 3, 1512, with three small caravels, set out to find the thermal fount.

Long did he sail, after the fashion of his times, although the way was short.

Then, on the blessed Sunday of the Palms, he made the land. Wondrous it seemed to him, for, as he sailed in winding channels through the great sand-banks which defend the coast, a scent more grateful than the perfume of a thousand Arabies was wafted on the breeze.

Thick and sweet-smelling pine-woods drooped their branches in the waves, hydrangeas all in flower, and oleanders fringing every stream, with red-buds full in bloom, a mass of fire, rose in his sight and filled his nostrils with their scent. Flowers, flowers, and still more flowers, with scented grasses,

\* Probably he resembled Cervantes, in that he was most likely 'mas versado en desdichas que en versos.'

† 'Pasó, Juan Ponce de Leon à la isla Española con Cristobál Colon, fue gentil soldado en la guerras de aquella isla' (Gomara, 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. xlv., p. 35).

thick and metallic-looking foliage in the thickets, and feathery canes, sentinels thrown out from the interior everglades, and plants the 'like of which are never seen in Spain,' gladdened his eyes and those of all his crew.

Partly on this account, Herrera says, and partly on account of the Church festival, he called the country 'la Florida'—that is, the Land of Flowers.

Who would not like to have the chance to name a new-found land? What possibilities suggest themselves, what miracles of appositeness rise to the mind! And yet many have had the chance, and still 'Hat Camp' and 'Dogtown,' 'New Small-pox' and 'Skunk's Misery,' tailing down by degrees to the more modern instance of 'Fraudesia,' make blots of mud on what were once flowery and beautiful waste spaces of the earth. What can be better than a space left waste by the Creator of the world, who for some purpose of His own jewelled His work with fragrant 'weed prairies,' and set His rhododendrons wild on the mountains, planting His Argentina on the river-sides of oceans of green grass in the great pampas of the South? Of course, He did not know that we should find His work unfinished till we had set it full of factory chimneys and the like, or maybe He had worked upon another plan, and made it all a heap of scoria ready to our hand.

But Ponce de Leon, being assured that such a country must contain the magic spring, landed with

gladness, and unfurled his flag, and took possession for the King of Spain.

The Indians, who knew nothing of the King, attacked him instantly, and he was forced to re-embark, leaving his youth-restoring spring still hidden in the flowers.

Once more he set his course to Puerto Rico, bearing a rankling arrow wound, of which he died soon after his return.

He did not find the Fountain of Eternal Youth, Gomara\* tells us, with the gravity of a historian, but, on the contrary, grew older looking for it, and lost his substance in the futile quest.

Still, he has left us the most picturesque of all the legends of the discovery of the Indies, for he alone did not set out to search for gold, to save the Indians' souls, and lay up for himself a bank account for use in heaven, but to renew his youth and save the

\* 'Anduvo seis meses perdido y hambriento sin hallar rastro de tal fuente' (Gomara, 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. xlv.).

The Spanish writers, in the spirit of realism of their race, never refer to the hypothetical fountain as 'The Fountain of Eternal Youth,' but simply as 'la fuente que remozaba,' or 'la fuente que tornaba moços á los viejos.'

In the island of Boriquen, where the Indians also said the fountain might be, Ponce de Leon had his solitary gain, for Gomara says: 'El cacique dió una hermana suya por amiga.' Thus some have encountered angels unawares.

In one of the old writers on America—I cannot remember which—the writer says that one of the great proofs, in the Indians' minds, of the existence of the fountain was that, of all those who went to look for it, not one returned.



bodies of mankind, their best possession on this earth, where everything grows old.

Who would not cheerfully, even to-day, leave his 'Fraudesian' government to duller men, putting his all into three caravels (their sails should shine like those of Turner's Chioggia boats), and seek a thermal spring to blot out wrinkles, clear the crows' feet off from the corner of the eyes, recrown bald pates with all the glory of their youth, and wipe out all the passage of our lives, so setting back the timepiece of our days, whilst leaving still experience with us, for a regulator. But though the ever-young-at-heart, adventurous Governor failed in his quest, the legend did not die, for, as Herrera says, there is no pond or swamp, or even puddle, in all the confines of the Flowery Land, in which men do not bathe, hoping by chance to find the wondrous spring and live their sorrows over once again.

Soto soon drew to him all the adventurous spirits, with those who lacked advancement—amongst them, Alvar Nuñez, just returned from his strange wanderings of ten years in Florida. Only that cursed chance, which often just upsets the best of plans, kept the two men apart. A miserable difficulty as to who was to pay or not to pay the outfit of a caravel, lost Soto the companionship of him who, of all Spaniards, best knew the Indians, and who alone had treated them as human beings having bodies which can feel pain, and not as merely cases which held souls for fanatics to save, or to dig riches for their

conquerors, so that they could return to ruffle it in Spain. A hundred thousand ducats, an adventurous spirit, and a name at thirty-seven, seldom find difficulty in getting men to follow them.

Soto must have used the treasure which he got in Peru\* to the best purpose, for nothing in Spain at that time worked without gold to oil the wheels; for in the year 1537 the Cæsarean Majesty of Charles V. gave him the right to conquer Florida.† Nothing is easier for Kings and Presidents than to give rights which they themselves have not a shadow of title to enable them to grant.

So the Cæsarean Majesty entered into a treaty (*asiento*) with Soto, on whom he conferred the title of 'Adelantado,' and of Marquis, making him at the same time his Captain-General in Florida and of Cuba, as to which latter office Garcilasso says that Soto showed much prudence in his demand, for it is most important to a conqueror of Florida.

The treaty was executed on April 20, 1537, at Valladolid, and it contains provisions which show

\* In the curious 'Relaçam verdadeira, etc., por Hum fidalgo Delvas,' Evora, 1559, the writer, a Portuguese, says Soto was not liberal in money matters, but, then, one would as soon hear what a Castilian Bardolph had to say. No other writer charges anything of the kind against him. On the contrary, all agree that he was popular with his men. Now, a commander may discourse as much celestial music as he pleases to his men, but without beer-money he will not be popular.

† 'La Cesarea Majestad hiço merced á Hernando de Soto de la Conquista' (Garcilasso de la Vega, 'Historia de la Florida,' book i., cap. v., p. 7).

that either Soto or the Emperor knew how a conquest should be carried out. First it set forth that Soto was to 'conquer, pacify, and people' all the land from Rio de las Palmas to Florida, and beyond. The last two words are wise in their Olympian vagueness, and 'pacify' is good, as the whole land was in primeval peace. But, then, your European potentate has ever thought that damnable saltpetre was first digged from the bowels of the earth solely to spread goodwill to man, and to rejoice the angels' hearts on high.

Much does the prudent, frugal Flemish Emperor set down about the conservation of his Cæsarean half of all the gold, the jewels, pearls, and the rest, which should be found in Indian temples, sepulchres, and other places where such things are stored. So might stout Captain Kidd and Hell-Fire Jack have arranged their treaties when, in the Isle of Galvez, they sat round their rum, planning a pleasure-trip upon the Spanish Main.

The last provision of the treaty was the best, forbidding lawyers of all degree to emigrate to Florida, or, if by chance they went, binding them not to stir up with sheepskin and with quill unnatural strife amongst the lieges overseas. Some such provision Alvar Nuñez had in his *asiento*, and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa writes to the Emperor in the following strain :

'MOST PUISSANT LORD,

'I desire to ask a favour of your Highness, for I have done much in your service. It is that your

Highness will command that no Bachelor of Laws, nor of anything else, unless it be of medicine, should come to this part of the Indies on pain of heavy punishment, which your Highness shall order to be inflicted; for no bachelor has ever come here who is not a devil, and who does not lead the life of devils.\*

Devils in lawyers' shapes most certainly annoyed poor Vasco de Balboa, and one drove him to his death, but Soto evidently determined to be free of them; and Charles was all the readier to gratify him, as he most likely was aware that the provision would be as useless as if it had applied to lice, or any other parasite from which even *conquistadores* were not able to escape.

The terms of the *asiento* duly arranged, Soto began to look about for men. They flocked to him from every side—old soldiers, scarred with the wars of conquest in both hemispheres, and artisans and husbandmen, who, as Garcilasso says, 'what with the fame of the new adventure (Peru), and with the sight of so much gold and plate and precious stones as they saw brought from the New World, leaving their fathers, relatives, and their friends, and selling all their goods, got themselves ready to go to this new conquest with the hope that it might prove as rich as those of Mexico and of Peru.' The fame

\* Vasco Nuñez de Balboa to Charles V., 1513, from Darien, in the 'Coleccion de los viages y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Españoles desde fines del siglo xv.' (manuscript in the Archives of the Indies at Seville).

of Soto's feats of arms, his gallant presence, and, perhaps, the smiles of Doña Isabel, with no doubt also the chinking of the hundred thousand ducats won at Cuzco, carried enthusiasm to its greatest height.

A conquest under a gallant captain, who had himself returned a wealthy man, with prospects to the meanest of the soldiers of rich loot, and to the older cavaliers a chance of bathing in the magic Fountain of Eternal Youth, fired the imagination of the adventurous of all Spain.

The first to join were six or seven cavaliers of the *conquistadores* of Peru, men who had come back wealthy, but on whom the spur of a new conquest acted as an electric shock, making them sell their properties to go and see the lands of other men.

Naturally, Estremadura and the south sent forth contingents from Zafra and from Badajoz; they came from Caceres, and Malagon, from Medellin, Truxillo, and from Almagro, and on the other side the frontier, from Evora, from which there came Captain Andres de Vasconcelos, a cavalier and nobleman of Portugal, native of Yelves, bringing a company of veteran soldiers from the wars of Africa.

Unknown to them—and us, for he has never chosen to reveal his name—amongst them marched the 'pawky' gentleman of Evora, self-constituted chronicler of the events in which he bore a part.\*

\* He wrote the 'Relaçam' before referred to, and proved himself the sternest critic of his commander's actions, as is only natural to one who had to hear his orders and silently obey.



He tells us (as is natural) that his countrymen, in the review which Soto held at San Lucar just before they went on board, outshone the rest.

Hakluyt, in his quaint phraseology, says 'the Portingales showed themselves in very bright armour, and the Castellans very gallant with silke upon silke, with many prinkings and cuts. The Castellans for the most part did weare very bad armour and rustic shirts of mail, and very bad lances.'\*

Their armour possibly was bad, for even in the times of the *conquistas* I cannot in my mind's eye see a Spanish soldier deliberately sit down with sand and oil, to polish anything out of pure gaiety of heart. As for their lances, it is possible that they, too, did not shine brightly, but they were always long enough for the stout hearts which beat behind them, all well aware of the advantage of the Spartan mother's step. From the Axarafe† de Sevilla came Baltazar de Gallegos, who sold his houses and 'ninety ranks of olive-trees,' beating his ploughshares into lances and to swords. He took his wife with him, and as a chaplain his own brother, Fray Don Juan de Gallegos, native of Seville, and of the Order of St. Dominic.

\* 'Discovery and Conquest of Tierra Florida,' by Don Ferdinando de Soto, written by a 'Gentleman of Elvas, employed in all the actions, and translated out of Portuguese' (Richard Hakluyt, London, 1611, cap. iii., p. 15).

† The Axarafe is a mountainous but fertile district near Seville; the name is from the Arabic *el sharaf*, the high ground.

‘One of the seventy conquerors,’ as Garcilasso calls him, came Nuño de Tovar from Badajoz, and was made at once Lieutenant-General, and entrusted to command a ship, the *Magdalene*. He did good service in the future, as did Luis de Moscoso, native of Zafra, also one of the seventy, and the man who, after Soto’s death, led the poor remnant of the expedition down to Mexico. He was elected Maese de Campo of the army, and sailed as captain of a galleon called *La Concepcion*. Diego Garcia, son of the Mayor of Barcarrota, Soto’s native town, commanded a tall ship, called the *Saint John*, and in the *Santa Barbara* Arias Tinoco went as the captain of the infantry.

As the commander of ‘a most lovely caravel’\* went Pedro Calderon, of Badajoz, and in his company Captain Micer Espindola,† a Genoese, and with him seventy halberdiers, who formed Soto’s own body-guard.

A gentleman of birth,‡ Gonçalo de Salazar, although a ‘conqueror’ of Mexico, could not resist the charm of the New World, so he returned with Soto in his fleet as far as Cuba, the Cæsarean Majesty having named him the factor of the Imperial property in Mexico.§ This gentleman was the first Christian born in Granada after it was won,

\* ‘Una caravela muy hermosa.’

† Probably Spinola.

‡ ‘Un caballero principal.’

§ Factor de la Hacienda Imperial en la Ciudad de Mexico.

and therefore the Catholic Kings of glorious memory gave him great privileges and riches, out of which he founded an entailed estate for his posterity.

Thus are the scoffers, who aver that peers enjoy their privilege but by the trouble they have taken to be born, brought easily to shame, for had not this same gentleman given much thought to his locality at birth, he might, for all we know, have passed his life a courtling, and the fleet of Soto sailed without him, leaving him freezing in the cold, subtle air of that Madrid which has destroyed so many of his kind.

As the Imperial accountant of the fleet went Biedma,\* who has left a business-like account of the whole venture, setting down succinctly, but with grace, how many infidels were despatched on such a day, or 'during the night we dressed our wounds with the dead Indians' fat, as all our medicine had been burned.'†

From Herrera de Alcantara there came Gonçalo de Silvestre, he of the 'pitch-hued chestnut horse, good in extreme,'‡ who in this expedition had his

\* Luis Hernandez de Biedma. He was factor or accountant to the expedition, and his short, dry, but business-like account of all he saw was presented to Charles V. in person, in his Council of the Indies, 1544.

His work in the original is very scarce, but Rye's translation for the Hakluyt Society gives his *ipsissima* (and *pauca*) verba.

† Biedma's report, p. 27.

‡ 'Era castaño peceño . . . bueno en extremo' ('La Florida,' Garcilasso de la Vega, cap. xiv., p. 44).

first adventures, and reversed his general's career, by finishing his military life in the same country where Soto had begun.

Eight priests with four religious gave their services to Soto's host, and Garcilasso says: 'Those of them whose names my memory has retained were Rodrigo de Gallegos, native of Seville and a relation of the captain, of the name, Diego de Buñuelos, and Francisco del Poço, natives of Cordova, with Dionisio de Paris, a Frenchman, and a native of the capital. The other four I cannot call to mind. The friars were Fray Luis de Soto, from Barcarrota, a cousin of the general; Fray Juan Gallegos; Fray Juan de Torres, a Franciscan; and Fray Francisco de la Rocha, native of Badajoz, and of the Order of the Blessed Trinity.' 'All,' Garcilasso says, 'were men both of good conduct and well grounded in the faith.'

Your friar who goes out to a savage land may not be quite a rod of iron as to dogma, but in the carnal part, above the rest he should be exemplary, after the fashion of the four whose names stayed in the memory of their chronicler.

Soto himself, with all his household and his wife, went in a galleon called the *Saint Christopher*, and on April 6 of the year 1538 his fleet, joined to the fleet which took the Imperial factor out to Mexico, crossed the San Lucar bar, and laid their course for Cuba, with all sail set, handsomely.

In all the fleet, we read, 'hardly there was a man who had gray hair, an important thing to overcome

the troubles and the difficulty, which in new conquest are certain to occur.\* To many of his men Soto had given money, to each according to his quality. Some, Garcilasso says, received it gladly; others with diffidence and of necessity; others, again, refused it courteously, thinking it was more just that they should help their general than he them, seeing the weight of the 'immense machine'† that he bore on his back.

In which particular ship Soto's good horse, Azeitunero, went is not set down, but probably in the *Saint Christopher*, for Soto must have known the application of the proverb of the master's eye, especially at sea.

On board the fleet, so great abundance of provisions had the general put aboard, that all had double rations, 'a thing impertinent, for it consumed all that was over and above;'‡ but the magnificency of the general was so great that it seemed little to him, so that he kept his crew and soldiers all content.§

\* 'Apenas se hallaba entre ellos uno que tuviese canas, cosa muy importante para vencer los trabajos y dificultades que las nuevas conquistas se ofrecen' (Garcilasso, 'La Florida,' cap. vi., p. 8).

† 'La machina grande.'

‡ 'Cosa bien impertinente porque se desperdiciaba todo lo que sobraba.'

§ Garcilasso puts the whole force down at nine hundred and fifty men; Biedma, at six hundred and twenty foot and two hundred and twenty-three horse; 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' at six hundred foot and two hundred and thirteen horse.



## CHAPTER IV

A FAIR wind took the fleet to the Canaries by April 21, and at Gomera they cast anchor upon Easter Sunday (Pasqua Florida), and were received with feasting and rejoicings by the Governor.

This Governor was a Count, and Hakluyt dubs him 'Earle,' and the *ignoto* of the Elvas narrative remarks 'that he appeared a Count of gypsies, dressed all in white, his cloak, his hat, his breeches, and his boots.'\* This white, but possibly not uncomely, Count entertained Soto royally, and nothing passed of much importance ('de mucha monta') at the islands, except that two of the soldiers, during a quarrel, possibly superinduced by the white Count's good cheer, fell overboard, locked in each other's arms, and, having

\* 'Ho conde daquelle ylha andava tudo vestido de branco, capa é pelote é calças é capatos é carapuça, que parecia conde de ciganos' ('Relaçam do Fidalgo de Elvas'). The gipsies, being an Oriental people, first appeared in Spain in white clothes. The Government of the Middle Ages in Spain, as anxious to perpetuate castes as we are to obliterate them (there soon will be but little difference between a 'snob' and a 'cad'), set forth a pragmatic, compelling the gipsies not to forsake their white. Like every ordinance of every Government, it soon fell into well-merited contempt.

armour on, sunk to the bottom 'as they had been two stones.'

After three days of feasting they set sail again, and just before they left the Governor appeared, leading a damsel by the hand.

Her name was Doña Leonor de Bobadilla, and she proved to be his illegitimate daughter.\* Her beauty was extreme ('era de extremada fermosura'), and her father entrusted her to Soto's wife, to take with her to Cuba, there to be married and made a great lady in the new conquest that her husband was to make.

With this lady, Garcilasso says, the Governor sailed from the island most contentedly, but as he was a married man, with his own wife aboard the ship, one fails to see exactly from what motive his content arose.

So, with a fair wind and carrying the illegitimate damsel in his flagship, Soto sailed from Gomera upon April 24 (1538), and arrived at Cuba towards the end of May,† having parted from Salazar and the fleet for Mexico about ten days before he made the land. As the fleet made the land near Santiago a man came riding furiously along the shore towards the harbour mouth, calling out, 'Port your helm!‡

\* In Hakluyt's translation of 'The Gentleman of Elvas, His Narrative,' she is called 'bastard daughter of the Earle,' but it would be invidious to sully a modern text with such a word.

† 'A los postreros de Mayo.'

‡ 'Diciendo, à babor à babor, que en language de marineros quiere decir à mano derecha del navio.'

which when they heard they instantly jammed their helm hard-a-port, without which, says the chronicler, they had assuredly been lost, as the doomed 'bottle' of the Port of Santiago is a most dangerous place. As they swung clear into the channel, the horseman galloped furiously beside them, shouting out this time to them to starboard their helm, and, that he should be better understood, dismounted from his horse and spread his arms out like a semaphore. Either the flagship was not carrying way enough to feel her helm, or the helmsman was too slow in carrying out the order, or from some other cause, such as the act of God or barratry of mariners, she just touched a rock, and in an instant all ran to the pumps, thinking she was about to sink. When the pumps were manned, nothing but wine came out of them, the shock of the vessel grounding having broken all the barrels in the hold.

Still, they lowered all the boats, and Garcilasso says: 'First they lowered down the Governor's wife and all her ladies, thinking the danger was immediate; and several cavaliers, young and not well experienced in that class of perils, crowded into the boats before all of the ladies were embarked.'

Soto stood on the poop, being determined to be the last to leave the ship, when the boatswain, stepping aft, informed him that the whole damage was the broken pipes of wine, and 'they were all exceedingly rejoiced, and those who showed such haste to leave the ship were left ashamed.'

The little interlude having past, they brought the fleet to anchor, and 'a gentleman of Santiago having sent a faire roan horse to the sea side for Soto, together with a mule for Doña Isabel, they mounted and entered the city upon Whitsunday.'\*

When Soto reached the town, he found, to his disgust, that the horseman had given wrong directions with the express purpose that the fleet should all be lost. The reason was as follows, and seems to show how much more interesting life was in those days than in these modern times, when all is done by rule.

About ten days before Soto and his fleet arrived in Cuba, a vessel bound from Seville came into the port. Her captain, Diego Perez, came ashore, and, 'though he wore a merchant's dress, he proved himself a soldier, stout both on land and sea.'† Nobody knew to what class he belonged—a most important thing to verify when there is fighting to be done. Still, his ways, talk, and methods showed him to be a gentleman, for those, indeed, are the things which make a gentleman.‡

After three days another ship also dropped anchor

\* 'Gentleman of Elvas,' cap. iv., p. 17.

† 'Aunque andaba en traje de mercader era muy buen soldado de mar y tierra.'

‡ 'Su conversacion, tratos, y contratos mostrababa, . . . que derechamente era hidalgo ; porque esse lo es que hace hidalguias.'

Garcilasso evidently believed in the truth of the saying, that 'En facha traje y equipage se conoce al personage.'

in the port. She proved to be a pirate, under French colours, and of about the size of Perez's ship. Immediately that Perez saw her colours he opened fire, and the two vessels fought till darkness separated them.

The fighting over for the night, each captain sent on board the other's ship to know how matters went, and in their boats they sent provisions, fresh and salt, with wine and fruit, just as if they had been dear friends (so Garcilasso says); and they agreed not to attack at night, or use artillery, thinking that lance and sword and battle-axe were arms for warriors, and that, apparently, saltpetre had but been digged from out the bowels of the earth to slay tall fellows cowardly, and spoil each other's sport.

But notwithstanding that the agreement was thus made, the Spanish crew were ready all the night to stand to arms, 'for to the word of a sworn enemy good soldiers should not trust.'

The second day passed as had done the first, in amicable strife, until night fell again; but this time both the captains personally came to the other's ship, and 'after compliments,' inquired if he could be of service to the wounded men. But late at night doubts, which assault even the stoutest of stout soldiers at the small-hours, entered into the heart of Diego Perez, and he sent a message to the people in the town.

'I have,' he said, 'done all that in me lay for the last two days to rid the seas of the French pirate, which, as you know, is of the last importance to the



town. Fate has not placed it in my power to make him strike his flag. Now, do your part and promise me, that, if the God of Battles frowns on me, you will pay me, or my heirs, the value of the ship, deducting from its price one thousand crowns.'

'Me or my heirs' bespeaks a prudence more often met with (in those days) in pirates from Kirkcaldy than from Seville, and possibly the deduction of one thousand crowns was a sweetener to the citizens, or an allowance for the wear and tear the ship would suffer during the process of battling.

The citizens, an austere and money-grubbing set, did not show well in the brief message that they sent, for briefly they told Diego Perez to do as he pleased, and they, like Pontius Pilate, washed their hands of all he did.

Stout Diego Perez (no doubt with a hearty curse or two) dismissed the messenger, and as day broke advanced towards his enemy, to show the citizens 'that, if he fought, he put his trust in God, and not in them.' All things considered, he showed himself a man of sense, for it is best to recognise, in entering on a fight, that you will get no help from any side but from your own right hand.

On this third day the fight raged desperately, and the ships lay alongside each other, yard-arm to yard-arm, until dinner-time, when, as by mutual consent, they parted, dined, and then fell on again. By evening both their decks were running blood, and dead and wounded lay about on every side. Still, 'at the

Angelus' they stopped, and once again made formal visits to each other's ship.

The citizens of Santiago (so Garcilasso says) were quite amazed to see them fight without necessity, and at the visits that they mutually made, especially when they remembered both were free rovers, and not sent out by either of their Kings with orders to engage.

A man may be an able citizen enough, cheating within the limit of the law with assiduity, and yet know little of the springs which actuate mankind, and so no doubt the corsairs and the citizens each thought the others mad, not knowing that their madness, if it differed in degree, was in essentials quite identical. On the fourth day the Frenchman slackened a little in his fire, but in the evening, 'when the tryst was set' for next day's battle, promptly accepted it, leaving poor Diego Perez in perplexity as to his power to carry on the fight.

But in the darkness of the night the Frenchman weighed his anchor quietly, and silently slipped off to sea, leaving the Spanish corsair in possession of the field.

Why Captain Perez, when he found himself secure, did not at once retaliate upon the citizens, and make them rue their avarice and greed, is not set down. Perhaps his 'gentleman-like' ways acted upon his pirate's instincts like a bearing-rein; but be that as it may, when the poor citizens saw Soto's ships arrive, they thought it was the Frenchman coming

back in force, and so, having no battleships belonging to the town, sent out the messenger who had met Soto as he came into the port, and whose directions almost proved the ruin of the fleet.

Once landed, all went smoothly, and the hidalgos of the town turned out in force to honour the new Governor.

Bull-fights and running at the ring, with 'cane-play'\* and the like, gave Soto and his officers full opportunity to see how good the horses of the island were—how fiery and how suitable for war.

These in the space of five-and-thirty years had thriven greatly, and were bred to sell to conquerors going to the wars, both in Peru and Mexico, as they endured the climate better than horses which were bred in Spain.†

\* 'Juegos de cañas,' literally 'cane-play.' This was the ancient Arab game of the *jerid*, brought by the Arabs from the East. It was continued in Spain till the end of the seventeenth century. It was played on horseback, and simulated a battle with javelins.

† They were no doubt sprung from the famous breed of Cordova, the type of which is now extinct, but of which a fine specimen is preserved in Velasquez's picture of the 'Lances.' It looks round sideways from the middle distance, from its position to the right of Spinola. The breed is said to have been formed by the crossing of the Yemini horse, brought from the East during the Caliphate at Cordova, either with native or African mares. The modern Cordovese horse is a heavy-headed, Roman-nosed animal, often also oyster-footed and cow-houghed. Sometimes the type of the white-faced, white-footed, compact and beautiful horse drawn by Velasquez appears in Southern Morocco, and more rarely in the River Plate.

Soto now found himself alone in his command, and his first care was to buy horses to equip his officers, for they in general had laid out their all in Spain, and found themselves dependent on their general both for equipment and for provender.

This done, he set to work at once to put some order into the land committed to his charge. In the brief space of five-and-thirty years the Indians had almost disappeared. The island which Columbus, writing to the Queen, speaks of as having been a paradise was now depopulated, and had become a hell.

From the beginning of the world the Indians had lived happily, raising their crops of maize and manioc.\* Work was to them unknown, all was content, and in those gardens of guayabas and of sugar-canes no serpent whispered in the ears of Indian Eves, for the primeval curse had passed the islands by.

Then came the Spaniards, and the scene was changed, and the soft natives, who had worked their fields with wooden hoes, tickling the earth till it laughed crops, were set to labour in the mines. They died like flies, and that which to a stout Galician or Biscayan peasant might have been a fair day's 'darg,' to them was unendurable—so unendurable that, to escape it, they had recourse to wholesale suicide.

\* *Jatropha manihot.*

Whole villages were found hanging dead to trees, having preferred to die by their own hand rather than perish in the mines or by the lash.

‘It was,’ says Garcilasso, ‘the greatest pity upon earth to see them hanging from the trees, like starlings when men set out snares.’\*

Soto, although a graduate in the Pizarros’ school, was not inhuman, and moreover saw that, if the evil were not checked at once, the island would be rendered worthless to the Spanish Crown. So he set out at once to check the oppression of the Indians as far as possible.

But other tasks were waiting for him, and he at once began his work. The Habana had just been burned and sacked by a French pirate fleet, the impious sea-dogs not having respected either the church or yet the sacred images, which to the Governor and all his suite—as Catholics†—had caused great pain.

Soto was Catholic enough not to care anything for the destruction and the sacking of the great Temple of the Sun at Cuzco, especially as he himself derived his fortune from its loot. But when the sacred

\* ‘Era la mayor lastima del mundo verlos colgados de los arboles, como Pajaros Zorzales, cuando les arman lazos’ (‘La Florida,’ cap. xii., p. 17). It is a sad sight to see a Pajaro Zorzal hang dead from a tree, and to see these Indians (no doubt each with his immortal soul) hanging opposite their reed-thatched houses, where they had been so happy before the Spaniards came, was fit to make a Bishop fall a-cursing like a drab.

† ‘Como Catolicos.’



'blocks'\* of his own faith were dragged about, his tender, Catholic heart wept tears of blood, as is the custom when a man's own particular fetish is attacked.

\* In out-of-the-way villages of Spain the sacred images are sometimes referred to as 'los bultos'—*i.e.*, the blocks.

## CHAPTER V

Soto at once sent off Captain Don Mateo Azeituno with a fleet, and workmen to rebuild the town, lay the foundations of a new cathedral, and probably to give the images another coat of paint. Just at this moment news came to Soto that one Don Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa was coming to join him from the town of Trinidad. Don Vasco had already passed fifty years of age, and in his youth had fought in Spain and Italy, as well as in the Indies, and in the lists had twice laid low a foe.

Though he was rich and much respected in the island, nothing would serve him but to go with Soto to the new conquest, and he arrived and made the offer of his person, riches, and his life.

Naturally, Soto was overjoyed at having, without effort of his own, rallied so valuable an ally to his cause. At once he named him Lieutenant-General of his whole fleet and army, which office at the moment he had in his own hands. Love, that respects not even conquerors, had given him the chance. Don Nuño de Tobar, who had left Spain high in his favour, and with the office of Lieutenant-General, was fallen from his high estate. The

daughter of the gipsy Count of La Gomera had caught Don Nuño in her net, and, as she was of 'extremada fermosura,' there does not seem anything unnatural in the circumstance. But Soto looked upon the lady as his ward, so when the pair appeared before him to ask for his consent, having already been united privately in the chains of holy matrimony, his fury knew no bounds. Although undoubtedly, to him ('como Catolico'), the ceremony which made them one was sacramental, still, he separated them, and at once deprived poor Nuño of his office in the army and the fleet.

The new Lieutenant-General proved a most valuable recruit. He brought a host of Indians and of negroes, with six-and-thirty horses for himself, and fifty more, which he presented to the various officers of Soto's force. His example brought out many others, and Soto thus received a great addition to his army, and a great store of fish, beef, maize, and caçavi,\* for the sailors of the fleet.

About the end of August of 1538, Soto set out by land from Santiago, with fifty horse, for the Habana, leaving the rest of his cavalry, which was about three hundred, to follow after him. His orders were to march by troops of fifty, leaving an interval of a week between each troop, so that they should not eat up all the provisions on the road. The infantry, with his wife, Doña Isabel, and all his household, he

\* Caçavi is the same as mandioca.

sent by sea, telling his captains to sail along the coast, and not lose sight of land.

A pleasant way to sail and travel, and one in which the travellers had time to study all the country as they went, for about April all the cavalry reached the Habana, having marched slowly the two hundred and fifty leagues, more or less ('poco mas ó menos'), which separated the two towns.

All being ready, Soto named his wife Governor of Habana and the island, and gave her for a deputy a cavalier, noble and virtuous in extreme, called Juan de Rojas. He also named Francisco de Guzman to govern for her in Santiago, as both those gentlemen had been the Governors of the respective towns when he arrived. Thus did he show his prudence, and secure internal peace, which is a thing not always easy to attain, either in those times or in ours, in Spanish colonies.

A fine ship, called the *Santa Ana*, having come into the port, he bought her, and, having loaded her with eighty horses, made ready to set sail. The *Santa Ana* had been the flagship of Mendoc̃a when he set out for the discovery of the River Plate.

Just as the fleet was ready, and Soto was about to go on board, a storm forced a ship, sailing from the Spanish Main, to come into the port. On board of her was Hernan Ponce, who had been Soto's partner in Peru. When Soto left Peru and went to Spain, Ponce (in the true spirit of a partner) had quickly annexed the whole advantage of their partnership,

hoping that he would never see his partner's face again. Nothing was more annoying to him, therefore, than to be wind-bound in a port where Soto was the Governor, especially as his ship was freighted with the spoils of Peru.

As soon as Soto heard the news he stopped the sailing of his fleet, and went aboard his quondam partner's ship, offering him hospitality, and saying that, as they were as brothers, he intended to show him brotherhood in every way.

Nothing was further from Ponce's wish than so much brotherhood, but, in the Habana, Soto was as powerful as a King, and when a King expresses his affection to a man, it usually occurs that the weaker of the brethren is apt to lose his cloak. Ponce was well aware of this, and tried to excuse himself, pleading fatigue, and saying in the morning he would land and pay his duty to the Governor.

