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CONQUEST OF FLORIDA,

UNDER

HERNANDO DE SOTO.

BY THEODORE IRVING.

“ Son quattromila, e bene armati e bene
Istrutti, usi al disagio e tolleranti.
Buona è la gente, e non può da più dotta
O da più forte guida esser condotta.”—*Tasso*.

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DEDICATION.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I KNOW of no person to whom I can with more propriety dedicate the following pages than to yourself, since they were written at your suggestion and the materials of which they are composed were moulded into their present form and feature under your affectionate and judicious advice.

Often, in the course of my labours, when I have been dismayed by unlooked-for difficulties, and disheartened by those misgivings which beset an inexperienced writer, you have dispelled my doubts, cheered my faltering spirit, and encouraged me to persevere.

I would be pardoned for alluding to other and greater obligations yet nearer to my heart. With the anxious interest of a parent, you have watched over the most critical period of my life. Amid the excitement and snares of foreign scenes, and in the quiet employments of our home, your counsel has been my guide—your friendship—the circumstances will excuse the term from one so much your junior—your friendship my happiness and pride. The heedlessness of boyhood could not arrest your assiduous care—the wayward habits of youth have not wearied your unceasing solicitude. That I have been thus far led in safety, claims the fervent gratitude of

Your affectionate nephew,

THEODORE IRVING.

New York, March, 1835.

P R E F A C E.

WHILE studying the Spanish language, some few years since, at Madrid, an old chronicle was placed in my hands, relating to the early discoveries and achievements of the Spaniards in America. It was denominated "The Florida of the Inca, or the History of the Adelantado, Hernando de Soto, Governor and Captain-General of the Kingdom of Florida, and of other heroic cavaliers, Spaniards and Indians : written by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega." As I read, I became insensibly engrossed by the extraordinary enterprise therein narrated. I dwelt with intense interest upon the hair-brained adventures and daring exploits of steel-clad warriors, and the no less valiant and chivalrous deeds of savage chieftains, which entitle this narrative to the high praise bestowed upon it by Mr. Southey, of being one of the most delightful works in the Spanish language.

At a subsequent period, I was advised to undertake a free translation of it into English, as a literary exercise. While occupied in this task, I had the good fortune to meet with a narrative on the same subject, written by a Portuguese soldier, who was present in the expedition. This led me to further research and closer examination; and, finding that the striking events and perilous adventures in the chronicle of the Inca, were borne out, in the main, by this narrative from another hand, and that various lights had been thrown by modern travellers upon the line of march, said to have been pursued by the adventurous band of De Soto, I was convinced, that what I had before regarded almost as a work of fiction, was an authentic, though, perhaps, occasionally exaggerated history.

Deeming, therefore, that a full account of an expedition which throws such an air of romance over the early history of a portion of our country, would possess interest in the eyes of my countrymen, I resolved, to the best of my abilities, to digest a work from the materials before me.

The two main sources from which I have derived my facts, are the narratives already mentioned, by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and by the anonymous Portuguese adventurer. The former I have consulted in a folio edition, printed at Madrid, in 1723, and in the history of the Indias, by Herrera, in which it is incorporated almost at full length. The Portuguese narrative I have found in an English translation, published in London, in 1686, and in an abridgment in Purchas' Pilgrims.

It has been the fashion, in latter days, to distrust the narrative of the Inca, and to put more faith in that of the Portuguese. This has occasionally been done without due examination into their respective claims to credibility. Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honour. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose

probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the written journals, or memorandums, of two other soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye-witnesses.

The Portuguese narrative, on the other hand, is the evidence of merely a single eye-witness, who represents himself as a cavalier, or gentleman; but for this we have merely his own word, and he is anonymous. There is nothing intrinsic in his work that should entitle it to the exclusive belief which has been claimed for it. It agrees with the narrative of the Inca, as to the leading facts which form the frame-work of the story: it differs from it occasionally, as to the plans and views of Hernando de Soto; but here the Inca is most to be depended upon—the Spanish cavalier from whom he derived his principal information, being more likely to be admitted to the intimate councils of his commander than one of a different nation, besides being free from the tinge of national jealousy, which may have influenced the statements of the Portuguese.

The narrative of the Portuguese is more meagre and concise than that of Garcilaso; omitting a thousand interesting anecdotes and personal adventures; but this does not increase its credibility. A multitude of facts, gathered from three different persons, may easily have escaped the knowledge, or have failed to excite the attention of a solitary individual. These anecdotes are not the less credible because they were striking and extraordinary. The whole expedition was daring and extravagant, and those concerned in it were men who delighted in adventure and exploit.*

I have been induced, therefore, in the following pages, to draw my facts more freely and copiously than others, in latter days, have seemed inclined to do, from the work of the Inca; still I have scrupulously and diligently collated the two narratives, endeavouring to reconcile them where they disagreed, to ascertain, with strict impartiality, which was most likely to be correct, where they materially varied, and to throw upon the whole subject the scattered lights furnished by various modern investigators. While I have discarded many incidents which appeared hyperbolic, or savoured too strongly of the gossip of an idle soldiery, I have retained, as much as possible, those everyday and familiar anecdotes which give so lively a picture of the characters, habits, persons, and manners of the Spanish discoverers of those days, and to my mind, bear so strongly the impress of truth and of nature. My great object has been to present a clear, connected, and characteristic narrative of this singular expedition: how far I have succeeded it is for the public to judge.

* The reader will find a note concerning Garcilaso de la Vega and his work in the Appendix.

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CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

NEVER was the spirit of wild adventure more universally diffused than at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The wonderful discoveries made by Columbus and his hardy companions, the descriptions of the beautiful summer isles of the west, and the tales of unexplored regions of wealth locked up in unbounded wildernesses, had an effect upon the imaginations of the young and the adventurous, not unlike the preaching of the chivalric crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The gallant knight, the servile retainer, the soldier of fortune, the hooded friar, the pains-taking mechanic, the industrious husbandman, the loose profligate, and the hardy mariner,—all were touched with the pervading passion; all left their home, country, friends, wives, children, loves, to seek some imaginary Eldorado, confidently expecting to return with countless treasure.

Of the enterprises undertaken in this spirit, none has surpassed, in hardihood and variety of incident, that of the renowned Hernando de Soto and his band of cavaliers. It was poetry put into action; it was the knight-errantry of the old world carried into the depths of the American wilderness. Indeed, the personal adventures, the feats of individual prowess, the picturesque descriptions of steel-clad cavaliers, with lance and helm and prancing steed, glittering through the wilds of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the prairies of the Far West, would seem the mere fictions of romance, did they not come to us recorded in matter-of-fact narratives of contemporaries, and corroborated by the minute and daily memoranda of eye-witnesses.

Before we enter, however, upon the stirring and eventful narrative of the fortunes of De Soto and his followers, it is proper to notice briefly the discovery of the land which was the scene of his adventures, and the various expeditions which stimulated him to his great enterprise.

Those who are conversant with the history of Spanish dis-

coveries, will remember the chimerical cruise of the brave old Governor of Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth. This fabled fountain, according to Indian tradition, existed in one of the Bahama Islands. Ponce de Leon sought it in vain; but in the course of his cruising discovered a country of unknown extent, to which, from the abundance of its flowers, and from its being first seen on Palm Sunday, (Pascha Florida,) he gave the name of Florida.

Obtaining permission from the Spanish government to subjugate and govern this country, he made a second voyage to its shores, but was mortally wounded in a conflict with the natives. Such was the fate of the first adventurer into the regions of Florida, and he seems to have bequeathed his ill fortune to his successors.

A few years after his defeat, a captain of a caravel, named Diego Miruelo, was driven to the coast of Florida by stress of weather, where he obtained a small quantity of silver and gold in traffic from the natives. With this he returned well pleased to San Domingo, spreading the fame of the country he had visited. About the same time a company of several wealthy men at San Domingo, concerned in gold mines, at the head of which was the Licentiate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, auditor and judge of appeals in that island, fitted out two vessels to cruise among the islands and entrap Indians to work in the mines. In the course of this cruise the vessels were driven by stress of weather to a cape on the eastern coast, to which their crews gave the name of St. Helena. The country in the neighbourhood was called Chicorea, and is the same now called South Carolina. They anchored at the mouth of a river which they called the Jordan, after the name of the captain who discovered it. It is the same now known by the Indian appellation of Cambahee.* The natives hastened to the shores at sight of the ships, which they mistook for huge sea monsters; but, when they beheld men issue from them, with white complexions and

* We follow the general opinion, strengthened by the circumstance that the neighbouring sound and island are still called St. Helena. Herrera places Cape St. Helena and the river Jordan in the thirty-second degree of latitude, which is that of the Savannah river — *Vide Herrera. D. 2. lib. X. c. 6.*

beards, clad in raiment and shining armour, [they fled in terror.

The Spaniards having dispelled their fears, a friendly intercourse took place. The Indians were kind and hospitable, brought provisions to the ships and made the strangers presents of martin skins, pearls, together with a small quantity of gold and silver. The Spaniards gave them trinkets in return, and, having completed their supplies of wood, water and provisions, invited their savage friends on board their ships. These latter eagerly accepted the invitation. They thronged the vessels, gazing with wonder at every thing around them; but when a sufficient number were below the decks, the Spaniards perfidiously closed the hatches upon them, and, weighing anchor, made sail for San Domingo. One of the ships was lost in the course of the voyage; the other arrived safe, but the Indians on board remaining sullen and gloomy, and refusing food, most of them perished.*

The reports, however, brought back by the kidnappers, of the country they had visited, and the specimens of gold and silver brought home about the same time by Diego Miruelo, roused the cupidity of the auditor Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon. Being shortly afterwards in Spain, he obtained from the Emperor Charles V, permission to conquer and govern the newly discovered province of Chicorea. With this permission he returned to San Domingo, and fitted out an armament of three large vessels, embarking personally in the enterprise.

Diego Miruelo persuaded him first to steer in quest of the country which the former had already visited, and which he represented as much richer than Chicorea. Miruelo accompanied the expedition as pilot, but, with a want of foresight altogether unworthy of a practised mariner, having neglected in his first visit to take an observation, he was unable to find the place at which he had formerly landed, and was so much mortified by the ridicule and reproaches of his employers, that he fell into a profound melancholy, lost his senses, and died in the course of a few days.

Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon now prosecuted his voyage to the eastward in search of Chicorea. Arriving in the river Jordan, (or Cambahee)—the scene of perfidy acted during

* Hist. Florida por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6.

the preceding voyage—his principal ship stranded and was lost. With the remaining two he passed further to the eastward, and landed on the coast adjoining Chicorea, in a gentle and pleasant region. Here he was so well received that he considered the country already under his dominion, and permitted two hundred of his men to visit the principal village, about three leagues in the interior, while he remained with a small force to protect the ships.

The inhabitants of the village entertained these visitors with feasting for three days, until having put them completely off their guard, they rose upon them in the night and massacred every soul. They then repaired by daybreak to the harbour, and surprised Vasquez de Ayllon and his handful of guards. The few who survived escaped wounded and dismayed to their ships, and making all sail from the fatal shore, hastened back to San Domingo. According to some accounts, Ayllon remained among the slain on the coast he sought to subjugate, but others assert that he returned wounded to San Domingo, where the humiliation of his defeat and the ruin of his fortune, conspired with his bodily sufferings to hurry him broken-hearted to the grave. Thus signally did the natives of Chicorea revenge the wrongs of their people who had been so perfidiously kidnapped.*

CHAPTER II.

THE next person who aspired to subjugate the unknown realms of Florida, was a cavalier of greater note, the brave but ill-starred Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had endeavoured to arrest Hernando Cortes in his victorious career against Mexico, in which attempt, Narvaez was defeated, and lost an eye. Possessing favour at court, he was enabled to fit out a considerable armament for his new enterprise. He was invested by the Emperor Charles V. with the title of Adelantado, or military governor of the country he expected to occupy, which was that part of Florida extending from its extreme cape to the river of Palms. In this expedition he

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6. Idem. D. iii. lib. 8. c. 8. Peter Martyr. D. vii. c. 11. Heylyn's Cosmographie. L. 4. p. 100. Lond. Ed. 1669.

trusted to wipe off the disgrace of his late defeat, and even to acquire a reputation which might vie with that of Cortes.

On the 12th of April, 1528, Narvaez anchored at the mouth of an open bay on the eastern coast of Florida, with a squadron of four barques and a brigantine. Here he landed his forces, consisting of four hundred men, and forty-five horses; having lost many of the former by desertion in the West India islands, and several of the latter in a storm.

Erecting the royal standard, he took possession of the country for the crown of Spain, without opposition from the natives. After having explored the vicinity, Narvaez determined to penetrate the country in a northerly direction, hoping to discover some great empire like that of Mexico or Peru. Meanwhile the ships were to proceed along the coast in quest of some convenient harbour where, if they discovered such, he ordered that they should either await his arrival, or steer for Havana, and return with supplies for the army.*

This plan was strongly opposed by the treasurer of the expedition, one Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a prudent and sagacious man. He represented the danger of plunging into an unknown wilderness without knowing a word of the language, and advised, rather, that they should continue in their ships, until they found a secure harbour and a fertile country, whence they might make incursions into the interior.

This advice was slighted by Narvaez and his adventurous companions, whose imaginations were inflamed with the idea of inland conquest. The squadron accordingly sailed to the northward; Narvaez and his troops setting out by land in the same direction, accompanied by the faithful Alvar Nuñez, who, since he could not dissuade his commander from his desperate course, resolved to share his fate.

The force which proceeded by land consisted of three hundred men, forty of whom were mounted on horses. The allowance to each man consisted of two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon. For the first few days they met with fields of maize, and villages containing provisions. Here, however, they outraged the feelings of the natives by rifling their sepulchres, mistaking them for idolatrous temples. They afterwards journeyed many days through desert solitudes, where there was neither house nor inhabi-

* Herrera, Decad. iv. L. iv. c. 4.

tant, suffering greatly from want of food. They crossed rapid rivers on rafts or by swimming, continually exposed to the assaults of hordes of lurking savages. They traversed swamps and forests, making their way with great difficulty through thickets encumbered by fallen trees, and suffering every variety of hardship.

Still they were cheered onward by the assurances of certain captives who served as guides, that at some distance before them lay a vast province called Apalachee, extremely fertile, and abounding in the gold they so eagerly sought after.

At length they arrived in sight of the place which gave its name to this long-desired province. Narvaez had pictured to himself a second Mexico, and was chagrined at finding a mere village of two hundred and forty houses. Alvar Nuñez was sent forward to take possession, which he did without opposition, the inhabitants having all fled to the woods.

The Spaniards remained twenty-five days in the village, exploring the neighbouring country, and subsisting upon the provisions they found in the place. During this time they were harassed, day and night, by the natives, who proved to be an exceedingly warlike people, besides being disappointed in their hopes of finding gold, and discouraged by accounts of the country further on. They were told, however, that by shaping their course to the southward, towards the sea, after nine days' journey, they would come to the village of Aute, where maize, vegetables and fish would be found in abundance, and where the natives were of a friendly disposition.

Towards Aute, therefore, they turned their steps, more eager now for food than for gold. The journey was perilous and full of disaster. They had to cross deep lagoons, and dangerous swamps, the water often up to their breasts, their passage obstructed by rotten trees, and beset by hordes of savages. These latter appeared to the disheartened Spaniards of gigantic stature; they had bows of an enormous size, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armour at the distance of two hundred yards. At length, after incredible hardships, and with the loss of many men and horses, the adventurers arrived at the village of Aute.* The natives abandoned and burnt their houses as the

* Supposed to be on what is now called the Bay of St. Marks.

invaders approached; but left behind a quantity of maize, with which the Spaniards appeased their hunger.

A day's march beyond the village brought them to a river which gradually expanded into a large estuary. Here they came to a pause in their perilous career, and held a consultation as to their future movements. Their hopes of wealth and conquest were at an end. Nearly a third of their original number had perished; while of the survivors a great majority were ill, and disease was daily spreading among them. To attempt to retrace their steps, or to proceed along the coast in search of the fleet would be to hazard the lives of all. At length it was suggested that they should construct small barks, launch them and keep along the coast until they should reach their ships. This was a forlorn hope, but they caught at it like desperate men. They accordingly set to work with great eagerness. One of them constructed a pair of bellows out of deer skins, to which he applied a wooden pipe. Others made charcoal, and a forge. By the aid of these, they soon turned their stirrups, spurs, cross-bows, and other articles of iron into nails, saws, and hatchets. The tails and manes of their horses twisted with the fibres of the palm-tree, served for rigging; the men's shirts cut open and sewed together furnished sails; the fibrous part of the palm was also used as oakum, the resin of the pine for tar; the skins of horses were made into vessels to contain fresh water; and a quantity of maize was won by hard fighting from the natives. A horse was killed every three days to furnish provisions for the labourers and for the sick. Having at length by great exertions completed five frail vessels, the Spaniards embarked on the 22nd of September, each vessel containing from forty to fifty persons, but so closely crowded, that there was scarcely room to move, whilst the gunwales of these fragile barks were forced down to the water's edge.

Setting sail from this bay, which they called the Bay of Caballos, and continuing their course for several days, they reached an island, where they secured five canoes that had been deserted by the Indians. These being attached to their vessels enabled them to sail with greater comfort. Passing through the strait between the island and the main land, which they called the Strait of San Miguel, they sailed onward for many days, enduring all the torments of hunger and

thirst. The skins which contained their fresh water having burst, some of the men, driven to desperation, drank salt water, and died miserably. Their sufferings too were aggravated by a fearful storm. At length they approached a more populous and fertile part of the coast, upon which they occasionally landed to procure provisions, and were immediately involved in fatal affrays with the natives. Thus harassed by sea and land, famishing with hunger, their barks scattered and scarcely manageable, these unfortunate wanderers lost all presence of mind, and became wild and desperate. They were again driven out to sea, and scattered during a stormy night. At daybreak three of these tempest-tossed vessels rejoined each other. In one, which was the best manned and the best sailer, was Pamphilo de Narvaez. Alvar Nuñez, who had command of another, seeing the Adelantado making towards the land, called upon him for aid. Narvaez replied that it was no longer time to assist others, but that every one must take care of himself. He then steered towards the shore, and left Alvar Nuñez to make the best of his way with the other bark.

After sailing along the coast for many days, one night Narvaez anchored off the land. All his crew had gone on shore for provisions, except one sailor and a page who was sick. A violent gale springing up from the north, the vessel, in which was neither food nor water, was driven out to sea, and no tidings were ever after heard of her. Thus perished the ill-fated Pamphilo de Narvaez.

The only survivors of this disastrous expedition were Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, and four of his companions. After the most singular and unparalleled hardships, they traversed the northern parts of Florida, crossed the Mississippi, the desert and mountainous regions on the confines of Texas and the Rocky Mountains, passing from tribe to tribe of Indians, oftentimes as slaves, until, at the expiration of several years, they succeeded in reaching the Spanish settlement of Compostella. From thence Alvar Nuñez proceeded to Mexico, and ultimately arrived at Lisbon in 1537; nearly ten years after his embarkation with Pamphilo de Narvaez.*

* This chapter is chiefly taken from the "Naufragios de Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca," with occasional references to Herrera.

CHAPTER III.

ONE would have thought that after the melancholy result of these sad enterprises, and others of less note, but equally unfortunate, the coast of Florida would have been avoided as a fated land. The Spanish discoverers, however, were not to be deterred by difficulties and dangers, and the accounts which they heard of the vast extent of this unknown country and of opulent regions in its interior, served only as a stimulus to still bolder and more extensive enterprises.

It is proper to note that the Spaniards, at this period, had a very vague idea of the country called Florida, and by no means limited it to its present boundaries. They knew something of the maritime border of the peninsula, but Florida, according to their notions, extended far beyond, embracing the confines of Mexico in one direction, the banks of Newfoundland in another, and expanding into a vast Terra Incognita to the north.

The accounts brought to Europe by Alvar Nuñez of the expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez contributed to promote this idea. It was supposed that this unfortunate cavalier, in his extensive march, had but skirted the borders of immense internal empires, which might rival in opulence and barbaric splendour, the recently discovered kingdoms of Mexico and Peru ; and there was not wanting a bold and ambitious spirit to grasp immediately at the palm of conquest.

The candidate who now presented himself to undertake the subjugation of Florida was Hernando de Soto, and as his expedition is the subject of the following pages, it is proper that he should be introduced particularly to the reader. Hernando de Soto was born about the year 1501, in Villa Nueva de Barcarota,* and was of the old Spanish hidalguia, or gentry, for we are assured by one of his biographers that "he was a gentleman by all four descents,"—that is to say, the parents both of his father and mother were of gentle blood ; a pedigree, which, according to the rules of Spanish heraldry, entitled him to admission into the noble order of Santiago.

* The Portuguese narrator assigns Xeres de Badajos as the birth-place of De Soto ; we follow, however, the authority of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. Herrera. Hist. Ind. Dec. VI. L. 7. c. 9. agrees with the Inca

Whatever might be the dignity of his birth, however, he began his career a mere soldier of fortune. All his estate, says his Portuguese historian, was but a sword and buckler. He accompanied Pedrarias Davila,* when the latter went to America to assume the command of Terra Firma. The merits of De Soto soon gained him favour in the eye of Pedrarias, who gave him the command of a troop of horse: with these he followed Pizarro in his successful expedition into Peru. Here he quickly signalized himself by a rare combination of prudence and valour. He was excellent in council, yet foremost in every perilous exploit; not recklessly seeking danger for its own sake, or from a vain thirst of notoriety, but bravely putting every thing to the hazard where any important point was to be gained by intrepidity.

Pizarro soon singled him out from the hardy spirits around him, and appointed him his lieutenant.† If there was a service of especial danger to be performed, it was invariably entrusted to De Soto:—if there was an enterprise requiring sound judgment and fearless daring, De Soto was sure to be called upon. A master at all weapons, and a complete horseman, his prowess and dexterity were the admiration of the Spanish soldiery. They declared that his lance alone was equal to any ten in the army; and that in the management of this chivalrous weapon, he was second only to Pizarro.

He was sent by that commander on the first embassy to the renowned but ill-fated Inca Atahualpa, whose subjects, we are told, were filled with surprise and admiration on beholding his wonderful feats of horsemanship.‡

He afterwards commanded one of the squadrons of horse that captured this unfortunate Inca and routed his army of

* Properly written Pedro Arias de Avila.

† Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. ii. c. 2.

‡ Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. 3. c. 10. says, Hernando de Soto sprang upon his horse, and, aware that the eyes of the Inca were upon him, caused it to curvet, caracole and leap, and striking his spurs into its flanks, dashed up so near to the savage Prince, that he felt the very breath of the snorting animal. The haughty Inca was as serene and unmoved as if he had been accustomed all his life to the charge of a horse. Many of the Indians, however, fled in terror. Atahualpa immediately ordered the fugitives to appear before him, and sternly upbraiding them with their cowardice, ordered them all to be put to death for having behaved so dastardly in the royal presence.

warriors.* He led the way with a band of seventy horsemen, to the discovery and subjugation of the great province of Cusco, in which he distinguished himself by the most daring and romantic achievements.† We might trace him throughout the whole history of the Peruvian conquest by a series of perilous encounters and marvellous escapes, but our purpose is only to state briefly the circumstances which directed his ambition into the career of conquest, and elevated him to the notice of his sovereign, and of all contemporary cavaliers of enterprising spirit.

Hernando de Soto returned to Spain with the spoils of the new world; his share of the treasures of Atahualpa having amounted, it is said, to the enormous sum of a hundred and eighty thousand crowns of gold. He now assumed great state, and appeared at Valladolid, at the court of the Emperor Charles V., with extraordinary magnificence, having his steward, his major-domo, his master of horse, his pages, lacqueys, and all other household officers who in those ostentatious days, swelled the retinue of a Spanish nobleman. He was accompanied by a knot of brave cavaliers, all evidently bent on pushing their fortunes at court. Some of them had been his brothers in arms during the conquest of Peru, and had returned with their purses filled with Peruvian gold, which they expended in a style of military liberality upon horses, arms, and "rich array." Two or three of them deserve particular notice, as they will be found to figure conspicuously in the course of this narrative.

Nuño Tobar, a native of Xeres de Badajos, was a young cavalier of gallant bearing, of great valour and romantic generosity. Another, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, likewise of Xeres, had signalized himself during his campaigns in the new world. A third, Juan de Añasco, was a native of Seville. He had not been in Peru, but while equal to the others in bravery, he was likewise noted for nautical skill and a profound knowledge of cosmography and astronomy.

The world was at that time resounding with the recent conquest of Peru. The appearance at court of one of the conquerors, thus brilliantly attended, could not fail to attract attention. The personal qualifications of De Soto cor-

* Vega. Com. de Peru, L. 1. c. 21. Herrera, D. V. L. 2. c. 11.