Soto, who had him in his power, said he might please himself, but, like a prudent man, set guards both in the harbour and on land to see his brother did not slip away by night.

Ponce, who judged his ancient partner by himself, made up his mind that in the morning he would lose his all, so about midnight he sent off a boat filled full of gold and jewels, with orders to the officer who took the boat to bury all the treasure and to mark the hiding-place. Unluckily for him, the boat touched shore just where the guards were placed, and they, seizing the treasure, took it to the Governor.



Next day Ponce, crestfallen and frightened, came ashore himself, and sought an interview with Soto, and talked with him of their adventures in Peru, and of their partnership, and how unluckily at night, whilst sending all his treasure to the shore, thieves had fallen on his men and taken it. Soto said not a word, but, calling to a slave, asked for the treasure to be brought, and then, giving it back to Ponce, told him to count it and see if anything was lost. Then, looking at him, he took up his parable, and said: 'It seems you did not know me, even after all the dangers that we have passed together in Peru.' He offered to renew the partnership, or, if Ponce chose, to take him to the new conquest which he had in hand. Ponce (as Garcilasso says) was much confused at so much courtesy, but chose to return to Spain, offering to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, Soto's wife, ten thousand dollars as a sort of complimentary conscience-money, freewill gift, or fire insurance.

Soto accepted it in his wife's name, and, bidding him good-bye, dismissed him and went on board his fleet.

Upon May 12, 1539, the fleet set sail, carrying above three hundred horses, and the best troops and finest officers that up to that time had set out for any conquest in the Spanish Main.\*

\* 'Llegavan á mil hombres, toda gente lucida, apercebida de armas, y arreos de su persona, y caballos, tantos, que, hasta entonces, ni despues acá, no se ha visto tan buena Vanda de gente y cavallos, todo junto, para jornada alguna, que se aya hecho de Conquista de Indios' (Garcilasso, 'La Florida,' cap. xv., p. 21).

Scarcely had Soto and his armada left the port, than Hernan Ponce went to the judge and made complaint that Soto had taken from him by force ten thousand dollars as a present for his wife. As Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, being Governor, knew better than to let her powers atrophy by want of use, she straight denied the debt, and said that Ponce owed nearly fifty thousand dollars to her husband, as he had never shared all their joint treasures in Peru.

But she did more than this, for, acting as befits a 'conqueror's' wife, both with the strong hand and with promptitude, she went to see Hernando Ponce in his ship. He, seeing the guards coming, slipped his moorings and set sail, thinking it safer to give up his claim than to await the fury of the female Governor, who, though but young, was a true daughter of Pedrarias Davila.\*

During his brief residence in Cuba, Soto gave evidence of much administrative power, and had he lived to see the place again, his record might have stood as high for civil governorship as it stands for daring and adventure in the field. But short as was his stay, and brief as was the time in which he had the opportunity to prove his fitness for the new sphere in which he found himself, he did enough to place him high in the ranks of Spanish statesmen of

\* The chronicler says Ponce 'tomó las de villadiego,' which is the same thing as to 'poner pies en polvorosa.' In Texas the operation is called to 'vamose the ranche.'

the time. In all his dealings, and especially in those with Hernan Ponce, he showed himself a generous man, and disinclined on ordinary occasions to shed blood, a fact which marks him out from almost all the Spanish Governors of the time, who ruled their people as a Moorish Kaid holds down a tribe, cutting off heads and burning down the houses of all those who become rich, or kick against his rule.

## CHAPTER VI

ALL went well with the fleet, and on May 30, 1539, after a voyage of but nineteen days, Soto arrived upon the coast. The fleet cast anchor in a deep bay, which Soto named after the Holy Ghost.\* As it was late, they did not land that day, but on the morrow sent off boats, which came back bringing grass for the horses and juice of the wild-grapes, which in that country grow abundantly. Then Soto sent three hundred infantry on shore to take possession for the King of Spain.

For a day or two no Indians showed themselves; but on the morning of the fourth they suddenly attacked in force, driving the Spaniards to the water's edge. Thus was the landing of the expedition almost from the first involved in battles, which never ceased till the poor remnant had returned to Mexico.

The new Lieutenant-General, Vasco Porcallo de

\* Both Garcilasso and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' call the bay 'Bahia del Espiritu Santo.' Biedma refers to it simply as 'la Bahia Honda' (the Deep Bay). Commentators—always a divided race—have agreed in this instance to identify the bay either with Tampa Bay or with one of the innumerable deep inlets in the vicinity.

Figueroa, charged with some horse to aid the infantry, and having pierced one Indian with his lance, his horse fell dead beneath him, killed by an arrow shot by so strong an arm that it pierced through the saddle and entered half a yard into the flesh. Vasco Porcallo was much amazed, and no one in the army had ever seen an arrow shot with such force; but, still, he was rejoiced that he had first drawn blood, and for his horse, he counted it an honour to have lost the first horse in the new conquest to which they all were bound.

On the next day, after the battle they disembarked the horses and the men who had remained on board the fleet. Accident stood the Spaniards in good stead on this occasion, as it had helped them both in Mexico and in Peru. Their first need was of an interpreter, and they hit on one without whose aid all that they subsequently did had been impossible.

Not far from where they landed lived a *cacique*\* of the Indians, called Hirrihigua, who had already had adventures with the Spaniards who in former expeditions had landed on the coast.

Panphilo de Narvaez, who had been in Florida, had fought with him, and injured him in some grave way, for Garcilasso, who as a general rule sets down all things with circumstance, on this occasion

\* *Cacique* is a South American word, but almost all the Spanish historians of America use it in the sense of 'chief,' no matter whether they write of South or North America.

says: 'I will not tell what the affronts were, for they were odious.'\*

This chief had in his power a Spaniard, one Juan Ortiz, whom he had captured with three others from a vessel which had put into a creek not far from where he lived. The three companions he killed instantly, but his wife had begged the life of Juan Ortiz, for he was young, and was quite innocent of the aforementioned 'odious affronts.'

This man, after ten years of rigorous captivity, had become quite an Indian, and spoke their language as it were his own. Soto, having heard of him, detached a party under Baltazar de Gallegos, a Sevillian knight, to bring him to the camp.

Ortiz, upon his side, had heard of their arrival, and by good luck at that time found himself in the power of a chief who lived but a short distance from where the Spanish forces lay. This chief, wishing to flee the wrath to come, or perhaps genuinely impressed by the beauties of European life as typified in arquebusses and in snaphaunces, had the idea to send an embassy to Soto, and for that purpose, naturally, his choice fell on Ortiz.

Thus, as it happened, Ortiz, with a company of Indians, was journeying towards the camp from which Baltazar Gallegos had set out in search of him. They met about the middle of the road, and the Spaniards, suddenly seeing Indians in the path,

\* 'Le avia hecho ciertos agravios, que por ser odiosos no se cuen tan' ('La Florida,' book ii., p. 24).



charged on them at full speed, in spite of all their officers could do. The Indians took the shelter of the trees, leaving Ortiz with one companion, undecided if they should wait the onset, or should fly for shelter to the wood. Ortiz, who had been captured whilst a mere youth, and who had grown quite like an Indian, his clothes being long worn out, was naked and painted like the warriors he was with. He knew his countrymen, but, when he tried to speak, found that his Spanish speech had left him, and, as a horseman charged upon him, called in the Indian tongue. The Spaniard, thinking him an Indian, pressed him hard, striking at him repeatedly both with his sword and lance. Luckily for himself, and for the Spaniards, Ortiz stopped all the blows with his bow, which he used as a sword. Then, finding himself hard pressed, he summoned up all that he could remember of his own tongue, and, wishing to call out 'Sevilla,' said 'Xivilla,' and at the same time made in the air a cross both with his hand and bow.

Those who know how intensely local patriotism stirs Spanish hearts can understand this was the best thing that he could have done. Seldom, indeed, a Spaniard says he is a Spaniard, but speaks of himself as being from Seville, Cadiz, or some forgotten town in La Mancha, of which he speaks with pride, referring to it as 'mi tierra,' as happened in the invasion by the French in the Napoleonic wars, when villagers would say with pride, 'Last night my town declared itself in war against the French!'

When, therefore, Alvaro Nieto, the soldier who pressed hardest on Ortiz, heard the mutilated word, and saw (as Constantine before him saw) the cross set in the sky, he checked his horse; then, being as it chanced himself from Seville, called out (no doubt with the thick, lisping accent of the city of his birth), 'Are you Ortiz?' and, on his answering 'Yes,' stooped from his horse\* and, lifting up Ortiz as he had been a child, set him before him and bore him off at once to Soto's camp. Soto received him joyfully, and by degrees his knowledge of the Spanish tongue came back to him, and he became Soto's right hand from that time till the moment of his death.

The Spaniards gave Ortiz a jerkin of black velvet, with hose and shoes, and everything befitting a Spaniard of the time. But for a month Ortiz was miserable, bound in his hat, his coat and hosen as in a prison,† and took them off to sleep, which he preferred to do quite naked, after the Indian style, and covered with a skin.

The first thing that the Spaniards asked Ortiz as soon as he could talk was if the country had much gold in it. Both Biedma and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' say that Ortiz gave them no expectations, and,

\* 'Era recio y fuerte este buen soldado' ('La Florida,' book ii., cap. vii., p. 32).

† The proverb says: 'El que no esta hecho á bragas, las costuras le hacen llagas' ('He who is not inured to breeches suffers from the seams').

moreover, that he knew nothing of the country except the district in which he had been kept.

Soto, who had the recollection of the treasures of Peru to spur him on, was not put off by this, especially as the chief Mucayo, having Otila was taken, came himself and made alliance with the Spaniards, behaving "like a gentleman," and thus winning the hearts of Soto and of Peraldo and the rest of the officers, who, being Spaniards—there at once—had shown upon good leading, holding their men and animals better than chiefly in their treatment of their kind. A domestic which is good or bad according to the weight men give to it, and if they measure others rather by what kind of men they are themselves, than by the wealth they own.

After a day or two passed in the Spanish camp, the mother of Mucayo, becoming anxious as to her son, came and asked Soto to send her back again. This Soto did at once, and had he always used the Indians in the same way as he did Mucayo, perhaps things would not have turned out so badly for him as they did.

Mucayo, who was young,\* did not return immediately, but passed a few days in the camp, teaching it all sorts of waffle exercises with the young Spanish officers, and all "as naturally and

\* "Era Mucayo de edad de veinte y seis años y era como todo hombre de guerra y valor." "La Florida," book 9, cap. 403.

with such grace that it appeared as if he had been born in Spain.'

During this time Soto had not been idle, and personally looked to all the officers both of his fleet and camp.

First he brought to the shore all the provisions and the stores, and then sent back seven of his ships to Cuba, with orders to his wife to use them as she liked. The other four he kept, hoping to turn them to account in exploration of the coast. Prudently Soto tried to wipe out the 'odious insults' which Panphilo de Narvaez had offered Hirrihigua, and, as it proved, his efforts turned to good account. That chief, having taken several Spanish prisoners, used them so well, and guarded them so slackly, that they were able to escape, and, on returning to the camp, said they had been well treated, and that their treatment differed much from that endured by Juan Ortiz, who had been cruelly ill-used during the ten long years of his captivity.

During his stay at the Bay of the Holy Ghost Soto took several Indians, and asked them all about the longed-for gold, which was the object of his quest. The Indians all deceived him, and, as it seems, deliberately, telling him always that there was gold, but it was far away from where they lived.\*

Soto appears at this point to have been in doubt whether to pursue his expedition or to return, but

\* Biedma, in his report (p. 175), says: 'All the Indians captured told the grossest falsehoods.'

the indomitable spirit of the Spaniards of his day prevailed, and he sent Baltazar Gallegos out to explore, telling him to try and reach the town of a *cacique* called Urribarracuxi, and instructing him always to send him good reports, no matter what he saw.

This proves that Soto was a prudent man, and knew that armies are like flocks of sheep, subject to quick despairs and panics, and, as their reason is replaced by discipline, incapable of thinking for themselves, and, above all things, dispirited or the reverse, by news. Gallegos carried out his orders, although he was no liar, and a man truthful to extreme.\*

First, Baltazar Gallegos went to Mucoço's town, and asked him to accompany him against the chief. Mucoço answered that he was brother-in-law to Urribarracuxi, and therefore begged to be excused. He said that even the Spaniards would despise him if he acted treacherously. To this Gallegos gave assent, and, having hired an Indian as a guide, went on his way.

Had but the expedition always acted in such a way, most of the troubles into which Soto subsequently fell had been avoided, and he, being assured that he could find no gold, might have sat down to colonize and to possess the land.

\* 'Para animar à la gente . . . y aunque no era de su condicion mentir porque era hombre de verdad' (Oviedo, 'Historia General de las Indias,' p. 448).

So, with the Indian guide, and taking Juan Ortiz as his interpreter, Gallegos set out, and in four days came to the town of the great chief Urribarracuxi, which he found deserted, the people having fled. He therefore, not knowing what to do, encamped, and sent to Soto to tell him what had occurred and ask him how to act.

But Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, who seems to have been a cavalier of the true errant breed, seeing a giant in every windmill and devoured by the love of distinction which often is the bane of mediocre men, making them blaze their mediocrity abroad, instead of keeping it for use at home, was fired to strike a blow. He therefore sent to Soto, saying that he, as second in command, wished for permission to advance and attack the chief, where he lay well entrenched behind some swamps, and sheltered by a wood.

Soto, who, though a younger man, had had experience of war in Indian countries, with its ambuscades, surprises, and treacherous attacks, and being a graduate in 'the Pizarros' school,' although he had imbibed some of their cruelty, had yet learned prudence, commanded him not to advance, saying the chief's position was too strong to venture an attack.

Little enough Porcallo cared for orders, being more accustomed to deliver them than to obey himself. Besides, being a man of fifty years of age, and who had experience of war from his youth upwards,



he no doubt was rasher than a youth, for years do but confirm our habits, whether of body or of mind. Therefore, although the orders were repeated, he advanced, and, riding on with all the cavalry, soon was involved in swamps. His horse fell with him in the mud, and he barely escaped with his life, getting out crushed and half stifled, and very much ashamed.

The hot fit over, and the cavalry having retreated into safety, he fell into a melancholy, and as he rode his followers heard him say: 'To what a land is this that I have come? What names are these of Hurri, Hurri, Higa, Burra-Coja, and the rest, not fit for Christians' tongues? Are these the Princes of the place, with such vile names? How can a man gain either profit or honour in fighting with such brutes?'

So, sore ashamed and bruised, he rode into the camp, and instantly waited on Soto, and asked his leave to return home. Soto at once gave leave, and Figueroa, having shared his horses, his provisions, and his arms with all the men who stood in need of them, embarked upon his ship, and, setting sail, went back to Cuba to his comfortable house. He left his bastard son, one Gomez Suarez Figueroa, to remain at Soto's side, giving him horses, arms, and all things necessary. He proved a stout-hearted but cantankerous soldier, staying with Soto to the last, but so proud-hearted and intractable that he would take no favour even from Soto, and, when his horses were all killed, marched on on foot, just like the meanest soldier in the host.

## CHAPTER VII

SOTO now found himself forced either to advance into the interior or to re-embark and quit his enterprise. He did not hesitate, but marched to join Gallegos near to Uribarracuxi's town.

His line of march was to the north-west, which led him by degrees into what is now the State of Georgia, a region in which the winters are severe, and where up to the present time no gold has been discovered, but in spite of every difficulty he pressed on.

The Indians\* he met were of a different type to the poor down-trodden slaves whom he had conquered with Pizarro in Peru. Biedma, in speaking of a battle that he fought in Tula, says: 'The Indians were so brave that they rushed on like furious dogs.'† Garcilasso speaks of their bows as being so stiff that no Spaniard could draw the string up to his face, however much he tried.‡ And when they shot, their arrows pierced helmets and breastplates made of

\* Perhaps the Seminoles.

† Biedma's report, p. 194.

‡ 'Son tan recios' (the bows) 'de enarcar que ningun Español, por mucho que lo porfiaba, podía llevando la cuerda, llegar la mano al rostro' ('La Florida,' book i., p. 7).

Milan steel as they were paper or the thinnest silk. Moreover, all the country was an enormous swamp, where horses could not pass, and from the banks of which the Indians rained their arrows on the Spanish force like hail, slaying both men and horses without danger to themselves. These swamps led to the great everglades, where almost in the recollection of men living the Seminoles for years defied the power of the United States.

What difficulties Soto had to contend with, without a commissariat, with no connection with the outer world but the four small vessels which remained upon the coast, can be imagined rather than described. Only the combination of religious fervour with a fierce greed for gold could have sustained his men in all the hardships which they underwent. Soto, having arrived at the town of Urribarracuxi, found his further passage barred by interminable marshes, and having failed to open up communications with the chief, after sending out some scouts, determined personally to lead his vanguard through the swamp.

Three days he and his men struggled along, their horses splashing in water to the girths, the infantry wading up to the knees and fighting every step—three days of agony, of hunger, and of misery caused by the myriads of mosquitoes which filled the air; days of continuous fighting which almost maddened all his men.

At last, having caught some Indians, they made

them choose between an instant death, or, acting as guides, to lead them to dry land. The Indians chose the latter, but involved them deeper in the swamp, till Soto, at his wits' end and furious with rage, threw them to the dogs, who promptly killed them; so they died martyrs to their love of liberty and patriotism. One Indian youth alone, seeing the appalling death of all the rest, turned traitor, and, to save his life, led out the Spaniards, who, having given thanks to God for their deliverance, encamped, and Soto instantly sent back to bring the body of his army to the camp.\*

When the main army joined their general, they found that the territory where they were was called Acuera,† and that the chief of it with all his men had fled and hidden in the woods.

Soto at once sent out a messenger to tell the chief about the glories of the King of Spain, informing him that he had orders to reduce the country peacefully to the jurisdiction of his lord, and asking him to come and see him, and talk over matters at his camp.

The chief, secure in his retreat, sent answer that though the King of Spain was personally unknown to him, yet he had seen Spaniards, and he knew their ways, which were to kill and plunder everyone they

\* The man he sent back was Gonçalo Silvestre, who safely accomplished the perilous journey with but one companion.

† Biedma spells the name of this place Aquera, and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' Aguera. It appears to have been not far from the Suwanee River.

met. He said that he believed them to be vagabonds, without fixed habitation of their own. As for becoming vassals of the King of Spain, he said he was born free, and so would live and die, adding that, if the King should come, he might perhaps confer with him, but never with his vassal, and such the terms of Soto's message showed him that he was. Lastly, he bid defiance to the Spaniards, and told them all to quit his lands, or he would come and slay them as enemies to God and man.

Soto, who had heard discourse of a like nature from the Inca of Peru, was yet astonished that a savage could hold such language, and sent again to him, but with the same result.

Foiled in his wish to open up communications, he remained encamped for twenty days to rest his men and horses, all of which had suffered much during the three days' passage of the swamp. The Indians every day attacked them, and so persistently that if a soldier strayed but one hundred paces from the camp an arrow pierced him, and before his comrades could run up, his head was severed from the trunk and borne off to the chief. The soldiers buried the bodies, and at night the Indians returned and dug them up, and hung them to the trees. During the twenty days they stopped to rest Soto lost fourteen men, and all that he could do was to kill fifty Indians, so well they hid themselves, both in the forests and the swamps. At last, giving up hope of making friends, and rested from his fatigues, he

determined to push on to Ocali, a place which he had heard was twenty leagues away towards the north.

Before he broke up camp, he gave strict orders to his men to do no damage either to the Indians' crops or huts, in order that they should not give him a bad name—a wise precaution in a hostile land, and one which might have been effectual, had he not begun already to throw Indians to his dogs. Even the ostrich (of the story-book) is not more ready to conceal his head, and leave his body well exposed to view, than is mankind, who always seem to think that reason is a quality that only they enjoy, and that their fellow-creatures are exempt from feeling that which actuates themselves.

After a journey through ten leagues of 'desert,' Soto reached the province of Ocali.\* Throughout the journey Soto saw 'pines and nut-trees, and others such as are not known in Spain.' The nuts were probably pecans, and, if one thinks upon the matter without prejudice, descriptions such as these are twenty times more interesting than scientific facts.

Into the town of Ocali the Spaniards entered, finding provisions in abundance, of a sylvan kind, as maize, and nuts, and acorns, which they ate gratefully, and with no mention of any base intrusion of vile money on their simple-minded hosts.

\* This 'desert' is probably some of the barren swampy land between Florida and Georgia.



The chief, after six days of vacillation, came to meet them peacefully.\* For the whole time that he was in the Spanish camp he acted crookedly,† to the great indignation both of Garcilasso and of Biedma.

Quite naturally, a man, even if he has invaded someone's country to bring him all the blessings of our faith and trade, protects his life against the assaults and wiles of aborigines. Still, when the fight is over, and the 'native' duly shot down, or otherwise disposed of, as by throwing to the dogs or the assaults of gun and sleeping-sickness, it seems strange that writers wax indignant on their efforts to preserve their land.‡

Soto, who was accustomed to deal with Indian diplomacy, soon found himself obliged to leave the chief to his own devices, and set out to bridge the river Ocali, and start for the province of Ochile, which lay further to the north.

Luckily, he had an engineer from Genoa, one Master Francis, in his camp. This Master Francis 'designed the bridge according to geometry'§—not a bad way of doing it—and then, cutting great trunks of trees, 'completed it so satisfactorily that even the cavalry passed it with pleasure,' and, one must presume, with profit to themselves.

\* 'Salió de paz.'

† 'Nunca andavo à derechas.'

‡ Patriotism cannot exist unless the patriot has at least three hundred a year.

§ 'Traço la puente por geometria.'

Soto, who found himself now quite without a guide, for Juan Ortiz was long beyond his reckoning, sent out some men to lie in ambush and seize on all the Indians that they could. They took some thirty, and, having promised them great gifts if they were faithful to their task, upon the other hand set instant death before their eyes if they should fail or prove unfaithful on the road. 'Pizarro's school' had certainly shown Soto a short road with infidels, and it has followers even to the present day. The Indians chose the gift and life, and in three days the army came to Ochile, 'which is the largest town of the province that we call Vitachuco.'

Soto, having arrived at this important town about the break of day, and being doubtless grounded in the Scriptures, remembering Jericho, ordered his band to strike up military airs on 'fifes and kettle-drums, with trumpets and other instruments of war.' So penetrating was the sound that the *cacique* and his notables came out, and proffered fealty to the King of Spain, being afraid, apparently, if he stayed obdurate, of the fate of those whom Shakespeare touches on, as suffering from the nerves when the shrill bagpipes skirl. The chief, who also was called Vitachuco, did not know—luckily for him—all that the visit of the Spaniards would entail, or probably he would have suffered all the horrors of their band rather than let them come into his town.

The chief having professed allegiance, Soto could do no less than issue orders to his forces to treat the

Indians as their friends, and not to burn their houses, as had been their wont.

It seems that from the earliest times that civilized men have been accustomed to bring home the glories of their state to their black brothers by killing them and burning down their homes, spoiling their crops, and thus making, as it were, a blank page on which to write the laws of progress and the glory of its code.

Ochile and his two brothers, who seem at once to have held up their hands, were sent by Soto to their overlord, Vitachuco, and in their embassy declared to him all they had seen, telling him of the horror of the Spaniards' guns, and of the fierceness and nimbleness of the strange animals they rode.\*

This Vitachuco answered Soto's embassy with such brave words that 'if it were possible to write them after the fashion of his emissary's speech, none of the bravest knights that the divine Ariosto, or the most illustrious and amorous Count Mateo Maria Bojardo, his antecessor, and other fine poets, introduced into their works, would equal them.†

\* The Indians of America all seem to have been persuaded that the horse was a carnivorous animal. Thus, when Cortes left a sick horse on his expedition to Nicaragua, enjoining great care on the Indians in its treatment, he found it dead on his return, the Indians having given it nothing but chickens to eat.

† 'Y las palabras tan sovervias que dijo, se pudieran escrevir, como los mensageros las referieron, ningunos de los mas bravos cavalleros, que el divino Ariosto, y el ilustrisimo y muy enamorado Conde Matheo Maria Bojardo, su antecesor, y otros claros poetas introducen en sus obras, igualaran' ('La Florida,' book ii., cap. xx.).

It is difficult to penetrate exactly Garcilasso's meaning when he reports the speeches of the various Indian chiefs. He sets them out in all their logic, and yet usually heads his chapter with, 'Of the proud and Insolent Message which Vitachuco' (or some other chief) 'sent to the Spanish Host.'

The insolent and logical *cacique* began his villainous and cruel protocol by stating that he understood at once what had induced the messengers to press him so to yield. He said—and mark how vilely logic shows in an Indian's\* mouth—'that imprisonment commonly subdues the spirit of a man. Therefore, as the messengers had been detained as prisoners by the Spaniards, he supposed their spirit of patriotism was dead.'

'How can this Christian,' said Vitachuco, 'be better than the rest? Have we not seen the cruelties they have done before? And are not these of the same nation, the same faith and law? They say they are the sons of the Sun and of the Moon, but their works show them sons of devils, . . . and now they permeate our land, committing murder, adultery and theft, and acting visibly without the fear of God.'

But the poor Indian, in order to resemble European Kings, after his show of logic sent defiance to his foes.

\* 'No es la miel para la boca del asno,' says the Spanish proverb, and 'logic' and 'honey' might be placed in the same category, as is exemplified in the story of Balaam and his ass.

Soto, who was not in a position to use force, of course dissembled, knowing upon the best authority that the serpent's cunning should supplement the lion's strength.

So he sent messenger after messenger, till at last the *cacique*, either worn out by importunity or being resolved to deal with the 'murderers and adulterers' in another way, sent an ambassador to say that Soto might pass through his territory if he did not remain above two days. He changed his tone, and said he did 'not know that Soto's Christians were different from the rest,' and generally acted as if he had been Pizarro or Cortes, at moments when they did not feel themselves so strong as to recur to force.

So Vitachuco, having laid his plans, set out from his chief village, and with five hundred men advanced to Soto's camp.

The charm of Garcilasso over almost all the other writers on the 'Conquest' is that his Indian blood enabled him to note class differences between the Indians, whereas to many of the Spaniards Indians were but mere animals ('gente sin razon'), which phrase is equal to the modern 'nigger' with the universal adjective.\*

\* This has been asserted to be a contraction of 'By Our Lady,' and should not, therefore, be in such general use as it is amongst Protestants.

## CHAPTER VIII

WONDERFUL the cortège of Vitachuco must have looked as it wound through the swamps of Florida. No doubt it walked in Indian file, the painted warriors crowned with feathers, with their bows in their hands, advancing noiselessly along the narrow trails, silent, and looking with the fixed, all-seeing eyes that mark their race. No one who has seen the degraded Indians of to-day, or even who has seen the finest of the wild tribes of Africa, can form the least idea of what they must have been. To the African, even to the best-looking of the tribes, there still attaches something of the brutish negro look, whereas to these men followers of Vitachuco there must have been a majesty which sometimes lingers even in their whisky-sodden progeny who loiter about frontier towns.

Soto and Vitachuco, having met upon the road, exchanged those protestations which the leaders of armed men have always professed to each other before the fight begins. Four days they passed in high festivity, Vitachuco having done his best to lull the Spaniards' suspicions so as to fall upon them afterwards with greater ease.



Unfortunately for his project, four Indians whom he trusted, came to the Spaniards and betrayed his plans, and Soto, who also had the cunning of the snake, thought he would lay a counter-ambuscade, and sent to the *cacique* to assure him of his distinguished consideration and goodwill.

So upon both sides, having faithfully given and received a lie, Soto and Vitachuco made arrangements for a conference, which each one knew must finish in a fight.

In reading it set forth in the contemporary historians, one is reminded of the old Border trysts, to which the Scottish and the English Borderers came, set upon fighting, under a show of peace.

Vitachuco had his army drawn up between a forest and two lakes, and all his men had their bows hidden at their feet, covered with grass, so as to lay suspicion and draw the enemy into the trap. Soto arrived, and, choosing twelve of his stoutest men-at-arms, stepped out in front of his army to meet the chief, who on his side had done the same.

The army of the Spaniards was drawn up, the vanguard resting on a wood with cavalry upon both sides. Soto, who in such moments was at his best, determined to be beforehand with the chief, and as they neared each other with their men, ordered an arquebuss to be discharged, and in an instant his twelve followers advanced and seized the chief. Soto, who had his armour on beneath a cloak, called

for his horse (a dappled gray named Aceytuno),\* and, mounting him, charged on the Indians leading on the horse.†

The Indians, not a bit dismayed, met the charge boldly, and eight, shooting all at once, transfixed the gallant Aceytuno, and he fell dead, 'as if a cannon-shot had struck him in the head.'

Probably Soto never had a narrower escape, for the Indians rushed upon him as he was rising from the body of the horse. Luckily for him, a page, one Viota,‡ a native of Zamora and a gentleman, put him on his own horse, and the Governor once more led on the charge.

The Indians, as Garcilasso says, 'having no pikes,' could not withstand the charge, and broke, some

\* 'Hernando de Soto, que secretamente iba armado, y llevava cerca de sè dos cavallos de rienda, subiendo en uno de ellos que era rucio rodado, y le llamavan Aceytuno, porque Mateo de Aceytuno . . . se lo avia dado, y era un bravissimo y hermosisimo animal, digno de aver tenido tales dueños' ('La Florida,' book ii., cap. xxiv., p. 59).

† Garcilasso complains of Soto being too fond of exposing himself in battle, and says: 'Este valiente capitán en todas las batallas y recuentros que de día ò de noche en esta conquista, y en la del Peru, se le ofrecieron presumia siempre de los primeros; que de quatro lanças, las mejores, que à las Indias Occidentales ayan pasado, ò pasen, fue la suza una de ellas.'

'Ò pasen' shows faith; but certainly Soto was one of the boldest riders (and lances) of all the *conquistadores* of America.

‡ 'Fulano Viota.' This use of the word *fulano*, meaning 'so-and-so,' is from the Arabic *flan-flan*, meaning the same thing. It can be translated, or, rather, paraphrased, into Scotch, as in the expression 'ane they ca' Campbell.'

saving themselves by swimming in the lake, and others taking shelter in the woods. Of those who could not gain the shelter either of wood or lake, more than three hundred perished, lanced by the cavalry.

The vanguard, being massed upon the shore, were forced into the water, and nine hundred of them took refuge in the shallows of the lake.

A ray almost as of humanity seems to have come upon the Spaniards when they saw the brave resistance that the Indians made, for they fired arquebusses over them, not with intent to kill, but to frighten them into surrender; but the Indians still stood firm.

At nightfall Soto set out men on horseback to patrol the lake, so that the Indians should not escape; but they, mounting upon each other's shoulders, shot arrows whilst their quivers held a shaft. Little by little all the Indians came out, until at midnight only seven were swimming in the lake. These swam and waded till the morning, and in the afternoon Soto, not being willing that such brave men should die, sent in some swimmers, who drew them, quite exhausted, to the banks. The soldiers, moved with compassion at their bravery, lighted great fires to warm them, and all the following night cared for them and brought them back to life.

In the morning Soto called them, and, pretending to be vexed, asked them what was the reason of their obduracy.

Four of them were men of about thirty years of age, the others younger, and all of them replied, each helping out the other when he could not find a word.

‘Keeping their style\* as near as possible,’ they said that, having been made officers and chiefs in their prosperity, they thought it unbecoming of a man to ask for quarter in adversity.

They said they wished, if they could, to leave at least a good name to their sons, for they esteemed their honour far above life, and for their lives they were not glad that they were spared; and they asked Soto to have them slain at once, for they could never venture home again.

Soto, having heard the answer of the elder men, turned to the boys, who ranged from twelve to eighteen years of age. The eldest of them, ‘speaking as quietly and composedly as if he had been free,’ made answer, saying they were sons of chiefs. ‘We went,’ he said, ‘to battle, to gain fame, defend our country, and to prove that we were men. How could we, therefore, flee, being the sons of chiefs, and with the example of the rest before our eyes.’

‘Son of the Sun,’ they said, ‘this is the reason that we did not yield. We did not fight to irritate you, but to defend our country and our homes.’

‘If it seems good to you that we should die, give orders, and we shall bravely meet our fate, holding the victor has the right to slay.’

\* ‘Guardardo pues su estilo.’

The Spanish soldiers, when they heard their words, and saw 'such noble youths in such extremity,' were moved to tears, and Soto, holding out his arms, embraced the youths, and spoke kind words to them, saying that he was glad to know them and have the power to spare their lives.

Logic, of course, toils breathlessly behind a 'conqueror,' and humour, which above all things civilizes man, is often absent, finding no resting-place on helmets or the barrels of the guns.