† Herrera, Dec. V. L. 4. c. x. and lib. 5. c. 2, 3.

responded with his fame. He was in the prime of manhood, being about thirty-six years old, of a commanding stature, above the middle size, with a dark, animated, and expressive countenance. With such advantages of person and reputation, he soon succeeded in gaining the affections and the hand of a lady of distinguished rank, Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro. This marriage, connecting him with a powerful family, had a great effect in strengthening his influence at court.*

De Soto might now have purchased estates, and passed the remainder of his days opulently and honourably in his native land, in the bosom of his connexions, but he was excited by the remembrance of past adventures, and eager for further distinction. Just at this juncture, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain with tidings of the fate of Pamphilo de Narvaez and his followers. His tale, it is true, was one of hardships and disasters, but it turned the thoughts of adventurous men to the vast and unexplored interior of Florida. It is said that Alvar Nuñez, when questioned as to whether there was any gold in the country he had visited, observed much reserve and mystery in his replies;—that he talked of asking permission of the crown to return there and prosecute further discoveries, and that he had even sworn his fellow survivors to secrecy upon all points connected with their discoveries, lest others should be induced to interfere with his prospects.†

The imagination of De Soto took fire at the narrative of Alvar Nuñez. He doubted not that there existed in the interior of Florida regions of wealth, equalling, if not exceeding Mexico and Peru. He had hitherto only followed in the course of conquest; an opportunity now presented itself of rivalling the fame of Cortes and Pizarro; his reputation, his wealth, his past services, and his matrimonial connexions—all gave him the means of trying the chances before him. With the magnificent spirit of a Spanish cavalier, he asked permission of the Emperor to undertake the conquest of Florida at his own expense.

His prayer was readily granted. The Emperor conferred on him the title of Adelantado, which combines military and civil command, and a Marquisite, with an estate thirty

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 1. † Portuguese Narrative, c. 2.

leagues in length and fifteen in breadth, in any part the country he might discover. He, moreover, created him for life, Governor and Captain-General of Florida, as well as of the island of Cuba. The command of this island had been annexed at the especial request of De Soto, as he knew it would be important for him to have complete control over it, in order that he might thus be enabled to fit out and supply his armaments for the meditated conquest.

No sooner were the wishes of De Soto gratified, than he provided for his companions in arms who had accompanied him to court. He appointed Nuño de Tobar his Lieutenant-General, for which post the latter was well qualified by his great valour and popular qualities. He made Luis de Moscaso de Alvarado, Camp Master General, and procured for Juan de Anasco the appointment of Contador, or royal accountant. It was the duty of this officer to take account of all the treasures gained in the expedition, and to set apart one fifth for the crown.

De Soto would likewise have engaged Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca to accompany him, and offered him highly advantageous terms, which De Vaca was at first inclined to accept, but subsequently refused, being unwilling to march under the command of another in an enterprise in which he had aspired to take the lead. He afterwards obtained from the Emperor the government of Rio de la Plata.*

But although Alvar Nuñez declined to embark in the enterprise, his representations of the country induced two of his kinsmen to offer their services. One of them, a brave and hardy cavalier, named Balthazar de Gallegos, was so eager for the expedition, that he sold his houses, vineyards and corn-fields, together with fourscore and ten acres of olive orchards, in the neighbourhood of Seville, and determined to take his wife with him to the new world. De Soto was so well pleased with his zeal, that he made him Alguazil Mayor. The other kinsman of Alvar Nuñez was named Christopher Spinola, a gentleman of Genoa, to whom De Soto gave the command of seventy halberdiers of his body guard.

It was soon promulgated throughout Spain that Hernando de Soto, one of the conquerors of Peru, was about to under-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

take the subjugation of the great empire of Florida, an unknown country, equal if not superior in wealth and splendour to any of the golden empires of the new world, and that he was to do this at his own expense, with the riches gained in his previous conquests.

This was enough to draw to his standard adventurers of every class. Men of noble birth, soldiers of fortune who had served in various parts of the world, private citizens and peaceful artisans, all abandoned their homes and families, sold their effects, and offered themselves and their resources for this new conquest.

A striking account is given of the arrival of a party of these volunteers. As De Soto was one day in the gallery of his house at Seville, he saw a brilliant band of cavaliers enter the court-yard, and hastened to the foot of the stairs to receive them. They were Portuguese hidalgos, led by Andres de Vasconcelos. Several of them had served in the wars against the Moors on the African frontiers, and had come to volunteer their services to De Soto, who joyfully accepted their offer. He detained them to sup with him, and ordered his steward to provide quarters for them in his neighbourhood. A muster being called of all the troops, the Spaniards appeared in splendid and showy attire, with silken doublets and cassocks pinked and embroidered. The Portuguese, on the contrary, came like soldiers, in complete armour. De Soto was vexed at the unseasonable ostentation of his countrymen, and ordered another review in which all should appear armed. Here the Portuguese again came admirably equipped, whilst the Spaniards, who had been so gaudy in their silken dresses, made but a sorry show as warriors, being armed with old rusty coats of mail, battered head pieces, and indifferent lances. The General, it is said, marked his preference of the Portuguese, by placing them near his standard. It must be observed, however, that this is the relation of a Portuguese historian, naturally disposed to give his countrymen every advantage over the Spaniards. Other accounts speak generally of the excellent equipments of all the forces.

In little more than a year from the time that this enterprise was first proclaimed, nine hundred and fifty Spaniards of all degrees had assembled in the port of San Lucar de Barra-

meda, to embark in the expedition.* Never had a more gallant and brilliant body of men offered themselves for conquest in the new world. All were young and vigorous, and fitted for the toils, hardships, and dangers of so adventurous an undertaking.

De Soto was munificent in his offers of pecuniary assistance, to aid the cavaliers in fitting themselves out according to their rank and station. Many were compelled, through necessity, to accept of these offers; others, who had means, generously declined them, deeming it more proper that they should assist than accept aid from him. Many came splendidly equipped, with rich armour, costly dresses, and a train of domestics. Indeed some young men of quality had spent a great part of their property in this manner.

Nuño Tobar, Luis de Moscoso, and several other high-born Spaniards who had distinguished themselves in the conquest of Peru, expended the greater part of their spoils in sumptuous equipments. Beside the cavaliers already specified, we may mention three brothers, relatives of the Governor, who accompanied him; Arias Tinoco and Alonzo Romo de Cardenosa, both captains of infantry, and Diego Arias Tinoco, standard-bearer to the army.

There were also enlisted in the enterprise, twelve priests, eight clergymen of inferior rank, and four monks; most of them relatives of superior officers: for, in every Spanish expedition to the new world, the conversion of the heathen was not lost sight of in the rage for conquest.

This brilliant armament embarked at San Lucar de Barameda, on the sixth of April, 1538, in seven large and three small vessels. The governor, his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, together with all his family and retinue, embarked in the largest vessel, called the San Christoval, of eight hundred tons burthen. They quitted the Spanish shore in company with a fleet of twenty-six sail bound to Mexico,† amid the braying of trumpets, and the thunder of artillery. The armament of De Soto was so bountifully supplied with naval stores, that each man was allowed double rations. This led

* The Portuguese narrator gives six hundred as the number of men assembled, but we follow the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, whose authority is corroborated by Herrera and others.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

to useless waste, but the Governor was of a munificent spirit, and so elated at finding in his train such noble and gallant spirits, that he thought he could not do enough to honour and gratify them.

On the twenty-first of April, the fleet arrived off Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. On landing, they were received with great parade and courtesy by the Governor, who bore the title of Count de Gomera. He seems to have been a gay and luxurious noble, with somewhat of an amatory complexion, his domestic establishment being graced by several natural daughters. When he appeared to receive his guests, he was dressed in white from head to foot, hat, cloak, doublet, breeches and shoes; so that, according to the old Portuguese narrative, he looked not unlike the captain of a gang of gipsies. During three days that the fleet remained in port, he entertained his guests with banquetings and rejoicings.

Among his daughters was one named Leonora de Bobadilla, who particularly attracted the notice of the youthful adventurers. She was not more than seventeen years of age, and extremely beautiful. De Soto was so interested with her appearance and manners, that he entreated the Count to permit her to accompany his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who, he promised, should cherish her as her own daughter; intimating that he would procure an advantageous match for her among the noble youths of his army, and advance her to rank and fortune in the country he hoped to conquer.

The Count de Gomera, knowing the munificence of De Soto, and that he would be disposed to perform even more than he promised, confided his daughter to his care, and to the maternal protection of his high-minded and virtuous wife.

On the 24th of April, the fleet again set sail. The voyage was fair and prosperous, and about the latter end of May they arrived in the harbour of the city of Santiago de Cuba.

CHAPTER IV.

THE arrival of a new Governor, with so important an armament, was an event of great joy throughout the island of Cuba. When De Soto landed, the whole city of Santiago

turned out to receive him. He found a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, waiting for him, and likewise a mule for Doña Isabella,—both furnished by a gentleman of the town. He was escorted to his lodgings by the burghers, on horse and on foot, and all his officers and men were hospitably entertained by them; some being quartered in the town, and others in their country houses.* For several days there was one continued festival. At night there were balls and masquerades; by day, titling matches, bull fights, contests of skill in horsemanship, running at the ring, and other amusements of a chivalrous nature.

The young cavaliers of the army vied with each other and with the youth of the city in the gallantry of their equipments, the elegance and novelty of their devices, and the wit and ingenuity of their mottoes. What gave peculiar splendour to these entertainments was the beauty, spirit, and excellence of the horses. The great demand for these noble animals, for the conquests of Mexico and Peru, and other parts of America, had rendered the raising of them a very profitable source of speculation in the islands. The island of Cuba was naturally favourable for breeding horses, and as great attention had been given to multiply and improve the breed, there was at this time an uncommon number, and of remarkably fine qualities. Many individuals had from twenty to thirty valuable horses in their stables, and some of the rich had twice that number on their estates.

The young and spirited adventurers had spared no expense in furnishing themselves with excellent steeds for their intended expedition. Many individuals possessed three or four, caparioned in a very costly manner; and the Governor aided liberally with his purse, such as had not the means of suitably equipping themselves.

Thus mounted and arrayed in their new dresses and burnished armour, the young competitors made a brilliant display, and carried off many prizes of gold and silver, silks and brocades, which were adjudged to those who distinguished themselves in these chivalrous games.

No one carried off the prize more frequently than Nuño de Tobar, the Lieutenant-General. He was, as has been said, a cavalier of high and generous qualities, who had

* Portuguese Relation, c. 4.

gained laurels in the conquest of Pern. He appeared at these entertainments in sumptuous array, mounted on a superb horse, of a silver grey dappled, and was noted for the gracefulness of his carriage, his noble demeanour, and his admirable address in the management both of lance and steed.

Unfortunately the manly qualifications of Nuño Tobar had procured him great favour in the eyes of the beautiful Leonora de Bobadilla, daughter of the Count de Gomera. A secret amour was carried on between them, and the lady's virtue was not proof against the solicitations of her lover.*

The consequences of their criminal intercourse were soon too apparent to be concealed. De Soto was incensed at what he considered an outrage upon his rights as guardian over the lady, and a violation of his confidence as a friend. He immediately deposed Nuño Tobar from his station as Lieutenant-General; and, though that really generous and spirited young soldier endeavoured to make every reparation in his power, by marrying the lady, De Soto could never afterwards be brought to look upon him with kindness.

At this time, there was on a visit to the Governor in the city of Santiago, a cavalier, upwards of fifty years of age, named Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. He was of noble descent, and brave, having seen much hard fighting under the first Spanish leaders in the new world, as well as in Spain and Italy, where he had distinguished himself on various occasions. He now resided in the town of Trinidad in Cuba, living opulently and luxuriously upon the wealth he had gained in the wars, honoured for his exploits, loved for his social qualities, and extolled for his hearty hospitality.

This magnificent old officer had come to Santiago with a pompous retinue, to pay his court to the Governor, and witness the festivities. He passed some days in the city, and when he beheld the array of gallant cavaliers and hardy soldiers assembled for the enterprize, the splendour of their equipments, and the martial style in which they acquitted themselves, his military spirit again took fire, and forgetting his years, his past toils and troubles, and his present ease and opulence, he volunteered to follow De Soto in his anticipated career of conquest.

* Portuguese Narrative, Conq. of Florida, c. 7.

A volunteer of such military experience, ample wealth, and great influence in the island, was too important not to be received with open arms. The Governor immediately made him Lieutenant-General of the army; the post from which the gallant but unfortunate Nuño Tobar had been recently deposed.

The conduct of Vasco Porcallo, showed the policy of this appointment. He was so elated with the distinction, that he lavished his money without stint in purchasing provisions for the armada. He was magnificent too in all his appointments, camp equipage, armour and equipments, having caught the gay spirit of his youthful companions in arms. He carried with him a numerous train of Spanish, Indian and negro servants, together with a stud of thirty-six horses for his own use: whilst, with that liberality for which he was remarkable, he gave upwards of fifty horses as presents to various cavaliers of the army.

The example of this generous, though somewhat whimsical old man, had a powerful effect in animating the inhabitants of Cuba to promote the success of the expedition, and in inducing some to enrol themselves among the followers of De Soto.*

For three months the Governor made a tour of the island, visiting the principal towns, appointing officers to rule in his absence, purchasing horses, and making other provisions for his expedition. Towards the end of August, he repaired to Havana, where he was afterwards joined by his family and by all his forces. Here he remained for a time aiding the inhabitants, from the resources of his own fortune, to rebuild their houses and churches, which had recently been destroyed by French corsairs.

While thus occupied he twice despatched the Contador Juan de Añasco, in a brigantine manned with picked sailors,

* The Portuguese narrator drily asserts that Vasco Porcallo engaged in the expedition merely with a view to get slaves for his estates in Cuba. This narrator, however, is to be distrusted, when he assigns motives to the Spanish leaders, against whom he seems to have entertained a national antipathy, I have preferred the motives attributed by the Inca, as they seem borne out by facts, and by the general conduct of this veteran Porcallo, whose character though peculiar, is nevertheless essentially Spanish. Indeed, throughout the whole work of the Inca, his rich and copious facts are always in harmony with the characteristic peculiarities of his persons.

to coast along the shores of Florida, in quest of some commodious harbour, where there might be found secure anchorage, and a good landing place for the troops, and for which the expedition might sail direct.

Juan de Añasco was well fitted for such a service, uniting at once many of the best qualities of the naval and military character, and possessing some skill in nautical science. He was fond, too, of hazardous enterprises, never flinching from toils or perils, and was altogether an excellent leader, though somewhat choleric.

Three months elapsed after Añasco's departure on his second voyage, without any tidings of him having been received: great fears were consequently entertained for his safety, when, after escaping many perils, his tempest-tossed bark arrived at Havana.

No sooner did Juan de Añasco and his crew set foot upon land, than they threw themselves on their knees, and in this way crawled to church to hear mass, in fulfilment of a vow made in an hour of great peril. When this was done, they related all the dangers they had escaped on sea and land; having once been near foundering, and having passed two months on an uninhabited island, subsisting on shell-fish gathered from the beach, and upon wild fowl knocked down with clubs.

Juan de Añasco, however, had faithfully fulfilled the great object of his cruise having found a secure harbour on the coast of Florida. He brought with him, also, four of the natives whom he had captured, to serve as interpreters and guides.

All his forces being now assembled in Havana, and the season favourable for sailing being at hand, the Governor made his final arrangements, appointing his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla to govern the island during his absence, with Juan de Roxas, as Lieutenant-Governor, and Francisco de Guzman as his Lieutenant, in the city of Santiago. These two cavaliers had been in command prior to De Soto's arrival at the island, and had proved themselves worthy of this great mark of confidence.*

* The Inca, lib. I. c. 13. Portuguese relation, c. vii. Herrera. D. vi. l. 7. c. 9.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE the Governor was waiting for a fair wind to embark, a ship was seen hovering off the port, driven there by stress of weather, but evidently endeavouring to keep from the land. Three times it was forced to the mouth of the harbour, and as often made its way against contrary winds to the broad ocean, as if the greatest anxiety of the crew was to avoid the port. At length, after struggling four or five days against tempestuous weather, they were compelled to anchor in the harbour.

The ship came from Nombre de Dios, on the Isthmus of Panama, and the reason of this strange conduct of her commander is stated to have been as follows. On board was Hernan Ponce, an old comrade of Hernando De Soto. They had sought their fortunes together in Peru, and when the latter quitted that country for a time to visit Spain, he entered into articles of partnership, or brotherhood, as it was called, with Hernan Ponce, as was frequently done by the Spanish discoverer and soldiers of fortune in the new world. By these articles they bound themselves, during their lives, to an equal participation of gains and losses, and of all things, whether of honour or profit.

After the departure of De Soto for Spain, Hernan Ponce had amassed much wealth, and recovered several debts which De Soto had left with him to be collected. Having turned all his property into gold and silver, jewels and precious stones, he embarked for Spain, but, at the port of embarkation, heard of the new enterprise of his old comrade, De Soto, and that he was at Havana with a great and expensive armament appointed for the conquest of Florida.

Hernan Ponce had no ambition to join in the conquest; for he feared that De Soto, having expended all his own wealth upon his outfits, would claim his right of partnership, and seek to share the treasures which his former comrade was carrying home, if not to grasp the whole. Hernan Ponce, therefore, anxious to steer clear of the port of Havana and to pursue his voyage, had made large offers to the mariners to induce them to keep out at sea, but tempestuous weather had forced them into port. No sooner did Hernando

De Soto hear of his friend's arrival, than he sent persons on board to congratulate him, and invite him on shore to share his house, his possessions, and all his honours and commands. He shortly followed in person, repeating his congratulations and offers.

Hernan Ponce would gladly have dispensed both with compliments and confraternity. He quaked in secret for the safety of his treasures. He affected, however, to reciprocate the joy and good-will of his former comrade, but excused himself from landing until the following day, pleading the necessity of rest and sleep, after the fatigues of the late tempest. De Soto left him to his repose, but suspecting, or having had some intimation of his real circumstances and designs, he secretly stationed sentinels by sea and land to keep a watch upon the movements of his ancient partner. His precautions were not vain. About midnight, Hernan Ponce landed two coffers, containing all his gold, pearls, and precious stones, to be concealed in some hamlet, or buried on the shore, leaving only the silver on board, to keep up appearances; intending to pass it off as the whole of his wealth.

No sooner had the mariners landed the coffers, and carried them some distance from the boat, than a party of sentinels rushed out from a thicket, put them to flight, and seizing upon the treasure, conveyed it to the Governor.

The confusion and distress of Hernan Ponce, at thus losing, by a measure intended for its safety, what he had been at such pains to secure, may easily be imagined. He landed the next day with a sorrowful countenance, and took up his abode with De Soto.

In the course of their private conversation, he soon revealed the misfortune of the preceding night. The Governor, who had been waiting for the opportunity, now indignantly reproached him with having attempted to conceal his treasures, through want of faith in his justice and friendship, but to show him how groundless had been his distrust, he ordered the coffers to be brought in, and requested his former companion to open them, and see if any thing were missing.

He further declared, that all he had expended in his present undertaking, all the titles, commands, and privileges

he had obtained from the crown, he had considered for their mutual benefit, according to their terms of co-partnership and confraternity. This he offered to prove by witnesses then with him, who had been present at the execution of the writings. He now asked whether Hernan Ponce chose to accompany him in his conquest or not, declaring himself ready to share with him his titles and commands, or to yield to him such of them as he might prefer.

The selfish Spaniard, Hernan Ponce, was confounded as much by the generous courtesy of the Governor, as by a sense of his own delinquency: nevertheless, his heart yearned more after his own treasures, than after all De Soto's anticipated conquests. He excused himself as well as he could for the past, pretended to be highly gratified at being still considered De Soto's partner and brother, but declined all participation in his titles. He begged that their writings of co-partnership might be renewed and made public, and that his Excellency would proceed with his conquest; while he returned to Spain, leaving to some future occasion the division of all their gains. To testify his acceptance of one half of the conquest, he entreated his friend to permit his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, to receive ten thousand dollars in gold and silver towards the expenses of the expedition, being half of what he had brought from Peru.

De Soto granted his request; the ten thousand dollars were paid into the hands of Doña Isabel, the articles of co-partnership renewed, and during the whole stay of Hernan Ponce at Havana, he was always addressed as his Excellency, and received the same personal honours as the Governor.

The heart of Hernan Ponce, however, was with his money-bags, and delighted not in these empty honours. Under various pretexts, he deferred sailing for Spain until after the embarkation of De Soto and his army for Florida. Eight days after the Governor had sailed, and when there was no longer a likelihood of his prompt return, Hernan Ponce addressed a memorial in writing to Juan de Rojas, the Lieutenant-Governor, declaring that the ten thousand dollars given to Hernando de Soto, had not been paid as a just debt, but through fear lest the Governor should make use of his power to strip him of all his property. He begged, therefore, that Doña Isabel de Bobadilla might be compelled

to refund the sum thus tyrannically obtained, otherwise he should complain to the Emperor of the injustice with which he had been treated.

When Doña Isabel heard of this claim, she immediately replied, that there were many accounts, both new and old, to be settled between Hernan Ponce and her husband, as would be seen by the writings of co-partnership. By those writings it would also appear, that Hernan Ponce owed her husband more than fifty thousand ducats, being half of the amount expended in the outfit for the projected conquest. She demanded, therefore, that Hernan Ponce should be arrested and held in bond until all these accounts could be examined and adjusted, which she offered immediately to attend to, in the name of her husband.

Hernan Ponce obtained a hint of the new troubles preparing for him, and fearing, should he fall into the hands of justice, that he would meet with little mercy, he hoisted sail before the harpies of the law could get hold of him, and made the best of his way to Spain, leaving his ten thousand dollars and all the unsettled accounts in the hands of Doña Isabel.* Having thus disposed of this episode, we will step back eight days in our chronology, to relate the sailing of the expedition for Florida.

CHAPTER VI.

ON the 12th of May 1539, Hernando de Soto sailed from Havana on his great enterprise. His squadron consisted of eight large vessels, a caravel and two brigantines, all freighted with ample means of conquest and of colonization. In addition to the forces brought from Spain, he had been joined by many volunteers and recruits in Cuba; thus his armament, beside the ship's crews, amounted to a thousand men,—the horses to three hundred and fifty. It was altogether the most splendid expedition that had yet set out for the new world.

The squadron was driven by contrary winds into the Gulf of Mexico, where it remained for several days. At length, on Whitsunday, the twenty-fifth of May, it arrived at the

* Hist. of Florida per el Inca, Lib. i. c. 14, 15.

mouth of a deep bay, to which, in honour of the day, De Soto gave the name of *Espiritu Santo*, which it still retains.

The expedition had scarcely arrived on the coast, when they beheld fires blazing along the shore, and columns of smoke rising in different directions. It was evident the natives had taken alarm, and were summoning their warriors. De Soto, therefore, observed the precaution not to disembark his troops, but remained several days on board the ships; sounding the harbour, and seeking a secure landing place. Meanwhile a boat was sent on shore to procure grass for the horses. The sailors brought off also a quantity of green grapes, which had been found growing wild in the woods. They resembled those of Spain, and were of a kind different from any that the Spaniards had seen either in Mexico or Peru. They regarded them with exultation as proofs of a fruitful country.

At length, on the last day of the month, a detachment of three hundred soldiers landed, and took formal possession of the country, in the name of Charles V. Not a single Indian was to be seen, and the troops remained all night on shore, in a state of careless security. Towards the dawn, however, an immense number of savages broke suddenly upon them with deafening yells. Several Spaniards were wounded with arrows; many were seized with panic, as new-levied troops are apt to be in their first encounter, especially when in a strange land and assailed by strange foes. They retreated to the beach in great confusion, crowding so closely together as to prevent each other from fighting to advantage, and sounding an alarm with drum and trumpet.

The din of this tumult was heard on board the fleet. Those seemingly lifeless hulks were immediately as busy as swarms of bees, when their republic is invaded: armour was buckled on in haste, and a reinforcement quickly landed. The Lieutenant-General, Vasco Porcallo, with seven horsemen, took the lead, not a little pleased at having so early an opportunity of displaying his prowess. Dashing his spurs into his horse's sides, and brandishing his lance, he charged the savages, who fled after a faint resistance. He pursued them for a while, and then returned highly elated at the success of this first encounter.

Scarcely had he reached the camp, however, when his

horse staggered under him and fell dead, having been wounded by an arrow in the course of the skirmish. The shaft had been sent with such force as to pass through the saddle and its housings, and bury itself, one third of its length, between the animal's ribs, Vasco Porcallo rose triumphant from his fall, vaunting that the first horse which had fallen in this expedition was his, and his the first lance raised against the infidels.