One sees the 'conqueror' almost moved to tears,\* being himself a tender-hearted man. So may a schoolboy, with a bird's nest in his hand, weep when he hears the mother's wailing note, or pious vivisectors wipe away a tear when they see muscles quiver as the scalpel enters in, knowing, as Soto did, that everything they do is for the cause of progress and a blessing in disguise, even to those who suffer by their deeds.

However, Soto had a heart that bravery could touch, and eyes to which tears came at heroism, and though his expedition was primarily to search for gold, by peril of his life he had remained a man, and not become a sordid money-grubber.

So, having comforted the gallant Indian youths, he sent them back to their fathers; but the four elder men he kept in chains, telling them gravely they had acted wrongly and must bear their blame.

\* 'El Governador que assimismo era de animo piadoso tambien se enterneció.'

'You have,' he said, 'tried hard to slay my soldiers, who never did you harm. You deserve death,' said he, 'but I, a Christian, will teach you to forgive ;\* therefore I pardon you, and ask you to be friends.'

They, being prisoners, naturally promised all he asked, and he then sent to Vitachuco, whom he had in chains, to endeavour to make peace.

But Vitachuco, after the style of Rehoboam, hardened his heart, and would not listen to the soft words that Soto spoke. So, like a true patriot as he was, he made his mind up to strike a blow for liberty, even although it proved to be the last. He therefore planned with all the Indian prisoners, who numbered many hundreds, at a given signal to fall upon the Spaniards, and each one to kill the nearest man. Soto he wished to kill himself, and, having killed him, thought that the other Spaniards would be sure to flee.

Upon the seventh day after the battle he gave the sign, being himself at that time well treated by his captor, who had thought to win his heart. Most of the Indians were in chains, but on that day Soto and Vitachuco ate alone. After their dinner Vitachuco rose, and, stretching up his arms, gave a shrill cry, and, rushing on his host, gave him a blow with his closed fist upon his skull. He struck so hard that Soto tumbled senseless to the ground, and

\* In fact, he freely forgave them for all he had done, as the saying is.



Vitachuco threw himself on him to 'mak siccar' with his work.

At the chief's-war whoop all the Indians rose, and fell upon the soldiers nearest them. Those who were chained struck fiercely, raising their hands and bringing down their chains upon the soldiers' heads. The rest took anything they could, as pestles, spades,\* or what they had to hand.

'He that could get a lance bestirred himself in such sort with it as though he had used it all his lifetime. One Indian, caught in the market-place by fifteen or twenty footmen, made away like a bull with a sword in his hand, till certain halberdiers came, which killed him. Another got up with a lance into a loft of canes, which they call there a "barbacoa," and there he made so great a noise that you had thought he was three men.'† The writer dryly adds, as commentary, 'Him we slew with a partisan.'‡

That was his epitaph, and for the rest, the revolt was soon got under, as the Indians had no arms.

During the progress of the fight Soto lay senseless on the ground, and Vitachuco, thinking he was dead, turned away, looking for another man to slay.

Just at that moment several men with crossbows in their hands came rushing to the fray. Seeing their general, as they thought, stretched dead upon the ground, they fired at once, and Vitachuco,

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 41.

† *Ibid.*, p. 42.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

pierced with a dozen shafts, gave a last war-whoop, and expired upon the spot.

The crossbowmen then took up Soto in their arms, thinking him dead, and carried him towards the camp. Little by little he revived, though bleeding from the ears, 'as if the blow had been delivered with a mace,'\* and, sitting up, thanked God for his escape.

For twenty days or more his teeth were loose, so that he had to live on spoonmeat, and he remained shaking and aching for a considerable time, from the effects of the last fell blow which Vitachuco struck.

The battle over, and order once again restored, with its handmaiden, law, triumphant and enthroned, nothing remained but to dispose of all the prisoners.

'We slew them,' says the chronicler, 'with halberds and with swords, and the tame Indians finished up the rest, shooting them all with arrows, fastened firmly up to stakes.'

So died the patriot Indians, miserably, after the fashion of the greater part of those who strike for liberty, and the accomplished misery of fact was vindicated.

\* 'La Florida,' book ii., cap. xxviii., p. 67.

## CHAPTER IX

SOTO, after a week spent in his tent, to rest and heal his wound, determined to set out again upon his quest, having been told that several journeys further on there was a town called Osachile, where he was certain to find gold.

One is concerned to know that the four eloquent and patriotic Indians, who had been captured in the lake, were killed during the massacre which took place when the revolt was done.

True patriotism is so rare a thing, and the very name of it has been so prostituted and debased by scheming rogues, that it is sad to think upon these patriots' death, and those Americans who take an interest in the early history of their land should give their thanks to Garcilasso for having made immortal the memory of so much virtue, which met its natural reward.

Upon the road to Osachile \* Soto had to fight perpetually, and when he reached the town found it deserted, after the usual Indian style.

The town was built upon a hill, with the chief's house about the middle of it, and at the top of the

\* Biedma and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' call it Uzachil.

high rock a temple, which the chroniclers refer to as a mosque.\*

Soto took in this place a hundred prisoners, whom he found lurking in the woods. The 'Gentleman of Elvas' (who did not care for Soto, and judges him as hardly as he can) says that many of them escaped, 'but those who stayed paid for themselves and for the rest, that they should not dare to do the like another time.' No doubt the dogs tore some of them to pieces as an example to the rest, and to instil the beauties of the Christian faith into their bold compeers who got off with their lives.

Gold, naturally, in Osachile there was none, nor the least sign of it; but Soto there got news that, in the province known as Apalache, there were mines, and, after resting, once again set out after his yellow *ignis fatuus*. Whilst his troops stayed in Osachile, one of their great amusements was to ride up the steep wooden steps which led to the *mezquita*, and then, dismounting, lead their horses back. As they were young, and horses relatively plentiful, this did not do much harm, and made a change from the usual sport of throwing Indians to the dogs.

All the whole road to Apalache a continuous battle raged, and Indians in the woods and swamps slew many Spaniards from these lurking-places. At last the army came to a dark lane between two forests,

\* 'Una mezquita.' This Spanish word for a mosque is from the Arab *el mosjid*, a mosque, and was often used by the *conquistadores* for a temple in America.

in which the ground was marshy, and which led out upon a swamp.

Soto then called a council, which agreed to push on towards Apalache at all hazards, although the lane became so narrow that they had to march in Indian file.

Two days and nights they passed struggling along the forests and the swamp, and with the Indians always on their flanks. Crossbows grew wet, and could not shoot their darts; swords rusted in their sheaths, and the plate armour weighed them down whilst struggling in the mud. The crossbowmen and harquebussiers found that the Indians shot six shafts to every one of theirs, their bows being more suitable for using in the woods than the steel crossbows or the musquetoons, which needed time to load.\*

But still the Spaniards struggled on, and at the last came out upon dry land. The army was so tired with the long fight that they encamped at once close to a little town, round which were fields of maize, of

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas' says: 'The Indians never stand still, but jump about when they fight.' This habit they transmitted to the old-fashioned Western men, who always talked of 'jumping and shooting.' 'By reason of this,' says 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' 'neither the crossbow nor the arcabuse can aime at them, and before a crossbowman can make one shot, an Indian will discharge sixe arrows, and he seldome misseth what he shooteth at. An arrow when it findeth no armour penetrates as deeply as a crossbow. For the most part when their [arrows] light upon an armour they break in the place. Those [arrows] of cane do splitte and pierce a coat of mail, and are more hurtful than the others.'

beans and calabashes. After a rest, Soto himself, with two hundred of his horse, went out to scout, for the prisoners had said that Apalache was but two leagues away upon the road. He found the town deserted, and at once occupied it, finding it larger than the last, and with provisions for his troops. The army rested there a week after the hardships of the road.

Soto had heard (from Alvar Nuñez, probably) of the existence of the town, though it seems probable that the place Nuñez visited was not the same as that in which Soto and his forces were encamped, for Nuñez puts it near the sea, and Soto found himself quite in an inland place surrounded by dense woods.

So he sent out a captain, Juan de Añasco, to try and find the sea, for before starting it had been agreed that the remaining vessels were to follow up the coast. With him went one Gomez Arias, a relation of Soto's wife, a 'hardy soldier and a wise, and one who had been much in Barbary, where he had learnt to speak the language like a Moor. Withal a valiant swimmer [a thing useful in conquests], and a man who had his worth as a stout soldier, both by sea and land.'

Such kind of soldiers naturally always were scarce in every army of the world, for military discipline seems to reduce all men to idiocy when left to act alone.

Juan de Añasco had one of the terrible experiences



so frequent in the conquest of America. After a day or two his food ran short, and, the Indians having retired into the woods, none was procurable; for the man who went out hunting to get meat never returned alive, an Indian arrow, whistling from behind a bush, usually slaying him, as it has slain many a good frontiersman before and since his time. The Indian guide who had engaged to bring them to the sea turned traitor, and led them in a circle, so close to the sea that they could sometimes hear the waves, but, on one pretext or another, always led them back again, in order that they should waste with hunger and fall a prey to the Indians who followed on their track.

This guide seems not to have been a prudent man, or to have possessed the supernatural patience of his race. One night, stealthily rising from his sleep, he took a burning log and struck a sleeping soldier on the head; then, laying himself down, feigned sleep and innocence. Unluckily for him, he had been seen. The soldiers, naturally, were for instant death, but Juan de Añasco, who had some sense, said, 'No. He is the only guide we have, and if we lose him we shall perish in the woods.' The guide lay down again, and towards morning got up again and tried to kill a soldier with a stone. The soldiers restrained themselves, 'and were contented with administering some hearty blows.'\*

\* 'Se contentaron con dar le muchos palos' ('La Florida,' book ii., cap. v., p. 77).

In the morning they began their march again, the treacherous (and well-beaten) guide chained and attached to one of them by a long cord. After an hour or two of march, the guide, being apparently weary of his life, sprang, fettered as he was, upon the man who led him, and brought him to the ground. The soldiers and their captain, 'not being able to withstand such shamelessness,'\* gave him so many sword-thrusts that they stretched him dead upon the ground. And then occurred a curious thing ('un caso raro'), and, had it happened to a Christian, verging on a miracle, for, when the man lay dead upon the ground, they found their sword-thrusts had not gone into his skin, but merely bruised him, as they had struck him with 'a riding switch of quince or olive wood.'

This raised their ire, as the matter savoured of enchantment, and Juan de Añasco, being 'provoked at the aspect of the thing, raised himself in his stirrups, and, with his lance held fast in both his hands, being himself a man robust and strong above the ordinary, dealt a strong thrust at the dead Indian as he lay upon the ground.† For all his strength, and the disgust at magic, which no doubt added power to his arm, the lance-head passed only a span into the flesh, leaving the captain thoroughly alarmed.

Fear fell upon the troop, and they stood shaking

\* 'Los Castellanos y su capitan no pudiendo ya sufrir tanta desvergüença.'

† The proverb 'A Moro muerto gran lanzada' seems to be applicable to this case.

and uncertain what to do, for it was evident that the dead Indian was an enchanter, though why he did not use his power to save his life seems not to have occurred to them.

Their swords and lances having failed them in their need—for it was evident that the man would rise and run away the instant they were gone, and perhaps throw his spells upon them all—they cast about what they could do to meet such an extraordinary case. It seemed to them that it was best to have recourse to extra-human means, so, letting loose a bloodhound which they led, they set him on the body, which he straight tore to bits, and thereby broke the spell.

Juan de Añasco and his soldiers, following back upon their trail, came safe to Apalache, having survived the hunger and the dangers of the road, and Soto, who was furious at the time lost, instantly sent them back again, with provisions for a week. He gave them orders to reach the sea at any cost, and, having got there, to return at once and tell him all that they had seen.

This time no fell enchantments stopped them, and in two days they reached a harbour at a place called Ante, where they found traces of a forge, and relics which showed them that it was the place where Panfilo de Narvaez had put in, for they found mangers for the horses, hollowed from trees, and an Indian who, having been a slave, 'spoke Spanish and informed them of the land.'

From Ante, Soto sent off a message to his wife by Gomez Arias, who took one of the brigantines, and in a few days anchored in the Habana bay.

Doña Isabel de Bobadilla received him well, for it was several months since she had heard from Soto, and her anxiety was great.

Arias then went on to Santiago, giving the news of what had happened in the new conquest, and was everywhere received both with rejoicing and with feasts. Especially the good health of the Governor (Soto) rejoiced them, 'as he had been the father of them all, and, in fact, he merited it from all of them.'

Soto, rejoiced to hear the news, sent back Añasco to bring in the ships, and, setting out himself with all the cavalry, fell upon Apalache and took it by assault, fighting himself in the front ranks, calling his men by name, and cheering on the fight, like the 'brave man and valorous knight he always proved himself to be.'

The Indians, seeing that the town was lost, humbling themselves before Soto, begged that he would spare their lives, and above all things that of their chief, who was so corpulent that he was carried in men's arms.

Soto, who was not cruel when there was no necessity, readily promised, and then, borne on a litter, the chief came to kiss his hand and make submission to the Emperor.

What Indians thought 'the Emperor' could be

is matter for conjecture, although we know that Atahualpa mixed him up with persons more august.

Soto was well content with having got the chief into his power, for before that no Spaniard could stray a bowshot from the camp. The chief, whose name was Capasi, was the first Indian, and the last, who deceived Soto in a trial of their wits. Hearing his promise of submission, and seeing that he could not walk, Soto at once believed him, and sent him out with a detachment of his men to bring his followers into the Emperor's fold.

After a day's long march, and when the Spaniards and their sentinels were all asleep, the chief got up, and, though he was too stout to walk, crawled off into the woods. There his own people found him, and bore him off in triumph in their arms.

Sleeping does not offend even in sentinels, in Spain, and it appears quite natural to all concerned that if a man is tired he shall rest; if angry, exhale his wrath in words; no one is any whit the worse, and everything is done in conscience and with tender heart. The Indians, adding insult to injury, refused to fight, but, coming to the edges of the woods, laughed at the Spaniards, 'making unseemly gestures.' And they returned to camp, crestfallen and sorry for themselves. As even soldiers will when they have acted foolishly, they made excuses for themselves, saying that they had heard strange noises in the night (as often happens when a man sleeps soundly after work), and hinting at a necromancer's spells.

Soto, who had the art of managing his fellow-men, seeing the mischief was without repair, pretended to believe, saying the Indians were sorcerers, and it was vain to fight against their charms.

As soon as the fleet arrived at the bay to which Juan de Añasco had been sent, Soto, who never could be idle even for an hour, sent off two brigantines, under the command of Diego Maldonado, to sail along the coast and bring him a report on everything he saw.

He sailed along nearly two months, and, having found a harbour, called Achusi, suitable for ships, and where the Indians all were well disposed, came back to Apalache, bringing on board a chief, who came quite willingly to see the Spaniards and invite them to his land.

As it was now almost a year since Soto had left Habana, he determined to write home, so he commanded Diego Maldonado to set sail for Cuba, with a letter to his wife and one to the municipality, setting forth all that he had done, and telling of the products, men, and condition of the land that he had won.

This was the second time in a whole year that he had sent a message back to Cuba, and it also was the last.\*

\* The only letter of Soto's which is (I think) preserved is in 'Les Mémoires sur l'Amérique' of Ternaux-Compans, vol. xx. It is translated from manuscript either at Timancas or in the Archivo de Indias at Seville. It is addressed to the municipi-



pality of Santiago de Cuba, and dated July 9, 1539. Soto says in it: 'Depuis que je suis dans se nouveau pays, que quoique peu éloigné est séparé par le mer, il me semble qu'il y à mille ans.' (Poor fellow! he found the Indians of Florida very different from the docile people of Peru.) 'Je n'ai eu nouvelles de vos seigneuries, quoique je vous aie écrit à la Havane par trois voies differents.' This does not appear in any of the three accounts of his expedition. He then tells, in a minute style, of the finding of Juan Ortiz, 'hijo de Sevilla y caballero.' In the whole letter he shows a strong common-sense; for instance, in telling of the taking of some Indians by Baltazar de Gallegos, who told of gold, he says, 'Et plaise à Dieu qu'il en soit ainsi.' Further on: 'De tout ce que me disent les Indians je ne crois que ce que je vois de mes propres yeux.' Piously, and in accord with the spirit of the times, he writes: 'Tout s'est passé suivant sa volonté il semble prendre un soin tout particulier de cette expedition . . . et je lui rends milles grâces.' Who shall enter into the designs of the protector of 'cette expedition,' but the protection does not seem to have been continued very long—that is, judging humanly. One touch of worldliness, redeemed by faith, peeps out in his report of having sent Baltazar de Gallegos on an expedition to Ocali, which he thus comments on: 'Dieu veuille qu'il en resulte quelque chose d'avantageux pour le service de Dieu notre Seigneur, et que je puisse me rendre utile à vos Seigneuries.' 'Pour le service de Dieu' is very modern, coming before what follows, and serves to remind us that all positions of authority bring out the worst of a man.

Soto enjoins on *leurs seigneuries* of the municipality to finish a bastion which he had begun at Santiago de Cuba, and tells them to keep the country quiet and well ruled during his absence. His signature is large, bold, and clear, and in a far better hand than that of most of the *conquistadores* of America.

## CHAPTER X

SOTO passed the whole winter in Apalache, and the Indians, who were sharp enough soon to find out the Spaniards' weak point, offered at intervals to take them to places where the gold lay thick upon the ground. At last, two of them offered to lead the Spaniards to where a chief called Cofachiqui lived, where the gold was, and where, they said, there was a quantity of pearls.

Whilst they were wintering in Apalache occurred the first case of scalping which, I think, was witnessed by white men in America. Two Portuguese, named Simon Rodriguez and Roque Yelvis, having gone out into the woods to gather fruit, climbed up into a tree. The Indians, seeing them, shot them with arrows, and Rodriguez falling down, they scalped\* him, before a party which came rushing from the camp could save his life.

About the end of March of 1540 Soto broke up his winter quarters and marched towards the north.

\* 'Apenas hubo caido quando le quitaron la cabeça ; digo todo el *casco* en *redondo* (que no se sabe con que maña lo quitan con grandisima facilidad) y lo llevaron para testimonio de su hecho' ('La Florida,' book ii., cap. xxv., p. 106).

His foot-soldiers carried Indian corn for sixty days; the footmen carried their rations on their backs, and the horsemen theirs in bags upon their saddle-bows. 'For the Indians that were for service, with the miserable life that they had had that winter, all in chains and being naked, died for the most part of their misery.'\*

In two more days Soto left the province of Apalache well behind, and came into another called Altapaha, in which, for the first time since he had left the town of Hirrihigua, he was received in peace.

After staying three days with the friendly chief, Soto marched on ten days towards the north, along the shores of a great river, to which he does not seem to have given any name. He was now in the State of Georgia, and the great river may have been the Chattahoochee, or the Flint. The chief of Altapaha and his men accompanied Soto to the edge of his domains, and Soto parted from him with regret, giving him presents, and especially two pigs, for the swine which he had brought from Cuba had multiplied and thriven well with the good feeding they had found in the great forests; and he had almost three hundred head.

Soto was anxious above all things to push on to where the gold and pearls were to be found, so he marched on right through the province of Achaloque almost without a stop, hoping to reach that of

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas.'

Cofachique,\* and to find riches as great as those that he had gathered in Peru.

Coming into the lands of the chief Cofa, Soto was well received, and Biedma says the chief came out and, after an oration, 'offered himself and his good service'; and Soto, who by this time must have been well acquainted with the Indians' ways, thanked him most kindly for his offer and goodwill, 'as if he had received it, and as if the chief had offered him a treasure of great price.'†

The chief Cofa, after his offering of himself, sent a subchief, whom Garcilasso calls a general, one Patofa, to guide the army on its way towards the land of pearls.

'General' Patofa took with him four thousand men, for the chief Cofa was at war with 'those of Cofachique, in the land of pearls,' and just before the expedition started the 'general' stepped out, and, taking from a servant's hands a wooden sword, executed a kind of Pyrrhic dance before both armies, and then, saluting, swore to acquit himself with credit, and to return only with victory.

The war-dance over, the chief, quite in the manner of a King who gives an order, took from his shoulders a splendid sable cloak, so fine that it was valued by the Spaniards at two thousands ducats, and gave it to his 'general.'

\* Biedma makes this chief's name to be Cofitachique. It seems also to have been the name of the country.

† Biedma, p. 49.

All was now ready, and Soto, for the first time after the hardships of the past year, seemed fairly embarked upon the road toward success.

Both armies were provisioned for a month, the land of pearls was well within the range of possibility, all was arranged, when, just before the start, the Powers of Evil, always on the watch when Christian men think themselves safe,\* endeavoured to spring cockle in his corn. As they marched through the swamps and woods, an Indian guide suddenly went into convulsions, foamed at the mouth, and fell upon the ground. 'They said a Gospel over him,' and he recovered and glorified the Lord.

This Indian guide, whom, with the levity of soldiers, the Spaniards had named Mark, but without having had recourse to formal baptism, and one called Peter (also named in the same imprudent way), were the two men to whom the armies looked for guidance by the way.

The Enemy of Man, seeing his chance, was quick to take it, and in the night a sound of screaming roused the camp. Peter (the unbaptized) was heard to shout that devils had attacked him, and as this was like enough to happen in his case, the camp at once all stood to arms. But what avail the cross-bow and the lance before such enemies? Squadrons of horse, although the riders to the last man were

\* 'Nunca faltan encontrones cuando un "probe" se divierte,' says the Gaucho proverb. For 'probe' my readers may, if they choose, substitute 'Cristiano.'

all '*gineté* in both saddles,' are but as ranks of roe-deer, to withstand his fell assault.

The priests advanced with book, and (I presume) with candles flickering in the wind, and Peter told his tale.

Just at the hour at twelve, when sleeping in his hut, Satan himself appeared, with a large following of his hellish crew. 'Do not conduct the Spaniards to the land of pearls,' he said. Peter stood firm, even although he was not yet a child of God, and Lucifer, with hideous threats, beat him most cruelly, and was about to finish up his work, and leave him dead, destroying at one swoop his body and his soul, when, luckily, two Spaniards came into the hut. When he but saw the chrisom men, Beelzebub shuddered and vanished, and Peter knew that the arch-fiend had recognised that they had been baptized.

Then did this *catecumeno* call loudly for a priest, desiring baptism. Soto, who knew the Indians and his own countrymen, called all the friars and the priests, and asked them what to do. They with one voice all answered, 'Let him be baptized.' At once they brought the element in a steel helmet, and Peter was received into the Church. This made him safe, but, most unluckily, no single word of Mark is set down in the pages of the chroniclers, so that it may be he remained merely a proselyte of the gate, and open to the attacks of fiends who walk by night; or it may be the friars and the priests bagged, so to speak, a brace, and with the water which was left



after the ceremony of Peter's christening baptized poor Mark; but into mysteries such as these even historians should not pry, for fear of consequence.

This matter being done, and Peter (and perhaps Mark) baptized, the army set out on its way. Six days they marched, and all went well with them, holding their course towards the north, but heading to the west, and when the seventh broke they found themselves in a 'despeopled'\* tract, and after following various tracks, which crossed and ran into each other, they saw that they were lost. Neither the 'general' Patofa, nor the baptized regenerate Peter, nor poor Mark, nor any of the Indians, knew the country or the road. To complete their plight, the provisions were exhausted, and upon every side of them stretched silent woods — woods, woods, and still more woods, of live-oak, post-oak, and black-jack, of hickory and pecan, thickets of red-bud, and a thick chaparral† which seemed impenetrable, when there were no trees. Silence so great it seemed like clamour, and absence of all life, whilst the ten thousand men and the three hundred horses laboured through the sandy soil.

After a day of travelling 'with hunger all the way,' they reached a river, larger than any they had seen before, which added to their pains, for without rafts, canoes, or boats they could not pass, so they encamped 'with hunger' on the banks.

\* 'Un despoblado.'

† Chaparral is used in Mexico and Texas for 'scrub.'

Soto, who was at his best in such positions, and always full of hope and of resource, sent out four captains, and then sat himself down to wait. After three days of mortal hunger, he went out himself to find a road,\* and, not having found one, came back to camp almost despairing, but yet put so good a face upon the matter that the troops thought a road was found.

At last Soto gave orders to kill some of the precious swine, for his own men could not bear up against the hunger, or content themselves, as did the Indians, with herbs and roots and wild-fruit which they found about the woods.

But the four captains whom Soto had sent out with 'General' Patofa followed the river, always going north, for three long days. The forest made an arch above their heads, and the great river† sluggishly ran between great banks of woods. Food they had none, and all they found was 'hunger and more hunger,' until at last Juan de Añasco came upon a town. Though it was small, it yet had some provisions, and after eating and feeding their horses plentifully with maize, Añasco sent back four mounted men to Soto, to tell him to come on. They brought back maize and several 'cows' horns.' During the time they were in Florida, although they now and then found dried beef in the Indians' huts, they never

\* Biedma, p. 180.

† It seems impossible to identify this river, every modern writer having given it a different name.

came upon the buffalo, and nothing would make the Indians tell them where they were.

At night 'General' Patofa, with his men, like a true Indian, saw his chance to take some scalps, and secretly beset the town and butchered everybody, not sparing either sex or age, so that the Spaniards, who, as a general rule, were none too sentimental, were disgusted, but, being few, could not do anything to stop the butchery.

The horsemen whom Añasco had despatched came back to Soto's camp, having travelled in one day, so great was their delight, what it had taken three to cover when they were looking for the road. Soto waited but for the light, and at daybreak broke his camp, and so great was the joy at their deliverance that Indians and Spaniards, without forming ranks, marched onward in confusion with the four horsemen showing them the way. Such haste they made upon the road that in a day and a half they reached the town, and then it seemed to Soto that it was well to rest and to recruit after the miseries they had endured.\*

\* 'Con estos trabajos,' says Garcilasso ('La Florida,' book iii., cap. viii., p. 120), 'y otros semejantes, no comiendo maçapanes, ni roscas de Utrera, se ganó el Nuevo Mundo. The hunger and misery they endured was so great that Biedma says (cap. x., p. 37): 'The bread that everyone had to eate, he was faine himself to beate in a mortar made in a knee of timber with a pestle. And some of them did sift the flour through their shirts of mail. It was so troublesome that there were many that would rather not eate it than grind it.'

After a few days' rest, Soto marched on and came to a great river, so broad that to pass over it without canoes appeared impossible.

The interpreter Ortiz advanced, and, shouting to the other side, some Indians crossed in a canoe.

Coming to Soto, they made reverence; turning first to the east to show their adoration of the sun, then to the west to adore the moon, and then to him, they asked him if he came in peace or war, for they were ready to meet him as he chose in either case. He answered that he came in peace, and the Indians then explained they were the vassals of a Queen, young and unmarried, and whose power was great. Soto, who had had enough of fighting and of hardships, made a conciliatory reply, and begged to be allowed to wait upon the Queen. The Indians retired, and in a little while two large canoes pushed out into the stream. They towed another one behind, all carved and ornamented, and covered with a cotton tent. In it was seated the great Queen,\* with eight of the chief ladies of her Court. The paddlers were all women, and thus they came to where Soto was standing on the bank. Garcilasso says that the occasion, though perhaps not quite so grand as that when Cleopatra

\* Biedma says it was only her niece, and that the Spaniards never saw the real Queen at all. I have often thought that a substitute King or Queen, or even a waxwork representation of the real Sovereign, would do quite as well for processions and public ceremonies as the original. The same applies to a President. Indeed, in his case, the thing would be a manifest convenience to himself and all concerned.

came down the 'Rio Cindo en Cilicia' to greet Mark Antony, when, as we all know, the Emperor's lord fell a mere victim to the charms of that imperial gipsy (*gitana*), it yet was striking, and so it must have been.

Drawn up upon the bank stood the Castilian cavalry, the Indians of Patofa in their feather crowns, the infantry with the strange, magical, death-dealing crossbow and the thundering arquebusses. All were clad in steel, and in the front stood Soto, handsome and gallant in his shining Milan plate.

The Indian lady\* got out of her canoe, and, modestly advancing with her eyes cast down, seated herself upon a stool, and, on both sides their followers withdrawing out of earshot, she talked to Soto, who stood with his helmet in his hand.†

The Queen began, after the 'usual compliments,' to say, quite in the manner of an agriculturist (northern style) that crops were bad, the year had been disastrous, and that she never had seen provisions so scarce in all her territory. But, and in this she differed from all agriculturists, past, present,

\* Biedma (p. 58) says she was 'brown, but well proportioned.' We may, I think, conclude, therefore, that she was agreeable to look upon, for a great authority on such matters says with unctiousness that his love was 'black, but comely'; but then, indeed, he had no prejudice as to the 'colour line.'

† Soto rose from his chair to receive her, for he had with him always 'una silla que llaman de descanso' ('La Florida,' book iii., p. 123), in which he sat to receive chiefs.

or to come, she offered freely to relieve Soto's necessity, and give him twice the amount of corn that he had asked. She also offered Soto her own house, and said that half the town should be dis-occupied and given up as lodgings for his men.

Soto made answer like the gentleman he was, taking her hand and thanking her, 'much moved,' and promising the gratitude of the Emperor Charles V. 'upon occasion,' and swearing never to forget her kindness and respect.

No doubt the brown and comely Queen was favourably impressed by the gallant figure standing on the bank, for we must not forget that he was 'de mas de mediano cuerpo,' and 'so well proportioned that he appeared well on horseback and on foot, gay of his countenance, and dark of hue,' and, in short, the kind of man to take the fancy of a Queen.\*

Perhaps it was a pity that the bonds of holy matrimony had him in thrall, for had he married the brown Queen he had not gone forth to his heroic but miserable death, and wretchedness untold might have been spared to Spaniards and Indians alike.

As the Queen spoke, and 'ever looking on the Governor,' she slowly drew from its place a string of pearls as large as filberts, and which went three times round her neck and hung down to her knee. Then, with the necklace in her hand, she turned to Juan

\* Herrera, dec. vii., lib. vii., p. 176.



Ortiz, and, giving it to him, told him to take it and to give it to the Governor.

Ortiz, who, though he had passed ten years of his life with Indians in the wilds, had not forgotten that he was a gentleman, told her that Soto would esteem it more from her than from another hand.

The 'Indian lady' said that she did not dare, for that she feared to outstep modesty, and Soto, guessing what she said, stepped out and took it from her hand. Then, drawing off a ring set with a ruby, he gave it to the Queen, who instantly placed it upon her finger 'as a sign of peace.'

She then retired, leaving the Spaniards 'muy satisfechos y enamorados' both with her beauty and discretion, so much so that no one asked her name, but all men spoke of her but as 'the Indian Queen.'

Of all the provinces which Soto had yet seen, Cofachiqui\* was by far the richest and most fertile. The soil was fruitful and well cultivated, the woods afforded fruit, pearls were abundant, and the furs the Indians had would have been riches in themselves. But, most unfortunately, the natives had some gold, and this they said came from the west; so Soto, who, like the rest of the *conquistadores* thought gold was the sole source of wealth, determined to push on.

The mother of the 'Indian Queen,'† either being

\* Biedma calls it Cofitacniqui, and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' Catifa-chique. It seems to have been the southern part of the State of Georgia.

† Biedma calls her 'the aunt.'

frightened or not being of an age to be impressed with the figure of the governor, had fled some thirteen leagues into the woods. Soto, who perhaps felt the Queen needed a chaperon, sent messengers to her, who failed to move her from her obduracy. Then he sent Juan de Añasco, the accountant of the expedition, in whom he seems to have placed great confidence, choosing him frequently for business both of danger and of delicacy, as an ambassador to the dowager.

She utterly refused to come, and said she was much hurt at the readiness with which her daughter had made friends with strangers and with enemies. She also scolded the ambassador bitterly, and 'went on after the fashion of prudish widows,' as Garcilasso says.\*

Juan de Añasco took with him an Indian as a guide, who had been brought up by the dowager. Upon the road he joked and laughed, and seemed contented, and about mid-day they sat down to eat. The guide took off his quiver, and, taking out his arrows one by one, spread them before the Spaniards on the ground. They looked at them, and found them admirably made, fashioned of reeds, and pointed, some with obsidian, others with bones of fish, and some with four-square heads of finest workmanship.

\* 'Riño asperamente con los embajadores . . . y hiço otros grandes extremos, quales los suelen hacer las viudas melindrosas.'

They took them up and passed them one to another as they sat and ate, remarking that the feathers were all placed upon the sides, so that the arrow should quite cleanly leave the bow. As they were talking and looking at the bow, the Indian drew from the quiver a larger arrow than the rest, shaped like a dagger, and pointed with a flint. This, as the Spaniards looked at him, he plunged into his throat, and in an instant bled to death, expiring at their feet. All passed so rapidly that no one interfered, and they stood looking 'each on the other,' not comprehending what had really happened or the reason of the Indian's act.

Calling the Indians who accompanied them as carriers, they asked the reason of the deed, and they made answer that the youth had been commanded by the Queen to guide the Spaniards to her mother's hiding-place, but that, fearing the mother who had brought him up, he had killed himself rather than venture to withstand her wrath.

Juan de Añasco, thus left without his guide, had nothing open but to return to camp, which, after a council with his men, he did, not being able to persuade his Indians to show him where the dowager was hidden in the woods.

Soto, still on the look-out for gold, asked the Indian Queen if there was any in her territory, and she replied that there was none, but that there was abundance of fine pearls. She told him that in the burial-place outside the town were many baskets full

of pearls, and that he and his soldiers could take as many as they chose. The burial-place turned out to be a temple ('mezquita'), which Garcilasso describes in detail, though neither Biedma nor 'The Gentleman of Elvas' mention it at all. The doors were guarded by six sculptured giants, so well carved 'that had they been in the most famous temples of Rome in its full power they had been held in admiration both for their perfection and their size.'

The Spaniards estimated that there were at least a thousand arrobas\* of the pearls. The royal officials who accompanied the army wished to take them all away, but Soto, who had seen the riches of Peru, despised the pearls, and saying that they would prove but an impediment, he intended to send but two arrobas to the Habana as a specimen of what the country had. Then, filling both his hands, he gave a handful to the chief officers and soldiers who stood near, and told them that they must be contented, and use the pearls for rosaries, or in any way they chose.

In Cofachiqui Soto made his first mistake, for he was now far from his base, having marched full fifty days since leaving Apalache,† and now he found himself in the most fertile country he had seen, and one in which the ruler and the people were all well

\* The arroba = twenty-five pounds.

† 'Á las cincuenta y siete jornadas, que estos Españoles anduvieron, de Apalache à Xuala,' etc. ('La Florida,' book iii., cap. xviii., p. 137).

disposed. Had he but settled there, he might have been the founder of an empire, as were Pizarro and Cortes, but the thirst for gold which consumed him and every other Spaniard who had seen the riches of Peru still drew him onward to his ruin and his death.

## CHAPTER XI

BIEDMA, a prudent man and practical, laments that Soto would not stay and plant a colony in Cofachiqui.\* He says: 'But the Governor, whose intent was to seek another treasure, like that of Ataliba in Peru, was not content with a good country, nor with pearls, though many of them were worth their weight in gold; so he determined to pass on, and being a stern man and of few words, though he was glad to sift and learn the opinion of all men, yet when he

\* Biedma, p. 58. Here Soto came upon some relics of the ill-fated expedition of Lucas Vasquez Ayllon, that left Hispaniola in 1526.

Ayllon is called by Peter Martyr 'a grave man, and of authority, and a citizen of Toledo.' He was really a scamp, as is so often the case with 'grave men,' even when 'they are of authority.' Having filled a ship with Indians, he sailed for Santo Domingo. His Indians all died, or jumped overboard, to avoid slavery, and even the colonists of Santo Domingo were revolted at the cruelty of this grave rascal. What they would have done had the ship arrived with her cargo of slaves we do not know. Charles V., who was no sentimentalist, made Ayllon Governor of Florida, whither he went and founded a colony, San Miguel de Gualdape. At his death in 1526 it broke up, and the relics which Soto found were those left by the survivors, who remained a few months after Ayllon's death.



gave his own he would not be constrained, and always did just what he liked himself, and so all men did condescend unto his will.'

It is a common thing enough, when men have to do with such a man as Soto evidently was, that they all 'condescend'; in fact, the word expresses well their action and their state of mind. But the citation shows that Soto was of the right stuff for a *conquistador*, and that his failure is to be put down rather to his preconceived ideas as to the value to his country and himself of gold, than to any inherent weakness in his character or life.

Being thus lured on in his search for the illusory gold, he set his face again towards the north, leaving behind him the great nameless river, about which Garcilasso says 'the sailors said it was the same which they had passed further down by the coast'; but this doubt, and many others, will be cleared up when the Lord wishes it, for was not Florida gained for 'the augmentation of our holy faith'? A scientific way of looking at geography, with yet a back look at theology, which does the author of it infinite credit, both for faith and ingenuity, two qualities which do not always go together in a man.

'The Gentleman of Elvas' and Garcilasso differ as to Soto's treatment of the Indian Queen. The latter makes them part in peace, with mutual respect, and says they did not offer her the rite of baptism, because they had determined to return and catechize, after the conquest was achieved.

Baptism, upon the whole, is easier to achieve than conquest, especially when a great though nameless river flows close to your camp; but perhaps it was as well not to precipitate things overmuch, and leave the Indian Queen with the illusions that she had formed of the first Christians she had seen.

'The Gentleman of Elvas' tells the tale differently, and says that Soto carried off the Queen by force, not using her as well as was her due, and thus exemplifying the proverb that says, 'For well-doing I receive evil.' And he adds, after a day or two the Queen slipped off into the woods, carrying away the finest chest of pearls.

If he is right in what he says, we must be glad the Indian lady saved her jewel-case; but Soto's character, with all his faults, had nothing mean about it, so that one hopes that Garcilasso may be right.

Five days' more marching took Soto to the town of Guaxulé, which some say is the modern Clarksville, Georgia. If that is so, it seems a pity that, if the place had once so good a name, it should have been replaced by such an epithet of opprobrium as that which it is saddled with to-day.

In Guaxulé the Indians brought three hundred dogs, which they presented to Soto for his troops, 'seeing the Christians sought for them for food, although amongst themselves they are not used.' So says 'The Gentleman of Elvas';\* but it seems in error,

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 61.

for the Indians of North America are said to have eaten dogs from immemorial time.

From Guaxulé the army came, upon June 5 (1540), to Chiaha,\* the horses all arriving quite tired out, so that 'for very feebleness' their riders had to march on foot and lead them by the reins.

The *cacique* 'voided his own house' for Soto,† who gladly took it, and remained there a month, resting his horses till they got strong again.

Once more he made inquiries after gold, and the chief told him that thirty leagues away there were mines of yellowish metal, and, if he liked, that he would send some Indians to guide the Spaniards to the place.

Two soldiers, Juan de Villalobos, and Francisco de Silvera, volunteered to go, and after ten days' absence both came back, saying that there were mines, but not of gold, but copper, and that there seemed to be clear indications both of silver and of gold.

Naturally, this report set Soto all agog, and, the horses being now all well and fat, he determined to set out at once, taking some Indians to guide him to the mines.

During the rest at Chiaha Soto lost one of his best soldiers, called Juan Mateos, who, as he sat fishing by a river-bank, was transfixed through the

\* Garcilasso calls it Ychiaha. It is supposed to be Rome, Georgia.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 63.

head by a lance thrown by a soldier, Luis Bravo, at a dog. This Juan Mateos was the only man in all the army who had gray hair, 'therefore the soldiers called him father,' and respected him as he had been the father of each one of them. Soto, according to 'The Gentleman of Elvas' (though neither Biedma nor Garcilasso mention it), fell into one of those aberrations which seem to attack *conquistadores* in all times, making them think themselves superior to humanity, and urging them to act as if a 'conquest' was a pleasure to the inhabitants of new-discovered lands.

'At the importunitie of some,'\* Soto, on leaving Chiaha, sent to the chief for thirty women slaves.

The phrase 'at the importunitie of some' but ill accords with the description of him, as a man who always asked advice, but only took his own; but the long trail and the hardships and anxiety were, perhaps, now beginning to undermine his health.

The chief, who, like so many Indian chiefs,† was a diplomatist from birth, said he would take the matter *ad avisandum*, and in the meantime all the Indians fled.

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 70.

† Sitting Bull, the well-known chief of the Sioux, so unfortunately killed in an insurrection, was said by all who knew him to be as able a diplomatist as all the 'Great Elches' and the rest who ever lived. That his field was restricted in no wise detracts from his ability, a thing Englishmen often forget. But, then, great empires commonly predispose small men, and many of them.

Soto himself went after them with thirty horsemen, but they having retired on to an island, where the horsemen could not pursue, he sent them word to return home, and bade them not to fear (*sic*), 'for he would have none of their women, from whom they seemed so loath to part.'\*

Had he but been content with the lame joke, it had not been so bad; but as those jokers† who have firearms in their hands usually have the last word on their side, he sent and burned down all their crops, a method of bringing home the Christian faith and practice which never fails of arresting the attention of the sufferers, and showing them that all the world has points of contact, based on the bed-rock of their common inhumanity towards mankind.

Twenty-three days they marched, passing through Acoste and Coça, in which territory the chief tried hard to make Soto remain and found a town. Failing the town, he wanted him to pass the winter there; but Soto, prudently enough, refused to plant himself down for the winter, even with friends, so far away from any port from which he could receive supplies. Especially, as time was wearing on, was he desirous to reach the harbour of Achusi, to which he had commanded Captain Maldonado to repair and wait. By this time all his men were badly off for clothes,

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' cap. xiv.

† 'Fules should no hae chapping sticks,' says the pawky North British proverb. The same applies to *conquistadores*, ancient and modern alike.

powder was running short, and it appears that, had he once but reached Achusi, that was the place at which he had intended to begin his town.

Upon this occasion Soto was forced to use one of those artifices which almost every great commander has been put to, to control his men when in a distant land. Some of his soldiers having (at Coça) begun plundering the town, an uproar soon arose, and the Indians, assembling, beat five or six of them 'at their good pleasure,' putting them to shame.

To quiet the uproar and rescue his soldiers from the Indians' hands, 'he used a stratagem\* farre against his owne disposition, being as hee was very francke and open. Though it grieved him much that any Indian should be so bold, as with reason or without reason† to disperse the Christians, he tooke up a cudgil, and tooke their part against his owne men, which was a means to quiet them.' He then sent to the camp for horsemen, and order once more reigned, though it is probable that had he had the horsemen at the first he would not have taken up his 'cudgil to pacify his men.'‡ In Coça two men were left behind; one was a nondescript, called Falco Herrado, 'who was not a Spaniad, and no

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' cap. xvi.

† In the 'with reason or without reason' is contained all the philosophy of imperial (if slightly flatulent) races.

‡ The whole episode is much in the style of the celebrated despatch which Sir Bartle Frere is said to have sent to his Government after the interview with Pretorius, at which he had to sing so small.



one knew from what province he really came, a very common man, and so he was not missed until the army came to Talise.'

The town of Talise was just halfway between Coça and Tascaluça,\* and on the road this base plebeian † seems to have slipped away into the woods to join the infidel. The Indians would not give him up, and Soto had to leave him, having left also one Robles, a negro, who was ill and could not walk. This he regretted much, for he was both 'a valuable slave and a good Christian,' ‡ so he left him well recommended to the chief.

Garcilasso apologetically says: 'I record these trifles, § so that when God shall please that all that land (Florida) shall be quite conquered men may search if any trace or memory has remained of these two men.'

When Soto reached the town of Tascaluça, the chief, who had the same name as his town, came out to meet him with his bodyguard.

When the two armies met, the chief sat down

\* This appears to be the place of the same name in Alabama. Luckily, it has not been improved to Quiggsville or Jonesburg.

† 'Era llamado Falco Herrado, no era Español, nadie sabia de que provincia era natural, hombre muy plebeyo,' etc. ('La Florida,' book iii., cap. xxiii., p. 144).

‡ A good Christian often makes a valuable slave, as many employers of labour often find, even in these days.

§ 'Hicimos caudal destas menudencias para dar cuenta dellas.'

upon a wooden stool, and over him an ensign\* waved a flag of yellow buckskin, with three broad bands of blue, exactly 'like those which in Spain are used by companies of horse.'

The chief was a true son of Anak, standing a head and shoulders high above his men. Soto got off his horse and embraced him, and then the two walked off at once to a house which Tascaluça had prepared.

Two days the Spaniards rested, and on the third took up the march, and Tascaluça, to show his friendship, came with them upon the road.

Soto, who when he wished to honour a great chief always had a quiet horse prepared for him to ride, was sadly put to it by the chief's stature and his bulk. No horse in all his army could carry him, and when at last a sturdy baggage animal was found to bear his weight, the Indian's feet were almost on the ground.

Oviedo† says, with the saving gift of humour (which but rarely lightens the labours of historians), that the chief could not have been much pleased to have been seated on a horse, 'because the Indians looked upon those animals with as much terror as if

\* 'Un alferéz.' This word is from the Arabic *el faras*, the horse, so that anciently ensigns must have been mounted.

† Oviedo, 'Historia General de las Indias,' vol. i., book xvii., cap. xxvii., p. 568. 'Ved que contento le podía dar . . . llevarle à caballo, que pensaba el que iba caballero en un tigre ò en un ferocísimo león ; porque en mas terror estaban los caballos reputados entre esa gente.'

they had been tigers or lions, and feared them mightily.'

No doubt the giant chieftain had an uncomfortable ride, which may have been a little compensated by the increase of dignity which he received.

After two days' marching, Soto, hearing that only a few leagues away was a large town, by name Mauvila,\* sent out two spies to look at it, and they returned, as did their prototypes in Holy Writ, to say the country was fruitful with 'wild tall vines,'† which bore great grapes, although they did not come back carrying a bunch, nor do we learn that they put up in such suspicious quarters as did the scouts whom Joshua sent out. Before arriving at the town, the army crossed a wide river, which must have been the Alabama, and on its banks they found remains of the expedition of Panfilo de Narvaez, in which Alvar Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca had been an officer.

Mauvila was the best built and best fortified of all the towns which Soto had yet seen, being surrounded with a stout stockade, flanked by low towers, on each of which ten or a dozen men could fight.‡ Soto and Tascaluça, with two hundred men, rode on

\* Mobile seems to be named after the tribe of the Mauvilas.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 67. The wild tall vines may have been the native 'Isabella' grape, or may have been the wild grape that grows in Texas and the Southern States. Texas has grapes sour enough to set on edge the teeth of all the children who were ever born, no matter how much their fathers may have refrained from eating them.

‡ 'La Florida,' book iii., cap. xxv., pp. 146, 147.

ahead and entered the town, and Tascaluça offered him a house, and lodging for his men.

But, just as Soto was getting off his horse, one of the soldiers, who had roamed about the town, came up to him, saying that it appeared to him that the Indians were plotting an attack, for in his ramble he had seen no child, or woman, or old man, in any of the streets. He also said that there must be at least ten thousand men in the low huts and tents, and that the ground outside the town was cleared of brushwood, as if the Indians had prepared it for a fight.

Soto, with his two hundred men, was in a trap, but, being a prudent man, and one well versed in Indian stratagems and wiles, concealed his fear, and secretly sent back a horseman to hurry on the troops.

The chief, having talked a little with Soto as he sat upon his horse, went to a house where he had 'trusted' all his captains, to arrange about the fight. During the council a troop of dancing-girls was sent to keep the Spaniards amused.\*

Soto, who had gone to breakfast at the house shown him by the chief, despatched a messenger to Tascaluça, bidding him to come and eat. No answer was returned, but in a moment clouds of Indians hurried out from every tent, shooting their arrows and yelling as they ran.

So rapid and so unsuspected was the attack that the horse-soldiers had no time to mount. Only a few could save their horses, and they charged in-

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 184.

stantly upon the enemy. The rest either cut their horses loose, to let them try and gallop off, or had to stand and see them all shot down, the Indians shooting the horses with more eagerness than they shot down the men. In the confusion all the camp arrived, and the Indians charged it instantly, killing the slaves who led the baggage animals.

In a few minutes they were masters of the camp, and carried off the provisions and the baggage, burning all that they could not take. This left the army with but the clothes they wore, and with the arms they carried in their hands.

After the first disorder had been stemmed, Soto rode out, and, rallying some horsemen, charged on the Indians fiercely, and the stubbornness of the Castilian infantry made itself felt once more, as bit by bit they forced the Indians to the town.

Once all were safe inside, they shut the gates, and rushed to plunder Soto's baggage in the house which was assigned him by the chief on his arrival at the place. Inside it were a friar and a priest, with some crossbowmen and a few soldiers of Soto's bodyguard. The two ecclesiastics, with lances in their hands, stood at the door, and, being 'stout and active men,' transfixed all those who ventured to approach.

Soto now ordered a general advance, and, leading on his men, entered the town and slaughtered all he met, the Indians fighting desperately, even the women throwing stones on the invaders' heads, both from the housetops and the towers.

So fiercely raged the battle that many of the men went to a pool hard by, from which, though it was full of dead, they drank and came back to the fight.

No single Indian asked for quarter,\* but all came on 'like furious lions,' and even children and their mothers fought to the death or perished in the flames. When night came, nothing remained but a few houses of the burning town, and in a hut three Indians, who were acting as a guard to the band of dancing-girls the chief had sent. They placed the girls in front of them, who, falling on their knees, besought for mercy, and the three Indians, standing on one side, continued to fight on.

Biedma, with the true phlegm of an official personage, remarks: 'We then slew two of them, and the third climbed a tree, unstrung his bow, and, fastening the cord round his neck, jumped from the bough and hanged himself.†

If ever patriot merited a statue for his deeds it was this Indian. One wonders that some freedom-loving millionaire of Alabama does not perpetuate himself and this brave Indian in some misshapen bronze, or cheap Carrara marble effigy, with due inscription on the pediment.

The victory was the dearest bought of all that Soto hitherto had had. His nephew Diego had been slain outright whilst trying to avenge the death of a brave officer, Carlos Enriquez, whom

\* Biedma, p. 184.

† *Ibid.*, p. 186.



the Indians had killed. Soto was wounded, and the baggage was all lost; eighty of his best soldiers lost their lives, and of the rest scarce one escaped without a wound. The greatest loss of all, 'after the Christians,' was that of five-and-forty horses, 'who were no less mourned and wept for than were the men, for they saw that in them was the greatest strength of the army.'\* The giant Tascaçuca disappeared, leaving no relic of himself, so that his first ride was his last, and his brief contact with a civilizing power did not last long enough to make a permanent impression on his mind. Of the mere Indians about ten thousand perished,† between those slain in fight, and those the fire consumed inside the town, and those who plunged into the river and were suffocated. For four leagues round about the Spaniards could not stir without finding dead Indians in the woods or hidden under grass.‡

The battle fell upon the day of the most blessed St. Luke (Evangelist), in the year of grace 1540, and, curiously enough, the historian penned the account of it on the same day after an interval of years.§ During the night the Spaniards dressed their

\* 'La Florida,' book iii., cap. xxxi., p. 157.

† *Ibid.*, p. 158. Biedma and 'The Gentleman of Elvas' give the numbers of Spaniards, Indians, and horses slain differently, and they both differ from Garcilasso. This is as it should be, and only serves to invest history with greater dignity.

‡ The whole scene must have been wonderfully like the massacre of the Matabele in the Matoppo Hills.

§ 'La Florida,' p. 155.

wounds with the dead Indians' fat,\* for medicines they had none; but the rough surgery turned out effectual, for of the wounded only twenty died.

When morning came they built up shelters made of canes, and some stripped the shirts from off the slain, tearing them up to bandage wounds. Some flayed the horses, saving their skins for coats, and salting down the flesh, so as to save the precious herd of swine, which they recurred to only in cases of the last necessity. Forlorn enough they were, with winter coming on, without provisions, and but little ammunition, far from their base, and enveloped in the never-ending woods and swamps, which, like a pall in those days, covered three-quarters of the land.

Soto was undismayed, and not Cortes himself after the 'Noche Triste,' or Pizarro, when all his men except thirteen turned tail and left him almost single-handed to attack Peru, showed a more dauntless front. Of course, he had his back against the wall—a wall, moreover, of his own building, for all his fortune was engaged, and if he could not, as he hoped, find gold, poverty and neglect, with loss of reputation, stared him in the face.

\* 'Biedma,' p. 186. The soldiers of Cortes did the same in Mexico after the 'Noche Triste,' and it also occurred before, in the conquest of Peru, to Soto himself. In fact, it was quite a favourite, and certainly an inexpensive, remedy, and as 'sovereign as St. John's wort for your green wound.' Biedma (no sentimentalist) relates that the poor dancing-girls, who alone remained alive of all the town, were forced to tend the wounded, no doubt applying the fat of their own countrymen to their wounds.

## CHAPTER XII

MISFORTUNES were indeed gathering upon the once gay and gallant cavalier, but what most likely moved him most (after the death of his good horses) was the fact that the chalices, altars, and instruments for Mass, with the vestments of the clergy, were all lost. The loss of a small quantity of wheaten flour and wine, which with religious care they had preserved in all their wandering, for consecration at the Eucharist, seems to have grieved the army sorely, for the priests and friars, after a consultation, came to the conclusion that in the future it was impossible for them to celebrate the Mass. What this implied to Spaniards of that age cannot be estimated by us who live in other times, for in those days the average Christian held his faith as sacred as still Mohammedans hold theirs, believed in it, and though, of course, it had but little influence on his practice, it formed a real portion of his life, and was in daily use.\*

\* 'La cual perdida, no solamente fue en la falta de los caballos que les mataron, y en los campañeros que perdieron, sino en otras cosas que ellos estimaron en mas, respecto de aquello, para que las tenian dedicados; que fue un poco de harina de trigo' (to their delicate consciences maize flour would

Their simple faith redeems the Spaniards in America from some part of that brutal cynicism which has characterized the modern conquerors of Africa, whom no man can accuse of being blinded by belief in anything but gold.

The priests and friars made a rough altar with such materials as they had, and out of buckskin cut rough vestments to resemble those which had been lost. Then, having set their altar up, they praised the Lord of Hosts for having saved their lives and given them some sort of victory. All they dared do, in consolation of the Sacramentless men, was to recite the general confession of their sins, the Introit to the Mass (though without consecration), and then a prayer, with the Epistle and the Gospel, finished their maimed rites. This to the soldiery was known as a 'Dry Mass.\*' Lastly, from the Gospel or the Epistle one of the friars who accompanied the host took up his parable.

Strange as it may appear, in the Floridan woods

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have been an outrage), 'en cantidad de tres hanegas, y quatro arrobas de vino, que ya no tenian mas quando llegaron à Mauvila ; la cual harina y vino, de muchos dias atras lo traian muy guardado y reservado, para las misas que les decian, y porque anduviese à meojr recaudo, y mas encobro lo traia el mismo Governador con su recámara. Todo lo qual se quemó, con las calices, aras y ornamentos, que para el Culto Divino llevavan' ('La Florida,' book iii., cap. xxxi., p. 159).

The arroba of wine was about thirty-two pints. The hanega, or fanega, is about a bushel.

\* 'Misa Seca' ('La Florida,' p. 159).

they thus set up a rite resembling that of the accursed 'Lutero,' or, perhaps more horrible to tell, that of 'Calvino,' name of fear to all believing souls.

Eight days the army stayed to rest, and, as perhaps misfortunes made them kinder to the sufferings of others, the wounded Indians whom they found about the woods 'they tended carefully, sharing their food with them and binding up their wounds.\*

After the battle, Soto had word from several of the Indians who came into his camp that Gomez Arias and Maldonado with their ships were waiting for him at Achusi,† which was only ninety miles away. Joy filled all hearts, for all the army knew that the two captains would bring supplies, and many of the soldiers and the captains, knowing that Soto wished to build a town and settle near the port, hoped that at last their wanderings might have an end.

Soto, who always acted prudently when not enraged or ill-advised by others, at once set free the *cacique* of Achusi, whom Diego Maldonado had made prisoner, and, telling him to go at once and greet the captains in their ships, dismissed him with rich gifts.

It was perhaps the last time that he acted prudently, for the brief period of his life which had to run was a perpetual round of miseries, and he seemed to

\* It is not stated if they applied the same ointment to the Indians' wounds which they had used to dress their own.

† Achusi is supposed to be Pensacola.

act like a disordered man driven by furies to his destiny.\*

Just when all men were looking forward to the meeting with the ships, to news from Cuba, and to a fresh supply of arms and of provisions, rumours reached Soto's ears which made him change his plans. Many of the soldiers in his army had served with him during the conquest of Peru, and having seen the wealth of Atahualpa, and the easy terms on which it was obtained, and feeling sure there was no gold in Florida, they resolved, upon arrival in Achusi, to leave the country and return to Spain. This would have ruined Soto at the Court, and so at once he set about to find whether the rumours of desertion were well founded, having resolved at any cost to stay in Florida till he discovered gold. Accordingly at night, going his rounds, he stopped before a tent where he heard voices, and with his own ears heard the treasurer, Don Juan Gaytan, and others say that the life they led in Florida was quite impossible to bear, and at the port they would either return to Cuba, Mexico, or Spain.

Soto above all things wished to keep news of his misfortunes either from Cuba or from Spain, fearing 'if they heard from Florida, without seeing gold or silver, or anything of value, that it would soon get

\* 'Desde aquel día, como hombre discontento, á quien los suyos mismos avian faltado las esperanzas, y cortado el camino á sus buenos deseos, y borrada la traça que para poblar y perpetuar la tierra, tenia hecha, nunca mas acertó, á hacer cosa que bien le estoviese.'



such a name that it would be impossible ever to get reinforcements when he had need of them '\*—adventurers, quite naturally, not caring to adventure where there was no gold.

No sooner was Soto sure that there was discontent, than, without saying a single word to anyone or holding any council with his officers, he went back to his tent and issued orders that the army should prepare to march at daybreak, and, to avoid suspicion, he took a road towards the interior, on which they had not journeyed as they came.

Nothing speaks more strongly to Soto's power as a leader than that such an order should have been obeyed. After a year and more of wandering in the wilds, to find itself close to a point where all had looked for fresh provisions and for rest, and then, with winter coming on, and without baggage, to be plunged again into the wilds, certainly gives an army an excuse for murmuring. On this occasion it does

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 84. There were not even pearls left, the Indian Queen having escaped with the best of hers, and the soldiers having either left all theirs behind or lost them in the fire. So confident were many of the men as to finding great wealth some day that they could not be bothered with mere pearls. One soldier in especial, called Juan Terron ('hombre muy rustico y plebeyo'), having a bag upon his back, asked a horse-soldier to help him carry them. The man refusing, Juan Terron threw his pearls away, but carefully preserved the bag. This in the army caused a saying, 'No hay perlas para Juan Terron,' which, if the country had been colonized, might have become proverbial, and been a knotty point for those who write on folk-lore, to resolve.

not appear that any one protested, so great was the ascendancy which Soto had.

At daybreak therefore once again, Soto set out towards his death. The march was slow, for all the way he travelled was through swamps or woods where roads did not exist, and where the path often had to be opened with the axe. The baggage had to be carried on men's heads, and, furthermore, a herd of swine accompanied the march.

After three days of slow and painful travelling, they entered a province which the chroniclers call Chicaça, doubtless the territory of the Chichasaws, who in those days dwelt in Alabama and the adjoining States.

Late in November (1540) Soto crossed the Yazoo and Mobile Rivers, and, coming to the chief town of the Chichasaws, prepared to pass the winter, for the cold was coming on. The Indians seem to have been as hostile and as warlike to the full as those of Mauvila, who had already done the army so much harm.

Soto at first tried to conciliate them, but without success. He went so far as to kill one of his more or less fattened swine, and to invite the chief to a banquet of the unusual meat. The chief and several *sachems* having appeared, they liked the food so much that every night a hog or two was killed. Having warned them, and the practice not having stopped (as if a poacher was ever stopped by warning), Soto took sterner means. Having caught two poachers,

he gave orders that one should instantly be shot, and that the other should have his hands cut off,\* quite in the spirit of our old English game laws.†

The law thus vindicated, Soto sent the man to the chief, no doubt with his respectful compliments.

The 'Gentleman of Elvas' says that the chief 'made as though it grieved him that they (the Indians) had grieved the Governor, and that he was glad that he had executed punishment on them.'

This premature attempt to introduce the laws and customs of a well-ordered State so worked upon the Indians that about the month of January of 1541 they attacked the Governor in his winter-quarters, and that so suddenly that many of the soldiers turned and fled. The rout might have become general had not Nuño Tovar sprung on his horse, and, galloping before the fugitives, just in the manner of a cowboy on the plains of Texas when cattle run before a storm, called out, 'Where do you run to? do you think the walls of Cordoba or Seville are at hand to shelter you?'

Soto, who always was the first in peril, sprang

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 87.

† 'Si quis vim aliquid primariis forestæ meæ intuberit, si liberalis sit amittat libertatem et omnia sux, si villanus abscindabatur dextra' (Charta de Foresta of King Canutus, granted at a Parliament holden at Winchester (1016), quoted in Manwood's 'Laws of the Forest . . . and of the Pourallee.' This work is not so much studied as one could wish in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.

upon his horse and charged the Indians, followed but by a page or two and by a company of Portuguese, all of whom had been soldiers in the frontier wars of Africa. Soto, charging in front, his lance most probably held high after the Moorish fashion (as he rode *á la gineta*), 'with the desire to kill an Indian'\* who had been foremost in the fight, engaged him, and bearing hard on his right stirrup, the saddle turned, and he was left defenceless on the ground. His peril was extreme, for, as he slept always in his clothes,† he had but put a helmet on, and with his shield and lance jumped on his horse without his armour, so that had not a page, one Tapia, set him on his horse he would have perished at the Indians' hands.

As the first thing the Indians had done was to shoot arrows bound round with burning rushes, which at once made the straw-thatched houses burn, they saw as well to fight as it had been mid-day.

As usual, the superiority of arms gave Soto victory, but at as great a cost as in Mobile. Besides a heavy loss in men, many of the best horses, too, were

\* 'El General con deseo de matar un Indio que avia andado, y andava muy aventajado en la pelea' ('La Florida,' p. 167).

† 'Con Calças y jubon.' Garcilasso says he rode so well that, though his servants in their hurry had not drawn his girths, but thrown them up over the saddle, 'como se suele poner quando desensillan un caballo,' yet he fought a full hour, 'aviendole valido la destreça que á la genita tenia, que era mucha.'

killed, most of them being burned or shot as they stood eating, before their owners had either time to mount or cast them loose to run.\*

The swine, having been enclosed in a corral, could not escape, only a few of the smallest being able to squeeze through the bars. This was a loss the army felt as in a country where there was little game, and that almost impossible to hunt, for fear of Indian attacks, they looked upon the swine as a reserve for last necessity, or to provide a meal for any who fell sick.†

The saddest loss of all was that of the one Spanish woman, Francisca Hinestrosa, who had accompanied the host. Left in a hut alone, and just about to be a mother, her husband, one Hernando Bantrita, having gone out to fight and left her helpless, when he came back he found her charred to a cinder, in the ashes of the hut.‡

Soto was now in a worse plight than ever, and had he not been blinded by his desire for fame and to find gold, he must have seen that his best plan was to return to Cuba, but his pride drove him on towards his ruin and his death.

Never before had victory hung doubtful in the

\* Garcilasso, quoting one of the soldiers (Alonso de Carmona) who accompanied the expedition, and from whom he had his information, says eighty horses were lost. Of these twenty were burned.

† Garcilasso says the swine were so fat that their grease ran out for more than two hundred paces.

‡ 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' vol. ii., p. 599.

scales, and never had it been secured with so much loss. So strongly did the Indians shoot, that in one instance an arrow pierced right through a horse and stuck into the ground. This feat appeared so notable to Soto, who was an athlete and a sportsman to the core, that he had it attested formally by a notary who was attached to the army, and who in writing testified the fact.\*

Without provisions and in miserable plight, their swords and lances all distempered in the fire, the Spaniards moved their camp a league or two, and built a town of huts to winter in, which they called Chicacilla—that is, the Little Chicasa—and there they set to work to make new saddles, lance-shafts, and bucklers, and to retemper all the swords which had been burned. As all the stores were lost, they made a bellows out of a bearskin, and used the barrel of an arquebuss for the nozzle,† and by degrees laboriously retempered all their arms.

Soto himself and all his officers worked at the forge to animate the men, who looked like gipsies, some without doublets, some without breeches, and

\* Garcilasso, who never gives anything without chapter and as many verses as possible, says that the horse was that of a trumpeter, one Juan Diaz, and that he was the fattest and largest horse in the army. He also knew the notary, Baltasar Hernandez, in after-years in Peru.

It used to be a common thing enough, amongst the Comanches and other Indians of the plains, to shoot an arrow right through a buffalo bull, which is a much greater feat than to shoot an arrow through a horse.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas, vol. ii., p. 604.



the greater part shod with rough shoes of deerskin, made with the hair outside.\*

To such a plight had the most brilliant expedition ever fitted out for the New World been brought by the obstinacy of its chief. But even then he would not admit defeat, and still pushed westward towards the lands of gold. Misfortunes had but made him stiffer in his purpose, and more inflexible towards his soldiers, but still they worshipped him, following him everywhere like faithful dogs, and giving up their lives without a murmur, so great was his ascendancy over all men he came across.