The remainder of the troops were now disembarked and encamped on the borders of the bay, where they remained a few days, reposing after the fatigues of their voyage. They then marched to a village situated about two leagues down the coast. The ships being lightened by the landing of the troops, were enabled, with the aid of the tide, to take their station opposite.

The village was deserted by the inhabitants. It consisted of several large houses, built of wood and thatched with palm leaves. At one end stood a kind of temple, on the top of which was the image of a bird made of wood, with gilded eyes. In this edifice was found a quantity of pearls of small value, having been injured by fire, in boring them for necklaces and bracelets.

In an opposite quarter of the village was the dwelling of the Cacique, built upon an artificial eminence, near the shore, and so constructed as to serve as a fortress. Here the Governor took up his residence, with his Lieutenant, the veteran Porcallo, and his Camp-Master, Luis de Moscoso. The other houses were converted into barracks for the troops, and store-houses for provisions and ammunition which had been brought on shore from the vessels. The ground was cleared round the village to the distance of a bow-shot, so as to give room for the cavalry to act in case of a sudden surprise in the night, which recent experience had taught the Spaniards to guard against. Sentinels also were placed at every point, and parties of horsemen patrolled the neighbourhood.

The Governor at length succeeded in capturing a few straggling Indians, natives of the place, from whom he learned the cause of their countrymen's fierce hostility, and of their deserting the village. He had come upon the traces of his predecessor, Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had unfortunately

committed the most cruel outrages. Narvaez in his expedition to Florida had been bravely opposed by the Cacique of this village, whose name was Hirrihigua,* but having at length succeeded in winning his friendship, a treaty was formed between them. Subsequently, however, Narvaez became enraged at the Cacique for some unknown reason, and in a transport of passion ordered his nose to be cut off, and his mother to be torn to pieces by dogs. These merciless wrongs, as may well be supposed, had filled the heart of Hirrihigua with the bitterest hatred of white men.

De Soto, having heard this story, endeavoured to appease the Cacique and to gain his friendship. For this purpose, he treated in the kindest manner his subjects whom he had captured, and sent them, laden with presents, to seek their chieftain in his retreat, and invite him to amicable intercourse. The Cacique was offended with his subjects for daring to bring him messages from a race who had injured him so deeply. "I want neither their speeches nor promises," said he, bitterly; "bring me their heads, and I will receive them joyfully."

De Soto reluctant to leave so powerful a foe between himself and his ships, endeavoured by repeated envoys to soften the animosity of the Cacique: but every message only provoked a more bitter and scornful reply.

While negotiating with this vindictive savage, De Soto received intelligence that there was a Spaniard, a survivor of the followers of Pamphilo de Narvaez, living under the protection of a neighbouring Cacique called Mucozo.† To

* We give the name according to Garcilaso de la Vega: the Portuguese historian calls the Cacique Ucita. These two authorities often differ as to Indian names. Sometimes they merely vary in the spelling, as is natural where the names were caught by ear, and did not originally exist in writing. At other times they differ entirely; one narrator having probably heard a village and province called by its proper and permanent name, the other by the name of its Cacique. These discrepancies are common and unavoidable, in the narratives of adventurers among savage tribes, whose language is unwritten and but little understood. Where irreconcilable differences occur, we are generally inclined to follow the Inca, as he received his facts from three different members of the expedition, one a gentleman of rank, the other two, private soldiers; whereas the Portuguese account has merely the authority of a single witness. The account of the transactions on landing are chiefly taken from the Inca, and occasionally from the Portuguese narrative.

† Mocoso. Portuguese Narrative.

obtain the services of this Spaniard was now a matter of great moment, for, having lived upwards of ten years in the country, he had become acquainted with the language and customs of the natives, and was consequently well fitted to act as guide, interpreter, and negotiator. De Soto accordingly despatched Baltazar de Gallegos, chief Alguazil, at the head of sixty lancers, and under the guidance of a native Indian, on an embassy to the Cacique Mucozo, to obtain the Spaniard's release, and invite the chieftain to his camp, with assurances of friendship and munificent rewards.

As this Spaniard was subsequently of great service throughout the expedition, and as his story is illustrative of the character and customs of the natives, and of the implacable resentment of the Cacique Hirrihigua, we will diverge for a moment from the main course of our narrative, to relate some particulars of his adventures.

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTLY after Pamphilo de Narvaez had quitted the village of Hirrihigua on his disastrous march into the interior, a small vessel of his fleet, which was in quest of him, put into the bay of Espiritu Santo. Anchoring before the town, they saw a few Indians on the shore, who made signs for them to land, pointing to a letter at the end of a cleft reed, stuck into the ground. The Spaniards supposing, and probably with justice, that it was a letter of instruction left by Narvaez, giving information of his movements and destination, made signs for the Indians to bring it to them. The latter, however, refused, but getting into a canoe came on board, four of them offering to remain as hostages for such Spaniards as chose to go on shore for the letter. Four Spaniards immediately stepped into the canoe. The moment they landed, a multitude of savages rushed out of the village and surrounded them; at the same time, the hostages on board plunged into the sea and swam to land. The crew of the vessel, seeing the number of the enemy, and dreading some further mischief, made sail with all haste, abandoning their luckless comrades to their fate.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega. Part 1. L. 2. c. 1. Portuguese Narrative, c. 9. Herrera. D. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

The captives were conveyed with savage triumph into the village of Hirrihigua; for the whole had been a stratagem of that Cacique, to get into his power some of the white men, upon whom he might wreak his vengeance. He placed his prisoners under a strong guard, until the day of a religious festival. They were then stripped naked, led out into the public square of the village and turned loose, one at a time, to be shot at with arrows. To prolong their misery and the enjoyment of their tormentors, only one Indian was allowed to shoot at a time. In this way the first three Spaniards were sacrificed, and the Cacique took a vindictive pleasure in beholding them, running in their agony from corner to corner, vainly seeking an asylum in every nook, until after being repeatedly wounded, they were shot to death.

Juan Ortiz, a lad, scarcely eighteen years old, and of a noble family, was the fourth victim. As they were leading him forth, his extreme youth touched with compassion the hearts of the wife and daughters of the Cacique, who interceded in his favour.

Hirrihigua listened to their importunities, and, for the present, granted the life of Ortiz;—but it proved to be a most wretched boon. From morning until evening he was employed in carrying wood and water, being allowed but little sleep, and less food. Not a day passed that he was not beaten. On festivals he was an object of barbarous amusement to the Cacique, who would oblige him to run from sunrise to sunset, in the public square of the village, where his companions had been so barbarously sacrificed. Upon those occasions, a number of Indians were stationed at different parts of the quadrangle with bows and arrows, to shoot him, should he halt one moment. When the day was spent, the unfortunate youth lay stretched on the hard floor of his hut, more dead than alive. At such times the chief's wife and daughters would come to him privately with food and clothing, and by their kind treatment his life was preserved.

At length the Cacique being determined to put an end to his victim's existence, ordered that he should be bound upon a wooden frame, in the form of a huge gridiron, placed over a bed of burning coals, and roasted alive.

The cries and shrieks of the miserable sufferer reached his female protectors, and their entreaties were once more suc-

cessful with the Cacique. They unbound Ortiz, dragged him from the fire, and took him to their dwelling, where they bathed his wounds with the juice of herbs, and tended him with assiduous care. After many days he recovered, though his body was marked with many a deep scar.

His employment was now to guard the village cemetery, which was in a lonely field in the bosom of a forest. The bodies of the dead were deposited in wooden boxes, covered with boards, without any fastening except a stone or a log of wood laid upon the top; so that the bodies were often carried away by wild beasts.

In this cemetery, Ortiz was stationed with a bow and arrows, to watch day and night, and was told, that should a single body be carried away, he would be burnt alive. He returned thanks to God for having freed him from the dreaded presence of Hirribigua, hoping to lead a better life with the dead than he had lately done with the living.

Upon one occasion while he was watching, towards morning sleep overpowered him. Being awakened by the lid of one of the chests suddenly falling, upon examination he found that the body had disappeared. The chest had contained the corpse of an infant recently deceased,—the child of an Indian of note.

Ortiz supposing some animal had dragged it away, immediately set out in pursuit. After wandering for some time, at a short distance within the woods, he heard a noise like that of a dog gnawing bones. Drawing near to the spot with a stealthy step, he dimly perceived a living object among the bushes, and invoking aid from on high, discharged an arrow at it. The thick and tangled underwood prevented him from seeing the effect of his shot, but as the animal did not stir, he flattered himself that he had killed it. With this hope he waited until the day dawned, when he beheld his victim, a huge creature of the panther kind,* lying dead, the arrow having passed through its entrails and pierced its heart.

Gathering together the mangled remains of the infant, and replacing them in the coffin, Ortiz dragged his prey in triumph to the village, with the arrow still in its body. The

* The Inca calls this animal a lion, as the Spanish discoverers were in the habit of calling animals of the tiger or panther kind.

exploit gained him credit with the old hunters, and for some time softened even the ferocity of Hirrihigua. The resentment of the latter, however, for the wrongs he had suffered from white men was too bitter to be appeased. Some time after his eldest daughter came to Ortiz and warned him that her father had determined to sacrifice him at the next festival, which was just at hand. She stated that the influence of her mother, her sisters, and herself, would be no longer of any avail to save him, and therefore wished that he should take refuge with a neighbouring Cacique named Mucozo, who had sought her in marriage, and would befriend him for her sake. "This very night," said the kind-hearted maiden, "at the northern extremity of the village, you will find a trusty friend who will guide you to a bridge about two leagues hence: on arriving there, you must send him back, that he may reach home before the morning dawns, to avoid suspicion—for well he knows that this bold act, in daring to assist you, may bring down destruction upon us both. Six leagues further on you will reach the village of Mucozo. Tell him that I have sent you, and expect him to befriend you in your extremity. I know he will do it. Go, and may your God protect you!" Ortiz threw himself at the feet of his generous protectress, and poured out his acknowledgments for the kindness she had always shown him. An Indian was at the place appointed to direct him, and they quitted the village without alarming the warlike savages. When they came to the bridge, Ortiz sent back the guide, in obedience to the injunction of his mistress, and continuing his flight found himself, by break of day, on the banks of a small stream near the village of Mucozo.

Looking cautiously round, he saw two natives fishing. As he was unacquainted with their language, and could not explain the cause of his appearance in their neighbourhood, he was in dread lest they should take him for an enemy and kill him. He, therefore, ran swiftly to the place where they had deposited their weapons and seized them. The savages fled to the village, without attending to his signs of friendly intention. The inhabitants sallied out armed with bows and arrows, and were about to attack him; but Ortiz fixing an arrow in his bow prepared for defence, crying out at the same moment, that he came not as an enemy, but as an

ambassador from a female Cacique to their chief. Fortunately one present understood him, and interpreted his words. Upon this the Indians unbent their bows, and returning with him to their village, presented him to Mucozo. The latter, a youthful chieftain, of a graceful form and handsome countenance, received Ortiz kindly for the sake of her who had sent him; but, on further acquaintance, became attached to him for his own merits, and treated him with the affection of a brother.

Hirrihigua soon heard where the fugitive had taken refuge, and demanded several times that he should be delivered up. Mucozo as often declined; considering himself bound by the laws of honour and hospitality to protect him. Hirrihigua then employed as mediator another Cacique, a brother-in-law of Mucozo, who went in person to demand Ortiz. The generous Mucozo, however, indignantly refused to deliver up to a cruel enemy, the poor fugitive who had come so well recommended to his protection, and treated the request as a stain upon his honour. The two Caciques continued their importunities, but the high-minded savage remained faithful to his guest, though in maintaining inviolate the sacred rites of hospitality, he lost the friendship of his brother-in-law, and forfeited the hand of Hirrihigua's beautiful daughter, whom he tenderly loved.

CHAPTER VIII.

1539. AT this juncture tidings reached Mucozo of De Soto's arrival at the village of Hirrihigua, with his troops, and that it was their intention to conquer the country. The Cacique, alarmed at this intelligence, addressed himself thus to Ortiz: "You well know," said he, "what I have done for you; that I sheltered you when you were friendless, and have chosen rather to fall into disgrace with my relations and neighbours, than deliver you into the hands of your enemies. This I have done without thought or hope of reward, but the time is now come when you can requite my friendship. Go to the chieftain of this army of white men which has arrived, make known to him the asylum I have given you, and which, under the same circumstances, I would have

afforded to any of your countrymen—entreat him, in return, not to lay waste my small territory, and assure him that I and mine are ready to devote ourselves to his service.”

Ortiz gladly departed on the mission, accompanied by fifty chosen warriors. It happened that about the same time Baltazar de Gallegos had been dispatched, as has been already mentioned, on his embassy to Mucozo.

As Ortiz and his Indian escort were on their way to the village of Hirrihigua, they came in sight of Baltazar and his band, whose lances glistened at a distance, amidst a verdant plain, skirted by a wood.

The Indians would have concealed themselves in the forest, until the Christians could be informed that they were friends; but Ortiz, rejecting their advice, insisted that his countrymen would at once recognise him; not reflecting that in appearance he did not differ from his savage companions, being, like them, almost naked, his body bronzed by exposure to the sun, his arms painted, having a quiver at his back, a bow and arrow in his hand, and his head adorned with feathers.

No sooner did the Spaniards perceive the savages, than they came down upon them at full gallop, heedless of the voice of their captain; for they were newly raised soldiers, full of spirit, and eager for a contest with the natives.

The Indians, seeing their furious approach, fled terrified to the wood. One of their number, however, being bewildered, or possessing more courage than the rest, loitered behind. He was pursued by a Spaniard, and before he could attain the shelter of the adjacent thicket, was overtaken by the trooper's lance. Juan Ortiz was assaulted by Alvaro Nieto, one of the stoutest and boldest troopers in the army, who charged him with his lance. Ortiz parried the thrust with his bow, at the same time leaping from side to side with great agility to avoid the horse, crying out lustily *Xivilla, Xivilla*—meaning *Seville, Seville*; and making the sign of the cross with his arm and bow, to signify that he was a Christian.

Alvaro Nieto hearing him cry out *Xivilla*, demanded whether he was Juan Ortiz. On his replying in the affirmative, Nieto seized him by the arm, lifted him upon the croup of his horse, and scoured over the plain to present him to Baltazar de Gallegos. The captain received him with great joy, and ordered his troopers to be immediately recalled, for

they were in the woods, hunting the poor Indians like so many deer.

Ortiz himself went into the forest and called with a loud voice to the Indians, to come out of the thickets and fear nothing. Many of them, however, were panic-struck and fled back to their village, to acquaint Mucozo with what had happened. Others joined Ortiz in small parties, upbraiding him with his rashness, but when they found one of their people wounded they were so exasperated, that they would have laid violent hands upon the Spaniard, had not his countrymen been present.

They were at length pacified. The soldiers bound up the wounds of the Indian, and placed him upon a horse. The troopers, having taken up all the savages behind them, galloped away for the encampment of the Governor. Previously to setting off, however, Ortiz despatched a messenger to Mucozo, with a true account of the late events, lest that Cacique should be irritated at the statement carried to him by the terrified fugitives.*

The night was already far advanced when Baltazar de Gallegos and his band reached the camp. The Governor hearing the tramp of horses, was filled with alarm, suspecting some mischance had befallen them, as he did not look for them before the expiration of three days. His apprehensions, however, were soon turned to rejoicing. He gave Gallegos and his men credit for the success of their expedition, and received Ortiz as his own son, sympathizing with him in his past sufferings, at the same time presenting him with a suit of clothes, with arms, and a good horse.† De Soto treated the Indians who accompanied him with every mark of kindness, and ordered the wounded savage to be taken care of. He then despatched two of the natives to Mucozo, thanking him for his past benevolence to Ortiz, accepting his offers of friendship, and inviting him to the Spanish camp. Not an eye was closed that night, but one and all joined in the revelry which welcomed the liberation of poor Ortiz.

On the third day after the envoys had been despatched,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 8. Herrera, D. 6, L. 7. c. 9.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 7. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 7. Herrera, Decad. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

The Cacique Mucozo arrived, accompanied by his warriors. He kissed the Governor's hand with great veneration, saluted each of the officers, and made a slight obeisance to the privates. De Soto received him with affectionate courtesy, and assured him that his people would be ever grateful to him for all his past kindnesses.

"What I have done unto Ortiz," said Mucozo, "is but little indeed; he came well recommended to me, and threw himself upon my protection. There is a law of our tribe, which forbids our betraying a fugitive who solicits an asylum. But his own virtue and dauntless courage entitled him to all the respect which has been shown him. That I have pleased your people I rejoice exceedingly, and by devoting myself, henceforth, to their service, I hope to merit their esteem."

These words were uttered with so much grace, the Cacique's bearing was so noble, his manner so full of kindness, that De Soto and his officers were touched, and made presents to him and to his warriors.

Two days afterwards, the mother of Mucozo came to the camp, overwhelmed with grief because her son was in the Christians' power. She would not have consented to his visiting the army, had she been present at the time of his departure. She passionately entreated the Governor to deliver up her son, and not serve him as Narvaez had served Hirrigua. "He is young," said she; "only give him his liberty, and take me, who am a poor old woman, and treat me as you please. I will bear any punishment for both." De Soto endeavoured to reassure her by expressions of gratitude and friendship towards her son and herself; but though she remained three days in the camp, and was treated by every one with no less kindness than respect, she continued anxious and suspicious. She ate at the table of the Governor, but would partake of nothing until Ortiz had tasted it, fearing she might be poisoned. "How is this," said a Spaniard to her, "that you who offered to die for your son, have now so great a fear of death?"

"I have the same love of life as other mortals," she replied, "but most willingly would I lose it to save a son, who is far dearer to me than life itself!"

Even when assured of her son's perfect liberty, and that

he only remained for a time with the Spaniards through choice, because they were young and generous spirits like himself, she was but poorly comforted, and departed in sorrow. On quitting the Spanish camp, she took Juan Ortiz aside, and besought him to liberate Mucozo, as the latter had saved him from the hands of Hirrihigua.

The Cacique remained with the army eight days, during which time he became very familiar with the Spaniards, and was inspired with perfect confidence in them. He went home well contented, and frequently afterwards visited the Governor, bringing always a number of presents.*

CHAPTER IX.

1539. While these things were passing in the camp, the provisions and military stores were landed from the caravels, and secured in the village of Hirrihigua. The Adelantado, following the example of Cortes and other renowned captains, despatched seven of the largest vessels to Havana, in order that his followers might lose all hope of quitting the country; retaining only a caravel and two brigantines to protect the sea-coast and bay.†

He appointed to the command of this important post Pedro Calderon, a hardy veteran, nursed in a rough school, amid camps and battle scenes, having served in his youth under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova.

De Soto left no means untried to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua, being aware that the example of this powerful chieftain would have great weight with the neighbouring Caciques. Accordingly, in foraging the adjacent country, whenever the troopers captured a vassal of this Cacique, the Governor instantly sent him home loaded with presents and charged with kind messages, urging Hirrihigua to accept his offered alliance, and promising every reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon him by Pamphilo de Narvaez. These wrongs, however, were too deep to be easily obliterated from the stern bosom of the savage. The only reply he deigned to give was, "The memory of my injuries forbid me sending

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. l. 2. c. 7, 8

† Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. l. vii. c. 10.

a kind answer, and a harsh one your courtesy will not allow me to return." Still these constant and unwearied exertions of De Soto in some measure mitigated the Cacique's deadlyrancour against the Spaniards.

The Governor made many inquiries of Ortiz respecting the country, and whether there was any district abounding with gold and silver. Ortiz knew of none such, and could give but little information. During his bitter servitude under Hirihigua, he had been closely watched, and not allowed to wander: and although while dwelling with Mucozo he had enjoyed perfect liberty, yet he dared not venture far, through fear of being way-laid by his enemies. He had heard much, however, of a Cacique named Urribarracaxi, whose village was thirty leagues distant. He was said to be the most powerful chieftain of the country. To him Mucozo, Hirihigua, and all the other Caciques of the coast paid tribute, and his territories were far more fertile than those nearer the sea.*

The Governor despatched Baltazar de Gallegos on an expedition to the village of this powerful chief. Gallegos chose the same sixty lancers who had accompanied him when he went in search of Juan Ortiz, and likewise sixty foot soldiers, armed with cross-bows and bucklers. He was accompanied by Ortiz as guide and interpreter. On approaching the village of Mucozo, that Cacique came out to receive them, and entertained them for the night with great hospitality. Next morning the Captain demanded a guide to the village of Urribarracaxi. The Cacique at first thought that his designs upon the village were hostile, and shrank with a noble spirit from what would have been an act of perfidy against his relative and neighbour. When he found, however, that the Spaniards were on a friendly errand, and only wanted one of his vassals to go before and inform Urribarracaxi of their amicable intentions, he gladly furnished them with an Indian for the purpose, who had been a friend of Juan Ortiz.

The Spaniards had been occasionally impeded by morasses during their progress into the interior: these became less frequent the further they went from the sea. In the course

* Portuguese Relation, c. 3. The name of the Cacique in the Portuguese Narrative is Paracoxi. We follow the Inca.

of their journey, they observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as walnut, oak, mulberry, plum, pine, and evergreen oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

The distance from the village of Mucozo, to that of his brother-in-law was about seventeen leagues. The adventurers arrived there in four days, but found it deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the woods. Gallegos sent his envoy repeatedly to the Cacique, with the most friendly messages, but every effort to draw him from his retreat proved fruitless, though he manifested no hostility either by word or deed. The Spanish leader made diligent inquiry of the Indians he met with, if there was any province where gold and silver might be found. They replied that there was a country to the westward called Ocali, the inhabitants of which were continually at war with the people of another province, where the spring lasted all the year long, and gold was so plenty that their warriors wore head-pieces of that precious metal.*

1539. After Hernando de Soto had despatched Gallegos to explore the country, he received intelligence that the Cacique Hirrihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. The Governor was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploits, and was withal a little vain-glorious. He thought this a fit opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honour of capturing the formidable though fugitive Cacique. His desire being acceded to, he prepared for it in his usual way, being fond of parade, and liberal in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering armour, boasting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.†

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence from his spies of the armed force marching in

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 10.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2, c. 9. Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. 6, L. 7. c. 10.

quest of him. This messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirihigua, not to proceed further, as the Cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, the Spanish leader would be unable to obtain an entrance: but that both he and his troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses and tangled forests, which they would have to pass. The Cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude nor courtesy, dictated the message: he therefore ordered the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced, messenger after messenger met him, all repeating the warning to return, and at length these became so numerous as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warned to return, the more obstinately did the stout-hearted, but hot-headed old soldier persist in advancing: taking every thing by contraries, and judging of the Cacique's panic, by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might escape him. Under this impression, he spurred on hotly with his troops, until they arrived at a vast and dangerous morass.

Here his men perceived the truth of the warnings they had received, and began to remonstrate upon the danger of attempting the morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle in this enterprise to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering; but, knowing from experience the effect of setting an example in time of difficulty, he put spurs to his horse, dashed forward, and his men followed him pell mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep part of the swamp, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the Lieutenant-General was imminent; his horse had fallen upon one of its rider's legs so as to fix him down, while the weight of his armour contributed to sink him into the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation, nor could any one afford them relief, as all who entered would be exposed to similar peril.

At length the cavalier having, with infinite difficulty,

extricated himself and steed from the bog, stood once more on firm ground, covered with mud. All his vain glory was at an end, he was out of humour with himself, and felt humbled in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous and friendly messages, and his vain-glorious enterprize had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

Ordering his men to face about, he set out on his return to the camp, in a far different mood from that in which he had sallied forth. Amidst the mortifications of his present plight, he called to mind the comfortable home he had left behind, at Cuba, and the easy life he had led there. He reflected that he was no longer a boy; that the vigour of his days was past; that his present disaster was but a slight foretaste of the toils and troubles which must attend this expedition of conquest; and came at length to the conclusion, that as he was not obliged to encounter them, he had better return home, and leave the conquest of Florida to the younger adventurers who were embarked in it.

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled, bemired, and totally crest-fallen, rode along in querulous, yet half-whimsical humour, muttering to himself.

Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp in a state of moody dissatisfaction. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire which he had caught from the young soldiers of the army, and which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, had been as suddenly extinguished. He only thought now, how to get rid of his command of Lieutenant-General, and return to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The Governor granted it with the same promptness with which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover, furnished him with the galliot *San Anton* to convey him back to the island.