Four days after the disastrous fight, hearing that Luis de Moscoso, his lieutenant, had by his negligence contributed to the misfortune of the night attack, he took away his office, and gave it to Don Baltazar Gallegos, he who had sold his land and olive-yards in Seville, to join him when the expedition sailed from Spain.

Then, hearing that two soldiers had been plundering, he straight condemned them to be hanged, and would have executed them at once, had not a stratagem of Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, availed to save their lives. He having appeared, with several Indians, before the Governor to make complaint of the two men, skilfully altered what they said into a plea for mercy, and so Soto, who no doubt was not too anxious to deplete his force, granted the men their

\* 'Andavan como Gitanos, unos sin sayos, y otros sin çaraguelles' ('La Florida,' p. 169).

lives, and from that day had no complaints of plundering by members of his force.

Being in a country where they had no title to take anything, Soto and all his men from the first day had to subsist by plunder; still, that which in the general is but an act of policy, lightly to be condoned, in the mere soldier is flat larceny, and the penalty is death.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE winter now was at its height, and the unlucky soldiers, being half naked, must have suffered much, so they began to weave rough mats of straw and ivy,\* with which they sheltered themselves, covering their nakedness in the best way they could.

Those who could get a jacket made of deerskin thought themselves well dressed, and though the cold was great they did not suffer nearly so much as they had thought to do, 'for the Indians kept them constantly on the alert and fighting,' and, luckily for them, the country all around was 'fruitful both in corn and many kinds of nuts.'

On one occasion a large force of Indians almost surprised the camp, and would have done so but for a sudden storm which wetted all their bows, making them useless until day broke and the sun dried the strings. In this, Biedma, who only now and then—and perfunctorily, after the fashion of the official of all times—refers to sacred things, remarks that 'our destruction must have been inevitable had it not

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas' says 'strawe and ivy'; but probably he was not a botanist. One fails to see how ivy could be woven into anything. Perhaps the plant they used was Spanish moss.

pleased the Lord to send His rain, which stayed their coming on.’\*

At the first signs of spring, in April (1541), Soto broke camp after three months of hardships and of constant skirmishes. His men and horses both were rested and in better case. So, ragged, thin, and looking like a band of Tartars on the move, his army once again took up the march, towards a town called Alibamo, which he had heard was a day’s journey off, and in which most of the Indians who had done him so much harm were all assembled, waiting a moment to attack. But Soto was before them, and, falling on the town, took it by assault, though with the loss of several of his bravest officers. The Indians fled, and Soto himself led the pursuit, spearing the stragglers like sheep for a full league across the open plain, and had not night compelled him to retire, none of the infidels would have escaped with life.

The fort of Alibamo taken, and the ‘shameless conduct’† of the Indians dealt with upon its merits, the army rested for four days in order to recruit.

The recent hardships and the fighting had tried the men severely, and in particular the want of salt occasioned many deaths. For a whole year they had not eaten salt, and over seventy men had died for want of it, until at last they found a plant out of

\* Biedma, p. 188.

† Garcilasso makes him impelled to this pursuit in order to ‘chastise the shamelessness of the Indians’ (‘habia deseado castigar la desvergüenza . . . de los Indios’)—*i.e.*, in killing his men when they were attacked.

whose ashes they made a lye in which they dipped their food. The condition of his horses and his men now inclined Soto more for peace than war, so, upon entering a town called Chisca, the offer of the chief to make alliance with him was received with joy. After a rest of about a week they journeyed on once more, and on following towards the north a river of so great a size that they at once called it El Rio Grande, and finding that it barred their further progress, encamped to construct barges to take across the horses and the men.

The river was the Mississippi, and the place where he struck it is variously supposed to be either the Lower Chichasaw Bluffs, the mouth of the White or of the Arkansas River, but as to this point commentators all disagree.\*

The dull imagination of unimaginative minds have caused Soto's first sight of the 'Great River' to be depicted in various ways, but all of them unlike reality. The picture which seems to have most fired imagination in the United States shows Soto

\* Biedma, p. 57, says the place was called Chucagua.

'The Gentleman of Elvas' (Hakluyt), vol. ii., p. 600, says the river was called Chucaqua. He adds that it was 'mayor que Guadalquiver por Cordoba.' He might have said at Seville also.

Oviedo, vol. i., p. 572, agrees as to the name.

Ellicot's Journal, p. 125, says the 'crossing is generally supposed to have been about lat. 34° 10' north,' but he gives no reason for his opinion.

Other commentators say different things, according to the wont of writers on such questions.

prancing on a huge apocalyptic horse, extremely leggy and with a flowing tail, just on the edge of an enormous chasm in the earth, resembling the river Colorado at the Grand Cañon, whereas the river really ran, as Garcilasso\* says, in a great wood.

Sheathed in bright steel, and topped by an enormous ostrich feather-plume, he holds a tilting lance, and rides on a steel saddle after the fashion of a Northern knight, with feet cased in steel boots, hung down to almost touch the ground.

An interminable throng of men-at-arms, all spick and span, as if they had just stepped out from some hall in a museum, crowd upon the banks. Their lances, swords, and morions all shine like stars, and each one has a plume such as King Henry of Navarre might, without doing himself discredit, have borrowed for a fight.

Happy and merry looking Indians in their feather crowns are grouped about the middle distance, and jovial-looking negroes, dressed in panther-skins, hold dogs, no doubt some of the Irish grayhounds about which Garcilasso speaks.†

Azaleas all abloom with poppy-oil and with megilp, shed their aroma in the air, which, judging by the composition of the flowers, should smell of turpentine. Cedars and cypresses, growing apparently on nothing, bend in the breeze like weeping-willows

\* 'Un monte muy bravo que avia entre el pueblo y el Rio Grande' ('La Florida,' book iv., cap. iii., p. 176).

† 'Lebreles de Irlanda.'



on an old-fashioned funeral card, and bunches of palmettoes, shiny and looking like that subfamily of palms which only flourish in hotels, sprout up between the horses' legs.

Priests in full vestments carrying crosses, with acolytes in rochets, as if they had just issued from a vestry, accompany the host. All are well shaved, and look as if the question whether chocolate breaks a priest's fast before the celebration had never crossed their minds.\* The banner of Castille is blown out stiffly from a flagstaff, although there is no wind, or, for that matter, any atmosphere. Above the sylvan, slightly suburban scene, a round great sun pours down his rays as one so often sees depicted when he illuminates a Celtic cross.

Framed in a plaster moulded frame, and glazed, the picture hangs in the Capitol at Washington, and in the humbler dwellings of the citizens, occasionally, a pale engraving or a woodcut of it decorates the walls. Strange that historic painters should vie with those who write in setting forth events and things unpicturesquely and without regard to fact.

What really the ragged army looked like no one with certainty can say. One thing is sure, that the armour, such of it as remained, must have been red with rust. The general himself rode with short stirrups in the Moorish style. His horse must have been thin and shaggy, and possibly unshod; his hair

\* Leon Pinelo (Lic, Antonio de) 'Question moral si el chocolate quebranta el ayuno ecclesiastico.'—En Madrid, por la viuda de Juan González, 1536,

and beard must have been ragged and unkempt ; and, no doubt, instead of sitting proudly in his seat, to view the Mississippi, he either leaned upon his lance or else sat sideways, with one leg hanging and the other drawn up short, after the fashion of a cowboy when out looking for horses or following up a trail. Soldiers, Indians, and negro slaves must have been travel-stained and hungry-looking, and in the winds of March their naked limbs, protected by their 'straw and ivy mats,' must have looked livid and unwholesome as the keen breeze whistled and chilled them to the bone. The priests in buckskin cassocks, and unshorn, must have resembled necromancers, and, to complete the scene, the grunting swine, starveling and grayhound-looking, routed about for last year's acorns underneath the trees.

Only the fact that the fantastic-looking soldiers, dressed in their straw and buckskin motley, were ready each and every day to fight unto the death, and their commander was a man no peril daunted or no hardship made afraid, redeemed the wandering host from ridicule. But with their raw-boned, high-nosed Spanish horses, and in their rusty jacks, there was no Coventry through which the best commander of the time, whether in Europe or the Indies, could not have marched them without discredit to himself, in spite of all their rags.

Soto, having once determined that he must cross, at once began to build two barges with which to pass his men,

For fifteen days they laboured, using for bolts such iron as they could spare amongst their arms, captains and soldiers working all together 'as men who laboured for their lives.'

During the time they worked the Indians harassed them continually, coming down in canoes and shooting arrows at them, whilst the chief in a great canoe, along the sides of which the warriors' shields were ranged, as in a Viking ship, gave orders 'like an admiral of the main.'\*

The river was about half a league across—so wide, 'The Gentleman of Elvas' says, that, 'if a man stood on the other side, it could not be discovered if he were a man.' The current was violent, the water deep and muddy, and down the stream swirled trees and logs just as they do to-day.

In it was store of fish 'all differing from the fish in Spain,' and these they caught, rejoicing after their miserable fare to have a change of food.

The barges finished, they embarked and crossed the river, the horsemen plunging into the stream when the water shoaled, and driving off the Indians from the bank. Once landed, they broke up their barges, taking away the precious iron bolts, and then, reforming, once more took up their march.

Four days they journeyed through a desert,† and

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' vol. ii., p. 607; Oviedo, vol. i., p. 573.

† Probably a 'pine-barren,' of which there are many in that region.

on the fifth came to a fruitful land, well cultivated, flowing with maize and honey, and where the Indians, for a wonder, met them in peace. The chief was named Casquin, and he proved hospitable, offering his house to Soto, who, with the instincts of a gentleman, would not accept it, and pitched his tent in a 'faire orchard' (*sic*), and all the army, having made booths of pine-boughs, rested for a week.

Casquin,\* the chief, came out with all the nobles of his land, and said to him: 'Sir, as you exceed us both in arms and strength, we think it is because you have a better God than ours.'†

The Indian theologian had grasped the question to the full as well as had Napoleon, and each of them looked on a god but as an extra park of artillery, which in some way or other could be made useful by subterfuge or force.

The chief then asked the general to pray for rain, of which they stood in great necessity.

Soto, who, though no theologian, was a born diplomatist, took up his parable, and answered 'that he and all his army were but sinners, but they would intercede with God, that He should show them favour, being as He was the Father and the Fountain of all grace.'

Then, in the presence of the chief, he ordered

\* 'Todo la nobleça de su tierra.'

† 'Señor como nos haces ventaja en el esfuerco, y en las armas, asi creemos que nos la haces en tener mejor Dios que nosotros' ('La Florida,' book v., cap. vi., p. 180).

‘Master Francisco, the Genoese, being a skilful carpenter and shipbuilder,’ to construct a cross. The cross was made out of the highest pine-tree they could find, Master Francisco labouring two days to finish it. When finished, it was set up on a high bank, from which it could be seen upon the other side of the ‘Great River,’ and then a solemn feast with a procession was appointed for next day.

Soto with all his officers, and Casquin with ‘his nobility,’ and followed by a concourse, numbering, between the ‘faithful and the infidels,’\* almost a thousand, and preceded by the clergy chanting litanies, to which the soldiers gave the responses, marched in procession to the cross.

Having regard to the Scriptural injunction to ‘watch and pray,’ half of them stood to arms, to guard against surprise. Falling upon their knees, the chief and Soto kissed the cross, Soto, no doubt, in faith and understanding, but the chief, we may surmise, in wonderment, and to propitiate the God of ‘Arms and Force.’ Then the ‘nobility’ and officers kissed and adored, and so on to the Indians and the soldiers, till the last man had passed.

But on the other side of the river a multitude of Indians had collected to view the adoration of the cross. They, when they saw the adoration, raised a ‘low howl,’† and, spreading out their arms, fell prostrate on the ground.

\* ‘Entre fieles è infieles.’

† ‘Un alarido bajo.’

All this 'solemnity' and ceremony (including the 'low howl') passed upon both sides of the river, and then, forming again into procession, the priests took up the canticle *Te Deum Laudamus*, and the adoring crowd returned to camp.

The Lord was pleased\* to show those Gentiles how He answers prayers addressed to Him with fervency. This may be so, and upon that occasion it proved to be the case, but the oracles in the Old World grew dumb at last with frequent prophecy, and the Olympians all turned deaf through frequency of prayer.

Next night at twelve o'clock a copious rainfall deluged all the land, and the grateful chief, coming at once to Soto, thanked him for the service he had done, looking, no doubt, upon the cross as the best 'medicine' he had ever seen.†

\* 'Dios nuestro Señor por su misericordia quiso mostrar á aquellos Gentiles, como oye á los suyos, cuando de veras lo llaman.'

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas' (Hakluyt, vol. ii., p. 609), with his Portuguese reserve, says briefly (and with little faith, as it appears) that 'here the Governor left a high cross, and because there was no leisure he declared only to him, that the cross was in memory of Christ's Passion, and told the *cacique* to revere it. The *cacique* made show as though he would do so.'

This account seems reasonable, but shows little imagination and no zeal for the conversion of the infidel.

Even the official Biedma (p. 58) is moved to a better effort. He says: 'Soto had a cross made of two pine-trees, as the *cacique* asked him for a sign by means of which he should be enabled to demand assistance during war (*sic*), and by which his subjects could obtain water.' It is not the first time that the cross has



This faithful chief had in the next province a bitter enemy, called Capahá, so he asked leave to march with Soto, and under the protection of the God of Force and Arms endeavour to wipe out old scores with his hereditary foe. On the fourth day they reached the town of Capahá, which was walled round, and, further, was defended by a moat.

The moat was stocked so well with fish that, although the army and the friendly Indians caught hundreds of them, they did not seem to lessen their quantity by a single fish.\*

This is, I think, the only instance that any of the *conquistadores* came on a moated town, but it did not seem to embolden the inhabitants to fight. On the approach of Soto's army, they all fled, and the Casquines Indians plundered the town and desecrated the burial-ground, for between them and those of Capahá † there was hereditary feud.

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been a sign in war ; but for finding water, hitherto, a hazel wand has been more efficacious, or, at least, in more general use. The chief was told to return next day, 'and the sign would be given to him, and that, if he believed, he would want for nothing.' The chief returned next day, and, the cross not being ready, 'he wept bitterly.' Who would not do the same, if he thought himself defrauded of so useful a talisman? When the cross was completed, the chief and Soto went in procession to it, in the manner related by Garcilasso. Thus, even an official mind, if strengthened by faith, may rise to better things.

\* Garcilasso, 'La Florida,' p. 182.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas' calls Capahá 'Pacaha.' It is most difficult to identify its precise locality, but it seems to have been either in Missouri or Arkansas.

The Indians of Capahá had all retreated to an island in the middle of the stream. Soto, who now was in no trim for fighting, sent messengers to him, demanding peace. The chief gave no reply, and Soto, having got a fleet of large canoes from the deserted town, embarked and landed on the island, losing one Francisco Sebastian, a native of his own town, Barcarrota, who fell into the water, and, having armour on, sank like a stone and disappeared.

The Capahás defended themselves bravely, and in an interval of the attack called to the Indians of Casquin, calling them cowards and slaves, and telling them of the ferocious vengeance they would take after the Christians had left the land.

The Casquines, either not having any stomach for a fight or being really afraid, turned tail and fled to the canoes, leaving two hundred Spaniards unsupported and surrounded by their foes.

Soto, upon the bank, looked on in agony, thinking at one fell swoop that he would lose half of his infantry. To his astonishment, Capahá came out and told his men not to do harm to any of them; most likely, being a good diplomatist, he thought thus to conciliate Soto, and to detach him from the alliance with his enemy Casquin.

Next day he sent ambassadors to ask for peace, and Soto, nothing loath, accorded it, after the fashion of commanders all the world over, in ancient and in modern times, when they are caught in such a position as that which Soto and his army had to face.

The embassy came with great state, and Capahá, advancing, first went to the desecrated burial-ground, and there with tears, having gathered up with his own hands the relics of his ancestors, kissed them and put them back into the cedar boxes from which they had been flung. Then, turning towards Soto, whom he had made as if he did not see, he walked up to him, offering his hand. Soto, who of all the *conquistadores* of the New World was easiest to move by what he held to be a noble act, got off his horse, and took him by the hand, embracing him and speaking courteously. The chief was about seven-and-twenty years of age, tall and well formed, and most intelligent.\* His lands were fertile and well cultivated, and the greater portion of his tribe lived in skin tents, which they rolled up and carried when they travelled, loading them and the tent-poles on the women's backs.†

\* 'Era Capahá de edad de veinte y seis ó veinte y siete años,' etc. ('La Florida,' p. 185).

† Biedma, p. 192. These tents were the ordinary Indian tepees, which may be seen in use to-day. In some of them Soto found skins of buffaloes, with which his soldiers clothed themselves and made shields and defensive armour for their horses. Neither Soto nor his men ever saw the buffaloes, though they often heard of them, and sometimes came on their flesh dried in the sun (jerked), and their skins.

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, in his 'Nafragios,' published by Andres Gonzalez Barcia (Madrid, Año MDCCXLIX.) in his 'Historiadores Primitivos de las Indias Occidentales,' has the following curious passage: 'I think they are about the size of those in Spain. They have small horns, like the cows of

Soto was now in the position of the man in the adage, having got on with a new love before he had dismissed the last. Casquin, with whom he had left a cross, was his ally, and now the mortal enemy of his ally had turned into a friend.

Having obtained an interview, Casquin bitterly reproached Soto for having taught him to adore his God, and, after having given him the cross, deserted him. 'What end have you in view?' he said, 'and for what reason are you moved to do and think such things against a people who are blameless, and the friends both of the cross and of yourselves?'

No answer being possible, Soto, who was a sensible man, attempted to make none. But as he was a

Morocco; the hair is very long and knotted, like the merino's. Some are tawny, others dun; to my thinking, the flesh is finer and fatter than that of this country (Spain)' ('*Naufragios*,' cap. xxviii., p. 41). He adds: 'I have seen them, and eaten of their meat three times' (this is in writing of the Indians of Eastern Texas, near Matagorda Bay). The passage is believed to be the first description of the American bison—the '*cibolo*,' as the Mexicans call him, from an Indian word.

Alvar Nuñez also makes the first allusion to smoking tobacco on the mainland of America that is known. He says: '*En toda la tierra*' (Eastern Texas) '*se emborrachan con un humo, y dan cuanto tienen por el*' ('*Naufragios*,' cap. xxvi., p. 28).

Gomara, in his '*Historia de las Indias*,' p. 197, calls the buffalo '*vacas corcobadas*' (hunchbacked cows).

\* '*Á que fin y á que propósito te movias á hacer ni pensar una cosa tan agraviada contra gente sin culpa y amigos de la cruz y de los tuyos?*' (Oviedo, '*Historia General y Natural de las Indias*,' vol. i., p. 574).

gentleman, he listened patiently, 'with his eyes softened, and not without some sign of tears,' considering the faith and wondering at the words which the *cacique* held.\* But he did more than this: he stepped between the chiefs, and took from Capahá 'a Christian knife'† which he had raised to strike Casquin.

The interpreter translated Soto's answer to the army, who stood listening with attention, and not without tears.‡

The whole scene must have been pathetic and dramatic in the extreme. But that the tragedy should not halt without its clown, Oviedo tells us that Casquin had brought a jester with him, who between speeches played the sylvan fool so aptly as to make the soldiers laugh as they dried their tears.§ Then Soto, in a speech, spoke of the sacred nature of the cross, the beautiful, the great and true, and of the mysteries of the faith. Calling the chiefs, he told them that the Spaniards had come, not to bring war into the land, but peace.

He did not touch (being an orator) on his own

\* 'Con los ojos enternecidos, y no sin dar señal de lagrimas, considerando la fé y palabras de aquel cacique' (Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' vol. i., p. 575).

† 'Un cuchillo Chripstiano' (Oviedo). Soto himself had given Capahá the 'Christian knife.'

‡ 'Con atencion y no sin lagrimas' (Oviedo).

§ 'E traia (Casquin) un truhán delante de si por grandeça (*sic*) dando ocasion de risa á los que le miraban' (Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' etc.).

actions, but, after talking much of friendship, and the joy it is to see men dwell in amity and love, he made the chiefs embrace. They did so, like two brothers, but in their countenances and the glances of their eyes the feelings of their hearts were seen to be far different from their words.\*

The new-made friendship was almost broken at a banquet Soto gave, for both the chiefs insisted that they should sit at his right hand, and it took Soto all his diplomacy to keep the peace.

After the banquet Casquin sent for his daughter, and, giving her to Soto, said that he wished to mix his blood with that of so illustrious a chief.†

What Soto answered or what he did is not set down by any of the conquerors; but he was young, and had been long from home, and it is evident Oviedo thinks he fell into temptation, for he says: 'It had been better, perhaps, if that Governor, together with the excellencies of the cross and faith, which he had preached to the two chiefs, had told them that he was married, and that a Christian could only have one wife.‡

But this was asking much from a *conquistador*, and

\* 'Y asi se abraçaron como dos hermanos, mas el semblante de los rostros, ni el mirarse el uno al otro, no era de verdadera amistad' ('La Florida,' book iv., cap. x., p. 186).

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 102.

‡ 'Pero quisiera yo que juntamente con las excelencias de la cruz y de la fé que este Gobernador les dixó á essos caciques, que el era cassado é que los Chripstianos no han de tomar mas que una mujer' (Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' vol. i., p. 576).



it may be that Soto's 'Chripstianity' did not go so far. At any rate, he did not want for opportunity to show his faith. Hardly was Casquin's daughter led away than Pacahá sent for two sisters of his own, and gave them to him, demanding he should marry both of them, and keep them in remembrance of himself.\* One was called Mocanoche, and the other Mochila. The first was of a pleasing countenance, 'was well proportioned, tall of her body, well fleshed, and in her shape and face she looked a lady of high rank.' The other, Mochila, was commoner, and all 'The Gentleman of Elvas' vouchsafes about her is that 'she was strongly made.'†

At Capahá Soto remained for forty days, to rest his men and horses, sending out messengers to seek for salt. After eleven days of search they came back laden with sacks of fine rock salt, which all the army fell upon at once, for it was nearly a whole year since they had eaten seasoned food. The soldiers ate the salt in handfuls, as it had been sugar, to such an extent that many died of eating it.

Soto at this point seems to have changed his course, for up till then he had gone steadily towards the north, but now set his face westward, passing five days at his old friend Casquin's, and then in four

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 113.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' p. 113. Women seem to have been plentiful and cheap in Capahá, for when the army set out once more on its march, Casquin appeared, bringing two women, whom he traded off for two old shirts.

days' march coming to Quiguate, in which he stopped, burning half of the town, as he feared treachery from the inhabitants.

Whilst at this place a scene occurred which shows how Soto's iron nerves had suffered by the continued strain of months. One of his officers having shirked his duty and refused to go on guard at night, Soto came out into the courtyard of the chief's house which he occupied, and, speaking in a loud voice, apostrophized the officer, who was of those who, at Mauvila, had wished to take ship and go back home to Spain. 'Why,' said he, 'do you wish to go home? Is it because you and your fellows all have property, or are you all so pusillanimous that you prefer to eat the bread of servitude rather than to remain and conquer and possess this land? . . . I tell you, whilst I live no one shall leave the country, which I intend to conquer, or we shall all expire in the attempt.'\*

These words, uttered with rage and bitterness of heart,† seem to have had a good effect, for Garcilasso says that from that time no one presumed ever to argue with the Governor, seeing he was a man with whom nobody cared to play.

Six days' more marching brought Soto to Colonia,‡ where, for a wonder, the Indians welcomed him in peace.

\* 'La Florida,' book iv., cap. xi., p. 188.

† 'Con rabia, y dolor de corazón.'

‡ The name seems suspicious, and unlike any Indian word; but when did copyists stick at trifles of that sort?

After some days of rest he marched to Tula, where he had so fierce a battle that he had to rest for twenty days to heal the wounded and to search about for quarters in which to pass the winter, which was coming on apace.

So fierce the Indians of the province were, that men and women, and even children, fought to the death, and if the Spaniards wished to take them prisoners, they sat down doggedly, so that they had to kill the men, but in their mercy let the women and children go.

A gentleman—one Francisco de Reynoso—almost came by his death at the hands (and teeth) of five of the Tula Amazons, who, having caught him in a house, attacked him, and would have killed him, as he disdained to call for help, had not some soldiers, hearing the struggle, rushed into the house.

So fiercely did the women fight, and so determinedly, that, as Reynoso was at the last gasp, the soldiers had to kill the women, who preferred death to letting him escape.

One Indian maiden, who was a slave to Juan Serrano of Leon, proved to have mastered all the arts, which have been brought to such perfection in our own times, for she insisted on doing everything in her own way. If her unlucky master scolded her, she threw the pots and firebrands at his head, so that he had to suffer her to follow her sweet will. But even this complaisance did not appease this pearl of waiting-maids. One morning she was found to have

gone off, taking with her all the available and lighter property her master had. He, miserable man (as Garcilasso says), was glad that a devil in a woman's shape was gone, for he had suffered much, 'both from her wrath and inhumanity.'

Soto remained but twenty days in Tula, and that time only from necessity, for he liked not the people or their manners, and then, hearing of a good town but four days off, resolved to occupy it and to pass the winter there.

The town was Utianque,\* and he proposed during the winter to construct two vessels, and in the spring to send to Cuba and to Mexico, both for supplies and men.

It was now nearly three years since he had sailed from Cuba, and in that time he had lost more than a hundred horses and two hundred men.†

The town of Utianque was built upon a river which fell into the Mississippi, and the people, though fierce enough, were not so savage as the Tulas, and neither painted their faces nor flattened their heads,‡ after the style of their more savage

\* Biedma calls it 'Antianque,' and, as the last few days of the march had been in mountainous country, it may have been in, or near, the Ozark Mountains, in the State of Arkansas. But all his wanderings upon the west side of the Mississippi are extremely hard to trace.

† Biedma, Garcilasso, and 'The Gentleman of Elvas,' all differ as to the exact number, but all agree that his losses had been great.

‡ 'No se pintan las caras, ni ahusan las cabezas como los de Tula' ('La Florida,' book iv., cap. xv., p. 194).

neighbours ; but, still, they kept up a sort of armed neutrality, which Soto, in spite of all his efforts, was powerless to subdue.

The Indians having left the town deserted, Soto strengthened the defences of it, and, finding grass for his horses and provisions for himself, about the middle of October (1541) went into winter camp.

The Indians, luckily, had left much maize stored up, and Soto at once gave orders to lay in a store of wood, with nuts and fruits, as cherries, ‘pasas,’\* and other kinds of fruits and seeds unknown in Spain.

The country was well stocked with rabbits (‘like those in Spain’), with deer and roe, and every day the Spaniards and the Indians, whom they had brought with them from other provinces, went out to hunt, partly for sport and partly for the pot.

It snowed prodigiously, both Garcilasso and ‘The Gentleman of Elvas’ say, so that for a whole month they could not leave the camp.†

Their chief amusement was in setting snares for rabbits, and Soto kept them always on the alert by

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This is, perhaps, the first reference to the curious custom of flattening the head, common amongst several American tribes, and, I believe, unknown elsewhere.

\* This word is generally used in Spanish for raisins, but evidently something else must be intended ; for, though there were wild-grapes, the Indians do not seem to have known how to cure them.

† ‘The Gentleman of Elvas’ says the snow was so deep that it stood piled up many feet above their heads in the roads they made about their camp.

false alarms, to exercise the men and make them vigilant.

During the winter Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, sickened and died, and thus, after his ten years' slavery and his long wanderings with his recovered countrymen, never returned to that 'Xivilla' which had remained the only word of Spanish in his mind. His death was much regretted, and his loss could not be filled, as Peter, the youth who was baptized in Georgia (for all his baptism), made an indifferent substitute.

'The Gentleman of Elvas' says that it took a day to learn from him that which Ortiz explained in half a dozen words, 'and most commonly he understood quite contrary that which was asked him.'\*

In spite of the severity of the weather and the snow, the army found such plenty of provisions and so much firewood that they passed the season pleasantly, as comfortably as they had been in their own fathers' houses and at home in Spain.†

About April 1 (1542)‡ Soto broke up his winter-quarters, thinking it time to push on with his discovery.§

Soto was now in desperate straits, for though the winter ought to have been over, it still continued

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas' (Hakluyt), vol. iii., p. 14.

† 'La Florida,' book iv., cap. xv., p. 194.

‡ 'The Gentleman of Elvas' makes the date of Soto's leaving his winter camp March 6.

§ 'Le paresció al Governador, que era tiempo de pasar adelante, á su Descubrimiento.'



snowing and raining now and then, and all the country through which they had to march was full of swamps. It must have been a most unusual season, for he was now well within the State of Louisiana and going towards the south.

By this time Soto must have seen quite clearly that his only hope was to make towards the sea, and then establish himself and wait for reinforcements and supplies. Although the horses must have been in good condition after the winter spent in rest, with plentiful supplies of maize, the clothing of the troops was all in rags.

Oviedo, quoting from Rodrigo de Ranjel, the soldier from whom he got his knowledge of the expedition, makes him say : ' I saw a gentleman, called Don Antonio de Osorio, brother of the Marquess of Astorga, with a jacket made of the skins of the martens of that country, all broken at the sides. His flesh showed through. He had no hat ; was barefoot and without breeches ; a buckler at his back, girt with a sword without a sheath ; and thus he marched in all the frost and cold. He who in Spain had rents worth two thousand ducats . . . that day he had not eaten, and if he wished to sup, he had to find food with his nails.'\*

\* ' Un caballero llamado, Don Antonio de Osorio, hermano del Marques de Astorga (andava) con una ropilla de mantas de aquella tierra, rota por los costados, las carnes defuera ; sin bonete la calva defuera, descalzo sin calzas ni çapatos ; una rodela a las espaldas, una espada sin vaina, en los yelos y frios grandes,

If this was the condition of a man of high position such as Osorio, how must the common soldiers have dressed and fared? Only the indomitable will of Soto, and the confidence all men reposed in him, could have kept troops so tried for three long years obedient and faithful to his cause.

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aviendo tenido en España dos mil ducados de renta . . . y de aquel día creía que no avia comido bocado, e aviendolo de buscar por sus uñas para cenar' (Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' vol. i.).

## CHAPTER XIV

So in this state of rags the army marched for seven days through swamps, till they came to a town called Naguatex, where they stopped for a fortnight resting, and in vain seeking for anyone to guide them to the sea. No one could tell them anything as to their distance from the sea, so Soto, after six days in Naguatex, pushed on towards the south, keeping his course close to the Mississippi, which he knew in the end would lead him to the coast.

The army was not two hours on the march, when they missed Diego de Guzman, a gentleman of Seville, a man of some repute, a nobleman, and one who had left Cuba richly dressed, well armed, and bringing three good horses, in the fleet. No one could find him, and by degrees the truth came out. After the fire in Mauvila, where all the baggage had been lost, it seems that all the cards, without which in those times no Spanish army, in spite of the imperial prohibition, ever marched, were burned. Soto had issued many orders against games of chance, but human ingenuity, which in all climes has found some way to make strong drink and to indulge in games of chance, was not at fault.

The ingenious soldiers out of bits of hide had fashioned cards, 'painting them wonderfully well,\* because then, no matter what occurred, they were a match for all necessity.'† They made them 'as if all their lives they had done nothing else,' and with them it appeared that Diego de Guzman had lost his arms, his clothes, a fine black horse which he still had, and lastly, having nothing but an Indian girl to stake, had staked and lost her, and, having asked for four or five days' grace before he gave her up, had taken her and fled‡ amongst the infidel.

Soto was furious when he heard the news, and instantly sent to the chief to send him Diego de Guzman—if need be, in chains. All he could do proved useless, and the gentleman of Seville had to be left behind—lost, as good Garcilasso says, by his love of cards and women, which, indeed, have lost

\* 'Á las mil maravillas.'

† 'Porque en qualquiera necesidad que se les ofrecia, se animavan á hacer lo que avian menester.'

‡ Oviedo ('Historia de las Indias,' vol. i., cap. xxviii., p. 566), in relation to these Indian slaves, asks pertinently why the army took 'tantas mujeres, y essas no serian viejas y las mas feas.' He speaks especially to the 'Letor Catolico,' but even Protestants can guess the reason why. But, in the fashion of a pulpit questioner, he answers his own doubt, and says: 'Que las mujeres, las querian tambien' (this 'tambien' seems a superfetation) 'para sus usos suzios é luxuria, é que las hasian baptiçar para sus carnalidades, mas que para enseñar les la fé.'

Baptism, if Protestant readers may be allowed a conjecture in so nice a point, seems a work of supererogation in such a case; but it is well to have a clear conscience in such matters.

great store of cavaliers since Diego de Guzman remained in Naguatex, happy to give up all so that he did not lose his Indian slave.

Eight days the army struggled through the swamps of Guancavé, crossing the stream in what 'The Gentleman of Elvas' calls 'almadias,'\* which are great bundles made of rushes, such as are used in Spain and in Morocco at the present day. In all the province they found crosses, which some thought were signs that Alvar Nuñez or his followers had passed that way, or, at the least, that news of him and of his works had influenced the Indians, for the cross was not a symbol they had found before in all their sojourn in the Flowery Land.

Soto was now coming to the last of all his wanderings. His men and horses diminished every day; the food-supply depended either on hunting or the Indians; but, still, he never seems either to have wavered or doubted what to do. Seeing the straits that he was in, he pushed on southward, hoping to strike the Mississippi at another point, and at the best place he could find construct a town, build ships, and send them back to Cuba for supplies.

His resolution came too late, and he pushed on, not knowing where he went, 'having no map-maker, nor any sailor in the army, who could take an altitude, and without any instruments by which to

\* *Almadia* is from the Arabic word *Maadih*. The word is often used for a raft in Spain.

shape his course.\* Whither he wandered cannot now be known with certainty; but always making southward, on his way he passed Anilco, and at last came to Guachoya, on the left bank of the 'Great River,' then called Tamalisca, and again made inquiries of the chief if he was near the sea. The chief said he knew nothing of it, but Soto seems to have distrusted what he said, for he sent out Juan de Añasco and a troop of horse to try and reach the coast. Eight days they wandered in the swamps, and then returned worn out and without tidings of the sea.

Seeing his men could march no more, Soto gave orders to fell timber and to collect a store of resin and of gum to calk the vessels which he hoped to build.

Having heard that on the other bank there was a town called Quiqualturqui, where food was plentiful, he set about to build the ships, hoping to pass and settle there, whilst he sent back to Cuba for supplies.

Knowing that peace was all-important in his present state, he sent an embassy across the river to the chief. He told him that he wished for peace, and, thinking probably of his old experiences in Peru, said that the Spaniards were the children of the Sun.

\* 'El exercito no llevaba instrumento, para tomar la altura, ni avia quien lo procurase, ni mirase en ello' ('La Florida,' book v., cap. iii., p. 201).



But the wild Indian chief cared not a farthing for such messages, and boldly asked a sign. 'Dry up the river if you are children of the Sun,' he said, 'and pass it dry-shod, and I will then become your vassal and ally. If not, expect my enmity, for I intend to rid the land of you and all your crew.'\*

Soto, who for a day or two had been unwell, suffering from fever and the exposure of the march, returned no answer, but quietly by night sent over soldiers, who, falling on the chief, taught him it was unsafe to send such messages.

This was the flickering up of the brief candle, for, the fever gaining ground, Soto, who saw his end was coming, took to bed. Up to the last he carried on the business of the camp, planning and scheming how to build the ships, and writing fully to the municipality of Santiago and his wife. That done, he wrote his will almost in cipher, for there was little paper in the camp.†

The third day found him almost at death's door, and he confessed and reconciled himself with God, with deep contrition and repentance for his sins. Then, calling his companions, he asked their pardon for leaving them without a leader in a strange wild land. Baltazar de Gallegos, he who had sold his lands and olive-yards to follow him, comforted Soto as he best could, talking about this vale of tears, the

\* 'The Gentleman of Elvas.'

† 'Ordenó casi en cifra, su testamento, por no haber recaudo bastante de papel' ('La Florida,' book v., cap. vii., p. 207).

transitory life, and the eternity of bliss in store for those who faithfully believe.

This done, he called on Soto to name a man to be their general when he should depart. Soto, who knew how much depended on his choice, named Luis de Moscoso as his successor in the governorship and captain-generalship of the kingdom and the lands of Florida. And this though he had some months before deprived him of his rank. But, recognising both his merit and abilities, he called on all to swear him fealty, till it was possible to obtain the Emperor's wishes and commands.

Then calling all the officers into his hut by twos and threes, he took his leave of them, impressing on them all, the necessity of fellowship and of goodwill between themselves.

Then all the soldiers, thirty at a time, came in and looked their last upon their dying chief. He bid them all farewell with sorrow, whilst many of them wept. Too late, but perhaps with conviction, he pressed on them the need of trying to convert the Indians, and of extending the territory of the crown of Spain.

The last to leave him was his successor, Luis de Moscoso, who remained talking long with him, and as he left the hut the soldiers saw his eyes all wet with tears.

During his illness Soto's mind was haunted by the prediction of an astrologer, one Micer Codo, whom he had met in Nicaragua, and who foretold that he

should not live older than was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa when he met his death.

As Vasco Nuñez had been executed at forty-two, and Soto was just about that age, and manifestly could not last more than a few days, in such a time it is not strange that he gave some importance to the necromancer's words. But a belief in witchcraft and in soothsayers did not then (nor even now) exclude a firm belief in all the dogmas of the Church.

So on the seventh day of illness, Soto, worn out with cares and hardships, could fight no more against the fever, and expired, 'with his last breath calling on Jesus and the saints, the Blessed Virgin, and the Celestial Court, and testifying his belief in God and in the faith.'

So died Hernando de Soto in an Indian village, the very name and site of which is lost. With proud humility, Garcilasso says: 'Giving his soul to God, thus died this most magnanimous and never-conquered gentleman, worthy of great estates and lordships, and unworthy that his history should be written by a poor Indian.\*'

Fortune advanced him as she doth others, that he might have the higher fall.† He died in such a place and in such circumstances that in his sickness he had little comfort,‡ and no doubt trouble and

\* Biedma makes the date of his death May 21, 1542, but Garcilasso puts it at June 21.

† 'The Gentleman of Elvas' (Hakluyt), vol. lix., p. 23.

‡ 'The Gentleman of Elvas.'

disappointments hastened his end, embittering his death.

But though he died almost a beggar, leaving for all his property three horses, one or two slaves, and a small herd of swine—for all the treasure which he had won with his right arm in the Peruvian wars was expended—he left a name for prudence, valour, and for generalship, which should endure whilst there is air to blow out from the staff the blood and orange banner, quartered with castles and with lions, under which he fought.

There is no need to ask Pizarro, Valdivia, Alvarado, and the rest of the *conquistadores* to stand aside to make a place for him.

With his own sword he carved out his own niche, setting it firmly in the annals of the conquest of the Indies, only a little lower than the pedestal on which is set Cortés.

In mere achievement, without doubt, he did not do as much as did Pizarro or Valdivia; but, then, it does not matter much what a man does, for it is what he thinks that counts. In the same way, what a man tries to do may be far greater than what other men achieve.

Achievement, after all, is but a hatchment, stuck up to mark a burial-place; the greater part of every man is buried with his bones. All see the hatchment, and read and comment on the quarterings in the shield; they give their wise, inept opinions on the deeds. Those are within their province—are, in

fact, within the power of anyone who has so little sense as to waste time in moralizing ; but for the rest, that is to them unknown.

Certain is it that Soto, judged by the modern standard, was as cruel as other conquerors, by the nature of their trade, are bound to be ; that is, he did not hesitate to kill, either for policy or to strike terror in a foe. But he believed, as the *conquistadores*, did almost to a man (including even Almagro and Pizarro), that in some strange mysterious fashion all that he did was to the glory of the Lord.

As a man, though stern and of few words, he made himself beloved. At his death his soldiers mourned as for a father, and his loss seemed irreparable to all of them.\*

Herrera says of him that he was affable, liberal, and quick to pardon ; severe in punishing when he could not excuse it, but much inclined to please when he could do so without endangering his office and his state. He goes on to say that 'he had no wish to pile up treasures, shunned bad company, and never caused the death of anyone for his own wish.'†

\* 'La muerte del governador, y capitan general, Hernando de Soto, tan digna de ser llorada, causó en todos los suyos, gran dolor y tristeza, asi por averlo perdido, y por la orfandad que les quedava, que lo tenian por padre' ('La Florida,' book iv., cap. viii., p. 208).

† 'Era siempre afable y liberal, clemente en perdonar, severo en castigar cuando no lo podia excusar, y muy inclinado á dar gusto y contento sin ofensa á la dignidad de su oficio. . . . No

This gives the keynote to his personal character, and shows why he maintained so firm a hold upon his soldiers' love. That he was generous and open-handed is, I think, proved by every action of his life. Money he only valued for the power it brought, and that which he had gained with so much peril in Peru he freely spent in his adventure in the Flowery Land.

Oviedo\* censures him for having made no colony, nor built a town; but we must judge him by the standards of his time, which in the main he acted up to, thinking that gold was riches, and that in finding it he would have done well for his country, which looked upon Peru as the first jewel in the Spanish crown.

In Garcilasso's quaint description of him, we are told that he was patient above all his followers in hardships, encouraging his men by the mere sight of how he bore the sufferings of the whole campaign. In all attacks he charged in the first rank, doing more execution than any other ten. 'This valorous captain had a particularity, which was that, when the enemy attacked his camp, he was always first or second to be armed, and never third. In night attacks, never the second, but always first, so that it seemed as if the general himself was always on the

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fue acumulador de tesoros; huia siempre mala compania, y jamas mandó matar á nadie de su motivo' (Herrera, 'Historia de las Indias,' vol. vii., p. 176).

\* Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' vol. i., cap. xxiii.



watch.' On horseback, not only did he look well, but rode the best of all his army, being most skilful in 'both saddles,' but more especially in the Moorish style. He was, by the consent of all, one of the best of all the lances who ever passed to the New World, the best with the exception of Gonçalo de Pizarro, who in the mind of all had the first place. So that he had all that endears a leader to the soldier's heart. Besides all this, he was himself a soldier, and knew that the first duty of a general is to assure the comfort of his troops.

Throughout his wanderings he never for a moment lost heart or gave way to despair, and in the field showed himself always a bold commander, and a good strategist, after the fashion of his time. His protest at the death of Atahualpa in Peru must be accounted to him as a proof of a good heart, and the reforms he made during his residence in Cuba show him a statesman of no mean degree.

No taint of avarice clings to his memory, or any of the meannesses from which even Cortés was not exempt tarnish his fame. His one recorded saying, 'Let them alone, for him who God gives luck St. Peter blesses,'\* shows that he was a man of humour, which in itself blots out a multitude of sins.

That which the army feared the most was that the Indians should get wind of Soto's death, and after

\* 'Dexenles estar, é á quien Dios se la diere en suerte San Pedro la bendiga' (Oviedo, 'Historia de las Indias,' cap. xxvi., p. 561).

their departure desecrate his grave. So they determined to bury him at night, in a small plain outside the village, which was done with sentinels set out, and silently, so that the Indians might not suspect the general was dead.

Next morning they gave out that he was better, and, mounting their horses, galloped about, as if rejoicing, trampling upon the grass, so as to blot out every sign of where the grave was made.

But all they did could not deceive the quick-eyed Indians, who, as they passed, glanced stealthily about the plain, muttering and pointing silently towards the new-made grave.

After a council, Luis de Moscoso and his officers determined that the one safe place of burial was in the river's bed.

So, by a chance of fortune, Soto was laid to rest in that great river with which his name is bound up for all time.

Juan de Añasco, the fighting *contador*, and Arias Tinoco, Juan de Guzman, and Diego Arias, all of them officers who had been always Soto's favourite captains in their long pilgrimage, taking with them a Biscayan, one Joanes Abadia, 'a sailor and a mighty engineer,'\* under pretence of fishing, sounded the river, at a place where it was half a league in width, and found full nineteen fathoms' depth of water in the stream.

\* 'Un Vizcayno, llamado Joanes de Abadia, hombre de la mar, y gran ingeniero' ('La Florida,' book iv., cap. viii., p. 209).

In all the country where they were, they found no stones to sink the body, so they determined to enclose it in a tree. Choosing an oak, they hollowed out a shell, and, placing Soto's body in it, boarded it up, so that it formed a rudely-fashioned ark. At midnight silently they pushed out into the middle of the stream, and there, 'in grief and with some hurried prayers,' after commending Soto's soul to God, they launched their ark, which floated for a minute in the swift yellow flood, and then, settling down deeper, vanished from their sight.



# GONÇALO SILVESTRE

## CHAPTER I

MOST of the *conquistadores* of America who are known to fame were men of middle age when they embarked on their career. At fifty-four Columbus set his face from Palos westward into the unknown seas. Pizarro and Cortés, Valdivia, Alvar Nuñez and Almagro, were not youths, and Ponce de Leon, the first discoverer of Florida, was so old that that which most induced him to embark was the supposititious fountain of eternal youth, which Indians had assured him existed in the everglades.

Gonçalo, on the other hand, was but a boy,\* not much past twenty years of age. On board the flagship *San Christobal*, in Soto's fleet going to Florida in 1538, upon April 6th, only a few hours after sailing, Silvestre first appears. Nothing is known of him except through Garcilasso de la Vega, Inca, who in

\* 'Novecientos y cinquenta Españoles de todas calidades se juntaron en San Lucar de Barrameda, para ir á la conquista de la Florida, todos moços que apenas se hallaba entre ellos uno que tuviesse canas' ('La Florida' Garcilasso de la Vega, Inca, cap. v., p. 8).

his 'Florida' and in his 'History of Peru' recounts his strange adventures in both lands. The general called a soldier, 'one of many that he had chosen to keep near his person,' and told him off to oversee the sentinels, and tell them that if any suspicious-looking ship appeared to fire upon her. This soldier was Silvestre, a native of Herrera de Alcantara, as we are told.\* Now, as most likely was the case, the weather being fine, and the sentinels knowing that sleep does not offend, were slumbering, or perhaps, as Garcilasso says, the ship in which sailed the commissary Gonçalo de Salazar, either to show her speed or that she too was quite as good as was the flagship, got ahead almost a cannon-shot.

The teller of the tale affirms that either to pass the flagship or to get to windward of her was in those days a crime to merit death. Either the laws of the Spanish navy of the day were written in blood, or else the Inca, † had formed exaggerated ideas of Spanish vigilance. But be that as it may, Gonçalo, who, like a wise man, though he had his watch set, yet was not asleep, 'after the fashion of a good soldier and a gentleman,' ‡ asked at once whether the vessel

\* Herrera de Alcantara is a village in what is now the province of Caceres. Thus, Gonçalo Silvestre, like Cortés, Pizarro, and Almagro, was a native of Estremadura, of which ancient division of Spain Caceres forms part.

† Garcilasso de la Vega.

‡ 'Como lo debe hacer todo buen soldado y hijodalgo, como el lo era' ('La Florida,' book i., p. 10).



was of the general's fleet.\* The sailors, being experts, quite naturally declared with oaths that it was not, thus showing clearly that the incompetency of experts is not of recent date.

Thus strengthened with expert opinion, Gonçalo did not hesitate to shoot. At the first fire Gonçalo's guns went through the unknown ship's sails, the second raked her fore and aft, and then a shout was heard, explaining that the vessel was a friend. The general rushed on deck, and the whole fleet soon fell into confusion, and none knew what to do. The ship which had been attacked, either, as the author says, from rage or from the effect of the confusion, almost ran into the flagship, and was prevented at the last only by the soldiers in each ship holding out pikes to break the shock. Three hundred pikes were broken, and many were left sticking in both vessels' sides. So that it looked like a splendid mêlée in a tournament.† The vessels' yards got foul of one another, and, what with shouting and with darkness, the peril became imminent. At last the Lord, as the writer says, saw fit to help them by putting in the sailors' heads the sensible expedient of sending men aloft with axes to cut adrift the yards. The general, not unnaturally, sent for the commander (Gonçalo de Salaçar) of the other ship, and on the quarter-deck discharged his mind to so much purpose that, after

\* 'General' was used both by sea and land, and yet the double title was no foe to incompetency on either element.

† 'Una hermosa folla de torneo.'

years in Mexico, Salazar used to say if he could meet his former general he would fight him to the death.

Nothing appears to have happened to Gonçalo de Silvestre, who, like a prudent soldier (and a gentleman), most probably kept out of the sight of his enraged superiors until their wrath had cooled.

After this little incident the fleet pursued the uneven tenor of its way, giving thanks to God for having saved them from such dangers of the sea. What seems extraordinary is that it did not occur to them that the great Power who saved might also have put sense into the experts' heads had He so willed it. Thus do we see two armies, drawn up for the fight, implore the intercession of the Lord of Hosts, forgetting what a difficulty must occur when from two faithful bodies of true Christians the self-same prayers arise.

On his arrival in Florida, Gonçalo quickly went to work. Sent with a squadron under Captain Baltasar de Gallegos, he formed part of the first expedition to the interior of the land. The captain, having seen the richness of it, and that all kinds of trees, as walnuts, figs, and mulberries, with plums and pines and oaks, 'and others which we do not know either in Old or New Castille,' were plentiful, came to the village of a chief known as Curáca. This name, says Garcilasso, in the Inca language of Peru, means chief. 'And because I am an Indian of Peru, the reader will permit me to introduce some words of my own language, because he sees I am a native of Peru

and of no other land.' A system which might well receive acceptance from our writers of to-day, so that a Dutchman travelling in some unknown land could, for example, call a negro chief a burgomaster, and plead his birth in Rotterdam for his excuse.

So Captain Baltasar Gallegos sent off four on horseback,\* to tell the Governor, Hernando de Soto, all that he had seen, and that in the territory of Curáca there was food enough to keep the army for several days. The four on horseback in two days made five-and-twenty leagues—not a bad record in a country which, like Florida, is thickly set with swamps, and on a track which must have been quite unfamiliar to the hard-riding four. One wonders how the horses, fresh from the confinement of a voyage and either brought from Spain or the Habana, could have stood such galloping upon such unfamiliar ground, especially as horses born in Florida to-day show none of the strength or bottom of the Texan broncos, or those of Mexico. This gallop was the first of many in which Gonçalo Silvestre had a share, and in which he proved himself, perhaps, the most intrepid scout and most untiring horseman of any of the *conquistadores* of America.

By this time the main body of the army of Hernando de Soto had arrived at one of the interminable marshes in which Florida abounds. Where it was situated exactly it is hard to say, for Garcilasso makes them arrive at it by working always to the

\* 'Quatro de á caballo.'

north-east, which he described as 'to the north, turning a little towards the rising sun,'\* after starting from the Bay of the Holy Ghost at the town of Urribarracuxi. In fact, the Inca Garcilasso is most careful, and at the same time diffident, about geography. He says: 'As regards this place, and in regard to all the others which I may mention in this history, it is to be remembered that I am not to blame if they appear different, when it shall please God that the country shall be gained;† for though I did my best to write with certainty, it was not possible for me to attain it, because, as the first intention of the Castilians was to possess the land and search for gold and silver, they cared for nothing except for silver and for gold, on which account they did not trouble to do other things which were more important than to map out the land.' The passage is ambiguous, and seems to point out that the Inca as an Indian was not quite satisfied with all the Spaniards did. At the same time, he writes quite in the spirit of a panegyrist, whilst not forgetting to set down the deeds both of the Spaniards and the Indians.‡

\* 'Que es al norte torciendo un poco acia donde sale el sol' ('La Florida,' p. 41).

† 'De la La Baia de Espiritu Santo al pueblo de Urribarracuxi.'

‡ 'Viendo me obligado de ambas naciones, porque soi hijo de un Español, y de una India' ('La Florida').

The Inca, Garcilasso de la Vega was the son of Garcilasso de la Vega de las Casas de los Duques de Feria e Infantado, and of Elizabeth Palla, sister of the last Inca of Peru, Huayna Capac.

The marsh, always referred to as 'La Cienega Grande,' was just that kind of place that generals seem to seek out, as dogs hunt truffles, with unerring scent, in which to land their troops. Let but a marsh, defile between two hills, thick forest or rough broken country be attainable, and into them at once a prudent, painstaking, parade-ground general blunders with a will. Hernando de Soto had a little more excuse than some of his more modern bold compeers. Nothing was known of Florida, and his only chance of information was either through Indian captives or by the help of men such as Silvestre, and how he used him, and how Silvestre served his general, fortunately, the Inca has set down.

The marsh was situated about a mile from the village of the chief Urribarracuxi, and was a league in width, and full of mud, and deep up to every bank. Eight days the scouts sought to discover a ford, and having found one, the general wished himself to try it. So, leaving the army camped upon the edge, he passed the marsh himself with one hundred horse and foot, the Indians never ceasing to attack him as he went. Four Indians who were prisoners were forced to act as guides, and, not unnaturally, guided the Spaniards where the Indians lay concealed. When (Garcilasso says) they understood the trick,\* they threw the Indians to the dogs, who tore them into shreds. Dogs played a great

\* 'Sentian la malicia.'

part in all the conquests of the Indies, and Garcilasso mentions some of them by name, laments their death, and chronicles their exploits with as much good faith as they had been baptized. One greyhound, coming out from Spain between Gomera and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, fell overboard and swam five hours behind the ship, no one, apparently, observing him, and then was saved by another vessel following on the track. Two in especial, Becerrillo and Leoncillo, behaved like heroes, killing and rending all the infidel they saw. Nothing in Becerrillo's life, although he had single-handed killed many Indians, became him more than did his death. Seeing some Indians swimming a stream, he plunged in after them, to avenge a blow that one of them had struck his master with a bow. Disdaining other Indians who swam round about him, he followed up the insulter of his master, and, like a Christian dog, he vindicated the outraged majesty of law by seizing on the culprit and tearing him to pieces in the water as he swam.\* This noble and discriminating dog was foully massacred by Indians in another fight, when fortune, as it willed it, reversed the situation, and as he swam the infidels discharged their arrows on him, and having received about a hundred in his head and chest, he gained the bank and died. His son, who does not seem to have had a name, was fortunate—at least, in this world's goods—for in a casting of accounts made under Vasco Nuñez de Balboa he

\* 'Y echandole mano lo hiço pedaços en el agua.'



received as his share of the conquest five hundred crowns in gold. His master, a crossbowman, but also nameless in the chronicle wherein their deeds are sung, most probably laid up the treasure in the nearest public-house, or, at the best, where moths corrupt and thieves break through and steal, as often as they may.

Hernando de Soto, having passed the marsh with about a hundred men, and finding himself cut off from the main body of his army and without provisions, cast about for a fitting messenger to send for help and food.\* Calling Gonçalo Silvestre to him, he said to him in presence of the rest: 'Fortune has given you the best horse in the army, but it was only that you should work the more.' After giving him minute directions, which showed that he was a skilled general, he recommended him to choose a sure companion, and to pass the swamp at night, for if the Indians were to catch him struggling in the water his life would not be worth a pin. Lastly he said: 'Although the road may seem to you both long and arduous, I know to whom I now commit the task'—words which show that Gonçalo at twenty years of age had the right stuff in him for a *conquistador*.† He proved this instantly, for 'without

\* The food he sent for was Lacedemonian in simplicity, consisting of biscuit and cheese ('vizcocho y queso').

† Bernal Diaz, in his 'Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de Mexico,' Madrid, año de 1795, en la Imprenta de Don Benito Cano, vol. i., p. 97, says: 'Quiero aquí poner por memoria todos los caballos y yeguas que pasaron (á Mexico).'

answering a word' he left the general. Mounting his horse (the best in all the army), upon the road he met a friend of his, one Juan Lopez Cacho, also about twenty years of age. Cacho was from Seville, and was a page of the general's, and also had a good horse. Gonçalo said to him: 'The general commands that you are to go with me back to the camp, therefore follow me at once, for I am on the march.' This was not strictly true, but truth is relative, and a man may be a good *conquistador*, and yet not accurate in statements of this sort. Juan Lopez Cacho answered, saying he was tired and could not go. Then did Gonçalo blurt out the blatant truth, having at first, like prudent men will do, endeavoured

Bernal Diaz when he wrote was an old man, as he says, 'En esta muy leal ciudad de Guatimala (Santiago) se acabó'—that is, his history, on February 26, 1578.

He left Spain in 1514, 'viniendo por la mar' (the land journey is yet unsolved) 'con buen tiempo, y otras veces, con contrario.' Nevertheless, he remembered the most remarkable points of all the horses after fifty years. Thus, 'Verena, vecino de la Trinidad,' had 'un caballo hovero algo sobre morcillo, no salió bueno.' 'Moron, vecino de Vaimo, un caballo hovero' ('hovero,' or 'overo,' as it is usually and wrongly spelt now, means piebald, and is from the Arabic *Hbari*), 'labrado de las manos y era bien revuelto.'

Juan Sedeño, from the Habana, had a chestnut mare, and this mare had a foal on board ship. This Juan Sedeño was the richest soldier in all the fleet, 'for he brought a ship of his own, and the mare, and a negro, and cazabe and bacon, for at that time it was impossible to find horses or negroes, except at their weight in gold, and for that reason no more horses came, because there were none.'

to place the matter as it seemed most fitting for the case. 'The governor,' he said, 'told me to choose a comrade, and it is you I choose. Therefore, if you will come, come in God's name, and if you will not come, then in the same name stay. For though the two of us should go, the risk will be as great, and if I go alone I shall not on that account pass greater difficulties.'

Thus saying, he spurred his horse and struck into the trail, and Cacho, though unwillingly, mounted his horse and followed him. They started, says the Inca, at the hour of sunset, and neither of the youths was more than twenty years of age,\* a proper age at which to ride through swamps at night, with lurking Indians waiting on the banks. I who write this have ridden so, and know how the two youthful horsemen must have felt as, turning in their saddles, they took a last look at the camp-fires before they rode into the night.

These stout and valiant youths (so says the chronicler of their adventurous ride) did not shrink from the undertaking, although they knew its difficulty. And for the first five leagues they rode in safety, seeing no Indians, as the road was clear of streams, of hills, of woods, and any place in which an ambush could be laid. But as they neared the marsh the peril was so great that nothing which they could have done would have availed them, had not

\* 'An bos moços á péñas pasaron de los veinte años' ('La Florida,' p. 43).

God Himself have helped them on their way, showing His power by putting in the horses' heads\* the instinct to find out the surest track. These horses, moved by Providence or by their instinct, set themselves to retrace the road by which they had been brought, following it up like spaniels or like pointers,† with their noses trailing on the ground. At the beginning, with the lack of instinct natural to man, their riders pulled the reins, but the animals did not answer to their bits, and still kept on upon the trail, giving loud snorts occasionally, which no doubt brought their riders' hearts into their mouths, when they thought of the Indians lying in the grass.

Gonçalo's horse was the better tracker of the two, both as regards the following the trail and finding it again when it was lost. But (says the Inca) this is not wonderful, nor should the reader marvel at the fact, for both by marks and colour he was naturally formed, in war and peace, to be extreme in everything. Was he not chestnut, of the darkest shade, almost the colour of pitch, and had 'his near forefoot wrapped in a stocking,'‡ a stripe upon his face, which came so low upon his nose that he appeared to drink it?§ All these are signs by which all Spanish horsemen of the time knew a good horse, and which gave

\* 'La Florida,' cap. xiv., p. 43: 'Si Dios no los socorriera por su misericordia, mediante el instinto natural de los cavallos.'

† 'Como podencos, ó perdigueros.'

‡ A white forefoot.

§ 'Que bebia con ella.'

promise both of bottom and of loyalty in horses, hacks, or chargers, in which they might prevail. Especially, dark chestnut is a colour above all the rest, in evil and in good repute, in dust and mud, for a dark chestnut horse will die rather than tire, and on the day his rider feels him with the spurs, clapping his hand upon the saddle-bow, and calling Santiago as he rises in his seat, will never fail the man who rides upon his back. Juan Lopez Cacho's horse was a fox-coloured chestnut,\* with black points and tail, and, although good exceedingly, not quite the equal of the other horse, who all the night guided his master and his friend. Gonçalo, having understood the intention and the goodness of his horse, let him do as he liked, without restraining him, and thus the night wore on, and the two friends kept still upon their way.

With all these difficulties and others which it is easier to imagine than to write about, the two young men kept on, half dead with hunger and with cold. The last two days their food had been only some ears of maize, which grain the Indians sowed in fertile places, and left to ripen, coming to harvest it when it was ripe. Sleep gained upon them and upon their horses, who for their part were hungry, having been saddled for the past two days, with but their bridles off for a moment now and then to give them food and drink. As they passed through the woods, upon the right hand and the left they saw the

\* 'Tostado que llaman çorrano.'

fires of Indians' camps. 'Those Gentiles danced and drank, keeping some feast of theirs, and though their dogs barked loudly, Providence Himself stopped up the Indians' ears,' so that they did not hear the dogs, or the noise of the armour as the horses trotted on the trail. After ten leagues of travel in the night, Juan Lopez Cacho who had started tired from the camp, pulled up his horse and said that he must sleep.

'Only a minute let me sleep,' he said, 'or if not run your lance through my body and end my misery, for sleep I must.'

Gonçalo, who had twice refused to let him sleep, lost patience, and replied :

'Sleep then in a bad hour [*'en hora mala'*], and lose our lives, for if the sun once rises whilst we are on the road, the Indians will soon see us and our lives are lost.'

But as it is ill talking betwixt a full man and a fasting, so is it equally impossible for one who is not overcome with sleep to reason with a man ready to fall asleep, although the whole world were on fire. Juan Lopez Cacho, had no sooner heard Gonçalo's words, than he let himself slide out of his saddle to the ground, and instantly was wrapped in sleep as if he had been dead, whilst his companion took his lance and held both horses by the reins. So going through a Paraguayan palm-wood, after long riding without food, about the hour before the dawn, drowsiness fell upon the writer, and he needs must sleep. Long did



his companion reason with him after the fashion of Silvestre, and with like result. Then, lying down beneath a palm-tree for five minutes' sleep, he slept and dreamed events which seemed to pass through months, and waking found the night still dark, his friend holding a reproachful Waterbury watch, and his horse twisted in its halter and kicking like a mule. A sweet, well-spent five minutes, which enabled him to laugh at sleep during the hours before the dawn—those hours which sentinels, seamen, and cowboys slowly riding round their herd at night, afraid to smoke, find mortal. The incident serves him to understand all that Juan Lopez Cacho felt, and the annoyance of his wakeful friend.

Most fortunately, Gonçalo was a man proof against sleep, and all fatigue, and fit in every way for a *conquistador*. A darkness fell upon the sky, and then a rain descended, like a deluge, but still Juan Lopez Cacho slept, as in his place I should have done, had fire fallen from the sky. Almost by magic, as it seemed, just at the dawn the torrents ceased, and instantly the sun shone out. After nights passed in pouring rain, those of us who are not born *conquistadores* (even of ourselves) usually cower round a fire and smoke, pending the time the coffee boils on the wet wood, and speculate whether our horses seem inclined to buck. But 'most divine tobacco' had hardly come in fashion, amongst Spaniards, and a fire was not within their reach. As soon as the faint light of the first dawn appeared, Gonçalo, who perhaps had

dozed upon his horse, called to his friend, knowing the danger that they ran. The miserable wretch was sleeping in the wet mud, and would, no doubt, had he been left alone, have never wakened but to feel the Indians' arrows passing through him, even had he had the time to feel, in the brief interval from sleep to death. How many frontier-men from the head-waters of the Rio Gila down to Choleché have so passed, since when Silvestre and his friend lay sleeping in the wood! Gonçalo dared not call aloud, but, as his chronicler sets down, in a low, husky voice called on his friend. He, fast as the Seven Sleepers, did not stir, until Gonçalo beat him with his lance. Then, sitting up, he wrung the water from his hair, and slowly mounted, whilst Gonçalo cursed him, and said that for his weakness they were in peril of their lives and hardly could escape. Even as he climbed upon his horse, the Indians, camped not far from where they were, saw them, and raised a yell, beating on drums, blowing war-whistles, and sounding on the conch. And at the noise they made canoes shot out from the reedy edges of the swamps, and barred the passage to the other side. So many came that they appeared more like the leaves of trees which floated on the swamp than war-canoes.

The two companions, though they saw the danger, yet could not return, for to the rear the Indians barred the way. So at a gallop they charged into the swamp, the Indians' arrows raining on their armour

like a very hail. But God was pleased,\* as both their horses were deep in the water and their own harness was of proof, to allow them to escape unhurt, although the swamp was full a league in width. This they took not as a little miracle, for the infinity of arrows was so great that when they turned to look upon the other side, the water was as thickly strewn with them as is a street with rushes upon the day of some solemnity or feast.