The worthy veteran was now as eager to abandon the expedition as he had been to join it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed;

but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vain-gloriously, his generous spirit displayed itself. He divided among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so ostentatiously provided; and he gave for the use of the expedition all the stores which he had purchased for himself and his retinue. He then set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so gallant a cavalier was about to be withdrawn from their confederation.

The only person who remained behind of Vasco Porcallo's retinue was Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, his natural son, by an Indian woman in Cuba, with whom he left two horses, arms, and other necessities. Throughout this expedition this youth conducted himself as a good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude upon all occasions.*

CHAPTER X.

1539. ON the day after the departure of Vasco Porcallo, a young cavalier named Gonzalo Silvestre, followed by three other horsemen, rode into the camp, bearing dispatches from Baltazar de Gallegos. They brought favourable accounts of the country he had explored, with assurances that, in the village of Urribarracaxi and its neighbourhood, there were provisions enough to sustain the army for several days.

There was but one drawback on this favourable intelligence, which was, that beyond the town of Urribarracaxi there extended a vast swamp, exceedingly difficult to be traversed. The Spaniards, however, ripe for action and adventure, made light of this obstacle, averring that God had provided man with genius and dexterity to make his way through every difficulty.

Satisfied from the dispatches just received, that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the Governor issued orders for every one to prepare for marching on the fourth day. In the mean time he commanded Gonzalo Silvestre to return to

* The Inca. P. I. L. 2, c. 11.

Baltazar de Gallegos with twenty horsemen, and inform him that the army would join him without further delay.

As there was a great quantity of arms, ammunition, and provisions in the village of Hirrihigua, a garrison of forty horsemen and eighty foot soldiers was left there, under the command of Pedro Calderon, who had charge also of the shipping in the harbour, consisting of a caravel and two brigantines with their crews.

They were enjoined to remain quiet, and not move to any other place without orders from De Soto; to cultivate peace with the neighbouring Indians, and not make war upon them even though they should be taunted and insulted;—above all, to treat Mucozo with marked friendship.

Having made these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet Captain, on the appointed day, De Soto set out with his main force, from the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armour and all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to constant hardships, unforeseen dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to which most of his soldiers were entirely unaccustomed.

As it was a leading object with the Governor, to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these were three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country should he succeed in forming a settlement, having found them the most advantageous stock for the subsistence of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them in the line of march, and guard them while traversing the swamps and rivers.

Besides the match-locks and cross-bows with which the infantry were armed, there was one piece of ordnance in the army, that must have cost them vast labour to transport, though it appears never to have rendered any efficient service.

After two days' march, to the north-east, on the morning of the third day De Soto came in sight of the village of Mucozo. The Cacique came forth to receive him, expressing great grief at his intended departure from the country, and entreating him to remain that night in his village. The Governor, however, excused himself, not wishing to task the

hospitality of this generous Indian with such a multitude of guests, but again expressed his thanks for the kindness shown by the Cacique to Juan Ortiz, and commended to his friendship the Captain and soldiers who remained in garrison at the village of Hirrihigua. The Cacique promised to observe the strictest amity towards them. He then took leave of De Soto, his principal officers and cavaliers, with many embraces and tears, praying that the sun might shine upon them throughout their journey, and prosper them in all their undertakings. The Spaniards, were greatly affected at parting with this amiable savage, who had in all things proved himself so disinterested a friend.

On arriving at the village of Urribarracaxi, De Soto found Baltazar de Gallegos waiting to receive him. The Cacique, however, still remained in the fastnesses of the forest, and though the Governor sent envoys with offers of peace and friendship, nothing could draw him from his place of refuge.

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass, a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were dispatched in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent runners before them to explore the route. The latter returned next day, declaring that they could not proceed on account of the numerous bogs caused by streams flowing from the great morass and inundating the country. Upon hearing this, the Governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing, therefore, a hundred horse and as many foot soldiers, he left the rest of the army where they were, under the temporary command of Luis de Moscoso, and re-crossing the great swamp, travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners at different intervals, to seek for some outlet.

During these three days, the Indians incessantly sallied from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharged their arrows at the Spaniards and retreated to their thickets. Some of the savages, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops

into difficult passes, and places where their countrymen were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose their dogs, which killed four of them. Fearing a similar fate, an Indian offered to guide them in safety, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mud, but where they had to proceed breast high in water for the distance of a league. Reaching the middle of the channel, they found it too deep to be forded. Here the natives had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two large trees into the water; and, where these did not unite, the space was supplied by logs united by means of transverse poles. By this bridge Pamphilo de Narvaez and his unfortunate army had passed ten years before.

Hernando de Soto, summoning two soldiers, named Pedro Moron and Diego de Oliva, half-breeds of the Island of Cuba, who were expert swimmers, ordered them to take hatchets and cut away several branches which obstructed the passage of the bridge, and remove all other impediments.

Moron and De Oliva set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labour, several canoes appeared from among the rushes filled with savages, who galled the workmen with a flight of arrows. The two soldiers plunged headlong from the bridge, swam under water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the stream, the force of the arrows was broken and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset, the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and a short distance above, discovered a good ford for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the Governor summoned Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, you will in consequence have the more work to do, as I shall assign to you the most difficult tasks that may occur. It is important to the preservation of our lives and to the success of our enterprise, that you return this night to the camp. Desire Luis de Moscoso to follow us with the whole army, and immediately dispatch you with provisions, to sustain us until we can procure food; for you well know that our need is great. In order that your return

may be rendered the more safe, desire him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I will wait for you at this place until to-morrow night; return, therefore, without delay. The road may seem long and difficult, and the time short, but I know to whom I entrust the undertaking. If you desire a companion, select whom you please, and depart at once, for you should be at the camp before day-break; because if the day dawn before you have passed the swamp, the Indians may capture and kill you."

The very peril of the mission put the youthful Silvestre upon his metal. Without answering a word he left the Governor, vaulted into his saddle, and was already on the way when he encountered one Juan Lopez Cacho, a native of Seville, and page of the Governor, who had an excellent horse. Silvestre immediately addressing him, said gaily—"The General has ordered that you and I deliver a message at the camp before day-break; follow me, therefore, immediately, for I am already on the road."

"Take some other person, I entreat you," said Lopez; "I am fatigued, and cannot undertake the journey."

"As you please," replied Silvestre, "his Excellency ordered me to choose a companion, and I have selected you. If you are so disposed, come; if not, remain. Your company will not diminish the danger, nor will my going alone increase the toil." So saying he put spurs to his horse and continued on his way. Juan Lopez, though much against his will, leaped into his saddle and galloped after him.

CHAPTER XI.

1539. THE sun was just setting as Gonzalo Silvestre and his comrade, Juan Lopez, departed on their hazardous mission. These youthful cavaliers were well matched in spirit, hardihood, and valour. Neither of them had yet attained his twenty-first year.

They galloped rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. No sooner, however, had they crossed this open tract, than their difficulties and dangers began. Being ignorant of the coun-

try, they were obliged to trace back, step by step, the track they had pursued three days previously, through bog and brake, brambles and forests, and across a labyrinth of streams flowing from the great morass; guiding themselves by the landmarks they had noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome journey they were aided by the instinct of their horses. These sagacious animals traced the road by which they had come, keeping their noses just above the ground in order to discover the track, like spaniels or setter dogs, upon the scent of game. Their riders, not understanding this unusual action, checked them with the reins to raise their heads. If at any time the horses lost the track, the moment they recovered it, they puffed and snorted, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard by the savages.*

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when it lowered its head, gave it the rein, without attempting to guide it. Encountering these and many other difficulties, the two daring youths travelled all night, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as they had not been unsaddled for three days, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, in order that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of large fires, round which savages were seen stretched in wild and fantastic groups, some capering and singing,—making the silent forests ring with their hideous yells. These Indians were probably celebrating one of their festivals with war-dances. The deafening din which they raised was the safeguard of the Spaniards, as it prevented the savages from hearing the bark-

* The Inca is curiously minute in his account of these horses. "The steed of Gonzalo Silvestre," says he, "was the most sure in the track, and certain to discover it when lost. However," he adds, "we must not be surprised at this excellent quality, and many others which this horse possessed; for, his marks and colour proved him admirably fitted either for peace or war. He was a dark chesnut of a pitchy shade, with white on one of his left feet, and striped above the nostrils;—marks which promise more excellence and gentleness than any other. The dark chesnut colour, especially when of a pitchy hue, is above all others the most excellent, either for light or heavy labour. The steed of Juan Lopez Cachero was of a light bay, commonly called fox colour, and his extremities were black, excellent marks, but inferior to the dark chesnut colour."—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

ing of their dogs, and the trampling of their horses as they passed.*

Thus they journeyed for more than ten leagues. Juan Lopez was repeatedly so much overpowered by sleep, that he proposed they should halt, and take some repose, but Silvestre resolutely refused. At length poor Lopez could contain himself no longer. "Let me sleep for a short time," said he, "or kill me with your lance on the spot, for I cannot possibly keep my saddle."

"Dismount then, and sleep, if you please," said Silvestre, "since you had rather run the risk of being butchered, than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have travelled, we cannot be far from the pass of the swamp which we must cross before dawn; for, if the light discovers us in this place, our death is certain."

Juan Lopez made no reply, but fell upon the ground like a lifeless body. His companion took from him his lance, and held his horse by the bridle. Night now rapidly drew on—the clouds discharged a deluge of rain, but nothing could awaken Juan Lopez from his death-like slumber.

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed, and Silvestre found that the day had dawned. As this was an unexpected discovery, it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the light, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke, were insufficient to rouse him, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, "Look what your sleeping has brought upon us; daylight has overtaken us, and left us little chance of escape from our enemies!"

Juan Lopez, awakened at last by this summary process, sprang into his saddle, and they set off at a hand-gallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that, notwithstanding past fatigue, they were still in good spirits. The light revealed the two cavaliers to their foes, who began to yell and howl from every part of the morass. This was accompanied with a frightful din, caused by the mingled clangour of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be travelled over an expanse

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting from thickets and cane-brakes, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after having escaped so many perils on land; but, knowing that their safety depended wholly upon their courage, they dashed boldly into the stream; seeking to cross it with all speed. During their adventurous passage the Indians discharged clouds of arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armour, and their horses nearly covered with water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though they declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the stream appeared to be strewed with arrows.

The savages continued to pursue them on land, plying their bows, and discharging flights of arrows after them, when suddenly a body of thirty horsemen came galloping to their rescue, headed by the gallant Nuño Tobar, on his dapple grey charger. The wild cries and yells of the Indians having reached the army, had caused a surmise that some of their companions were in danger, and Nuño Tobar had immediately proposed this sally to their rescue; for that generous cavalier, now that he was out of favour with his general, with the pride of a noble spirit, seemed to pique himself the more on signalizing himself by worthy deeds.

At sight of Nuño Tobar, and his band, the Indians gave over the pursuit; and fearing to be trampled down by the horses, fled to the thickets and morass for safety.

CHAPTER XII.

1539. THE two adventurous troopers reached the army in safety, and were received with acclamations by their comrades. On learning their errand, Luis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master-General, immediately ordered two horses to be laden with supplies for the Governor and his troops, and thirty horsemen to accompany them as an escort. With this band Gonzalo Silvestre set out on his return, without having reposed an hour in the camp, or taken scarcely any refreshment. His friend, Juan Lopez, however, remained behind, excusing himself under the plea that the Governor had neither ordered him to go nor return.

The thirty horsemen passed the morass without opposition from the Indians, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed, however, they could not reach the place at which the Governor had promised to wait for them, until two hours after night-fall, when, to their great vexation, they found the late encamping ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the General, this little band made arrangements for passing the night upon the spot where their comrades had lately encamped. Being exposed to the attacks of hordes of lurking savages, constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One of these detachments, mounted and armed for action, went the rounds the first third of the night; another kept watch at the encampment, with their horses at hand, saddled, bridled, and ready to be mounted; the third merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner they lightened their toils, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, and the night passed without molestation from any enemy.

As soon as day dawned they sought the tract of the General and his troop, and following it, came to the second pass of the morass where they found the Indian bridge. Here, having to advance a considerable distance, breast high in water, they thought themselves in imminent peril from the Indians, who might hover about them in their canoes and assail them with flights of arrows; but to their great joy they accomplished the whole passage without sustaining any assault. This capricious conduct of the savages, one day attacking with blood-thirsty fury, and the next keeping entirely out of sight, occurred repeatedly throughout the whole of this expedition, and has been sometimes attributed to superstitious notions, such as the observance of lucky and unlucky days in their warfare.

Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three or four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the Governor encamped, who received them

joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his services. He excused himself for not having waited at the appointed place, alleging the intolerable hunger of his troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Within a few days, the Governor was joined by the remainder of the army, conducted by Luis de Moscoso. They had traversed the two passes of the morass with great toil and difficulty, but fortunately without experiencing any hostility from the natives.

The fertile province in which the army was now encamped, lay twenty leagues to the north of that governed by Urribaracaxi, and was governed by a Cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to this chief, representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury in war, and confer benefits in peace; declaring his disposition to befriend the natives, his only object being, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to his Sovereign, the powerful Emperor and King of Castile. He invited the Cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview in order to arrange a peaceful intercourse.

The Cacique returned a haughty reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past disturbed our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder the defenceless in cold blood. No! with such a people I want neither peace nor friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all I ask. You boast yourselves to be valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and of this you shall one day have proof, for I have sworn to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders;—not openly in the battle field—though even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, ambush, and midnight surprisal."

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the Emperor, the Chief replied: "I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who submits to the yoke

of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we prefer death to the loss of liberty, and the subjugation of our country!"

The Governor, filled with admiration at the spirit of this savage chieftain, was more pressing than ever to gain his friendship; but to all his overtures the Cacique's answer was, that he had already made the only reply he had to offer.

The army remained in this province twenty days, recruiting from the fatigues and privations of their past journey. During this time, the Governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, and they returned with favourable reports.

During this time the Indians were not idle. To justify the bravadoes of their Cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot and instantly beheaded; if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

The Christians buried the bodies of their unfortunate comrades wherever they found them; but the savages invariably returned the following night, disinterred them, cut them up and hanged them upon trees. The heads they carried as trophies to their Cacique, according to his orders. Thus fourteen Spaniards perished, and a greater number were wounded. In these skirmishes, the Indians ran comparatively little risk, as the Spanish encampment was skirted by a thicket, whither, after making an assault, the assailants could easily escape. In this manner the Spaniards saw effectually verified the threats of their ferocious foes, who had hung upon their rear during the march. "Keep on, robbers and traitors," they cried, "in Acuera and Apalachee we will treat you as you deserve. We will quarter and hang up every captive on the highest trees along the road."

Notwithstanding their great vigilance, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for the latter were extremely wary in their ambuscades.*

1539. The army reposed twenty days in the province of Acuera, during which period De Soto permitted no injury to be done either to the hamlets, villages, or fields of grain: he then broke up his encampment, and set out in search of

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 16. Herrera, D. 6. L. 7. c. 13.

another province, about twenty leagues to the north-east, called Ocali,*—the same of which Gallegos had heard at the village of Urribarracaxi. His way lay across a desert tract, about twelve leagues broad, interspersed with open forests of pine and other trees, free from underwood, through which the horsemen could ride at ease. The army then traversed seven leagues of inhabited country, where dwellings were scattered about the fields and woods. At length, they arrived at the principal village, called after the Cacique, Ocali, containing six hundred houses. The inhabitants, however, had abandoned it, and fled with their effects to the forests.

This province, being further from the sea-coast, was less intersected by creeks and bays, which in other parts penetrated deeply into this low and level country, causing vast swamps, difficult, and sometimes impossible to traverse. In some of the morasses, the surface appeared like firm and dry land, but on stepping upon it, it would tremble for twenty or thirty paces around, and on being trodden by horses would give way, and engulf both horse and rider.

Besides being freer from swamps, the province of Ocali was more populous and fruitful than the other districts. This the Spaniards found to be the case throughout the country, in proportion as the provinces were remote from the sea. Their greatest sufferings during this expedition arose from the scarcity of animal food, as the natives did not breed domestic cattle; and, although deer and other game were abundant, the Indians only killed sufficient to supply their own immediate wants.

The Spaniards took up their quarters in the village of Ocali, where they found vast quantities of maize, vegetables, and various kinds of fruits. De Soto sent three or four Indian messengers daily to the Cacique Ocali, endeavouring, in vain, to draw that chieftain from his retreat, with offers of friendship. With one of these messengers, there came to the camp, gaily decorated with plumes, four young Indian warriors, who manifested an eager curiosity to see the Spaniards, their dress, their arms, and above all, their horses. The Governor entertained them kindly, made them presents, and ordered that refreshments should be set before them.

* This name is spelt Cale by the Portuguese narrator.

They sat down and appeared to be eating very quietly, when, perceiving the Spaniards off their guard, they all rose suddenly together, and ran full speed to the woods. It was in vain to attempt a pursuit on foot, and there was no horse at hand.

A greyhound of uncommon sagacity, however, happened to be near; hearing the cry of the savages, and seeing them run, it pursued them. Passing by the first whom it overtook, and likewise the second and third, it sprang upon the shoulders of the foremost and pulled him to the ground; meanwhile, the next Indian passed on, but the dog, quitting the man whom it had seized, leaped upon the other, and secured him in the same way. In like manner it served the third and fourth; and then kept running from one to the other, pulling each down as fast as he rose, and barking so furiously, that the fugitives being terrified and confounded, the Spaniards were enabled to overtake and capture them. They were led back to the camp and examined separately, for as they were armed, the Spaniards apprehended treachery; but it appeared that their sudden flight was only an exploit to show their address and fleetness.

This same greyhound had signalized itself on another occasion, before the army reached Ocali. As several Indians and Spaniards were talking in a friendly way on the bank of a river, one of the former struck a Spaniard violently with his bow, and threw himself into the water, all his companions following him. The dog immediately sprang in after them, but passed by several without molesting them, until it came to the one who had committed the assault, when, laying hold of him, it tore him to pieces.

CHAPTER XIII.

1539. AFTER repeated solicitations, the Cacique Ocali, at the end of six days, ventured from his place of refuge, and visited the camp, where he was treated with great courtesy and kindness, although the Spaniards doubted much the sincerity of his professions.

Close by the village ran a wide and deep river, with precipitous banks. Notwithstanding that it was the summer

season, this river was too full of water to be fordable; it was therefore necessary to construct a wooden bridge, over which the army might pass. De Soto having treated with the Cacique for a number of his subjects to aid in its construction, went to decide upon the spot where it should be erected. As they were walking along the bank of the stream, conferring upon the subject, more than five hundred Indians suddenly started from among the bushes and thickets, on the opposite bank of the river, crying out fiercely, "You want a bridge, do you? merciless robbers! but you will never see it built by our hands!" Thus shouting, they discharged a volley of arrows towards the place where the Cacique and Governor were standing.

De Soto demanded the meaning of this outrage, having received from the Cacique pledges of his friendship. The latter replied, that these were a refractory party of his subjects, who had cast off their allegiance to him on account of his attachment to the Spaniards, and that he was not, therefore, answerable for their acts.

It happened that the greyhound already mentioned was at hand, held in a leash by the Governor's page. No sooner did it hear the yells and see the menacing actions of the Indians, than it was furious to get at them. In its struggles, it threw the page upon the ground, and breaking loose, plunged into the stream. The Spaniards called it back in vain. The savages knowing the injury it had done to their countrymen, were glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves. They showered their arrows about the dog as it swam, and with such dexterous aim, that more than fifty struck it about the head and shoulders, which were above the water. Still the courageous animal kept on, and reached the land, but had scarcely quitted the water when it fell dead. Its death was greatly lamented by the Governor and the whole army: for it had been of signal service throughout the expedition, a vigilant guardian of the camp by night, and an effectual champion by day. It was one of a rare and renowned race of dogs, several of which were noted for their feats in the course of the Spanish discoveries and conquests.

1539. De Soto saw that the chieftain Ocali was but little esteemed by his subjects, who disobeyed his commands with impunity; and, thinking the neighbouring Caciques might

suppose that he was detained against his will, he gave him permission to return to his people, and revisit the camp whenever it might please him. The Cacique gladly availed himself of this offer, but declared he only went in order to bring his subjects into more perfect submission to the Governor, and as soon as he had accomplished this, that he would joyfully rejoin the Spaniards. With these and many similar professions he departed; but never again showed his face in the camp.

Upon the Cacique's departure, the Spaniards commenced constructing a bridge over the river. The work was superintended by one Francisco, a Genoese, the only shipwright in the army. He was likewise skilled in all kinds of joiner's work, and by his art rendered incalculable services to the Spaniards throughout this expedition. Large planks were floated upon the water, and tied together with strong cords, which the Spaniards had brought with them for such emergencies; the planks were then crossed with immense poles laid and fastened on the top. This rude bridge was of sufficient strength for the passage of both men and horses. Having captured thirty Indians to serve as guides, the army passed the river and set forward on their march.

After travelling about three days, the Governor putting himself in advance of the army, with a hundred horse, and the same number of foot, and pushing forward in the night, came by daybreak to the frontiers of a province fifty leagues across, called Vitachuco. It was under the dominion of three brothers. The eldest, Vitachuco, bearing the name of the country over which he ruled, had five parts out of ten, the second brother governed three of the remaining five, and the youngest of the family, who was chief of the village of Ochile, and of the same name, possessed the remainder. This was contrary to the usage of the other provinces through which the Spaniards had passed, the eldest son generally inheriting all.

It was scarcely daybreak on the first day, when De Soto and his advanced corps arrived at the village of Ochile. It contained fifty large and strong habitations, being a frontier post, fortified against incursions from the adjacent provinces, with which it was at war.

De Soto and his little band rushed suddenly into the

village, amid the clamorous sound of drum and trumpet, seized the Indians as, terrified and amazed, they came forth from their houses and surrounded the mansion of the Cacique. This was built in the form of one large pavilion, upwards of a hundred and twenty paces in length, and forty in breadth, having four doors, and a number of smaller buildings connected with it, like offices.

The Cacique had with him a guard of his principal warriors, and many others had hastened to his defence. He would have sallied forth and offered a vigorous resistance, but the Spaniards had possession of the doors, and threatened to fire the house. At length, by sun-rise, through the mediation of Indian prisoners and interpreters, he was persuaded to yield to the superior power of the Spaniards, and accept their offered friendship. De Soto received him kindly, but detained him, setting at liberty all the other prisoners, and ordering his soldiers to treat them in the most friendly manner.

The Governor, however, did not feel himself secure. The neighbourhood was populous; the savages seeing the small number of his band, might gather together, and attempt to rescue their Cacique. Taking that chieftain with him, therefore, and a number of his most faithful warriors, De Soto marched his detachment out of the village, and returned in quest of the main body of his troops. These he found encamped three leagues off, full of anxiety on account of their General's absence.

The day following, the army entered Ochile, in battle array; the foot and horse formed into squadrons, with trumpets, fifes, and drums sounding. The troops being quartered, the Governor prevailed upon Ochile to send envoys to his two brothers, inviting them to accept the Spaniards' offer of peace, and warning them of the disastrous consequences that would attend a refusal.

The second brother, who was nearest, readily embraced the proposal, and at the end of three days came accompanied by many of his warriors gaily decorated. After kissing the Governor's hands, he entered into familiar conversation with the officers and distinguished cavaliers of the army, asking the name of each, and bearing himself with as much ease and natural courtesy as if he had been brought up among them.

The elder brother, however, who was much the most powerful of the three, made no reply to the message, but detained the envoys by whom it had been conveyed. The two brothers, by the persuasion of De Soto, sent other messengers, with still more urgent entreaties. They magnified the power of the Spaniards, whom they represented as children of the sun and moon, and their gods invincible—that they had come from a remote region, where the sun rises in its brightest glory, and that they had with them animals called horses, so fleet, courageous and powerful, that it was impossible either to escape them by flight, or resist them by force.

The answer of Vitachuco is given at length by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; though he quotes it from memory, after a lapse of years; and declares that he cannot vouch for its being arranged exactly in the order in which it was delivered, or that it was the whole of what was said; but pledges his word that, as far as it goes, it is truly the reply of the Cacique. He asserts that if it really was delivered as recounted by the envoys, none of the knights whom the divine Ariosto or his predecessor, the illustrious and enamoured Count Mareo Maria Boyardo, have introduced into their works, could have equalled in fiery courage and indomitable spirit, this savage chieftain. Without claiming for it all the praise awarded by that ancient author, still it shows the haughty spirit of this wild warrior, whose gallant efforts were, however, of little avail against the Spanish invader.