Says Garcilasso de la Vega, after this episode: 'By this the valour of the Spanish nation may be estimated, and how by it has the new world been gained. A lucky gain for Indian and for Spaniard alike, for thereby did the latter gain great temporal riches, and the first the treasures of the spiritual world.' Whether he, as the son of the last Inca Princess of Peru, was justified by his Spanish father's works is a moot-point, but spiritual and untarnishable wealth is sometimes dearly bought at the expense of temporal liberty.

So when the two adventurous youths emerged all dripping on the bank, those in the army camped close to the swamp heard the Indians' yells, and, mounting quickly, thirty or forty horsemen spurred up to the swamp. In front of all of them came Nuño Tobár, galloping furiously upon a splendid dappled gray. His horse looked so ferocious, to the Indians'

\* 'Fue Dios servido, que como los caballos iban cubiertos de agua y los cavalleros bien armados.'

eyes, and he himself so gallant in his seat,\* that the mere sight of him was sufficient to secure the safety of the tired young men. This gentleman, though not a favourite with the general, on all occasions showed great courage; for says Garcilasso, 'No evil treatment or neglect could ever turn him from the path of duty, for true generosity of mind does not allow room for the least baseness in the souls of those who really have it.' Such, for the most part, were the men who, for their faith and to find gold, conquered the Indies for the Spanish Crown.†

Gonçalo's work was not yet over, for on arriving at the camp, and having eaten, whilst the convoy of food was getting ready, two ears of roasted maize, he started back to show the way across the

\* 'Era lindo hombre á la gineta' ('La Florida,' p. 45). The *saddle á la gineta* was the Moorish saddle with short stirrups, and was the very opposite of the saddle *á la brida*, which was but the modification of the older saddle *á la estradiota*, with the straight seat of armour-clad knights. To ride well in both saddles (*ser ginete en ambas sillas*) was a great feather in a man's cap. Sometimes it was mentioned in his epitaph. All old Spanish literature teems with allusions to this saddle. Garcilasso himself says, 'Mi tierra (Peru) se ganó á la gineta.' He records that he himself rode well *á la gineta*. We must believe him, for horsemen do not willingly magnify their own virtues. The saddle *á la gineta* (only with the stirrups lengthened) is still used in Andalusia, and is called *la silla Jerezana*. The Mexican saddle is also a modification of it. The Chilians, Brazilians, and Argentines use a modification of the *silla á la brida*.

† In their case the Spanish proverb, 'Honour and covetousness do not go in one bag'—'Honor y codicia no caben en un saco'—was falsified, for certainly they managed to have both.

swamp. Juan Lopez Cacho stayed in the camp, saying, 'The general neither told me to come with you nor to go back.' Perhaps the memory of his broken sleep weighed with him, or perhaps the Egyptian flesh-pots of the camp appealed to him, and he remained to feast on roasted maize. The convoy reached the general safely, and found him camped in a valley in which the Indians had abandoned crops of Indian corn, and which the soldiers gathered as they rode and ate, giving thanks to God for having succoured them with such abundance in their necessity. The Captain-General praised Gonçalo with fine words ('magnificas palabras'), and told him that he had done his duty, and he was satisfied with him, so that a soldier's recompense to-day and then were not unlike—fine words as long as he is wanted, and the war over, a comfortable workhouse, or in those days the well-aired streets of Seville in which to beg his bread.

Hernando de Soto, who, if he had a fault as a commander, was perhaps too rash, after a few months found himself in Apalache, in a similar position to that he occupied when separated from the main body of his army by the great swamp. Having travelled about a hundred and fifty leagues, he found the winter coming on, and the main body of his army still at All Saints' Bay. So he determined to stay where he was, and sent back thirty horsemen to tell his lieutenant, Pedro Calderon, to join him with the rest. Naturally, with them went

Gonçalo, always in the front in desperate rides. The territory which lay between the general and the coast was one eternal swamp. In fact, it formed a portion of the everglades of Florida. Indians were thick upon the road, and Indians not like those of Mexico, who trembled at the sight of horses, but warriors who shot so strongly with their bows that Spanish plate was but as paper to their shafts. He (says the Inca) who had not Milan steel threw off his armour, as it was of no use, and used a quilted cotton doublet, such as the Indians wore themselves, which turned an arrow better than inferior plate. So the general chose out thirty horsemen of the best mounted in the host. Their captain was one Juan de Añasco, and with him went Gonçalo and others whose names the Inca has preserved. One of these was Antonio Carillo of Illescas, one of the thirteen who in the rebellion of 1553, under Francisco Hernandez Giron, raised a revolt against the crown, and took the town of Cuzco in Peru.\* Perhaps the most remarkable in one way was Pedro Moron, a half-breed from Bayamo in Cuba, for he had a special grace.† His grace was that he could follow up a trail by scent as well as any bloodhound, and smell fire a league away, and if an Indian did but approach the camp, this 'gracious' half-breed knew him by his smell.

\* The Inca always spells Cuzco 'Cozco,' and, as he was half a Peruvian Indian himself, it is possibly the correct spelling.

† 'Una gracia rarisima.'



Upon October 20, 1539, the thirty started out. They all rode lightly armed, with but their helmets and light coats of mail above their clothes, with lances in their hands, and bags upon their saddles, with a little food and nails and horseshoes, for whatever might occur. They must have looked not unlike horsemen of the Sahara below Morocco of to-day, and no doubt rode upon the Moorish saddle (*à la gineta*), and without doubt at that time many of them knew Arabic, as Spain was still half Moorish, and, in fact, is still so down to the present day. They left the camp 'a reasonable time' before the break of day, so that no word should get abroad as to the road they were to go. As the first day was in flat country, they travelled fast, galloping often, and again keeping their horses to the 'Castilian pace.' The God of Battles went with them upon the road, for, coming on two Indians by the way, they speared them quietly, so that they should not raise alarm and bring the others out upon their track.

They made full thirteen leagues that day, not a bad journey for men who had only a single horse apiece, and were not certain of the road. They passed the swamp, which on a former ride had proved so dangerous, without adventure, and camped upon the other side.

Next day, before the sun was up, they left the swamp of Apalache, and, riding twelve more leagues, got close to Osachile, a small Indian town. Fearing the Indians might attack them, and with their

arrows wound or disable any of their horses, they waited till the night, and then, mounting again, passed through the Indian village at a smart pace. A league beyond the town they halted, and passed what remained of darkness, sleeping and leaving a third of their companions on the watch. Again that day they travelled thirteen leagues.

Starting before the break of day at a hand gallop,\* they made five leagues, doing their best, because they feared the Indians might get word beforehand of their coming, which was the thing above all others that they feared.

They reached the river Osachile about mid-day, and (says the chronicler) the horses were so good that they stood everything. They must have been, for though the men rode light, they must have carried food, and nothing wears out horses on a journey like the want of sleep. Gonçalo first arrived upon the river's bank and passed it, swimming on his horse; the rest all followed him, and then, all dripping as they were, sat down to breakfast, after thanking God. In four more leagues they reached the town of Vitachuco, where a month before there had been a battle, in fear that they should find the town rebuilt and the Indians ready to dispute the way. To their astonishment, they found it all in ruins, and the bodies of the dead Indians all lying where they fell. It appears their fellows had not buried them, or even cleared the town, because they

\* 'A media rienda.'

thought that, fortune having proved contrary, the dead men must have been cursed by God, and it was impious to touch them, or to rebuild the town.

Dead and departed men are always in the wrong,\* the proverb says, and these poor Indians seem to have stood in little need of missionaries to teach them ethics from the standpoint of a Christian land.

The 'thirty lances,' as the Inca calls Gonçalo and his companions, when they had passed the deserted town, fell in upon the road with a pair of Indian hunters searching for game. Their bows were in their hands, and each carried a quiver full of arrows on his back. The Inca calls them 'dos Indios gentiles hombres,' which may have meant 'two Indian gentlemen,' or merely 'two tall or well-made Indians.'

But, such as they were, one of them proved himself more than a gentleman,† and rightly does the Inca chronicle his deed. Seeing the 'thirty lances' suddenly, the Indian gentlemen (?) took refuge underneath a tree, which in the original is called 'nogal.‡' As they were armed with bows, and as the Spaniards carried lances and swords, and probably, as they were riding light, no firearms, and as the boughs

\* 'A muertos y idos no hay amigos.'

† Francis Adams, poet, says that 'the gentleman is the vilest animal that God has made.' This, of course, may be so, for it is uncertain what were the Creator's views at the creation of the various animals.

‡ *Nogal* in Spanish is a walnut-tree, but this most probably was a hickory or a pecan.

of a pecan often fall low, the Indians underneath the tree were relatively safe.

However, one of them, taken with sudden fear, came out and ran to gain the woods. Two of the 'lances' galloped after him, not heeding all their captain's shouts to them to stop. They caught and speared the Indian, a feat which the Inca rightly terms not very difficult for two well-mounted men. The other Indian gentleman was made of different stuff to him who fled and lost his life. For, having more determination, Fortune favoured him, as she most usually does when men compel her by their bravery.

As the Spaniards came on, galloping fast to avoid his arrows, he turned his bow on each one as they passed, but took good care never to shoot, after the fashion of a frontier-man who, caught alone upon the plains, dismounts and points his rifle, resting on the saddle, at the Indians who approach. To fire and miss is fatal, and for the Indians to rush in is death to some of them, so that if but the man keeps cool and does not fire he usually escapes. So did it happen with the Indian underneath the tree. None of the 'thirty lances' cared to go too near, although Gonçalo wished to attack on foot. To this his captain wisely answered the Indian's death did not advance them anything, and that the death or wounding of a horse would prove disastrous to all concerned.

So, making a wide circle round the tree, he passed,

and all the 'thirty lances' followed him, the Indian covering every one of them until the last had gone. Then, breaking out into a fury, he called them cowards for not daring to attack, and remained shouting out insults underneath his tree. The Inca says he gained more honour than did all those who had their niches in the temple of the goddess Fame. The Spaniards rode upon their way, astonished at the Indian's boldness and his want of shame.\* His boldness was apparent, but his want of shame not so discernible—at least, to Indians—as one may suppose. That day, which was the third from leaving camp, the 'thirty lances' galloped seventeen leagues, and on the fourth another seventeen, so that their horses either were far better than the horses of those who go on similar adventures in these latter days, or they themselves were better riders, or, like the Indian underneath the tree, they had less shame, or something of the sort.

The fourth day found 'the lances' still upon the road, walking and galloping without respite, till they had travelled once more sixteen leagues.

So far their journey had been almost a pleasure-ride, for the mere matter of the lancing of a sporadic infidel or two, to your *conquistador*, modern or of the days of which I write, but serves as a pleasurable excitement, keeps men from growing stale, and the mere Indian or African almost enjoys the sport, as foxes in their youth all pray to die a glorious

\* 'La desvergüenza del Indio' ('La Florida,' p. 81).

death after a forty minutes' burst before the hounds in Leicestershire.

So on the evening of the fourth day out the 'lances,' meeting various Indians on the way, slew several of them, for fear that they should be the bearers of messages to Indians on ahead. Thus they killed seven of them (a fair day's sport), and coming to an open bit of prairie, and having, as all Spaniards in America at that time seem to have had, a native genius for a frontier life,\* they made their camp and slept till midnight, and, starting thence, rode five leagues more before the break of day. This brought them to the river Ochali, where, as the reader may remember, the good bloodhound Brutus met his untimely death.†

The Spaniards hoped to find the river low, but, most unluckily for them, it was in flood, and as they stood upon the banks a band of Indians suddenly appeared in sight. Again the Spaniards showed their natural aptitude for frontier fights. Their captain called on twelve of them to swim across and hold the landing-place upon the further side. Stripped to their shirts, and with their coats of mail and helmets and their lances in their hands, they plunged into the stream. Whilst they were swim-

\* Possibly the eight centuries of fighting with the Moors had sharpened their faculties for the 'lordliest life on earth.'

† 'Donde digimos avian flechado, los Indios al lebrél Bruto.' The reader may remember that 'Bruto' was called Becerillo the last time that he was mentioned. Therefore 'Bruto' may have only been his family name.



ming some of their comrades held the Indians in check, and others cut down boughs on which to pass the saddles, saddle-bags, and clothes, and several men who could not swim. The danger was extreme, for had a band of Indians appeared upon the further bank, they could have easily shot all the swimmers, and then, holding the landing-place, have either shot the rest or forced them into the ranks of the other Indians who were closing up behind. So wild was the adventure, so far removed the 'thirty lances' were from all assistance, and so small the chance of crossing with their lives, that one forgets they were really filibusters, seeking to take away the patrimony of other men, to enslave them if they could, and to force on them a religion entirely alien to their mode of life.

Eleven of the swimmers having gained the other side, they sent out scouts to watch the higher ground, who, in their dripping shirts and with their rusty coats of mail and helmets for their only dress, must have looked just as wild as did the Indians. The last man of the twelve was Lopez Cacho, whose horse, missing the landing-place, was carried downwards by the current, and only rescued by four good swimmers, who, plunging in, kept just above the tired horse, and broke the current, so that he gained the bank, but on the same side of the river from which he entered it.

Just as Juan Lopez Cacho and his tired horse emerged upon the bank, a band of Indians appeared, and advanced upon the eleven swimmers on the

other side, thus showing how wise the captain had shown himself in sending them to hold the landing-place. The eleven, mounting half naked on their bare-backed, dripping horses, charged on the Indians, and forced them to retreat. As the country upon the further side was bare of wood, the Indians fled, but kept on shooting arrows from a distance. The raft being ready, four swimmers, after loading it with saddles and with cloaks, passed to the other side, their companions holding the Indians in check by frequent charges on them. The cloaks were what the eleven on the further side most wanted, for the north wind blew cold. Those who have felt its full effects in Texas and in Florida can estimate how inadequate a dress a helmet and a coat of mail over a dripping shirt must have been to the half-frozen men.

Four times the swimmers went across, the wind rising at every journey and piercing them to the bone. At last but two were left upon the bank alone. These were Gonçalo and one Hernando Atanasio. The latter having got upon the raft, Gonçalo charged the Indians furiously alone, and, having driven them all back, instantly wheeled his horse, and, coming to the bank, plunged in with saddle, bridle, and his armour as he was. The Indians were so amazed that he gained the middle of the stream before they shot. The arrows at that distance rattled harmlessly against his coat of mail, and by good luck his horse escaped a wound. The Inca says the horses so feared the Indians that they seemed glad to go into

the icy stream. And so the riders, taking example from their beasts, refused no danger, and in the future shirked no difficulty. This was as well, for many lay before them still during the course of their adventurous ride.

Thus all the men and horses crossed the Rio Ochali, and by the help of God neither a man nor horse was hurt. Juan Lopez Cacho, who had been unlucky from the start, was now so tired with the exertions he had made in crossing, and had remained so long immersed, and then exposed to the full force of the north wind, that he was almost frozen, and stood like a statue, unable to move hand or foot.\*

So, placing him upon a horse, they took him to the town of Ochali, close to the river, and from which the Indians retired as soon as they saw the Spaniards arrive. Not daring to go into any of the huts for fear of lurking enemies, and most of all for fear that any of their horses would be shot, they camped upon the square, and lighted four great fires, one at each angle of the camp. In front of one of them they put Juan Lopez Cacho, and, covering him over with their cloaks, waited until he thawed. One of the Spaniards found a clean shirt in his saddlebags, and this they put on Cacho, and it proved the finest gift he could have had.

Till nightfall they waited in the town, caring for Cacho, whom they determined on no account to

\* 'Se avia elado y quedado como estatua de palo, sin poder menear pie ni mano' ('La Florida,' p. 87).

leave, although delay should cost them all their lives. But, still, they knew that if he could not manage to sit his horse by night the Indians would have time to gather and attack in force. All day they fed their horses upon Indian corn, and, though the town contained much fruit and vegetables, took nothing for themselves but maize, with which they filled their saddle-bags, reflecting that it served as food both for their horses and themselves.

At nightfall they placed sentinels at every angle of the square, and about midnight two of them heard, as it were, a murmur far away among the trees. They called a comrade, who went out and brought back word that he could just discern in the night-glow\* a band of Indians approach, who, as they marched upon the town, raised a confused and savage murmuring. The rest, seeing their danger, hastily mounted, and, tying Cacho, muffled in his cloak, upon his horse, placed him between two of his comrades, one of whom led his horse. He looked, the Inca says, like the Cid Ruy Diaz when they took him dead on his horse out of Valencia, right through the battle, the Moors all thinking him alive.

So well the thirty travelled that by daybreak they had made six leagues. So they kept on their way, travelling post-haste along the roads where they thought Indians might be found. When they met any by the way, they speared them, so that they

\* 'Lustror de la noche.'

might not carry news. When they passed desert country, they walked their horses, but yet made such good speed that in that day they travelled nearly twenty leagues—a wonderful march after the hard work the horses had had during the five preceding days.\*

Upon the seventh day they started early, and after a few hours upon the road one Pedro de Atiença fell ill, and in an hour or two died on his horse.† His fellow-riders buried him, digging his grave with the axes which they had for breaking firewood. They dug his grave as speedily as possible, some of them holding the horses whilst the others dug. Then they remounted, half amazed at having left a comrade, dead and buried, who but an hour ago was riding by their side.

At sunset they arrived close to the pass in the Great Swamp, having once more done twenty leagues—a good day's journey, with the time included that they had lost in burying their friend; still, not impossible, and one, men in America not infrequently make, keeping their horses to a steady jog, and never breaking or altering the pace, after the

\* The horses of the *conquistadores* of America came almost always from the plains of Cordoba. The breed to-day does not exist; that is to say, the horses of the South of Spain are quite unlike the horses in the pictures of the time of Charles V. Those looked like barbs, and must have been wonderfully sound to stand the work they did during the conquest of America.

† The Arab proverb, 'The grave of the horseman is always open,' was amply fulfilled in his case.

foolish fashion of those men who think, apparently, that galloping eases a horse upon the road.\*

In what condition poor Juan Lopez Cacho found himself after his ride of sixty miles, fastened, like Perkin Warbeck, to his horse, the Inca does not say. That night they could not sleep, the cold was so intense. They made great fires, and whilst a third of them kept watch the others tried to sleep; but towards midnight all were awakened, for one Juan de Soto, completely worn out with the hardships of the road and with the cold, died, almost without a word. One of the company, thinking the plague had come upon them, and being probably light-headed with the want of food and sleep, ran violently into the darkness shouting out 'Plague!' But one of those who had remained before the fire, named Gomez Arias, called to him, and said :

'The plague we have is that of the journey we are on. From it you cannot fly, and where do you expect to flee to? Here is not Seville, or its Axarafe,† or the Arenal.'

This was self-evident, and the man returned but joined in the prayers which they put up for 'Soto's soul.' With this help for their troubles,‡ as the Inca says, they passed the night.

\* A horseman who wishes to arrive would as soon think of varying his pace as would a walker think of resting by running down the hills.

† The Axarafe is a hilly region near Seville. The name is derived from the Arabic *el sharaf*, which means 'a hilly land.'

‡ 'Socorro para sus trabajos' ('La Florida,' p. 88).



Day broke with an intensely cold north wind, but, luckily, the water in the swamp was lower than it had been at night. What all most feared was that the Indians should come out in their canoes to stop their passage, as they had neither bows nor cross-bows with which to keep them off. Luckily for them, no Indians appeared, although the day was arduous enough.

Placing eight of the number who could not swim upon a sort of raft, together with the saddles, lances, and the cloaks, they passed them over, and then tried to make the horses cross. Nothing would make them face the icy cold, and the twenty who could swim had to take off their clothes, and, tying ropes to the horses, swim and pull them in. The horses, planting their four feet firmly, stood upon the bank, and, though the swimmers pulled and those upon the bank beat them with sticks, they would have rather died than face the cold. After three hours of struggling in the water by the clock,\* none of the horses could be induced to cross. At last the horse of Gonçalo Silvestre and another passed, but still the rest were obstinate, and the unlucky men were blue with cold, and looked like corpses when they came out on the bank. And whilst they struggled some of the rest kept guard, seated upon their horses with their lances in their hands. At last a gleam of sun at mid-day warming the water, the horses all were passed, but both they and their riders were so

\* 'Mas de tres horas de reloj.'

miserable that they could scarcely stand. So, having made large fires in the plain, they camped between them, and no doubt the night was long enough, for all the food they had they were obliged to give the horses, on whom, after God,\* their hope of safety lay.

Once more the first light saw them on the road, their company reduced by two. The horses of the dead men, saddled as they were, accompanied them, running along beside them, and occasionally taking the lead, as if they followed up the trail. Perhaps they did so, as the army had once passed along the road they travelled, and no animal in a wild country can better find its way than can a horse. That day their march was thirteen leagues. Five wretched Indians they met upon the track they lanced with as slight compunction as a colonist in 'Fraudesia Magna' would kill a Matabele, if it seemed proper for him so to do.

Next day, about an hour before the light, the half-breed Pedro Moron, who had the keenest sense of smell in all the Indies, suddenly stopped and exclaimed, 'I smell a fire.' A league upon the road they came upon a camp of Indians sitting around a fire and busily engaged in roasting fish. Charging the fire, they scattered them, and though the horses charged right through the camp, and all the fish was scattered in the sands, the Spaniards were so hungry that, without washing it, they straight devoured it

\* 'Despues de Dios.'

all. The Inca says it tasted as if seasoned with cinnamon and sugar, so sharp a sauce is hunger to a starving man.

After a five leagues' march, the horse of Lopez Cacho tired, and nothing they could do would make him keep up with the rest. So, taking off his saddle, and hanging it upon a tree, they left him grazing, grieving as it had been a comrade, for they felt sure that the first Indian who passed would put an arrow through him, for the Indians feared the horses like the plague.

Juan Lopez Cacho had by this time recovered, and, after taking off the bridle from his horse, mounted one of the horses of the dead men, and once again the company set out. By this time only six leagues remained to cover, and their hearts began to rise. They galloped wearily until within a league or two of Hiriagua, where Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eight foot-soldiers, still lay encamped. As they drew nearer, seeing no tracks upon the ground, which there was open prairie, stretching out for leagues, or any marks of horses, they began to fear the Indians had surprised the camp, or that perhaps, tired out with waiting, they had taken ship, and gone back to the port from whence the expedition had set out.

Had either of these two contingencies occurred, the 'thirty lances'—now reduced to twenty-eight—had been indeed in danger, for, without doubt, the horses could not have carried them back to the

general without rest. So they determined, if they should find the camp deserted, to retire into the depths of the forests, and wait a week where there was grass and water, and, having killed one of the dead men's horses, 'jerk' his flesh to make provision for the road.

However, when they arrived close to a little lake within less than a league of Hirihigua, they came upon fresh trail of horses, and in a pool saw signs of soap, where Spaniards had washed clothes. This raised their spirits, and their horses, smelling their fellows, pricked their ears and danced about—at least, so says the Inca—as if they had but just left stables for a morning ride. Just before sundown they came close to the town, and as they looked a line of horsemen, riding two by two, came from the gates. The travellers knew them, and forming into twos, as they had been but riding to a tournament, spurred their tired horses, and with shouts entered the town full gallop, twirling their lances round their heads. Each couple started separately, as was the custom in the 'Game of Canes,' and as one couple reached the gate the next one started. So, as the Inca says, thus terminated, as at a tournament, the hardships and the dangers of their painful ride.

In eleven days, one of which they lost in passing the river Ochali, and another at the Great Swamp, they had ridden one hundred and fifty leagues,\* so that they and their horses must have been in good

\* Four hundred and fifty miles.

condition, or else the breed of horses and of men has much deteriorated. At the noise the 'lances' made upon arriving at the town, Captain Pedro Calderon came out, and his first words to them were, not to ask about their own or of the general's or the army's health, but if, in the country they had passed, they had discovered gold.

On the third day after they reached the town, some friendly Indians brought the tired horse that Lopez Cacho had left grazing underneath the trees. The saddle and the bridle they carried on their heads, as none of them had dared to put them on.

## CHAPTER II

WHEN Captain Pedro Calderon received the message which Gonçalo and his companions had brought, after some necessary arrangements, and having despatched Juan de Añasco with two ships to join the Governor by sea, and Gomez Arias to the Habana to give an account of Florida and to seek reinforcement, he set out upon the road. One hundred and twenty followers accompanied him, and all went well with them until a short day's journey from the Great Swamp. Here Indians set on them, and one of them, standing close to the edge of a great wood, kept off the Spaniards by pointing an arrow drawn to the head at them. Gonçalo charged him on his horse and ran his lance right through him, but not before the Indian had had time to draw his bow. The arrow struck the horse right in the chest and stretched him dead without a movement, so that, the Inca says, Gonçalo and his horse and the dead Indian were all upon the ground at once.

So died Gonçalo's celebrated horse and all the army mourned his loss, for he was held the best, not



only in the army, but in the Indies, at the time. The Spaniards, never having seen bows drawn with such force, opened the horse, and it was found the arrow had almost come out on the other side. At this, the Inca says, they were amazed, but had no reason for their wonder, as the Indians practised shooting from their earliest youth. The children, if they saw a rat or any other beast go into a hole or hollow tree, would stand for hours waiting to shoot him as he came out, and, if they found no animals to practise on, would shoot at flies upon the wall. Thus they became so dexterous and so strong that they pierced coats of mail like paper, so that their owners called them 'cloth of Flanders' as a jest.

After the skirmish Calderon advanced to pass the swamp. In the deepest of the pass the Indians fell on them and slew several of their men.

The captain of the Indians, crowned with a feather head-dress which made him look almost a giant, advanced before the rest with, says the Inca, as much bravery and gallant bearing as you can conceive. His object was to place himself behind a tree which stood upon a mound, so that behind it he and his men could shoot the Spaniards as they struggled through the mud. Gonçalo, who with some soldiers who had lost their horses stood nearest to the tree, called to one Anton Galvan, a crossbowman who had lost his horse, but, like a good soldier, still retained his bow. Following Gonçalo, with his crossbow bent and ready to shoot,

they crawled towards the tree. Gonçalo, who had taken up a broken buckler from the mud, covered himself as well as possible with it and rushed on furiously. The Indian instantly let fly three shafts so quickly that they seemed as one. Gonçalo caught them on his buckler, which, being wet, resisted them, and then Anton Galvan, with a crossbow-shot, wounded the Indian in the chest, who fell back shouting to his friends. They hurried up, and bore him in their arms out of the fight.

Perhaps, of all the various fights in the Great Swamp, this was the fiercest that the Spaniards had; in it they lost both men and horses, and on emerging from the swamp they had to fight at every instant on the road until they reached the camp.

In Soto's camp there was such scarcity of food that the Indian boys brought lizards, rats, and other animals, for sale, which the soldiers paid high prices for and instantly devoured. 'Here,' says the Inca, 'I had almost forgotten to narrate an exemplary chastisement which Captain Patosa gave to an Indian who had wished to run away. This Indian, one of the men who carried burdens, called in the language of Hispaniola a *Tameme*, without having received the slightest injury, moved by cowardice, or by the wish to see his children and his wife, or perhaps because the devil had told him of the hunger he would pass, or from some other cause unknown to me, deserted from the post.' Happening to fall again, like an imprudent man, into the Spaniards'

power, Patosa sought about for something novel to impress the rest. First, like a Christian captain, he had the man brought up before the troops, harangued him upon truthfulness, on duty, and the necessity of keeping faith. He spoke to him about the bad example he had shown, upon the slight respect that he had manifested towards his officers, and then he said, judicially enough, 'I mean to punish you, so that the rest may learn how to behave.' Then, gathering his wits together, he pronounced the doom. 'Take me this Indian,' he said, 'and bind him face downwards to this brook till he has drunk it dry. If he refuses, beat him till he dies.'

No sooner said than done; the Indian was duly tied and set upon his face to drink. Those who stood by him, when he raised his head, beat him with sticks, and the captain made them stir the water, to make it still more difficult to drink.\* Placed in this torture,† the Indian drank till he nearly choked, and when he raised his head to breathe the soldiers beat him, so that in a short time he must have died. However, some of his friends ran to the general, who instantly sent and had the torture stopped. Thus, says the Inca, did Patosa punish with justice and severity the Indian's fault, and he, having drunk more than he wished for, without thirst, had almost died.

\* 'Hiço que le enturbiase el agua porque la bebiese con mayor pena' ('La Florida,' p. 119).

† 'Puesto en el tormento.'

An incident told without comment, in a military way, for soldiers, by a soldier, and which the teller seems to think sets forth Captain Patosa in a favourable light.

The national illness, Hunger, which, from the days when the Romans called their country the *dura tellus Iberiæ* down to the present day, has always beset Spaniards, did not desert them in Florida, or, for that matter, in the New World at large, until the natural fertility of the soil insisted, upon bearing crops almost in spite of them.

At the general's camp food was so scarce that all they had was the Indian corn which they had brought to feed the horses, and of this so little that on one occasion Silvestre and four friends only received, for an entire day's ration, eighteen grains.

Having received his eighteen grains of maize, Silvestre met a friend, one Troche, a man from Burgos, and asked him to come and eat some marchpane which had just come from Seville. As they were laughing, up came Pedro de Torres from Badajoz and asked if he could give him anything to eat. Gonçalo answered, 'Yes, I have some rusks from Utrera which have just come quite fresh.' Then, drawing out his eighteen grains of maize, he made three portions of them, and, says the Inca, they ate them hurriedly, in case that any other of their friends should come and ask for food.

After this plenteous meal they went down to the stream and drank to their hearts' content, passing

that day with that alone, for, as the Inca says, there was no more to get. Thus was the New World gained, not by full eating, but on grains of Indian corn and water, and by the providence of God assisting those who had stout hearts.

Promotion, which, as we know, cometh not from the east or west, and, so to speak, is of the nature of the creed of Holy Willy, being not for the good or ill the man promoted does, but by the caprice of the War Office, in those days was a slow affair. In spite of all Gonçalo's rides and starvings, lancing of Indians and the like, his first reward was but to be an Ensign, and that in April, 1541, after three years of war.

He was not called upon, we may presume, to send for a new uniform to Spain, for hardly was he named an Ensign than he found himself engaged with the Indians in a stiff battle for his life.

It seems that close to Alibama the Indians had erected strong stockades, a most unusual thing in Florida. Gonçalo with some others was ordered to attack and carry them. On this occasion, the Inca notes, the Indians painted their bodies and their faces to look terrible. This is one of the first times that this subsequently well-known custom is set down. Neither in Cuba, Hispaniola, nor in Mexico, and still less in Peru, it seems to have been known.

Advancing on the stockades, the Indians shot so fast that almost all the Spaniards were soon killed.

The remnant, with Gonçalo at their head, charged desperately, but were beaten back with loss.

The general himself was forced to head the next attack. This he immediately did on horseback, at the head of all the mounted men. As he advanced, an Indian arrow struck him on the helmet with such force as to beat him backwards on his seat, the arrow springing from the steel almost a pike's length in the air.\* But the full tide of progress rushing in was not to be withstood. Entering the stockade upon their horses, and all sheathed in steel, the Governor and his men cut down the infidel as they had been ripe wheat. Some of the Indians, not being able to escape, jumped from the high banks into the river, and, as the Inca says (speaking entirely this time on the score of his half-Spanish blood), 'it was a most amusing thing to hear their bodies strike the water as they fell.'

One of the Indians who had escaped, relying on his bowmanship, turned back and called upon one of the Spaniards to take his crossbow and step out and fight. This was a practice that the Spaniards of that age must have heard often mentioned by their grandfathers. During the eight hundred years of fighting with the Moors in Spain, nothing was commoner before a fight than for a champion to step out before the contending hosts and challenge anyone to single fight. In Arabic he was known as

\* 'La flecha surtío de la celada mas de una pica en alto' ('La Florida,' p. 174).



*mobariz*, that is, the duellist, and all the Spanish and the Moorish records of the wars in Spain teem with descriptions of such combats and their varying results. On this occasion a crossbowman, one Juan de Salinas, stepped out before the rest, advancing with his crossbow bent towards the Indian, who waited for him with an arrow in his bow. To his great honour, Juan de Salinas indignantly refused the offer of a friend to shield him with his buckler as he fought, saying, 'The Indian is alone and has no shield: shall I, a Christian gentleman of Spain, shrink to attack on equal terms a naked infidel?' As they advanced they fired at the same time. Juan de Salinas struck his adversary full in the chest, and Indians, advancing, bore him senseless from the field. The Indian's arrow took the Spaniard in the neck and pierced it through, but he had strength to walk alone back to the camp amongst the cheers of his companions and his friends. A good fair fight, and such as rarely happened between an Indian and a Spaniard, for the Spaniards then looked on themselves in the same way as we to-day, who talk of killing so many hundred of the enemy, and if some of ourselves are killed rave about massacre, as if we could make either war or omelettes and break no eggshells or imperil lives.