1539. “It is evident enough,” observes the Cacique in reply to the embassy of his brothers, “that you are young, and have neither judgment nor experience, or you would never speak as you have done of these hated white men! You extol them greatly as virtuous persons, who injure no one. You say that they are valiant—that they are children of the sun—that they merit all our reverence and service. The vile chains which they have hung upon you—the mean and dastardly spirit which you have acquired during the short period you have been their slaves, have caused you to speak like women, lauding what you should censure and abhor. You remember not, that these Christians can be no better than those who formerly committed so many cruelties in our country. Are they not of the same nation and subject

to the same laws? Does not their manner of life prove them to be children of the Spirit of Evil, and not of the sun and moon, our gods? Go they not from land to land plundering and destroying; taking the wives and daughters of the peaceable inhabitants, instead of bringing their own with them; and, like mere vagabonds, maintaining themselves by the laborious toil of others? Were they virtuous, as you represent, they never would have left their own country, since there they might have practised those virtues which you extol;—there they might have cultivated the earth, maintained themselves without prejudice to others, or injury to themselves; instead of roving about the world committing robberies and murders, having neither shame of men nor fear of God.

“Warn them not to enter into my dominions, for I solemnly vow, valiant as they may be, that if they dare to set foot upon my land, they shall never quit it alive—I will exterminate the whole race.”*

This was the first reply of the fierce Vitachuco; but he sent so many others, that every day there arrived two or three messengers, always sounding a trumpet, and each embassy conveying greater menaces than the preceding. The Cacique Vitachuco thought to terrify the strangers by the various and supernatural deaths, with which he menaced them. At one time he threatened, that the moment they entered his province, the earth should open and swallow them; that the hills by which the Spaniards would have to travel, should unite and bury them alive, that the trees of the forest through which they had to pass, should be blown down and crush them; that flights of birds should hover over and pounce upon them, with corroding poison in their beaks. He finally threatened that he would command the water, herbs, trees, and even the air to be poisoned, in such a manner, that neither horse nor rider, man nor beast, should escape with life. Thus, he declared, he would make an example of them to all who should henceforth dare invade his territory.

These extravagancies provoked the laughter of the Spaniards, who considered them the empty bravadoes of a savage; but the deeds of Vitachuco afterwards showed that they were the furious menaces of a proud warrior; who, it is

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 21.

probable, was promised all these miracles by some native prophet.

These and many other messages arrived during eight days, spent by De Soto in traversing the domains of the two brothers, who did every thing in their power to gratify him and his army. They at length undertook a mission to Vitachuco. The fierce chieftain pretended to be finally won by their persuasions, and agreed to enter into friendly intercourse with the strangers; but desired first to know how many days they intended to continue in his dominions, what quantity of provisions they would require when they departed, and what other things would be necessary for their journey.

The two brothers sent an envoy to De Soto with this message; the latter replied, that they would not remain in the territory of Vitachuco longer than might be agreeable to him; neither did they desire any provisions but what he might think fit to give them, nor should they require any thing except his friendship.

CHAPTER XIV.

1539. THE chieftain, Vitachuco, pretending to be well contented with the Governor's reply, and a day being fixed for their meeting, the Cacique ordered an abundant supply of provisions for the troops and horses to be brought from all parts of his domain, and deposited in the principal village.

On the appointed day of meeting, Vitachuco went from his capital, accompanied by his two brothers and five hundred Indian warriors, adorned with plumes of various colours, and armed with bows and arrows of the finest workmanship. At the distance of two leagues, they found the Governor encamped with his army in a beautiful valley.

Their meeting was cordial, and the Cacique endeavoured to atone for past threats, by professions of present friendship and promises of future services, all which were graciously received by De Soto.

Vitachuco was about thirty-five years of age, of lofty stature, and strongly formed, as the Indians of Florida generally were; his countenance expressing the bravery of his spirit.

The ensuing day, the Spaniards entered the principal village in order of battle. It bore the name of its chief, and consisted of two hundred houses, large and strong, besides many other of smaller size in the suburbs. The Governor, his body guards and servants, together with the two brother Caciques, lodged in the house of Vitachuco, as it was sufficiently spacious to accommodate them all.

Two days were passed in feasting. On the third day, the two brothers of Vitachuco having obtained leave to return to their respective territories, departed, well pleased with the good treatment and numerous presents they had received from the Spaniards.

After their departure, Vitachuco redoubled his courtesy to the strangers, and seemed as if he thought he could not do enough to serve them. Five days only had elapsed, however, when Juan Ortiz came to the Governor, and informed him of a perfidious plot devised by the Cacique, which had been revealed to him by four of the native interpreters. Having selected several thousand of his bravest warriors, Vitachuco had ordered them to conceal their weapons in a thicket near the village, and appear at all times unarmed, so as to throw the Spaniards off their guard. On an appointed day, it was arranged that the Cacique should invite De Soto to a general muster of his subjects, drawn up in battle array, though without weapons, in order that he might see what a numerous force of Indian allies he had at his command for future conquests.

Trusting, from the good understanding existing between them, that the Governor would go forth carelessly and alone, a dozen of the most powerful Indians had received orders suddenly to seize and bear him into the midst of their warriors; who, assuming their arms, were to attack the Spaniards in their camp. Thus, between the surprise of the sudden assault, and their dismay at the capture of their General, the Cacique calculated upon an easy conquest: in which case he intended to make good his extravagant menaces, and inflict on his prisoners all kinds of cruel and tormenting deaths.

The Adelantado having been made acquainted with Vitachuco's perfidy, consulted with his Captains, and the result was a determination to seize Vitachuco precisely in the same manner as the latter had planned to seize the Governor;—

he would thus fall into his own snare. For this purpose, twelve of the stoutest soldiers were selected, to be near De Soto when he should go forth to view the Indian army. These, at a certain signal, were to make the Cacique prisoner. Every thing being secretly arranged, the Spaniards watched Vitachuco's movements, at the same time, maintaining an appearance of careless unconcern.

The day so much desired having arrived, Vitachuco came to the Governor early in the morning, and with much humility and seeming veneration, begged him to confer a great favour on himself and subjects, by quitting his camp to behold them arranged in order of battle, when he would see the number of his faithful allies, and have an opportunity of judging whether they knew how to form their squadrons, as well as his own troops, who were reported to be so eminently skilled in the art of war.

De Soto replied, with an unsuspecting air, that he should rejoice greatly to see them; but in order to make the display more striking, and furnish the Indians likewise with a spectacle worth beholding, he would command a mock fight among his horse and foot soldiers for Vitachuco's entertainment.

The Cacique did not much relish this proposal, but blinded by his passions, he agreed to the arrangement; trusting to the number and valour of his vassals to overthrow the Spaniards, however well prepared.

All things being arranged, the Spaniards marched out, horse and foot, in battle array, with glittering arms and fluttering banners. The Governor remained behind, to accompany the Cacique on foot, in order the better to disguise his knowledge of the latent treason. He went, however, secretly armed, and ordered two of his finest horses to be led caparisoned for service. One of these is especially mentioned as a beautiful and spirited animal. It was named Aceytuño, after a brave cavalier who had made it a present to the Governor.

Near the village was an extensive plain, bounded on one side by an extensive forest, and on the other, by two lakes; one of which, about a league in circumference, was clear of trees, but so deep, that three or four feet from the bank no footing could be found: the other at a greater distance from

the village, was more than half a league in width, and appeared like a vast river, extending as far as the eye could reach. Between the forest and these two lakes, the Indians formed their squadrons, having the latter on their right flank, and the former on their left. Their bows and arrows were concealed in the grass, that they might appear to be totally unarmed. Their force amounted to ten thousand chosen warriors, decorated with lofty plumes, which increased their apparent height; and, being drawn out with somewhat of military order, they made a magnificent display.

The Cacique and Hernando de Soto appeared on foot, each accompanied by twelve of his retinue, and each secretly having the same hostile determination against the other. The Spanish troops were to the right of the Governor; the infantry being drawn up near to the forest, and the cavalry marshalled upon the plain.

Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, De Soto and Vitachuco arrived at the spot, which the latter had fixed upon for seizing of the Governor. Before the former, however, could make his preconcerted signal, a Spanish trumpet gave a warning blast.* In an instant twelve Spaniards rushed upon the Cacique. His attendants threw themselves before him, and endeavoured to repel the assailants, but in vain. He was borne off amid the shouts of his captors.

De Soto leaped, at the same moment, upon his favourite steed Aceytoño, and spurred among the thickest of the enemy, with that headlong valour which always distinguished him in battle. The savages had already seized their weapons. Their front ranks were thrown into confusion by the impetuous charge of De Soto; but as he pressed forward, a shower of arrows came whistling round him. They were principally aimed at his horse, the Indians always seeking to kill these animals, knowing their importance in battle. Four arrows wounded the generous animal in the knees, four pierced it in the breast, and it fell to the earth dead, as if shot by a piece of artillery.†

The Spanish troops, who, at the trumpet signal, had assailed the native squadrons, came, at this critical moment,

* Narrative, c. 11.

† Herrera, Decad. 6. l. 7. c. 11. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. l. 2. c. 23. Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

to the aid of their General. One of his pages, named Viota, a youth of noble birth, sprang from his horse and assisted the Governor to mount it. Once more on horseback, he put himself at the head of his cavalry, and spurred among the enemy. The latter had no lances to defend themselves; and being assailed by three hundred horse, broke and fled in every direction. A great number of those who were in the rear, took refuge among the entangled thickets of the forest; some threw themselves into the large lake and escaped, others scattered themselves indiscriminately over the plain, where more than three hundred were killed, and a few made prisoners.

A worse fate attended the enemy's vanguard, composed of his bravest warriors; who are always doomed to fare the worst in battle. After receiving the first impetuous charge of the cavalry, they fled, but unable to reach either the forest or the larger lake, more than nine hundred threw themselves into the smaller one. Here they were surrounded by the Spaniards, who endeavoured, by threats, promises, and occasional shots from their cross-bows and arquebusses, to induce them to surrender. The Indians replied only by flights of arrows. As the lake was too deep to give them footing, they adopted a mode of defence as singular as it was desperate. Three or four clung together, and supported each other by swimming, while one mounted upon their backs, and plied his bow and arrows. In this way an incessant skirmishing was kept up all day. Numbers of Indians were slain, and all their arms exhausted, yet no one expressed a desire to surrender.

At night the Spaniards posted themselves near each other, round the lake, the horse by two and two, the foot in parties of six, lest the savages should escape in the dark. Some of the latter endeavoured to save themselves by covering their heads with the leaves of water lilies, and swimming noiselessly to land; but the watchful troopers, perceiving that the water was agitated, spurred their horses to the bank, and drove their enemies back again into the channel,* in hope of tiring them out, and thus forcing them to capitulate. They moreover, threatened them with death, if they did not yield, but offered them peace, if they would surrender.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11

So obstinate were they, however, that it was midnight before any of them submitted, although they had been fourteen hours in the water. At length, the intercessions of Juan Ortiz, and of the four Indian interpreters, began to have effect. The most weary came on shore, one and two at a time, but so slowly, that by the dawn of day not more than fifty had surrendered. The remainder, seeing that these were kindly treated, and being persuaded by them, now gave themselves up in greater numbers, but still with extreme reluctance. Some when near the bank returned to the middle of the lake, until the love of life compelled them to yield. At ten o'clock, two hundred landed at the same time, and surrendered themselves, after having been in the water four and twenty hours. They were in a wretched condition, swollen with the water they had swallowed, and overcome with fatigue, hunger, and want of sleep. There yet remained in the lake seven Indians of such indomitable spirit, that neither the entreaties of the interpreters, the promises of the Governor, nor the example of their comrades, who had surrendered, had any effect upon them.* They treated all promises with scorn, defying both menaces and death. Thus they remained until three o'clock in the afternoon, and would, no doubt, have remained there until they had died; but the Governor, struck with admiration of their magnanimity, thought it would be inhuman to allow such brave men to perish, and consequently, ordered twelve Spaniards, who were expert swimmers, to go into the lake with their swords in their mouths, and drag them out by main force. As they were too much exhausted to resist, the Spaniards seized them by the legs, arms, and hair, drew them to land, and placed them upon the bank, where they lay extended, more dead than alive;† having, according to the Spanish narrator, been thirty hours in the water, apparently without putting their feet to the ground or receiving any relief: — an exploit, adds the Inca historian, almost incredible, and which I should not dare to record, but upon the autho-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† The Portuguese Narrative adds, that they were immediately put into irons. The Inca's account, however, of the conduct of the Spaniards towards these brave warriors, is more in accordance with the generous character of De Soto.

rity of several cavaliers and nobles, who both in the Indies, and in Spain assured me of its truth, confirming the authenticity of this extraordinary feat, related to me by a person, in all things worthy of belief.

The reader, however, without questioning the veracity of the cavaliers, may surmise that the savages had been enabled, from time to time, to snatch a few moments' repose, on shallows near the banks of the lake.

The heroic obstinacy of the seven Indians had extorted the admiration of the Spaniards. Moved to compassion by their present deplorable state, they bore them to the camp; and used such assiduous means for their recovery, that they were restored to animation in the course of the night.

On the following morning, De Soto summoned them before him, and pretending to be angry, demanded the reason of their desperate resistance, and why they had not surrendered as their companions had done.

Four of them, in the prime of manhood, replied, that they were leaders, chosen by their Cacique, from his confidence in their courage and constancy. Their actions were to justify his choice. They were bound to set an example to their children, to their brother warriors, and above all, to such as should thenceforth be appointed to command. They felt that they had failed in fulfilling their duty, and in vindicating their honour; and while they acknowledged the kindness of the Governor, regretted only that he had not left them to perish in the lake. "If you want to add to your favours," said they, "take our lives. After surviving the defeat and capture of our chieftain, we are not worthy to appear before him, or survive his dishonour."*

The Governor listened with admiration to these savage warriors: and when they had finished, turned to their three companions, who had remained silent. These were young men, not more than eighteen years old, sons and heirs of Caciques holding dominion over the adjacent provinces. De Soto demanded their reason for persisting so desperately in their defence, as they were not leaders, nor bound by the same obligations, as their companions.

They replied with a proud and lofty air, that they had

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 25. Herrera, Decad. 6. l. 7. c. 11.

been incited to hostility, not through a desire of gain, or any implacable spirit against the Spaniards, but merely from a thirst for glory : that although they were not chiefs, yet as the sons of Caciques, and destined one day to be Caciques themselves, the felt especially bound to signalize themselves by bravery in action, and by a contempt for suffering and death. "These, O offspring of the sun!" said they, "are the reasons for our obstinate hostility : if they are sufficient in your eyes pardon us ; if not, we are at your mercy. Strike us dead, for nothing is prohibited to the conqueror."

The brave spirit and heroic sentiments of these generous youths, charmed all the Spaniards present ; and their hearts were touched at seeing them exposed so young to such adversity. The Governor, likewise, who was of a compassionate nature, was moved to pity. He arose and embraced them as if they had been his own sons ; commending their valour and heroism, which he considered as proofs at once of noble blood and of illustrious descent.

He detained them in the camp two days, feasting them at his table, and treating them with every mark of distinction ; he then dismissed them with presents of linen, cloths, silks, mirrors, and other articles of Spanish manufacture. He also sent by them presents to their fathers and other relatives, with offers of his friendship. The young Caciques took leave of him with many expressions of gratitude, and departed joyfully for their homes, accompanied by a number of their countrymen whom the Governor had liberated.

The four captive leaders were retained prisoners, and on the following day summoned before the Governor, with their Cacique Vitachuco. De Soto reproached them all with the treacherous and murderous plot they had devised against him and his soldiers, at a time when they were professing the kindest friendship. Such treason, he observed, merited death : yet, wishing to give the natives a proof of his clemency, he pardoned them, and restored them to his favour. He warned them, however, to beware how they again deceived him or his army, lest they should provoke him to take a terrible revenge.

The Indians who had come out of the lake and surrendered themselves, were distributed among the Spaniards to serve them as menials, so long as their conquerors should

remain in the province. This was partly as a punishment for their participation in the late treason, and partly to deter the neighbouring tribes from like aggressions.

CHAPTER XV.

1539. VITACHUCO now remained in some sort a prisoner in his own house, but was treated with great kindness and respect, and dined at the Governor's table. Rage and hatred, however, still rankled in his heart; and he soon conceived another scheme of vengeance. Nine hundred of his bravest warriors were dispersed among the Spaniards; equalling the latter in number, and, as he thought, in personal prowess. They attended their new masters as slaves, and as the Spaniards, when at their meals were seated, off their guard, and many of them without weapons, the Cacique conceived that at such a moment it would be easy, by a preconcerted movement, for his subjects to strike a signal blow that should rid them at once of their oppressors.

Scarcely had Vitachuco conceived this rash scheme, than he hastened to put it into operation. He had four young Indians who attended him as pages. These he sent to the principal prisoners, revealing his plan, with orders that they should pass it secretly from one to another, and hold themselves in readiness, at the appointed time, to carry it into effect. The dinner hour of the third day was the time fixed upon for striking the blow. As Vitachuco would be dining with the Governor, and the Indians in general attending upon their respective masters, the Cacique was to watch his opportunity, spring upon De Soto and kill him; giving, at the moment of assault, a war-whoop that should resound throughout the village. This was to be the signal for every Indian in the place to grapple with his master, or any other Spaniard, and despatch him on the spot.

Many of the poor natives saw the perfect madness of this second project; but, accustomed to yield implicit obedience to their chief, they promised to carry it into execution or perish in the attempt.

On the day fixed, Vitachuco dined as usual at the table

of the Governor, who sought to win his friendship by the kindest attentions. When the repast was concluded, the savage stretched himself upon the bench on which he had been seated, and twisting his body from side to side, projected first one arm, then the other, to its full extent, clenching his fists, and drawing them up so that they rested on his shoulders; he then jerked out his arms two or three times, until every joint cracked like a snapped reed. In this way the Indians of Florida used to rally their strength when about to perform any extraordinary feat.

After this preparation, the Cacique sprang upon his feet, closed instantly with the Governor, at whose side he had been sitting, seized him with his left hand by the collar, and with the right gave him such a furious blow in the face, as to level him with the ground, the blood gushing out of his eyes, nose, and mouth, as if he had been struck with a club. The Cacique threw himself upon his victim to finish his work, at the same time giving the signal war-whoop so loudly that it might have been heard for a quarter of a league.

All this was the work of an instant, and before the officers present had time to recover from their astonishment, the Governor lay senseless beneath the tiger grasp of Vitachuco. One more blow from the savage would have been fatal; but ere he could deliver it, a dozen swords and lances were thrust through his body, and he fell dead, blaspheming heaven and earth at having failed in his deadly purpose.

The war-whoop of the Cacique had been heard and obeyed by his subjects throughout the village. On hearing the signal, the Indians who were attending upon their masters assailed them with whatever weapon or missile they could command. Some seized upon pikes and swords, which they wielded with great skill; others snatched up the pots in which meat was stewing at the fire, and beating the Spaniards about their heads, bruised and scalded them at the same time; some caught up plates, pitchers, jars, and the pestles with which they pounded the maize; others, bones remaining from the repast; others seized upon stools, benches, and tables, striking with impotent fury when their weapons had not the power to harm. The greater number, however, armed themselves with burning firebrands, which seemed to

have been provided for the purpose, and rushed like devils into the affray.

In this chance medley fight, many of the Spaniards were terribly burnt, bruised, and scalded; some had their arms broken, others were maimed by sticks and stones. One was knocked down by his slave with a firebrand and beset by three other Indians, who dashed out his brains.

Another was assailed with blows, his teeth knocked out, and he was on the point of falling a sacrifice, when several of his countrymen came to his assistance. The savage assailant fled, and mounted a hand ladder into a granary opening upon a court-yard, taking with him a lance which he found against the wall. The Spaniards attempted to ascend after him, but he planted himself in the door-way, and defended the entrance so bravely with his lance, that no one dared to approach him.* At length, Diego de Soto, a relative of the Governor, arrived in the court armed with a cross-bow. He presented it and took aim. The Indian never attempted to draw back or screen himself; his object was not to save his life, but to sell it as dearly as possible. At the instant De Soto drew his bow, he threw the lance. The steeled point grazed the Spaniard's right shoulder and the shaft knocked him down upon his knees, passing half a length beyond, and remained quivering in the ground. The aim of De Soto was more certain. His shaft pierced the Indian through the breast, and killed him upon the spot.

It was fortunate for the Spaniards that most of the Indians were in chains, and none of them regularly armed, otherwise their assault would have been attended with great carnage. As it was, many Spaniards were maimed, and four slain before the savages could be overpowered.

A signal vengeance was then taken upon the prisoners. Some of the Spaniards were so exasperated at the wounds they had received, and at hearing of their Governor's maltreatment, that they wrecked their fury upon every Indian in their power. Others, who were cavaliers, thought it beneath their dignity to take away the lives of slaves. They brought their prisoners, therefore, to the grand square of the village, and delivered them into the hands of the archers of the General's guard, who dispatched them with their halberts.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

Among the cavaliers who thus brought their captive slaves to be executed, was one of a small and delicate form, named Francisco de Saldaña. He entered the square, leading after him a powerful Indian, by a cord tied round the latter's neck. No sooner, however, did the savage perceive what was passing, and the fate that awaited him, than, driven to desperation, he closed upon Saldaña as he walked before him, seized him with one hand by the neck and with the other by the thigh, raised him like a child, turned him topsy turvy with his head downwards, and dashed him to the ground with a violence that stunned him. Jumping then upon his body he would have despatched him in an instant, had not a number of Spaniards rushed with drawn swords to the rescue of their comrade. The Indian seized Saldaña's sword, and received them so bravely, that though there were more than fifty, he kept them all at bay. Grasping the weapon with both hands, he threw himself into the midst of them, whirling himself round like a wheel, and dealing blows so rapidly and madly that no one dared oppose him, and they were obliged to dispatch him with their firearms.*

These, and many similar scenes of desperate valour, occurred in this wild affray. In order to embroil with the natives of the neighbourhood, the interpreters, and those Indian allies who had accompanied the Spanish army from the other provinces, so that they should not dare henceforward abandon the Spaniards, they were compelled to aid in destroying the prisoners, many of whom were tied to stakes in the public square, and shot with their arrows.†

In these battles and the subsequent massacres, fell Vitachuco and thirteen hundred of his warriors, the flower of his nation, among whom were the four brave leaders who had been rescued from the lake.

CHAPTER XVI.

1539. THE blow which the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had received from Vitachuco, had been so violent that it

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† Idem. The Portuguese narrator calls the village where this affray took place Napataca.

was half-an-hour before he recovered his senses. His face was bruised and disfigured, and several of his teeth were broken, so that for three weeks he could eat no solid food. He and his wounded soldiers were obliged to remain four days in the village, before they were sufficiently recovered to undertake a journey. On the fifth day, he resumed his march, departing in search of another province, called Osachile.*

The first day they journeyed four leagues, and encamped on the bank of a deep river, which divides the two provinces, and over which it was necessary to throw a bridge. They had scarcely began their operations, when they beheld the Indians on the opposite side, in hostile array. Abandoning their work, they hastily formed six rafts, on which a hundred men passed over, fifty cross-bowmen and arquebusiers, and fifty horsemen, the latter taking with them their horses and saddles.

As soon as they reached the land, their horses were driven into the water, and made to swim across. Their owners received them on the opposite shore, saddled and mounted them immediately, and galloped into the plain. The Indians flying, the Spaniards worked without molestation at the bridge, which was finished in a day and a half.

The army passed the river, and after travelling two leagues through a country free from woods, came to large fields of maize, beans, and pompions, among which were a few scattered habitations. While they were dispersed about the fields, a number of savages lurking in ambush among the grain, assailed them with their arrows and wounded many. The Spaniards proceeded in pursuit of them, lance in hand. There was some sharp skirmishing; many natives were wounded, and a few taken prisoners. The latter had chains put about their necks, were distributed among the soldiers, and made to carry the baggage, pound the maize, and perform other servile employments.†

The Spaniards arrived at Osachile, a village about ten leagues from that of Vitachuco. It contained two hundred houses, which were deserted, the Cacique and his people having sought refuge in the woods, terrified by rumours of

* This name is spelled Uzachil, by the Portuguese historian.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

Vitachuco's death.* The Governor sent offers of peace and friendship to their chief by the Indian prisoners. He made no reply, neither did any of the envoys return.

The village of Osachile† resembled most of the Indian villages of Florida. The natives always endeavoured to build upon high ground, or at least to erect the houses of their Cacique upon an eminence. As the country was very level, they constructed artificial mounds of earth, the summits of each being capable of containing from ten to twenty houses. Here resided the Cacique, his family, and attendants. At the foot of this hill was a square, according to the size of the village, around which were the houses of the most distinguished inhabitants. The rest of the people erected their wigwams as near the dwelling of their chief as possible.

An ascent in a straight line, from fifteen to twenty feet wide, led to the top of the hillock, and was flanked on each side by trunks of trees, joined and thrust deep into the earth; other trunks of trees formed an ascent by steps. Every other side of the mound was steep and inaccessible.

While they resided in the village of Osachile, the Spaniards learnt that they were not far from the province of Apalachee, the country of the Apalachians. They had heard a wonderful account of the extent and fertility of this district, and the bravery as well as ferocity of its inhabitants. Throughout their march, the natives had predicted that the warriors of Apalachee would transfix them with their lances, hew them in pieces, or consume them with fire. De Soto was little moved by their menaces, his great desire being to see this province; and if it were as fertile and abundant as represented, to winter there. After remaining, therefore, but two days in Osachile, he resumed his march.

The Spaniards were three days traversing an uninhabited desert, twelve leagues in extent, which lay between the two provinces, and about noon on the fourth day, arrived at the great morass.‡ It was bordered by forests of huge and lofty

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† The river Oscilla may take its name from this old Indian village and province.

‡ This is supposed by some to have been the great swamp of Okefenokee lying in lat. 31° North, on the frontiers of Georgia and Florida. Mr. McCulloch, in his researches, imagines it to be the Ohahichee swamp, and

trees, with a thick underwood of thorns and brambles, and clambering vines, so interwoven and matted together as to form a perfect barrier. Through this the Indians had made a narrow path, scarcely wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. In the centre of the morass was a sheet of water half a league wide, and extending as far as the eye could reach.

De Soto encamped at an early hour on a fine plain on the skirts of the forest, and ordered out a hundred foot, consisting of cross-bowmen, archers, and pikemen, with thirty horse, and twelve expert swimmers, to explore the passage of the morass, ascertain the depth of water, and search for a ford, against the following day.

The Spaniards had penetrated but a little way into the forest, when they were opposed by native warriors. The passage, however, was so narrow, and so completely walled on each side by a thorny and impervious forest, that not more than the two foremost of each vanguard could come to action. The Spaniards, therefore, ordered two of the stoutest to the front, armed with sword and buckler, followed by two cross-bowmen and two archers. In this way they drove the savages before them until they came to the water. Here, as both parties had room for action, there was some hard fighting, several being killed and wounded on both sides.

Finding it impossible, under such determined opposition, to examine the depth of the water, the Spaniards sent word to the Governor, who came to their aid, with the best soldiers of the army. The enemy having likewise received a reinforcement, the battle became still more fierce and bloody. Both fought to their waists in water, stumbling among thorns and brambles, twisted roots, and the trunks of fallen trees. The Spaniards were aware, however, that it would not do to return without discovering the pass; they continued, therefore, to charge the enemy with great impetuosity. Succeed-

his opinion is entitled to great credit, as he has investigated the subject more thoroughly than most writers. It must, however, remain a matter of conjecture; for it is almost impossible to trace the route of De Soto and his followers, at the commencement and close of their expedition, as the distances given by both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, are often exaggerated and sometimes contradictory. Vide *Kear's Voyages and Travels*, v. 5. p. 456. *McCulloch's Researches*, p. 524. *Darby's Florida*, p. 19, 20.

ing at length in driving them out of the water, they observed that the narrow pass of which they were in search continued through the stream, being so cleared of thorns, roots, and sunken trees, that the Indians could wade up to their middles, except over about forty paces of the mid-channel, where it was too deep to be forded. This they crossed by a bridge composed of two trees fastened together. Both sides of the morass were bordered by the same kind of impervious forest, and traversed by a narrow path. The distance through the two forests, and across the morass, was about a league and a half.

The Governor, having well reconnoitered the strait, returned with his men to the encampment. Here he held a council of war, in which the difficulties and dangers of the case were discussed, and the mode of meeting them determined upon.

It was arranged that two hundred picked men should proceed in advance to secure the pass, and prepare a way for the passage of their main body. One hundred of these were to be horsemen, and one hundred foot soldiers.

The former being better armed than the infantry, and protected by bucklers, always received less injury from the enemy's arrows; they were, therefore, to take the lead on foot, as horses would only be an embarrassment in such a narrow strait. In this way they would, as it were, form a shield to the hundred foot soldiers, consisting of arquebusers and archers.

They were all to be provided with bills, hatchets, and other implements for clearing an encamping place in the opposite forest, for as the Spaniards would have to pass the narrow ford one by one, in the face of a ferocious enemy, it would be impossible for the whole army to traverse the morass and both borders of woodland in one day. It appeared advisable, therefore, to make a halt in the opposite forest.*

CHAPTER XVII.

1539. ALL the requisite preparations being made, two hundred picked men quitted the camp, each soldier carrying with

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 1.

him his day's allowance, consisting of a little boiled or toasted maize. Two hours before dawn they entered the defile of the forest, which they traversed as silently as possible until they reached the water, when they soon found the ford where the stones, roots, and sunken logs had been cleared away. Keeping along this, they came to the bridge constructed of fallen trees and thrown across the deepest part of the channel. This they passed without molestation from the Indians, who had left it unguarded, not imagining that the Spaniards would dare to penetrate the forest, or ford the deep and perilous passage of the morass by night.

When the savages, however, perceived at daybreak that their enemies had passed the bridge, they rushed forward with great fury, raising loud cries and howls, to dispute the passage of the morass yet to be traversed, which was about a quarter of a league in length. The Spaniards received their attack manfully;—both parties fighting up to the middle in water. The natives were soon repulsed and driven into the defile of the forest, into which they could only enter one at a time. This being extremely narrow, and walled in by an impervious wood, it was easy to blockade the passage and prevent the enemy from sallying forth. Forty men were ordered to do so, while the remaining hundred and fifty proceeded to cut down trees and clear a place for the army to encamp.

In this manner they remained all day, the Indians in the heart of the forest shouting and yelling, as if to frighten with their noise those whom they would not engage with their arms; some of the Spaniards watching, others felling trees and burning the fallen timber. When night came, each remained where he happened then to be. Disturbed by the yells of the savages, and obliged to maintain a constant vigilance, the Spaniards passed a sleepless night.

Next morning the troops undertook the passage, but although they met with no opposition from the enemy, they found many difficulties in the ford, and being obliged to perform the transit one by one, were the whole day in crossing.

By night they were all encamped on the cleared ground, where, however, they enjoyed but little sleep, in consequence of the yells and frequent attacks of their enemies.

At day-break they pressed forward through the defile of

the second forest, driving the natives slowly before them, who retreated step by step, plying their bows incessantly, so that every inch of ground was won at the edge of the sword.

At length, after fighting onward for half a league, they emerged from this thick thorny brake into more open woodland. Here the Indians, foreseeing that there would be more scope for the horses to come into action, had taken precautions accordingly.

It was in this very morass, though not in the immediate neighbourhood where the Spaniards were now engaged, that Pamphilo de Narvaez had been defeated about ten or eleven years before. The Indians, profiting by the experience then gained, and encouraged by the recollection of that triumph, trusted they should have like success in the present instance.

To render the horses ineffective, they had blocked up the open places of the forest with great logs, and branches fastened from tree to tree; and in the close and matted parts, they had cut narrow passages by which they might dart forth, make an assault, and disappear again in an instant.

As soon, therefore, as the Spaniards entered this more open woodland, they found themselves assailed by showers of arrows from every side. Their enemies being scattered among the thickets, sallied forth, rushed among the troops, plied their bows with great rapidity, and plunged again into the forest. The horses were of no avail; the arquebusiers and archers seemed no longer a terror; for during the time that a Spaniard fired, and reloaded his musket, or placed a bolt in, and sent it from his cross-bow, an Indian would discharge six or seven arrows;—scarcely had one arrow taken flight before another was in the bow.

In their hampered situation, the Spaniards finding it impossible to assault the enemy, their only alternative was to defend themselves and press forward. While, too, that they were exposed to the galling missiles of their foes, they were insulted by the taunts and threats of the savages, who reminded them of their victory over Pamphilo de Narvaez, and menaced them with a like defeat.

The Spaniards toiled full two leagues, and fought their way forward through this forest. Irritated and mortified by these galling attacks, vexatious taunts, and the impossibility

of retaliating, they at length emerged into an open and level country. Here, overjoyed at being freed from their forest prison, they gave the reins to their horses and free vent to their smothered rage, scoured the plain, lancing and cutting down every Indian they encountered, out of revenge for recent annoyances and the past defeat of Narvaez. Few of the enemy were taken prisoners, but many were put to the sword; and thus did they suffer severely for the presumptuous confidence inspired by their former triumph over the Spaniards.*

The Spaniards had now arrived at a fertile region covered with villages and fields of grain for which the province of Apalachee was famous throughout the country. Wearied with their toilsome march, and almost incessant fighting, they encamped for the night in the open plain, near a small village, but could obtain no repose. All night long they were disturbed by the yells of Indians, by their repeated assaults, and by the arrows discharged into the camp.

At daybreak the troops resumed their march through extensive fields of maize, beans, pompions, and other vegetables, extending on each of the road as far as the eye could reach, and interspersed with small cabins, showing a numerous but scattered population.

The inhabitants justified their ferocious and warlike reputation, by making continual attacks, sallying from their dwellings, or starting up from their corn-fields where they had lain in ambush; and though the Spaniards wreaked upon them sanguinary revenge, slaughtering them without mercy, yet nothing could check the fury of the survivors.

After fighting their way for two leagues, the Spaniards came to a deep stream bordered by a forest,† where the savages had erected palisades and barriers to impede the passing of the horse, as well as to protect themselves. As this was one of the strongest and most important passes, and in a manner their last hope, the Indians had prepared to defend it vigorously.

Having reconnoitered the pass, the Spaniards made arrangements accordingly. The best armed horsemen alighted,

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 2. Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. 7. c. 12.

† Mr. McCulloch supposes this to be the river Uche.

and buckling on their shields advanced with their swords and hatchets, gained the pass and broke down the barriers. The Indians fought desperately; several Spaniards were killed and many wounded, but they succeeded in forcing their way with less difficulty than they had apprehended.

Having forded the stream, they marched two leagues further without opposition, through the same fertile and cultivated country; then, choosing a place clear from forests, encamped for the night. After four days and three nights of watching, toiling, and fighting, they hoped, that in this open place, where the horses had free career, they should be able to enjoy repose without molestation. The darkness, however, encouraging the assaults of their restless and daring foes, obliged the Spaniards to keep constant watch with their weapons in their hands.

Even the captured Indians evinced that implacable and unconquerable spirit for which the Apalachian tribe was famous. Though in the power of their enemies, they maintained an air of haughtiness and defiance, boasting of their origin, vaunting the valour of their nation, and telling the Spaniards that they would soon arrive at the village of their Cacique, where he and a host of warriors were waiting to destroy them. The name of this Cacique was Capafi, the first they had heard of whose name was different from that of his principal village. Learning that this Indian capital was actually but two leagues distant, on the following morning, Hernando de Soto marched in advance, with two hundred horse and a hundred foot. On their way they put all the Indians they met with to the sword.

On reaching the village they found it deserted by the Cacique and his men. Pursuing the fugitives, they killed some, and captured others, but the Cacique made his escape. They then fixed their quarters in a village named Anhayca,* containing two hundred and fifty large houses. The Adelantado took possession of the Cacique's dwelling, which stood at one end, and was superior to the rest.

In addition to this native capital, the Spaniards understood that there were many hamlets in the province, containing from fifty to a hundred houses more or less, besides a multitude of habitations scattered about the country. The pro-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

vince throughout was reputed to be pleasant, and the soil fertile, producing maize, cucumbers, beans, and wild plums; the rivers abounding in fish, which the natives caught in vast quantities throughout the year, and dried for use.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

1539. THE army remained quiet in the village of Anhayca for several days, recruiting from its past toils, although the enemy did not fail to continue their attacks both by night and day. The Governor now sent detachments of horse and foot to explore the surrounding country for fifteen or twenty leagues. Arisa Tinoco and Andreas de Vasconceles, two captains, were sent in different directions to the northward. They returned, the one in eight, and the other in nine days, having met with no adventures worthy of record. Both reported that they had visited many populous villages, and that the country was fertile and free from morasses and extensive forests. Juan de Añasco, the Contador of the army, had been sent about the same time to the southward. De Soto often chose him for undertakings that required a stout heart and active spirit, though he was sometimes prone to be a little hasty in temper and positive in command. He had under him forty horse and fifty foot, and was accompanied by Gonzalo Silvestre and Gomez Arias. The latter was a relation of the Governor's wife, and a hardy soldier, seasoned in all kinds of perils and vicissitudes by land and water, as most Spanish adventurers were in those days. He had seen rough times in Moorish warfare: he had been a slave in Barbary, and to adventurous valour, added sage experience in council.

Thus accompanied, Juan de Añasco set off towards the south, in hopes of coming upon the ocean, which was said to be less than thirty leagues from Anhayca. He was guided in his expedition by an Indian, who professed great fidelity and attachment to the Spaniards.

For two days they travelled over an excellent road, wide and level, passing two small rivers that were easily forded and arriving at the village of Aute, which was abandoned by the

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. l. 2. c. 4. Poruguese Narrative, c. 12.

inhabitants, but well stocked with provisions. Taking with them a supply for four days, they continued on the same road. At length the Indian diverged from it, and led the way into tangled forests without any path. The ground was in many places rough and broken, and covered with fallen trees. In other places there were deep bogs overgrown with grass; these presented the appearance of firm land, but the horse and foot sank into them and were almost smothered.

In this wilderness the detachment wandered about for five days, frequently crossing their former track, until their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. Three times they came, as they thought, within sound of the distant surges of the sea, and each time the Indian took an opposite direction. In their vexation and perplexity they began to suspect his fidelity, and that he had a design they should perish with hunger in this inextricable forest, even though he should share the same fate. These suspicions, however, they kept to themselves, for they had no other guide.

They now determined to return to Aute, obtain a fresh supply of provisions, and renew their search. Their return was the more toilsome, as they had to retrace their footsteps in order that they might not miss the road, and the mire of the bogs was so much trampled, that they sank deeper in it than before. In this painful manner they travelled four days, and their suspicions of their Indian guide revived. They grew peevish in their conduct towards him; quarrels ensued between him and the soldiers; he was beaten, and would have been killed on the spot had not Añasco interfered. Exasperated to revenge, he watched an opportunity at night while the soldiers slept, and snatching a brand from the fire, struck those who had maltreated him. This only brought on him severer punishment. A chain was put round his neck, and the other end given to a soldier to keep strict watch over him.

Next morning, in the course of their march, the guide sprang suddenly upon the soldier who had him in charge, threw him to the ground, and began to trample upon him.

Upon this the Spaniards assaulted the Indian with sword and pike: even Juan de Añasco, losing all temper, raised himself in his stirrups, and with both hands, gave him a

terrible thrust with his lance; after which, as he lay insensible, a hound was turned loose, which tore him to pieces.

The guide being slain, and their anger thus cruelly appeased, the detachment began to think which way they should direct their steps. In this dilemma they turned to an Indian whom they had captured on their return to Aute. From him they gathered by signs, and a few words which they understood, that it would be impossible to reach the sea by their present route, on account of the swamps and forests; but that if they returned to Aute, he would conduct them by a direct road to the coast, and to the very place where Pamphilo de Narvaez had built his vessels and embarked.

They had no alternative but to trust to this new guide, hoping that the fate of his predecessor would have a salutary effect upon him. They returned, therefore, to the village of Aute, after fifteen days of toilsome and fruitless wandering.

As Gomez Arias and Gonzalo Silvestre were riding in advance, they captured two native prisoners near the village. On questioning them about the sea-coast, and the proper route towards it, they confirmed all that had been said by the present guide. The Spaniards comforted themselves with the hope, therefore, that they would now be able to accomplish the object of their journey; and with this persuasion, slept soundly and contentedly that night, after their toils.

1539. On the following day Juan de Añasco and his followers set out once more from the village of Aute, under the guidance of the three Indians, by the new route which the latter pointed out. The road was wide and open, free from impediments, except one narrow marsh, in which the horses did not sink over their fetlocks. They had not journeyed more than two leagues when they arrived at a spacious bay,* and proceeding along its shores, to their great joy came at last to the very place where the unfortunate Pamphilo de Narvaez and his people had sojourned. Here they found the remains of a rude forge, where the iron-work for the vessels had been wrought; and around it lay scattered

* Evidently the Bay of St. Marks, or Apalachee. See Charlevoix *Journal Historique*, Let. 34.

charcoal and cinders. There were large trunks of trees, also, hollowed out into troughs, in which the horses had been fed; and not far off lay the bones of the horses that had been killed.

The Spaniards gazed with melancholy interest upon these relics of a disastrous expedition, and eagerly sought to obtain from their guides further particulars respecting Narvaez and his men. The Indians had picked up some Spanish phrases during the time that Narvaez had remained in their neighbourhood; with these, aided by signs, and by words of their own language partly understood by their hearers, they contrived to give some account of the transactions at the bay. They led the Spaniards, step by step, over the scenes visited by Narvaez; showed the place where ten of his men had been surprised and slain; and pointed out every spot where anything of note had happened to that ill-fated commander.

Añasco and his companions searched in every direction to find if any letter had been left in the hollow of a tree, or if there were any inscription on the bark; as it was a common practice with discoverers to leave some memorial wherever they touched for any length of time;—they could, however, find nothing of the kind. They then proceeded along the shores of the bay to the sea, which was three leagues distant. Here, finding some old canoes cast upon the beach, ten or twelve expert swimmers embarked in them and sounded the bay, in which they found sufficient depth for large ships.

After this, they placed signals in the highest trees, so as to be apparent to any one sailing along the coast; and took down, in writing, a minute account of the place and its bearings, for the information of those who might hereafter seek it. Having taken these precautions, they made the best of their way back to the army. De Soto was rejoiced to see them, for their long absence had caused him great uneasiness. He was highly satisfied, also, to learn that they had discovered so excellent a harbour, and the very same from which Pamphilo de Narvaez had set sail with his ill-fated barks.

CHAPTER XIX.

1539. As the season was far advanced, De Soto resolved to proceed no farther for the present, but to winter in the province of Apalachee. He caused the village of Anhayca, therefore, to be strongly fortified, additional buildings to be erected for barracks, and the surrounding country to be foraged for provisions. In the mean time, friendly messages and presents were repeatedly sent to the Cacique Capafi, who, however, rejected all overtures, and buried himself in a forest, surrounded by morasses and perilous defiles.

As De Soto saw no use in keeping up a garrison at Hirrihigua, in the bay of Espiritu Santo, he determined to send orders to Pedro Calderon to break up his encampment there, despatch the vessels that lay in the harbour, and march with the forces under his command to rejoin the army in their winter quarters. How to get these orders to Pedro Calderon was now the question; for whoever bore the message would have to retrace the wilderness through which the army had marched, to recross the deep and rapid rivers, tread gloomy forests and miry swamps, and probably encounter tribes of warlike and cruel savages, smarting from their late conflicts, and thirsting for revenge.

After mature consideration, he resolved to intrust the perilous enterprise to a band of troopers, sufficient in number to make head against a large force of savages, yet not too numerous to move with secrecy and expedition.

No sooner had he declared his determination, than there was a competition among the hardy young cavaliers of the army to be sent upon this hazardous service; for its very danger excited their ardour. De Soto chose from among them thirty lancers, and appointed Juan de Añasco as their leader. He was accompanied by Gomez Arias, who had been his comrade in his late expedition to the bay of Ante.

Among the lancers was one Pedro Moron, a mestizo, or half-blood, between Spaniard and mulatto, and a native of the island of Cuba. This soldier, besides being an admirable swimmer, was gifted with the faculty of smelling almost equal to that of a dog. In the island of Cuba, he had often traced a fugitive Indian into the thickets and caves where

the savage had hid himself. He could also scent fire at the distance of a league, though no light or smoke was perceptible.* In company with him went another mestizo, his friend and countryman, likewise a native of Cuba.

It was on the 20th of November,† (1539,) that this small and intrepid band set out on their hazardous enterprize. As celerity of movement was important, each horseman was lightly equipped, with a casque, a coat of mail under his doublet, and a lance. A pair of alforjas or wallets were slung across the saddle bow, in which, besides a small supply of food for himself, and corn for his steed, the rider had two or three spare horse-shoes, and a few nails.

Long before day, the gallant troopers were on the road.‡ Pressing forward, they scoured along at full speed, when practicable, fearing lest the rumour of their coming should precede them, and give the Indians time to assemble and dispute the passes. Overtaking two natives, they put them to death, to prevent their giving alarm to their comrades scattered about the fields. They rapidly traversed the extensive morass and vast forests of Apalachee, without opposition, and halted in an open plain on its skirts; ten of their number keeping watch while the remainder slept.

Before it was light they were again in their saddles, and urging their horses, made the best of their way over that desert tract lying between the morass of Apalachee and the village of Osachile. Apprehensive that the natives might have heard of their approach, and would make stout resistance in the village, Añasco ordered a halt. As night closed in, they pushed onward with great caution, and came in sight of the village about midnight. Not stopping to reconnoitre, they loosened their reins, clapped spurs to their horses, and dashed through the village at full speed. Galloping on about a league further, they deviated from their course for a short distance, and halted for the remainder of the night; having travelled this day more than thirteen leagues.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 7.

† Portuguese Relation.

‡ The account of this romantic and perilous expedition of the thirty troopers, is entirely from the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. The Portuguese Narrative makes very brief mention of it.

At daybreak they resumed their journey, putting their horses to their speed, lest the natives, scattered about the fields, should give alarm. Thus they proceeded for five leagues to the river Osachile, at the risk of killing their horses; but these were, luckily, so high mettled that they suffered little.

On approaching the river, Gonzalo Silvestre, who had pushed his horse more than his companions, was in advance. He was fearful lest the river should have swollen since the army had crossed it. Fortunately, however, the water had fallen; at which he was so overjoyed that he plunged in with his horse, swam the stream, and mounted the bank on the other side. When his companions came up they were rejoiced to see him on the opposite bank, for they had entertained the same fear, that the river might have increased. They all dashed in, gained the further side without accident, and with light hearts, dismounted and breakfasted on the green sward.

They were soon again on horseback, and approached the village of Vitachuco at a moderate pace. Thinking to have found the place as they had quitted it, they looked forward to some severe fighting with the inhabitants, and expected to pass through it at the point of the sword. A consultation was held, and it was resolved, that none should stop to fight, but that they should cut their way through the enemy at full gallop; as the death of one of their number, or of a horse, would be a serious loss, and increase the perils of the expedition. Thus determined, they spurred on, and were soon relieved from their apprehensions. They found the village a scene of utter desolation; the houses burnt, the walls thrown down, and the bodies of those Indians who had fallen on the day of battle, heaped up into a mound, and left uninhumed. The Spaniards afterwards learnt, that the natives had destroyed this village, from an idea that it had been built on an evil and ill-fated site; and that they had left the corpses of their people unburied, food for carrion birds and wild beasts, because, according to their superstitious belief, the unfortunate and defeated in battle were infamous and accursed.

CHAPTER XX.

1539. THE Spaniards checked their horses, and wound slowly through the ruins of the village, wondering at the desolation around them. They had left it but a short distance behind them, when they encountered two Indian warriors, on a hunting expedition. The moment the Indians perceived the horse advancing, they took refuge under a large walnut-tree close at hand. One of them, however, afraid to trust to the shelter of the tree, fled, and made an attempt to reach the woods on the opposite side of the road, but two horsemen pursued him, and before he gained the wood, transfixed him with their lances.

The other Indian, being of a more courageous spirit, undauntedly kept his station under the tree; and, as fortune usually favours the daring, he met with a better fate. Fixing an arrow in his bow, he fearlessly faced the Spaniards, who came galloping one after the other, and threatened to shoot if they approached him. Some of the cavaliers, irritated at his insolence, or moved by jealousy of his courage, would fain have dismounted and attacked him lance in hand.

Añasco, however, interfered, representing to them that there was neither valour nor prudence in attacking a desperate man, especially at a time when the death, even of a horse, would be deeply felt, and when too they were so badly provided with medicines for healing the wounded. He then ordered them to diverge from the road, lest the Indian should shoot any of the horses as they passed; for this was greatly dreaded. The savage allowed the Spaniards all to pass, and finding that, instead of attacking him, they had turned on one side, he ran after them, calling them mean-spirited cowards, and taunting them for flying from a single foe. At this moment there arose a wild outcry from every part of the surrounding forests. The savages started up on all sides, and called upon each other to barricade the road. But the Spaniards gave their horses the reins and spur, and soon left the enemy behind them. This night they halted in a level and beautiful plain, having travelled seventeen leagues since morning, and the last eight through the province of Vitachuco.