Lives, it appears, Silvestre had in greater numbers than a cat, and every day he risked at least one or two of them. Not many days after the battle at the stockades, Gonçalo and some Spaniards who

presumed in valour\* were roaming in the woods looking for a lost horse, when on a sudden a solitary Indian appeared. As he could not escape, he came out boldly, holding in his hands a battle-axe which he had taken from one Captain Paez, a leader of the crossbowmen. A Spaniard named Cunança charged the Indian on his horse, but he received him with so violent a blow upon his shield that it was cut in two, and Cunança badly wounded in the arm. Then, turning on the next, he wounded him, severely, and the two Spaniards were obliged to leave the fight. The next to attack was Francisco de Salaçar, but the Indian gave his horse so furious a blow upon the neck that he, too, was forced to turn and gallop back. The fourth advanced on foot, and would have been killed instantly had not Gonçalo, rushing on his horse, escaped the Indian's blow by bending in the saddle almost to the ground, and as he passed cutting the Indian's left hand off at the wrist. The Indian, nothing daunted, placed the handle of the axe against his wounded arm, and charged upon Gonçalo with the point. He caught the point and with a blow cut the Indian at the waist, and he, the Inca says, having no armour, was so swiftly cut in two that for an instant he did not fall. Gonçalo, seeing he was dead, reined up his horse, and, saying 'Peace be with you,' watched the Indian fall in two halves to the ground. Thus did Gonçalo emulate St. James, he who in Spanish

\* 'Presumian de valientes.'

pictures, on a white and rather long-backed horse, triumphantly rides amongst the ranks of Moors, trampling the dogs under his charger's feet so constantly that the spectator's sympathies inevitably incline towards the infidel.

But now Gonçalo's time in Florida was drawing to a close. A serious illness, brought on by the hardships he had suffered, left him broken for the time in health, and only fit for duty at the camp. Watching one night, about the 'hour of drowsiness'\*—that is to say, between the hours of one and three—he saw two Indians approach. They wore their war paint and high crowns of feathers on their heads. The man who was on duty with Silvestre said to him, 'You are but just recovered and still weak: let me deal with the two misbelieving dogs as they deserve.' Gonçalo, always eager to strike a blow for the true faith, was quite indignant, and without reply fell on the miscreants, raised the battle-cry of 'Santiago!' and put the dogs to flight. Perhaps the invocation was sufficient in itself, for the Indians, turning, fled; the warrior sank upon the ground exhausted, whilst the invaders of the camp fled, as the wicked do the whole world over, no man pursuing them. Nothing in the Conquest of America was more remarkable than the development of those who had left Spain but mere raw boys into men seasoned both to battle and diplomacy in a few short years. Hardly recovered from his illness, Gonçalo was

\* 'El cuarto de la modorra.'

promoted to be captain, and chosen to conduct an expedition to a chief called Anilco, to obtain some wool to calk the ships, some rope for rigging, and some tar, which the chief got from trees 'like pines in Spain,' which grew near to where he lived. Except upon extraordinary occasions or when duty called, Silvestre seems to have behaved as well or better to the Indians as any of the subordinate *conquistadores* of whom we have accounts. They, as a general rule, were cruel, as any man is apt to be who thinks himself of a superior race. The daily dealings with the animals, even of the most humane of us to-day, are tinged with cruelty, rendered more terrible because we think that we are kind. So of the Spaniards in the Indies at the conquest: their most tremendous crimes were often perpetrated from a mistaken view that they were acceptable in the sight of the Great Power whom they believed had raised them up to execute His will.

It happened that Silvestre had once saved the son of the Cacique Anilco, and kept him with him, endeavouring to teach him 'Christian doctrine,' and no doubt enforcing it by the example of his life. The chief lived near Mauvila, and there Gonçalo went, taking with him the boy who had become a Christian, and, what perhaps was quite as important in his case, almost a Spaniard. Although nothing of moment happened at Mauvila, still, it is pleasing when we read that all the time was spent in feasting and good fellowship, and that Silvestre and the chief

embraced at parting and promised to be friends. It is not unusual for people to part friends, even in England, as long as there has been no talk of gold and perhaps one of the reasons of the friendly parting of Gonçalo and the chief was that his visit had only been for wool and tar with which to calk the ships.

In fact, all Florida was a miserable country for a *conquistador*—fierce, warlike Indians to fight, a difficult and dangerous territory to cross, and not a sign of gold. The only trace of anything of the least value seems to have been secured by Gonçalo, in the shape of a most curious standard, eight yards long, all made of sable-skins. It was all sewn with strings of pearls, and seed-pearls (*aljofar*) strung into tassels all along the edge. What it may really have been, even the Inca is not clear.

It was, he says, either used as a standard or as a canopy at feasts, being too long to serve either for the cover of a bed or hanging for a room. In fact, he leaves one in the same position as is the searcher in an Arabic dictionary, who finds some word referred to twenty texts, and then is left with this pregnant summing up, 'But as to what it really means, only Alláh can tell.'

What more adventures and wild rides Silvestre had in Florida no one can say, but in the wanderings by sea and land, right through what now is Louisiana, to the Mississippi, no doubt he had his share of dangers and of fights. However, he was one of those who passed through all the hardships of the voyage,

first down the Mississippi, fighting all the way, and endured their five-and-fifty days of navigation, on what to them was quite an unknown sea, until their shipwreck at Panuco, where at their landing they found that they were safe in Mexico. They were so sunburned, dry, and thin, so much disfigured with all the hardships they had undergone, that the inhabitants of Panuco were moved to tears at sight of them, and sent at once mules laden with shirts and shoes for all the followers of Soto, who numbered about three hundred men, shoeless and without hats, their armour either long cast away or rusty, and their clothing skins of beasts. Even the Indians came to look at them, not having seen before the Spaniards reduced to such necessity. But as they marched their spirits rose, and they remembered all they had undergone, and having heard upon the way about new conquests in Peru, some of them made up their minds to go and seek the fortune which they had not found in Florida.

When they arrived in Mexico, the Viceroy had them billeted upon the citizens, giving them clothes and food, but some of them in the pride of their adventures still kept to their frayed coats of skins. Diego de Tapia, a soldier, who afterwards went to Peru, was walking through the town, when a kind-hearted citizen, seeing his miserable state, came out and asked him if he would go to his estate to work. The soldier, who, the Inca says, looked like a lion, clothed as he was in bear skins, stared at him fiercely,



and replied: 'I am just going to Peru, and if you care to come with me, you can work on one of the estates which I shall gain.' The citizen turned and went back into his house without a word, thinking that he was fortunate to have escaped so well.

The Viceroy, Gonçalo de Salazar, singled out Gonçalo in especial, talking for hours to him of all he saw in Florida, asking him questions, and reminding him that, in the voyage out from Spain, his was the ship at which the cannon-shots were fired. He pardoned him, telling him he had only acted as a good soldier should, but adding that he hoped one day to meet Hernando de Soto and fight the question out. Perhaps when he had heard the pathetic, picturesque account of Soto's death, he may have buried the remembrance of the dead man's offence, though, as we know, 'ulcers may sooner heal than bitter words.'\* But be that as it may, he showed himself worthy to be Viceroy of Mexico, in his nobility of heart and unending kindness to the poor

\* 'Sanan llagas, y no malas palabras.' Though the Viceroy may not have quite forgiven, yet he sympathized, as kindred spirits always sympathize, although they hate, for he ' marvelled much upon the battles and the fights . . . and felt much pain when that he heard of Soto's death.' His burial also moved the Viceroy almost to tears, 'and, on the contrary, he was much pleased to hear of his brave deeds, his courage, and his patience under cold and heat.' Much did he blame himself, when he heard Soto had wished to send to him for help, saying with oaths ('grandes juramentos'), 'had he but known it, he would have gone himself, and taken all the force of Mexico down the mouth of the Great River, where it joins the sea.'

starvelings whom the search for gold had caused to sell their lands to visit those of other men.

Long did he talk into the night about the dangers of the road, telling Gonçalo that he envied him his ride, when with the 'thirty lances' he passed the dismal swamp. Much did he dwell upon their individual exploits, and being 'very curious in some things,' he begged Gonçalo's sword of him, that sword with which he cut the Indian in two, to hang in his *recamara*.\*

His disappointment knew no bounds, on hearing that Gonçalo, like a true Spaniard of the day, having nothing else to give, had bestowed the standard made of sable-skins and sewn with pearls upon his host, when he had landed in Panuco, after the shipwreck of the caravel. He said—and all collectors here will feel for him, that he would cheerfully have given fifteen hundred crowns to own so rare a 'piece.' But though the citizens of Mexico all did their best to entertain the wanderers, 'giving them shoes and shirts, mattresses, sheets and blankets, doublets of cloth of twenty-four † made in Segovia, with combs

\* *Recamara* really means 'wardrobe,' but here must be taken as 'museum.'

† It has not been vouchsafed to me to be able to translate 'Paño ventiquatreño de Segovia' except as above. Dictionaries, those blind misleaders of the blind, explain the phrase as meaning the number of threads the cloth contains, as 'pañó catorceno, etc., cierta especie de paño basto . . . de mayor ó menor cantidad de hilos, como diezoceno venidoceno, etc.' This throws light on the meaning, but does not help me to an

and brushes and all that soldiers want,' their pride forbade them to stay long and eat the bread of idleness.

So coming to the Viceroy they kissed his hands, and, thanking him, departed for Peru. Some went 'into religion,' and some returned to Spain as poor as they set out, but taking their experience with them, as a fund to draw upon in their old age, when sitting by the fire.

Gonçalo, no doubt, went with the adventurers who, not yet tired of danger, set out for Lima and for Cuzco, in the search for more. At least, no more is heard of him, either in Florida or in Mexico, but in Peru he had another ride at least as dangerous as any he had had, and fights and strange adventures enough to have contented him had he been one of the 'Twelve Peers of France.'

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adequate translation, so that the matter remains in as 'absolute warrandice' (if I may pervert that term) to me as, when reading an old Scotch law-book, I come upon 'ane ten merke lande of olde extent,' or the like phrase, the meaning of which 'only Alláh can explain.'

### CHAPTER III

How or with whom Silvestre came to Peru seems to be quite unknown. He may have joined the band of skin-clad, barefoot men who did not care to live in Mexico on charity. He may have journeyed with his friend Captain Don Diego de Centeno, for he was with him throughout the insurrection of Gonçalo de Pizarro, and in the year 1546 is mentioned as taking refuge in a cave together with Centeno, after the battle in which Gonçalo de Pizarro killed and defeated Blasco Nuñez Vela, the Viceroy of Peru.

In 1546, although still young, he was no longer the raw boy who had sailed from San Lucar in 1538. Eight years of life in the Indies had no doubt changed him into an accomplished man-at-arms. The time at which we find him was of great interest in the history of Peru.

The rival factions of the Almagros and Pizarros roved all about the land, fighting pitched battles, and the last Inca Prince, Manco, had just been wounded by a Spaniard over a quarrel which arose out of a game at bowls. Silvestre seems to have belonged to the faction of the Almagros, whose last leader, Diego

de Almagro, son of the celebrated *conquistador*, had just been executed by the rival chiefs.\*

Much discontent existed amongst the Spanish settlers on account of certain laws which, chiefly through the agency of the great friar, Bartolomé de las Casas, had been promulgated in reference to the treatment of the Indians in Mexico and in Peru. The Indians also were in a state of chronic disaffection, both on account of the abominable treatment they received and on account of the murder of the last Inca Prince.

The Inca Garcilasso (though a *mestizo*) says of Las Casas: 'He showed himself very zealous of the welfare of the Indians, and a great defender of them. He proposed and sustained things which, though they appeared holy and good, upon the other hand appeared very harsh and difficult to put into effect.'†

In 1542, after the Emperor Charles V. returned to Spain from Flanders, he had several long interviews with Las Casas, who persuaded him to issue what

\* Diego de Almagro was a *mestizo*—that is, his mother was an Indian woman. Garcilasso de la Vega says of him ('Comentarios Reales del Peru,' vol. i., book xviii., p. 172): 'Asi acabo el pobre Don Diego de Almagro el mejor mestiço, que ha nacido en todo el Mundo Nuevo, si obedeceria al ministro de su Rei ; fue lindo nombre de á caballo de ambas sillas, murió como buen Christiano, con mucho arrepentimiento de sus pecados.'

† 'Comentarios Reales del Peru,' p. 175: 'Proponia y sustentava cosas, que aunque parecian santas y buenas, por otra parte, se mostrava, muy rigurosas, y dificultosas, para ponerlas en efecto.'

were called 'Las Nuevas Ordenanças de Indias,' which were designed to protect the Indians from the cruelties and injustices under which they lay.

These laws regulated taxes, protected the Indians from forced labour in the mines, and enacted that no Government official, or any Bishop or a monastery, could hold Indians in the semi-slavery known as *repartimientos* and *encomiendas*, in which the Indians so held, although they only were obliged by law to work so many days for those who held the *encomienda*, were virtually slaves. These, and matters of the same kind contained in the new code of laws, quite naturally gave much offence to men who, as the Spaniards in Peru, in general looked on the Indians as mere beasts.

Scarcely had the new Viceroy, Blanco Nuñez Vela, landed in Peru than discontent arose. He, having no regard but to the orders of the Emperor and to the letter of the law, attempted instantly to give the laws effect. The fury of the Spaniards, and in particular those of them who had been *conquistadores*, knew no bounds. They not unnaturally thought that all the hardships they had suffered, and the dangers which they had run in the first conquest, entitled them to do exactly as they pleased, both as regards the Indians and the land which they had won.

At last, four of the chief towns wrote to Gonçalo de Pizarro, naming him Procurator-General of all Peru. He at once set out to levy troops. Having



got together an army composed of all the oldest and best-seasoned of the *conquistadores* and their sons, he marched from Cuzco and raised the standard of revolt.

Of all the *conquistadores* of America, Gonçalo de Pizarro was one of the most outstanding and most interesting. An able captain and an adventurous explorer, he had the gift, inseparable from greatness in command, of winning every heart. Gomara and the other writers of the time who mention him all speak in praise both of his ability\* and of his pride.†

Throughout the war Silvestre was upon the loyal side. After the Battle of Quito, in which the Viceroy, Blasco Nuñez de Vela, was killed and his whole army routed, Gonçalo, with his friend Diego de Centeno, retreated in good order with a few hundred men. After them came Francisco de Carabajal, one of the most experienced captains of the age; for almost two hundred leagues the chase endured, Centeno and Silvestre always in the rear and fighting all the way. On one occasion they, with six horsemen, stayed behind, and laid two barrels of gunpowder under some branches in the road, and set a slow match burning, timed

\* Gomara ('*Historia de las Indias*,' cap. clxxxv., p. 173) says of him: 'Hombre que nunca fué vencido en batallas que diese, y dió muchas.'

† Pride was a virtue in the eyes of the Spaniards of those days, as cant is a virtue to so many Englishmen to-day.

to explode them as the pursuers came along the path. The scheme turned out a failure, and they owed their lives but to the swiftness of their mounts, for Carbajal, who had long served in Flanders and in Italy, although at that time he was over eighty years of age, was one of those into whose hands it was as bad to fall as it would be into those of a party of Apaches painted and armed for war. His favourite method with a prisoner in Peru was to expose him naked all night in a marsh, which, at the altitude at which most of the great plains lie, meant certain death. Still, as a captain of repute, he knew good soldiers, and as the chase went on from day to day, he said to those about him that not in Italy or Flanders had he seen two captains better fitted to command than the two young men who covered the retreat.\*

Gonçalo and his friend made towards Arequipa, hoping there to find a ship; but the pursuit grew each day hotter, and at last the force all separated into twos and threes, leaving Silvestre and Centeno and some others almost alone. They hid themselves in caves, with some friendly Indians, who for months supported them; then, on the coming of the new Viceroy, the Licenciado La Gasca, they

\* When the Pizarro faction was at length beaten, and Gonçalo Pizarro executed by the President La Gasca, Carbajal, then a prisoner and hourly expecting death, was in Centeno's charge. When Centeno asked if he did not remember him, he is reported to have said, 'No, for I only saw your shoulders during the whole length of that long retreat.'

joined him, and in the Battle of Huarina both fought valiantly.

In this desperate battle, in which Diego Centeno commanded the forces of the Crown against Gonçalo de Pizarro, Silvestre performed one of the greatest exploits of his life, which, as the Inca says, he was accustomed to relate in after-times.

In a desperate charge made by Centeno and the cavalry, Gonçalo de Pizarro got separated from his followers, and, seeing some of his infantry about to fly, galloped towards them to encourage them. Three horsemen, seeing him alone, pursued him, with Silvestre at their head.

For the first time, perhaps, Silvestre found himself outmatched in horsemanship. Gonçalo and his two followers caught up Pizarro, and one attacked him on each side, but he, being dressed in Milan steel, was quite invulnerable to their attacks. One of the horsemen, Miguel Vergara, kept shouting all the time, 'Yield, traitor!' Pizarro answered not a word, but galloped on towards the infantry. Gonçalo de Silvestre pushed his horse on to strike Pizarro from behind, and got so close that his horse rested his nose upon the quarters of Pizarro's horse, and prevented him from galloping his best. Seeing this, Pizarro turned 'as easily and lightly as if he had been playing in a Game of Canes,\* and with a short mace, which he carried hanging from his wrist,

\* 'Con un desenfado y una desenbultura, como si fuera en un Juego de Cañas' ('Comentarios Reales del Peru,' p. 305).

struck the pursuing horse three rapid blows. Two of them fell upon his muzzle, which they cut through to the teeth; the third came down above his eye and broke the bony circle, though without injuring the eye.

In another instant, fighting as they rode, they came upon the infantry, which instantly lowered its pikes and let Pizarro pass into the square. Silvestre tried to stop his horse, but could not, and rode in close upon the pikes. Just as he checked his horse he lowered his sword and wounded\* Pizarro's horse in the hip-bone, but slightly and to such small account that afterwards he never cared to talk about the blow. The pikemen gave Silvestre's horse two wounds about the face which made him rear, and as he reared gave him another wound, which pierced both forearms, but only through the flesh. The horse swerved round and snapped the pike, and in a bound or two took both his master and himself beyond the fear of death.

The other two pursuers did not come off so well. Miguel Vergara could not stop his horse, which carried him into the square, where in an instant the rider and his horse were slain.

The third, Francisco de Ulloa, turned his horse

\* 'Gonçalo Pizarro preciose de buenos caballos, y los tenia bonisimos. Al principio de la conquista del Peru, tenia dos castaños, el uno llamaron el Villano, porque no era de buen talle, pero bonisimo de obra; el otro llamaron el Çainillo' ('Comentarios Reales del Peru,' p. 351). What horse he rode at the Battle of Huarina is not set down, but he must have been 'bonisimo de obra.'

just on the pikes, but as he turned one of the crossbowmen stepped out and shot Ulloa through the body, whilst a pikeman hamstrung his horse above the hocks. The horse, a gray (the Inca says, 'I had this from an eye-witness'), was so good that he ran more than fifty paces with his dying master on his back, and then the two dropped dead.

The Battle of Huarina was one of the bloodiest fought in the civil wars throughout Peru. Victory at first inclined towards Centeno, who slew more than one hundred of the horsemen of his enemies; but all the infantry of the Pizarros which had not been engaged, with Gonçalo de Pizarro in their midst, advanced, and turned the day. Before their attack things looked so desperate that Pizarro wished to go out alone and strike a blow before his death. His old lieutenant, Carbajal, restrained him, saying, 'There is always time to die; leave things to me.' Then, bringing up his reserve of crossbowmen, he turned the rout into a victory, and the forces of Centeno had to fly. Carbajal himself had a narrow escape just at the last, for, seated on a pony in front of the crossbowmen whom he was bringing up to the attack, a flying horseman as he passed struck him across the visor with such force that, had his helmet not been made of Milan steel, he must have killed him on the spot.

Silvestre on his wounded horse, seeing the day was lost, began to think of flight. The fight had been so fierce that he was mixed up with the horse-

men of Pizarro, and, as his horse was wounded, could not leave their ranks. One of them, seeing that his horse was dripping blood, turned round and said to him, 'Get off; your horse is just about to fall.' What he thought may be imagined, but he said nothing and kept on upon his way.

He turned his face towards the wing, looking for any means whereby he might escape, but on the right he saw Gonçalo de Pizarro and the remnants of his cavalry, their horses tired and wounded, pressing towards Centeno's camp.

Pizarro rode without his helmet, pale with fatigue, bloody, and white with dust. At every step he crossed himself, exclaiming, 'Jesus! what a fight!' whilst his followers slew all of the wounded that they passed.

In front there was a little marsh, but not much deeper than the horses' hocks. Into it at once Silvestre spurred, expecting every instant that his horse would fall. Just as he got into the mud and water he heard a man shouting to him to halt. This was Gonçalo de los Nidos, whom in the battle Silvestre had unhorsed and granted him his life. Seeing that Silvestre was not upon his side, he called again, and then, when Silvestre turned upon his horse, he recognised him. He instantly set up a shout of 'Death to traitors!' and advanced whilst brandishing his sword. Luckily for Silvestre, the noise their horses made whilst trampling in the mud prevented any of the other soldiers from hearing what they said.



Turning towards Gonçalo de los Nidos, Silvestre said: 'Let me go on; I and my horse are wounded, and he is just about to fall. We shall soon die, without your help.' But as he said this he still spurred his horse across the swamp.

Los Nidos answered, 'Yes, you will die, but at my hands,' and tried to attack him, but his horse was tired and could not raise a trot. Silvestre, who still thought his horse was more severely wounded than it was, looked round and said, 'Will you not treat me as I did you but a few hours ago?' The other, thinking that he had an easy chance to wipe off his disgrace, spurred up his tired horse, and shouted, 'When I catch you you are a dead man, and I will tear your heart out and throw it to the dogs.'

Gonçalo, says the Inca, was so sure his horse was just about to drop, that in after-years he said, 'Had but he spoken to me courteously, I should have given myself up.'

However, luckily for him, his fury was so great at hearing the menaces of him who but an hour or two ago he had treated kindly, that he resolved to go as far as his wounded horse would carry him, and then retreat on foot. When they got through the marsh, the mud of which was just sufficiently deep to prevent them coming to blows till they came out upon hard ground, Silvestre spurred his horse. To his surprise, it bounded like a goat, and then, giving a snort and tossing up its head, throwing a bloody foam upon his clothes, it galloped on as if it had no

wound. As soon as Silvestre saw his horse was fit to go, he made believe to fly, in order to put as much distance as he could between himself and the horseman of Pizarro on the other side of the swamp. Nidos came after him, calling on him to stop, and shouting 'Traitor!' so that his friends might hear and follow up the prey.

Gonçalo in the fight had broken both his swords, for then it was the custom in Peru to carry two, one hanging round the waist and one upon the saddle-bow. However, in his hand he had a rusty rapier, which he had taken from a negro in the fight. Wheeling his horse, he rushed upon Los Nidos and struck him with the flat so stout a blow that he reeled in his stirrups, and, turning round his horse, galloped towards the camp, calling upon the rest for help.

Pizarro, who on his tired horse was sitting near the swamp, saw and admired the feat of arms, and, calling to an officer, said, 'Fetch me in that man, either with fair words or offers, for he deserves great honour for his bravery.'

Alonso de Herrera tried to execute his chief's command, but in despite of spur his horse could never raise a trot, and gradually Silvestre disappeared from sight, Alonso de Herrera shouting after him, 'Turn back: you will get more honour and reward in one week from Pizarro than in a twelvemonth in the service of the King.'

This was quite possible, for Kings in general keep

their rewards for pimps, and the great Emperor Charles V. was no exception to this rule.

Gonçalo de Pizarro, says the Inca, went to his tent and asked my father to lend him his horse called Salinillos, and left the horse which Silvestre had wounded in the hip. He rode out on the field, and found that in the time of changing horses the Indians had stripped all the wounded, friends and foes alike. As night was coming on, and the climate of Peru upon the hills is most severe, all would have died of cold had he not had them brought into a church.

Silvestre, when he found himself beyond pursuit, went to his tent, which luckily had not been sacked. The first thing that he called for was his bag of horseshoes and his nails, his pincers, foot-parer, and everything to shoe a horse upon the road. Taking a cloak of scarlet cloth, which was then used by gentlemen throughout Peru, he left his Indian frightened and tearful and struck into the road.

Upon it fugitives of every sort were streaming, all trying to escape. As luck would have it, the Pizarros' faction, having lost almost all their horses, were unable to pursue. Gonçalo passed them all, and lastly came on a wounded Spaniard stretched on a pony's back, his arms about its neck, having lost too much blood to sit upright. Beside him walked an Indian girl, with her hand upon his wound, and in the other a short stick with which she beat the

horse. As Gonçalo passed them she said, 'Courage, my master; fly from the traitors; do not fear that I shall leave you till I see you safe.'

After three leagues of travel night began to fall, and then Gonçalo left the beaten road and looked about for grass, having no food either to eat himself or to give to his horse. In a small hollow he took his bridle off, and his horse, being half dead with hunger, set to work at once to eat. He ate with so much fury that he pulled up the roots and ate them, earth and all, and Gonçalo, though he had no food himself was comforted by seeing his horse eat. In an hour or two stragglers came in, and soon a company of fifty gathered round the fire the Indians lit, and shared a little maize which the Peruvian Indians always carry on the road. Most were sore wounded, and one, between himself and horse, had three-and-twenty wounds. The night was arctic, and the frost stiffened the wounds, and round the fire the wounded men huddled and groaned as their last hour had come. Just then an Indian arrived with a basket on his back, which he picked up near the battlefield. In haste they opened it, hoping to find some food, but there was nothing in it except tallow candles, which they were just about to throw away. Luckily for them, some Indians told them that melted grease would do to dress their wounds. So, having melted down the candles in two helmets, and mixed the grease with llama dung, they poured it as hot as

they could bear into the wounds, both of the horses and the men. The effect was marvellous, for of the wounded horses and the men not one by morning but was fit to take the road, and that in spite of the intense cold which had prevailed all night.

When day broke they all separated to avoid pursuit, and after fifteen days of wandering about, Silvestre found himself safe in an Indian village, where he met the wounded Spaniard and the Indian girl whom he had passed in such a lamentable state, after the battle, in the rout upon the road. The man was quite recovered of his wound, the girl's relations having sheltered and cared for him till he was cured. Thus, says the Inca, 'is the mercy of the Lord declared'; this may be so, but to less pious souls the charity of the poor Indian girl would seem to loom as largely as the Lord's mercy, in looking at the case.

Where or in what manner Gonçalo de Silvestre employed himself for the next few months is quite a blank, but as the tide of fortune gradually flowed towards the largest sea, which in this instance was the party of the King, during the three months in which we lose him from our sight Silvestre was most probably resting himself and caring for his wounded horse. After these months were passed he appeared one day at Andaguaylas, to which place all the chief men who remained faithful to the King had gone to meet the President La Gasca, and

to arrange about levying more forces to push on the war.

The President and all his army passed the winter months in Andaguaylas, and were joined there by Pedro de Valdivia, the *conquistador* of Chile, who brought with him 'many and hardy knights.'

There, so that the soldiery should not be dull—for dulness breeds discontent, even in veteran troops—they passed their time in jousting and in 'playing canes.' We may be sure Silvestre and his horse, by this time cured of his numerous wounds, had their full share of sport.

By this time President La Gasca, although he had set out from Spain without a single soldier, had succeeded in drawing to him all the most powerful men throughout Peru.

At last, in the great battle of Aquizaguana, La Gasca broke the rebel's power, and took and executed Gonçalo de Pizarro and his war-worn lieutenant, Carbajal, who died 'more like a Moor than like a Christian,' which, being rendered into plain words, would seem to be that, when the game was up, he did not snivel, but died as a brave man. Your Christian ending to a heathen life, to those who look at life and death as things to apply their reason to (in the same way as they apply their teeth to beef and mutton equally), is but a cowardly attempt to reap the benefits of fire insurance, whilst neglecting to send in the yearly premiums on the property insured.



I find no mention of Silvestre in the battle, though he must have been there with his friend Centeno, and no doubt was not averse to triumph over enemies who had reduced him to such straits after the Battle at Huarina, when he escaped upon his wounded horse.

With the death of Gonçalo de Pizarro and of Carbajal, almost the whole of the first turbulent *conquistadores* of Peru had disappeared. Francisco de Pizarro and the Almagros, father and son alike, had been murdered or executed, or, living by the sword, had fallen by it, and a new race of men, who were more directly amenable to the central power in Spain, stood in their place.

Pedro de Valdivia had gone to Chile, to pursue his conquests and to meet his death, as some say, by the Indians pouring molten gold into his mouth, a fitting death for a *conquistador*, whether of Chile or Rhodesia. Soto was dead and buried in the Mississippi; Pedro de Alvarado killed by his horse in New Galicia; and Belalcazar, having passed through Peru, had gone to Bogotá. There yet remained Francisco Hernandez de Giron, who, curiously enough, had always been against the faction of the Pizarros, and fought against them, both under the unfortunate Viceroy, Blasco Nuñez de Vela, and even at the Battle of Huarina with La Gasca for the King. Thinking, perhaps, that he could make himself the King of all Peru, Giron rebelled in Cuzco, and for some time roamed up and

down the country, killing his enemies when chance delivered them into his hands, and gaining several victories over the Viceroy's troops.

In one of them, at a place known as Chaquinca, Silvestre fought his last battle on Peruvian ground. Before the battle he had purchased a new horse, knowing by his experience that, after all that has been said, it is wise to trust one's self to a good horse in time of danger and of need. Seeing the horse led by a negro slave and saddled with a *silla á la brida*, a gentleman called to Silvestre and asked him what he would take both for the horse and slave, offering him ten thousand dollars, which, as the Inca says, were equal to twelve thousand ducats, and even for Peru in the time of which I write was a great price to pay.\* Gonçalo refused the price, and in the middle of the fight his horse, killed by a crossbow-shot, rolled on him and broke his leg. He would

\* The ducat was worth about 6s. 8d. Perhaps the price was not too high, for the fear that horses inspired in the Indians was excessive. The Inca says ('Comentarios Reales del Peru,' book ix., cap. xvii., p. 324): 'Comunmente los Indios tienen grandísimo miedo á los caballos, en viendolos correr se desatinan de tal manera que por ancha que sea la calle se saben arrimarse á una de las paredes y dejarle pasar sin que les parece, que donde quiera que estan (como sea en el suelo) los han de trompillar y así viendo venir el caballo, corriendo cruzan la calle dos y tres veces de una parte á otra, huyendo del, y tan presto como llegan á la otra pared, tan presto les parece que estarian mas seguros á la otra, y vuelvan corriendo á ellas. Andan tan ciegos y desatinados del tremor, que muchas veces acaescio (como yo los vi) irse a encontrar con el caballo por huir del.'

have lost his life had not a faithful Indian put him on another horse, helped him to mount—though how he managed it with a broken leg is hard to understand—and took him to a place called Huamanca, where ‘he tended him as he had been his son.’

This happened at the battle of Chaquinca, where Hernandez de Giron broke and defeated the forces of the Marshal Don Alonso de Alvarado, who commanded for the Crown. The career of Hernandez de Giron was short, and he, too, ended on the scaffold, after the fashion in which had died most of the *conquistadores* of Peru.

Then the new era really set in, and the new Viceroy, Don Andres Hurtado de Mendoça, set about in earnest to free Peru from all the troublers of the public peace. At first he got all the artillery into his hands, and then disarmed the soldiers by degrees. Naturally, this gave great offence to men who, so to speak, were born with swords in their hands. Another of his ordinances gave even more offence. Before his coming to Peru many old soldiers, and amongst them Gonçalo de Silvestre, had got together to wait upon him, to ask for grants of land. As pay was always in arrears, and they for one cause or another had been in arms for years, their intention was not, perhaps, unreasonable; but Governors have not infrequently their friends from home to reward first, for of the services of a tried man you are secure, but a new soldier is entitled to reward to bind him to your cause.

Hearing about the intention of the soldiers, the Viceroy ordered them not to approach him, but to give up their arms, and settle down, and marry certain ladies, who in the course of time he would assign.

Peru was full of Spanish women, but of a sort the soldiers knew by long experience was not the best for wives.\*

Then, fearing that his ordinances would lead to a revolt, he seized upon some seven-and-thirty of the most recalcitrant to matrimony and most importunate in their demands, and shipped them off to Spain. Amongst them was Gonçalo, who thus in the year 1555 (more or less)† returned to Spain after long years of hardships, and of war, as poor as he set out.

\* 'Porque se escandalizarion las que las habian de recibir por mujeres, rehusando la compañia dellas, porque las conoçian de mui atras' ('Comentarios Reales,' p. 473).

† 'Por mas o' menos.'

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