On the fourth day they journeyed another seventeen

leagues through the same province. The natives, thirsting for revenge, on account of their late defeat, were on the alert ; and seeing the Spaniards passing through their country with so small a force, determined to massacre them. They, therefore, sent seven native runners to spread an alarm of the coming of the white men, in order that their warriors might assemble at some narrow pass, and dispute the way. The Christians, however, suspecting their designs, pursued the runners so closely, that they took them all prisoners. At nightfall they encamped as usual in an open plain.

Having roused themselves from their slumbers, a little past midnight, and resumed their march, by sunrise they had already travelled five leagues, and had arrived at the river Ochali, where, on a former occasion, the Indians had killed the greyhound. They expected to find the river shallower than when they crossed it before ; but, on the contrary, it had overflowed its banks, and was now a deep, turbid, rapid stream, boiling and foaming with whirlpools, fearful even to look upon, and dangerous to traverse.

The Spaniards held a consultation for a few moments. Their first object being to secure the opposite bank before the Indians should arrive, it was determined, that twelve of the best swimmers, stripping themselves of every thing except their casques and coats of mail, and disencumbering their horses of saddles and saddle-bags, and taking only their lances in their hands, should swim their steeds to the opposite bank, and take post there, to protect the crossing of their companions with the baggage. At the same time fourteen soldiers were ordered to construct a raft of drift wood, with all speed, to transport the baggage and such of the party as could not swim ; and four to mount guard at their present post, until the passage should be effected.

This was immediately put into execution. The twelve swimmers threw off all superfluous clothes, and taking their lances, urged their horses into the stream. Eleven of them landed in safety at a large opening on the opposite bank. The twelfth swimmer was Juan Lopez Cacho, page to the Governor, and the same youth who once accompanied Gonzalo Silvestre on his perilous errand to the camp. In attempting to cross, he drifted with his horse somewhat below the opening. Finding he could not stem the current up to

the place where his companions had landed, he let his horse swim lower down the river, and sought some other landing place. He attempted several times to scramble up the bank, but it was like a wall, and there was no footing for the horse. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the opposite shore, but before he reached it his horse began to falter through fatigue. Calling for assistance to his companions, who were felling wood for the raft, four threw themselves into the water and dragged him and his horse on shore. By the time they reached it, the poor youth was so thoroughly chilled, and exhausted by struggling so long in the cold water, that he was more like a corpse than a living being.

Leaving the cavaliers to complete the crossing of the river, we will cast a look back at the camp, to notice the proceedings of its commander.

Having despatched Juan de Añasco and his thirty lancers on their expedition, the next thought of De Soto was for the security and comfort of his army. Ever since he had been quartered in the village of Anhayca, the Indians had not ceased to harass him either by attacks or alarms, day and night. The whole neighbourhood was beset by them, lurking about in ambush, and watching every movement of the Spaniards, so that a soldier could not stray a bow-shot from the camp without being way-laid and assaulted.

Knowing the devotion of the natives to their chieftains, it occurred to De Soto, that if he could once get Capafi, the Cacique of Apalachee, into his power, his subjects would cease from their vexatious assaults. It was a long time, however, before he could discover where that chieftain had concealed himself, for he did not take the field with his warriors like the other Caciques. In fact, the chief, though formidable from his sovereign power, was so enormously fat that he could not walk. When he went about in his dwelling, he usually did so upon his hands and knees, and when he moved from place to place, he was borne in a litter on the shoulders of his subjects.

At length De Soto received intelligence that the Cacique, being too fat to travel, had posted himself in the midst of an extensive forest, about eight leagues from the camp; the road to which lay through tangled thickets, and treacherous morasses, which rendered the place almost inaccessible. It

was, moreover, strongly fortified and garrisoned by a band of the choicest Apalachian warriors, so as to be deemed by them altogether impregnable.

As an enterprise against this stronghold was one of peculiar peril, De Soto, with his accustomed intrepidity, took it upon himself, and, at the head of a body of horse and foot, in three days made his way, with great difficulty, to the Indian citadel, the construction of which deserves particular mention.

In the heart of this forest, the Indians had cleared a piece of ground, and fortified it strongly, for the residence of the Cacique and his warriors. The only entrance or outlet was by a narrow path, cut through the wood. At every hundred paces, this path was barricaded by palisades and trunks of trees, at each of which was posted a guard of the bravest warriors. Thus the fat Cacique was ensconced in the midst of the forest, like a spider in his web, and his devoted subjects were ready to defend him to the last gasp.

When the Governor arrived at the entrance of this perilous defile, he found the enemy well prepared for its defence. The Spaniards pressed forward, but the path was so narrow, that the two foremost only could engage. They gained the first and second palisade at the point of the sword. Here it was necessary to cut the osiers and other bands with which the Indians had fastened the beams. While thus occupied, they were exposed to a galling discharge of arrows, and received many wounds. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, they gained one palisade after the other, until, by hard fighting, they arrived at the Cacique's place of refuge.

Here was the hottest of the battle. The Indians, driven to desperation by the imminent peril of their Chief, threw themselves upon the swords and spears of the Spaniards. The latter were animated by the sight of their prey, and excited to furious zeal by the example and voice of De Soto, who not only fought as usual, in the thickest of the fray, but called on his men by name, and cheered them on to action.

The obstinate conflict lasted a long time, many feats of prowess being performed on both sides, but the Indians, for want of defensive armour, fought upon unequal terms, and were most of them cut down. The Cacique called out to the survivors to surrender. The latter having done all that

good soldiers could do, and seeing every warlike effort vain, threw themselves on their knees before the Governor, and offered their own lives, but entreated him to spare the life of their prince.

De Soto, moved by their valour and loyalty, received them with kindness, assuring them of pardon for the past, and that thenceforth he would consider them as friends. Capafi, not being able to walk, was borne in the arms of his attendants to kiss the hands of the Governor, who, well pleased to have him in his power, treated him with the utmost kindness.*

CHAPTER XXI.

1539. DE SOTO returned well pleased to the village of Anhayca, flattering himself that he should meet with no farther molestation from the savages, as he held their Cacique captive. His hopes, however, were vain, for the Indians, freed from the charge of protecting their chieftain, employed themselves in molesting the Christians. The General considering this a base instance of ingratitude, for his forbearance in having refrained from ravaging the country, threatened Capafi with a war of extermination.

The Cacique expressed much grief at the conduct of his subjects, and informed De Soto that the most eminent of them were concealed in a thick forest, five or six leagues from the camp. He offered to go thither, guarded by a body of Spaniards, and persuade them to submit, adding, that no messages would avail, as they were not to be convinced that he was not a prisoner in irons and harshly treated. De Soto, accordingly, ordered a company of horse and foot to escort him, charging them to watch him closely, and not allow him to escape. They quitted the village before morning, and directing their march in a southerly direction, reached the forest about sunset.

Here the Cacique sent some of his train to the warriors, concealed in the forest, with orders that they should assemble before him on the following morning. Trusting that this order of Capafi would be punctually obeyed, the Spaniards betook themselves to rest for the night, having first placed

* The Inca, P. 2. L. 2. c. 10.

sentinels at the out-posts, and a strong guard round the Cacique ; whose unwieldly bulk, in fact, seemed a sufficient guarantee for his safety. Partly through negligence, however, and partly through weariness from three days' journey, the guard fell asleep. Upon this, the wily Chieftain, watching his opportunity, crawled on all-fours through the camp, and soon fell in with a party of his subjects, who raised him on their shoulders, and bore him off to the forest.

When the Spaniards awoke, the Cacique was not to be found. They beat up the neighbouring thickets, but without success. Each wondered, and questioned the other, how so unwieldy a man could have escaped without being seen or heard. The sentinels all swore that they had been exceedingly vigilant ; it was unanimously agreed, therefore, that the Indians must have conjured up some demon to carry him off through the air. They returned to the army deeply mortified ; followed by the Indians at a distance, taunting and jeering them, but offering no other molestation. Upon reaching the camp much crest-fallen, they invented a thousand fables to account to the Governor and his officers for the prisoner's escape. All agreed they had witnessed strange sights during the night, and insisted that the Cacique could not have eluded their vigilance, unless he had been spirited away by devils or by magical arts.

The Governor, though aware that the soldiers had neglected their duty, knew there was no remedy, and in order not to displease them, pretended to be convinced of the truth of what they had represented. He increased their satisfaction by saying the savages were such notorious necromancers that they might have performed even more wonderful things.

We must now return to the thirty cavaliers whom we left preparing to cross the river Ocali. Those employed in felling the timber, soon finished the raft ; being provided for such emergencies with hatchets and cords. When the raft was completed, they fastened two large ropes to it under the water, by which it could be drawn backwards and forwards from bank to bank.

Two good swimmers carried one of the ropes to the opposite shore. They had but just accomplished this, when the natives of Ocali rushed down to the river to assail them.

The eleven cavaliers who had already crossed, closed with the enemy, killed some, put the rest to flight, and remained masters of the field; nevertheless, great numbers of arrows were discharged at them from a distance.

The combat ended, they called for their cloaks to be sent over on the first raft, as a north wind had risen, and being dripping wet, without having any other covering but their shirts and coats of mail, they were suffering severely from the cold.

The raft was pulled backward and forward many times before all the baggage, and such of the Spaniards as could not swim, were ferried across. As fast as they landed, the majority hastened to join their comrades, who were keeping the savages at bay, while the remainder unloaded the raft.

The four horsemen who had been posted as a rear-guard, to protect the men as they embarked, had succeeded in covering them from assault. Two of them, Hernando Athanasio and Gonzalo Silvestre, remained for the last crossing, which was likely to be the most perilous. When the raft was laden and ready for the passage, Athanasio sprang upon it, leading his horse into the water to swim alongside. Silvestre then charged the savages, drove them from the shore, returned at full speed, leaped from his horse, urged him into the water, cast loose the fastening of the raft, and springing upon it, gave a signal for it to be hauled over to the opposite bank.

All this was accomplished with such promptness, that they were already half way across the river, and out of danger, before their enemies could reach the shore.

The horses performed their parts admirably. They required neither spur nor scourge, and scarcely any leading; they never hesitated, but seemed to comprehend their real danger—to be conscious that an enemy was hovering near, and that their safety depended upon their docility and perfect obedience to their masters.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the whole detachment had crossed the river, neither man nor horse having received a wound. They marched towards the village, where they purposed resting, as Juan Lopez Cacho had been so long in the water, as to be completely chilled, and unable to move hand or foot.

The savages opposed their approach to the village, until the wives and children of the former had time to fly to the woods. When they considered their families to be in safety, they abandoned the place. The Spaniards entered and halted in the middle of the public square, fearing to quarter in the houses, lest, being separated, the enemy might surround and make them prisoners.

They kindled four large fires in the square, near which they laid poor Juan Lopez and covered him with their cloaks. One of his friends gave him a dry shirt, which he chanced to have with him—at this time a most acceptable gift.

They remained in the village the rest of the day in a state of great anxiety. The situation of Juan Lopez rendered it impossible for him to travel this night, yet his companions feared lest the delay might give the natives time to spread alarm or gather in numbers, and barricade the road. Resolving, however, not to abandon their companion, they tethered one half the horses, and fed them with maize, while the remainder went the rounds. Some of the troops occupied themselves in drying their saddles and clothes, and others in replenishing the saddlebags with maize; for although there was abundance of dried grapes, plums, and various other fruits, they took nothing but Indian corn, which answered as food both for themselves and horses.

As night closed in, mounted sentinels patrolled the village and its vicinity, to give warning in case an enemy should approach. About the mid-watch, while going the round, two horsemen, heard a low murmuring noise, as of men advancing. One of them immediately galloped off to put his comrades on their guard, while the other remained to reconnoitre and ascertain the meaning of the sound. In the brightness of the starlight, he descried a large body of savages moving towards the village, and hastened to give the alarm. The Spaniards, finding that Juan Lopez was somewhat recovered, threw the cloaks of his companions over him, and seating him on a horse, fastened him in the saddle, a soldier leading his horse by the reins. In this manner they quitted the village in deep silence, before the enemy arrived, and travelled so expeditiously, that at daybreak they were six leagues from Ocali.

They continued their journey with the same expedition, in

order that the rumour of their approach might not precede them, killing all the natives they encountered near the road, lest they should give an alarm. In the uninhabited tracts they slackened their pace, that the horses might rest and be ready to run when necessary. Thus passed this day, which was the sixth of their wayfaring, having travelled almost twenty leagues, and part of the distance through the province of Acuera, a country peopled with warlike savages.

On the seventh day, Pedro de Atienza declared himself to be ill. They made light of his declaration, and not to lose time urged him forward. He continued from time to time to complain, but without being attended to, until having ridden in this way for several hours, he fell dead beside his horse. His comrades were shocked at his sudden death, and at their own want of sympathy in his sufferings. There was no time to be lost, however, in ceremonies. They dug a grave with their hatchets upon the spot, buried him by the way side, and then rode on, deploring the loss of a brave soldier and well-trying comrade.

That night, after travelling twenty leagues, they encamped on the border of the great morass. It was so extremely cold, in consequence of a keen north wind, that they were compelled to kindle fires at the risk of warning the Indians of their vicinity. Twenty resolute men would have been sufficient to dispute this pass, and massacre every one of them, as the savages would possess great advantage in their canoes over the Spaniards, who could not avail themselves of their horses, and had neither archers nor cross-bows to dislodge the enemy. Thus troubled and anxious, one third of their number kept watch at a time, while the others slept, in order to recruit their strength for the fatigues of the coming day.

CHAPTER XXII.

1539. THE Spaniards had slept but a few hours when they were awakened by the sufferings of Juan de Soto, who had been the companion of Pedro Atienza, and who died almost as suddenly, being overcome by excessive fatigue.

Some of the troopers fled from the neighbourhood of the corpse, declaring that the plague had broken out among them

and caused these sudden deaths. Gomez Arias, vexed at their panic, cried out, "If you fly from us, whither will you go? You are not on the river banks of Seville, nor in its olive groves." Ashamed of their alarms, the fugitives returned and joined in prayers for the dead, but would not aid in interring the body, insisting that their companion had died of the dreaded pestilence.

When day dawned, they prepared to pass the morass. Eight Spaniards, who could not swim, proceeded to the bridge, and having replaced its railing, carried over the saddles of their horses and the clothes of their companions. The remainder, perfectly naked, vaulted upon their horses and endeavoured to force them into the water; but it was so cold that they shrank back. The soldiers then attached ropes to their halters, and four or five swam to the middle of the current attempting to drag the horses after them, others struck them behind with long poles. The animals, however, planted their feet firmly in the ground, and could not be moved.

Two or three were at length urged into the stream, but when they came to the deep water, the cold was so great that they turned back, dragging the swimmers after them. For more than three hours the latter thus laboured in vain. At length they succeeded in forcing two horses over, one of which belonged to the leader, Juan de Añasco, the other to Gonzalo de Silvestre. Both of these cavaliers, being among the number of those who could not swim, had already passed by the bridge. As soon as their horses had landed, they saddled and mounted them, in order to be ready for action should an enemy approach.

Notwithstanding two horses had thus led the way, no other, either by coaxing or cudgelling, could be prevailed upon to follow Gomez Arias, the hardy chief of nineteen companions who, entirely naked, had been labouring up to their waists in water more than four hours, exposed to the keen north wind, and so thoroughly chilled that their naked bodies were almost black. They were wearied in body, and vexed in spirit; and seeing all their exertions useless, were almost driven to despair.

At this juncture, Juan de Añasco, having saddled and mounted his horse, as has been stated, advanced on the

opposite side, as far as he could ford, until he reached the edge of the deep channel. He was enraged that no more horses had crossed; and without inquiring the reason, or regarding the comfortless plight of Gomez Arias and his comrades, attributed it to a want of respect towards himself as their leader. Under this impression, he cried out angrily, "Gomez Arias, bad luck to you! why do you not pass those horses over?"

The spleen of honest Gomez, who was a rough soldier, being already sufficiently roused by the toils, sufferings, and vexations he had endured, this speech of his commander cut him to the quick. Casting a grin and surly glance at Añasco, "Bad luck to *you*," he cried, "and to the drab of a cur that bore you. There you sit on your horse, comfortably clad and wrapped up in your cloak, and never think that we have been for more than four hours in the water, half frozen with cold. Dismount—and come here! and we shall see how much better you can do than we have done."

Juan de Añasco, though prone to be passionate, recollected himself and restrained his anger. The companions of Gomez Arias told him the true state of the case: he saw that he had been wrong in speaking so abruptly to the veteran, whose rough reply was excited by his vexations situation, rather than by any personal disrespect.

Juan de Añasco, by the hastiness of his temper, often drew upon himself similar rebuffs in this and other expeditions; for there is nothing which a partizan commander ought more strictly to observe, than the obligation of treating his comrades with kindness and civility.

When this discord was appeased, the Spaniards renewed their efforts, and the noontide sun having somewhat tempered the coldness of the water, the horses were slowly forced across. By three in the afternoon all had passed over.

They were, indeed, in a wretched plight, drenched with water, worn out with excessive toil, benumbed with cold, exhausted with hunger, and what added to the misery of their condition, they had but little provisions to recruit their strength and spirits. They uttered no complaint, however, so much rejoiced were they at having crossed this much-dreaded pass, without having been opposed by an enemy; for, had only fifty savages hemmed them in, their destruction

must have been inevitable. The forbearance of the natives in not attacking them, was most probably owing to the distance of the morass from any hamlet or village;—it was, moreover, now the winter season, during which period, the Indians, being naked, seldom quitted their houses.

The Spaniards determined to pass the night in an extensive plain near the morass, for they and their horses were so much fatigued that they could not travel a step. They made large fires, therefore, to warm themselves, and found consolation in the reflection, that from this place unto Hirrihigua, whither they were journeying, they should encounter no further impediments.

At night they observed the same precautions as before, and resumed their march before daybreak. In this way they travelled two days without meeting any thing worthy of record. The horses of the two companions who had died, went free, saddled and bridled, sometimes following the others, sometimes taking the lead and keeping as regularly in the route as if they had riders to guide them. The night of the tenth day was passed within three leagues of the village of Mucozo.

A little past midnight the Spaniards were again in the saddle. They had not gone far before Pedro Moron, the half-caste, so noted for the quickness of his scent, suddenly cried out: "Take heed! I smell fire at no great distance." His companions looked about, but could neither see nor smell fire.

After proceeding about a league further, Moron again stopped. "I am certain," said he, "that there is fire somewhere, close at hand." They now advanced warily, and after a short time discovered a fire in a forest close by. Drawing silently near, they perceived a number of Indians, with their wives and children, seated round it, cooking and eating fish. Though they supposed them to be subjects of the friendly Cacique Mucozo, they resolved to capture as many as they could, in order to ascertain whether this chieftain continued at peace with Pedro Calderon. In case he did not, they determined to make all his subjects who might fall into their hands prisoners of war and send them as slaves to Havana. They accordingly dashed forward to surround the group. On hearing the sudden tramp of horses, the

savages started up and made for the woods. Many eluded pursuit in the darkness, and many escaped in the thickets. The Spaniards took prisoner about twenty persons, women and children, who continually called out the name of Ortiz, to remind their captors of the past kindness of their Cacique. But this availed nothing; they were secured.

The half-starved Spaniards, without dismounting, made a hearty meal of the fish, not waiting to cleanse them from the sand with which the trampling of the Indians and of the horses had covered them.

Refreshed by their hasty repast, they continued their journey, keeping clear of the village of Mucozo. After travelling five leagues, the horse of Juan Lopez Cacho could not proceed; having never recovered from its sufferings in crossing the river Ocali. Its rider had fared better, having been restored, partly by the sudden alarm of the night, and chiefly, by the natural vigour of his age, being not more than twenty years old. Throughout the remainder of the journey he was as active as any of his companions.

Finding it impossible to get the horse on, although within six leagues of the journey's end, it was left in a meadow where there was abundance of pasturage, and its saddle and bridle hung in a tree; so that any Indian who should use the horse might also have its furniture. It was feared, however, that as soon as the Indians found it, they would kill it. After travelling nearly five leagues, the detachment arrived within three miles of the village of Hirrihigua, where they expected to find Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eighty foot. They examined the ground narrowly as they rode along, hoping to discover some tracks of horses, for as the village was so near, and the country free from wood, it seemed to them natural that their countrymen should have ridden out as far as this, and even farther. Discovering, however, no traces of the kind, they were filled with dismal forebodings, fearing that Calderon and his men had been massacred by the natives, or had quitted the country in the caravels. In either case, what were they to do—surrounded by enemies, having no bark and without the means of building one? To return to the Governor appeared impossible, after what they had already suffered. Having discussed their forlorn condition, they unanimously agreed, that if they

did not find their companions in Hirrihigua, they would retire into some of the fastnesses of the adjacent forests, where there was abundance of grass for the horses. They resolved to kill the superfluous horse, dry its flesh as food for the journey, and when the other horses should be sufficiently recruited attempt to return to the Governor. Should they be attacked upon the road, they determined to die like true and faithful soldiers; and if they arrived safe, they would at least enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled their commander's orders.

With this heroic resolve they proceeded; the further they advanced, however, the more were they confirmed in their fears; for they discovered no trace of their comrades. At length they came to a small lake, less than half a league from the village. Here they found fresh tracks of horses, and near the water, marks of cloths having been recently washed there.

A joyful shout burst from the lips of every Spaniard. The horses were dragging wearily along, but the moment they scented the traces of their companions, they threw up their heads, pricked their ears, and neighed loudly, plunging and leaping about as if just taken from the stable: setting off at a quick pace, they soon accomplished the remainder of their journey.

The sun was setting as they came in sight of the village. The night patrol were defiling out on horseback, with lance and shield, and shining armour. Juan de Añasco and his followers fell into the same order, and advanced at a furious gallop, as if tilting in the lists, rending the air with their huzzas and joyous shouts. Pedro Calderon and his men sallied out to meet them, and received them with open arms. Instead of inquiring, however, after the health and welfare of the army, the Governor, and their particular friends, they anxiously demanded whether there was any gold in the country?

Añasco, without delay, inquired of Calderon whether the natives of the province, and the vassals of Mucozo, had continued friendly; and learning they had, he directed that the prisoners recently taken should be immediately liberated, and sent home to their country loaded with presents. By them he sent an invitation to Mucozo to pay him a visit with a

train of attendants to convey to their dwellings the sea stores and other articles which, on the Spaniards' departure, they intended leaving behind : at the same time, Añasco recommended to the Cacique's care the horse which had been left in his territory.

The Indians departed delighted with this kind treatment, and on the third day came the good Mucozo, followed by his warriors and a train of attendants ; two of whom led the horse, while the others carried the saddle and bridle, as they knew not how to use them. Mucozo embraced Añasco and his comrades, and after enquiring for the Governor and the army, requested him to relate the particulars of his journey, the battles and skirmishes, the toils and privations which he and his detachment had suffered. When Mucozo had heard the whole detail, he observed that he should rejoice if he could impress his own spirit and will upon the other Caciques throughout the land, that all might treat the Governor and his people with the kindness which, as he considered, they so well merited.

Juan de Añasco was struck with the difference between the reception he met with from this noble chieftain, and that of his own countrymen, whose first inquiry had been after gold. With a grateful heart, he thanked him for the kindness he had shown to Calderon and his soldiers, and delivered to him many friendly messages from the Governor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1539. JUAN de Añasco now prepared to discharge the duties of his mission. He was to embark in two brigantines, and to coast to the westward until he should arrive at the Bay of Ante, which he had discovered with so much toil. He brought orders, also, from the Governor to Captain Pedro Calderon, to rejoin him with his troops, by land : and Gomez Arias was to sail for Havana in the caravel, to convey an account to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla of the expedition.

The whole harbour was in a bustle. The brigantines and caravel were careened and repaired, the sea stores, sails, rigging, and equipments carried on board, the crews mus-

tered and embarked. Equal stir was made for the march by land, in preparing the furniture for horses, furbishing armour and weapons, and selecting every article necessary for the service.

After all the necessary preparations had been made, there remained an abundance of articles, which the Spaniards could not take with them; such as cassava bread, clothing, cuirasses, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, besides sea stores, and quantities of steel and iron, which the Governor had provided in such profusion for the expedition. All these superfluous commodities were given to Mucoza as a reward for his constant friendship. The Cacique found himself suddenly possessed of a profusion of valuable stores. During four days that he remained at the harbour, his subjects were incessantly busy going to and fro like ants, bearing off these presents to his capital. Every preparation being made and the crews embarked, besides thirty soldiers who were distributed in the brigantines and caravel, and twenty Indian women for Doña Isabel,* the different commanders took leave of each other, and of their respective comrades. Juan de Añasco set sail in the brigantines in quest of the Bay of Aute; Gomez Arias in the caravel for Havana, and Pedro Calderon prepared to march, as soon as he should have seen them fairly under weigh.† With this cavalier and his little army we shall continue for the present, hoping to meet Juan de Añasco at some future day.

No sooner had Añasco and Arias set sail, than with a force of seventy horse and fifty foot, Calderon sallied out of Hirrihigua, leaving the gardens and fields which had been planted in full vegetation. They reached Mucozo's village on the evening of the second day. The kind Cacique came out to welcome them, and hospitably quartered them for that night. The next day he escorted them to the frontier of his dominions, where he took leave of them with many expressions of regret.

Pedro Calderon continued his march until evening, when he encamped in a plain skirted by a forest. The night darkened apace, and suddenly a party of natives rushed into the encampment. The Spaniards attacked them sword in

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P 2. L 2. c. 27.

hand, dispersing and pursuing them to the entrance of the woods. As soon, however, as the former returned to the camp, the savages were on their track, and in this manner annoyed them all night long. During these skirmishes, one of the horsemen pursued an Indian; who, finding the horse gained upon him, and that he would soon be overtaken, turned suddenly round, fixed an arrow in his bow, and discharged it at the same moment that the horseman threw his lance. The savage fell dead, but not unrevenged; for his arrow pierced the horse's breast with a mortal wound, so that Indian, Christian, and horse, rolled together upon the plain.

The Indian must have been one of their chief warriors; for, on his fall, the savages immediately fled into the forest and were not again seen.

The horse that was slain was the famous steed of Gonzalo Silvestre. The Spaniards, astonished that this powerful animal should have died so suddenly, merely by the wound of an arrow, opened its body and found that the shaft had penetrated its breast, and passed through its heart to the very entrails. So adroit were the natives of Florida in the use of the bow.

Next evening the Spaniards slept on the margin of the grand morass, and traversed it without opposition from the enemy on the following morning. They made forced marches, the horsemen dismounting by turns, and relieving the foot soldiers. Thus they travelled for several days, without a single conflict with the natives, finding refreshment and food in the villages, which were all abandoned, the whole country being as silent as if it had been uninhabited, until they arrived at the warlike province of Apalachee.

Having encamped upon the skirts of a thick forest bordering the morass, next morning they entered the defile, half a league in length, and reaching the water, the foot soldiers passed over the Indian bridge of logs, while the horse swam the deepest portion of the channel. Calderon, finding that they had traversed the most perilous portion of the morass, wished to hasten over the remainder. He, therefore, ordered ten horsemen to take behind them five arquebusiers, and five cross-bowmen, and seize upon the narrow pass through the forest which was on the opposite bank. They set off at

full speed through the water, when shrill cries and yells arose from different quarters, and Indians rushing from behind bushes, brakes and the trunks of huge trees, discharged showers of arrows at them.

At the very first discharge, the horse of Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, was killed, and five others wounded. The horses, panic-struck with the sudden attack and clamour, turned and fled; their masters being unable to restrain them. Plunging and rearing in the water, which was up to their breasts, they threw off the foot soldiers, who were all wounded, as the wheeling of the horses exposed their shoulders to the enemy's arrows. The Indians perceiving this, advanced eagerly to dispatch them, giving their war-whoop and shout of victory to encourage their companions.

The suddenness of the attack, the overthrow of the ten archers, the flight of the horses, the thronging of hordes of natives to the combat, produced a scene of wild confusion. The Spaniards were bewildered, and as the battle was in the water, and the calvary could render no assistance, they were greatly alarmed for the result of the conflict.

The savages, on the contrary, encouraged by the success of their first efforts, attacked the fallen archers with greater fury. The nearest Spaniards rushed across the bridge to their rescue. A formidable band of native warriors advanced on the left; about twenty paces before them stalked an Indian, perfectly naked, fearless and bold in his bearing, with a large plume of feathers upon his head. His object evidently was to gain the shelter of a large tree, which lay between him and the Spaniards, from behind which he might annoy them, and prevent their passing. Gonzalo Silvestre, who happened to be near, perceived his intention and shouted to Anton Galvon. Galvon was one of those who had been dismounted and wounded, but like a true soldier, he had retained his cross-bow. He followed Silvestre, who shielded him with a quilted garment, which he had found floating in the water; advising him to shoot at none but the leading Indian, who was evidently the Chief. In this manner they gained the tree, but this movement did not escape the observation of the savage; he bent his bow, and in an instant discharged three arrows. They were sent with unerring aim, but Silvestre received them upon the garment

which he used as a shield, and which, being wet, proved an effectual defence.

Anton Galvon, who had reserved his aim until the savage should draw near, now fixed a bolt in his cross-bow, and sent it through the Indian's breast; the latter staggered a few paces, crying out to his followers, "These traitors have slain me." They rushed to his aid, received him in their arms with dismal murmurs, and passing him from one to the other, conveyed him from the field of battle.

The combat was no less bloody in other parts of the morass. A large body of Indians advanced on the right. A valiant soldier, Andres de Meneses, who with ten or twelve others, stood to oppose them, receiving four arrows in his thighs, fell into the water; luckily his large shield covered him, and the enemy leaving him, shot at his companions, five of whom were grievously wounded.

The savages, elated by their successes, and considering the victory as already theirs, redoubled their efforts. The Spaniards were evidently losing ground, for only fifty of their number could be brought to engage, and the cavalry could neither render assistance, nor molest the enemy. They fought, however, desperately; it was a struggle for life. At this critical moment, information reached the Indians that their chief was mortally wounded. It gave an immediate check to their ardour; they soon began slowly to retreat, but nevertheless kept up a constant discharge of arrows.

The Spaniards perceiving these signs of faltering among their adversaries, rallied, charged, and driving them out of the morass, pursued them to the narrow defile of the forest, taking possession of the cleared field in which De Soto had formerly encamped.

This the enemy had strongly fortified, but had abandoned it in order to assist their Chief. Here the Spaniards halted for the night, as the place was strong and only accessible through the defile. Scarcely one among them escaped without a wound. The least injured bound up and dressed the wounds of their comrades. Not an eye was closed that night. Every man maintained anxious watch, the savages who hovered around them, keeping up a dismal howling until break of day.

The lucky shot of Anton Galvon had proved the salvation

of the Spaniards in this desperate contest ; for the Indian laid low by his bolt, proved to be the hostile Chief, whose fall changed the tide of battle in their favour. But for his timely destruction every one of them would probably have been massacred.

Early in the morning they resumed their march, driving their foes before them through the defile of the forest. At length they issued into the open woods, where the enemy availed themselves of the same barriers and palisades which had stood there when De Soto passed. They sallied from behind these, and, discharging a shower of arrows, retreated, wounding in this way about twenty Spaniards. Every inch of ground was disputed for a distance of two leagues, when the Spaniards came to a plain, where the enemy left them through fear of the cavalry. They now marched five leagues further, and halted in an open country, that the wounded might have some repose ; but as soon as night set in, the Indians again beset their camp with dreadful yells, and taunting speeches. The little army, worn out by repeated assaults, still kept on the alert ; the horsemen sprang into their saddles and pursued the enemy, who launched their arrows and then fled in every direction ; but only to repeat the same annoyances the moment the troopers returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1539. At daylight, the Spaniards continued their march, and came to a forest skirting a deep stream, which the enemy had obstructed with palisades and strong barriers. Some of the Spaniards having formerly surmounted these obstacles, were enabled to advise the mode of attack. It was determined that the horsemen should dismount, being the best armed, and that thirty of them with shields, swords, and hatchets, should join the vanguard to destroy the barricades—that those who were lightly armed should mount the horses, which were of no use in this pass, and go with the baggage and serving-men in the centre, and that the other twenty, who were well armed, should form a rear-guard. In this order they entered the forest.

The Indians, seeing that their enemies were few in number, and that they could not use their horses, charged with great impetuosity, expecting an easy conquest. The latter forced their way to the palisades, where the battle became obstinate, the Spaniards struggling to cut a road, and the Indians to defend it. While some of the soldiers kept the enemy at bay with their swords, others hacked with their hatchets at the tendrils of wild vines which fastened the barriers. In this way they demolished them one by one, but at the expense of many grievous wounds. Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese, lost another horse, which was transfixed with arrows.

At length, the Spaniards having fought their way across this perilous pass, travelled with less trouble over the plains, where the enemy, dreading the horse, avoided them. But whenever there were any woods near the road, the Indians were sure to be in ambush. Issuing from the thickets they made their attacks, shouting, and repeating frequently these words: "Where are you going, robbers? we have already killed your chief and all his warriors."

In this manner, these one hundred and fifty Spaniards, skirmishing and fighting all day, arrived at sunset in Apalachee. They had to travel slowly, on account of the number of wounded, ten or twelve of whom afterwards died; one of these was Andres de Meneses.

As they drew nigh the village they became exceedingly anxious. Perceiving neither man nor horse, nor any sign of life, they began to apprehend disaster. It was thought that the yells of the savages must have reached the village, and as their comrades came not to their assistance, they dreaded lest the boasts of the natives, that they had despatched De Soto and all his army, should prove true.

On their nearer approach, however, their anxiety was relieved by the sight of the Governor, who received them like an affectionate father. They were hailed, too, by their comrades, with shouts of joy, as men risen from the dead; for the Indians had alarmed De Soto, by assuring him that they had all been slain:—a fate he thought too probable, when he considered that this little band of a hundred and twenty men had to cut their way through a wilderness in arms, which he, with a force of eight hundred toops, had found such difficulty in passing.

Among the first to greet Pedro Calderon on his arrival at Apalachee, was Juan de Añasco. This cavalier had accomplished his voyage in the two brigantines without any accident, and arrived safely in the Bay of Aute on the 29th of December.* The Governor had calculated the probable time it would take Añasco to make his voyage and journey, and had taken precautions accordingly. For twelve days before his arrival companies of horse and foot marched, and counter-marched, between the camp and the bay, so that while one body was advancing the other was returning. In this way they kept the road clear of the enemy, and when at the bay, placed their standards in the highest trees, that they might be readily descried from the sea.

Juan de Añasco saw them, landed confidently, and without molestation, and leaving his brigantines well manned in the bay, reached the camp under escort of the companies.

It was a great gratification for Añasco and Calderon to meet, and once more join the Governor and their companions in arms. Companionship in dangers had attached them strongly to each other;—fortitude and valour made them ready, when together, to brave the greatest perils. Thus happily united, in the midst of a hostile wilderness, this band of adventurous Spaniards passed their winter together in the village of Apalachee.

CHAPTER XXV.

1539. A FEW days after the arrival of Juan de Añasco, the Governor, summoned Diego Maldonado, and ordered him to proceed to the Bay of Aute, set sail with the brigantines, and explore the coast to the westward, taking note of all its rivers, bays and harbours.

Maldonado set sail as directed, and coasted along to the west for seventy leagues, when he discovered a fine harbour, called Achusi.† It was land-locked and com-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 12.

† The present Bay of Pensacola. Vide Martin's Louisiana, v. 1. p. 10. The Portuguese narrator calls this port Ochuse, and says that Maldonado set out by land with a detachment of fifty foot soldiers, and marched along the coast until he discovered the bay. We follow the Inca's account, which is adopted by Herrera and others.

pletely sheltered from all winds, ample enough for a fleet to ride in, and its shores were so bold, that a vessel might anchor close to the land.

The natives invited him on shore with many offers of hospitality. Seeing he mistrusted them, they came without hesitation on board the brigantines, and traded with the Spaniards, bringing whatever they demanded. This friendly intercourse gave Maldonado opportunities to go about in his small boats to take soundings, and note all the advantages of the bay. The Cacique, moved by the representations which his subjects brought of the brigantines, and relying on the good faith of the strangers, in a luckless hour ventured on board. The Spaniards, having made all the necessary observations, and being apprised of the rank of one of the visitors, hastily weighed anchor, thus requiting the hospitality of the simple-hearted natives by treacherously carrying off their Cacique. In two months from the time of his departure, Maldonado was again at the camp.

De Soto was rejoiced at the accounts given of the Bay of Achusi. It was the kind of seaport well calculated to facilitate his scheme of empire, being a convenient place for receiving reinforcements and supplies from Havana, necessary to the prosecution of his grand project of conquest and colonization. It being now the latter part of February, the Governor dispatched Maldonado with the brigantines to Havana, to proclaim his success, and to return with those vessels, the caravel of Gomez Arias, and any other shipping he could purchase, freighted with clothing, weapons, and ammunition of all kinds. Gomez Arias was likewise to return with him, as De Soto had a great opinion of the latter's prudence and sagacity in council, and his hardihood, perseverance, and intrepidity in the field. They were to rendezvous in the Bay of Achusi in the following month of October, at which time De Soto proposed to meet them there, having in the interim, made a circuit through the interior of the country, to explore the surrounding provinces,* which he determined to do during the thaw.

The natives of Apalachee were a race of large stature, amazing vigour of arm and intrepidity of spirit, and seemed to delight in war. During the whole winter they kept up

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 23.

alarms day and night, never ceasing to employ stratagems and assaults; but the vigilance and promptness of the Governor, and his great skill in Indian warfare, foiled every effort of consequence. They never attempted to oppose any body of soldiers drawn up in squadron, but roved in bands about the forests to surprise foraging parties, or lurked among thickets to cut off stragglers from the camp.

If a small party repaired to the forest to cut wood, the sound of their axes would sometimes attract a host of foes, who, coming upon them by stealth, would surround and massacre them, break the chains of the prisoners who had accompanied them to carry away the wood, and bear off the scalps of the slain as trophies to decorate their bows. In this way they destroyed more than twenty soldiers, and rendered the vicinity of the village so dangerous, that the Spaniards rarely ventured any distance unless well armed and in strong parties. One day, however, Juan de Añasco and six other cavaliers, extended their ride into the adjacent fields. Not intending to venture far, they wore no defensive armour, nor any weapons but their swords, except one of their number, named Estevan Pegado, who had a helmet and lance.

While thus sauntering slowly forward, seeing in a vista of the wood, a male and female Indian, they spurred forward to make them prisoners. The female was so terrified at sight of the horses, that she stood like one petrified. The husband took her in his arms, ran with her to the woods, and thrusting her among the bushes, returned to where he left his bow and arrows, and seizing them, boldly fronted his enemies.

The Spaniards, pleased with his spirit, determined to take him alive. Rushing upon him, therefore, before he had time to discharge an arrow, they threw him down, and crowded upon him to prevent his rising, while Estevan Pegado with his lance kept him to the ground. The harder he was pressed, the more furious he became. He writhed and struggled under the horses' feet, wounding them in the flanks and belly with the thrusts of his bow. At length, with a desperate effort, he sprang on his feet, grasped his bow in both hands, and gave Estevan Pegado such a blow across the forehead that the blood streamed down his face. "Plague

on it," cried the Spaniard, "if we treat this savage thus daintily he will kill us all seven." So saying, he rose in his stirrups, thrust his lance through the Indian's breast, and pinned him to the earth.

In this affray all the horses were more or less wounded, and one of them afterwards died of its wounds. The cavaliers returned to the camp, wondering at the prowess of the savage, and not a little ashamed to confess that a single Indian had treated them so roughly.

At another time, a party of twenty horse and fifty foot sallied out on a foraging expedition to gather maize. After they had collected an ample supply, they placed themselves in ambush in a hamlet about a league from their quarters, in hopes of entrapping some of the natives. In the upper part of what appeared to be a temple, they placed a sentry, who after some time descried an Indian moving stealthily across the public square; casting furtive glances, as if he dreaded a concealed foe.

The sentinel giving the alarm, Diego de Soto, nephew to the Governor, one of the best soldiers in the army, and an excellent horseman, spurred into the square to capture him. Diego Velasquez, Master of Horse to the Governor, followed at a hand gallop, to aid De Soto in case of need.

The Indian, seeing them approach, trusted for safety to that fleetness of foot for which his countrymen were remarkable. Finding, however, that the horse gained upon him, he took refuge under a tree, as the natives were accustomed to do, when they had no lances to defend themselves from the horses. Here, fixing an arrow in his bow, he awaited the approach of his enemy. Diego de Soto galloped up to the tree, but not being able to ride under it, wheeled close beside it and made a thrust with his lance over his left arm at the Indian as he dashed by. The latter evaded the blow, and drawing his arrow to the head, discharged it at the moment the horse was abreast of him. The shaft entered just between the girth and stirrup-leather; the wounded animal went stumbling forward fifteen or twenty paces and fell dead.

Diego Velasquez spurred to the relief of his comrade, and passing the tree, made a lunge with his lance as De Soto had done. The same event followed. The Indian dodged the

lance, discharged another arrow just behind the stirrup-leather, and sent the horse tumbling to take its place beside its companion. The two cavaliers sprang upon their feet, and advanced upon the Indian, lance in hand. The savage, however, contented himself with his good fortune, made off for the woods, just keeping an even pace before them, scoffing, making grimaces, and crying out, "Let us all fight on foot, and we shall then see who will prevail." With this taunt he took refuge among the thickets, leaving the cavaliers to mourn the loss of their gallant steeds.

Some few days after the misfortune of these two horsemen, Simon Rodriquez and Roque de Yelves, set out on horseback to gather some fruit that grew in a wood skirting the village. Not satisfied with plucking it from the lower branches, seated in their saddles, they climbed the tree to gather it from the topmost boughs, fancying it of better flavour. While thus employed, Roque de Yelves gave the alarm of Indians at hand, and throwing himself from the tree, ran to recover his horse; but an arrow, with a barb of flint, entered between his shoulders and came out at his breast; he fell forward and lay stretched upon the earth. Rodriquez was too much terrified to descend. They shot at him like a wild beast, and he fell dead, pierced by three arrows. Scarcely had he touched the ground when they scalped him and bore off the trophy in triumph. The arrival of his comrades saved the scalp of poor Roque de Yelves. He related the event in few words, and making confession, immediately expired. The horses of the slain Spaniards had fled towards the camp. Upon the thigh of one of them was perceived a drop of blood. He was taken to a farrier, who, seeing that the wound was no greater than that made by the puncture of a lancet, said there was nothing to cure. On the following morning the horse died. The Spaniards suspecting that he had been struck by an arrow, opened the body at the wound, and tracing it, found a shaft which had passed through the thigh and entrails, and lodged in the hollow of the breast. They were perfectly amazed at the result of the examination, for an arquebuse could scarcely have sent a ball so far.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1540. THE Governor remained five months in winter quarters ; and such was the fertility of the province of Apalachee, and the quantity of maize, beans, pompions and various other kinds of grain, pulse, and vegetables, besides a variety of fruits, that there was no need of foraging more than a league and a half round the village to find food in abundance, though the force consisted of fifteen hundred persons, including Indians, and above three hundred horses.

During this time, De Soto endeavoured to collect information respecting the interior of the country, that he might regulate his march in the spring. In the course of the winter two Indian lads, about sixteen years of age, were brought to him ; they were natives of distant provinces, and had travelled with Indian traders. They offered to guide him to those provinces : and one in particular spoke of a remote district towards the east, called Cofachiqui, governed by a female Cacique, whose capital was extensive, and who received tribute from all her neighbours. The Spaniards showed him jewels of gold, pieces of silver, and rings set with pearls and precious stones ; and endeavoured to ascertain if any such articles were to be found in Cofachiqui. He gave them no doubt vague and blundering replies, which they interpreted according to their wishes. Understanding him to say, that the chief traffic in that province was in those yellow and white metals,* and that pearls were to be found there in abundance, it was determined to march in search of Cofachiqui.

Accordingly, in the month of March 1540, Hernando de Soto broke up his winter cantonment, and proceeded to the north-east. Being apprised that he must travel many leagues through an unpeopled wilderness, the Governor ordered his men to provide themselves with provisions. The Indians they had captured and made slaves, being exposed naked, and in irons, to the severe cold, had nearly all perished, so that each soldier was obliged to carry his own supply of pro-

* The Portuguese historian asserts that the lad described the manner in which the gold was dug, melted and refined with such accuracy, that those who were experienced in mining, declared he must have witnessed the process.

visions. On the evening of the third day, after a toilsome march, they arrived at a small village called Capachiqui.* It was situated on high ground on a kind of peninsula, being nearly surrounded by a marsh more than a hundred paces broad, and traversed in various directions by wooden bridges. The village commanded an extensive view over a beautiful valley, sprinkled with small hamlets. Here the troops remained quartered for three days.

About noon on the second day, five halberdiers of the General's guard sallied from the village, accompanied by two other soldiers, Francisco de Aguilar and Andres Moreno. The latter was a gay, good-humoured fellow, and from frequently using the exclamation,—Angels! was nicknamed by his comrades, Angel Moreno. These boon companions, without orders from their superiors, went forth in a heedless manner, merely to amuse themselves, and survey the neighbouring hamlets. The five guards were armed with their halberts, Aguilar with his sword and shield, Moreno with a sword and lance. They crossed the morass, and a strip of thicket about twenty paces wide, beyond which was an open country with corn-fields.

Scarcely had they advanced two hundred paces, when the ever-watchful savages sprang upon them from their lurking places. The startling war-cries and shouts of both parties, roused the soldiers in the village. They did not stay to cross by the bridges, but dashed through the swamp where the water was up to their breasts, and rushed on to rescue their companions. It was too late; the Indians had disappeared; and the five halberdiers lay stretched lifeless upon the ground, each pierced with ten or twelve arrows. Moreno was yet alive, but transfixed with a shaft barbed with flint, and the moment it was extracted from his breast, he expired. Aguilar, who was a hardy soldier, more robust than his companions, had defended himself stoutly; he was alive though badly wounded and much battered about the head. The Indians, having exhausted all their arrows, had attacked him with their bows. With such might did they wield them, that Aguilar's shield was shivered in pieces, and his skull laid bare.

As his comrades bore him to the camp, they inquired the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

number of the enemy, which he declared to be more than fifty, giving the reason why his party had been so suddenly defeated. One day, having nearly recovered from his wounds, his comrades began to jeer him, asking him whether he had counted the blows he received, and if they had hurt much. "I counted not the number of the blows," replied Aguilar somewhat crustily, "but you may, one day or other, receive the like, and then you will know whether they hurt or not." Being further bantered upon the subject, he broke forth in testimony of the valour and generosity of the Indian warriors. "You must know," said he, "that a band of more than fifty savages sprang out of the thickets to attack us; the moment, however, they saw that we were but seven, and without our horses, seven warriors stepped forth and the rest retired to a distance. They began the attack, and as we had neither arquebusses nor cross-bows, we were entirely at their mercy. Being more active and swift of foot than our men, they leaped around us like so many devils, with horrid laughter, shooting us like wild beasts, without our being able to close with them. My poor comrades fell one after the other, and the savages seeing me alone, all seven assailed me with their bows and battered me as you witnessed. I concealed this before, through a sense of shame; but so it really happened, and may it serve as a warning to you all, never to disobey orders and go forth in a like careless manner."

Aguilar has probably given to this event a somewhat romantic colouring; yet, such instances of magnanimity are said to have been common among the warriors of Apalachee. They had great confidence in their own courage, strength, and dexterity, considering themselves equal if not superior to the Spaniards, when equally armed, and when the latter were not mounted on their horses:—at such times they would often disdain to avail themselves of their superiority of numbers.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1540. Quitting this village, within two days, the army crossed the frontier of Apalachee, and entered the province

of Atapaha.* On entering a new province, it was the custom of the Governor to lead the way himself, and see every thing with his own eyes, rather than trust to the accounts of others. He accordingly chose forty horse and seventy foot, well armed, with shields, arquebusses and cross-bows, and penetrated the country in advance of his army. On the morning of the third day they came in sight of the village of Achese. The Indians had fled to the forests, carrying with them their wives, children, and effects. The horsemen dashing into the village, made six prisoners, two of whom were warriors that had remained behind to remove the infirm.

These two warriors came into the presence of the Governor with a fearless and lofty demeanour. "What seek you in our land?" said they, not waiting to be questioned, "peace or war?" De Soto replied through his interpreter, Juan Ortiz, "We seek not war with any one, but our wish is to cultivate peace and friendship. We are in search of a distant province, and all we ask is food during our journey." The warriors instantly offered to supply the wants of the army. They sent two of their companions to their Cacique to relate all they had heard and seen, and charged them to inform all the natives they should meet, that the Spaniards came as friends, and were to be received and aided accordingly. On the departure of the three messengers, De Soto ordered the Indians to be set at liberty, and treated as friends.

De Soto, being joined by his army, halted three days in this village and then resumed his march to the north-east, proceeding for ten days along the banks of a river, skirted by groves of mulberry trees, and winding through luxuriantly fertile valleys.† The natives were peaceable and domestic in their habits, and never violated the peace which they formed with the Spaniards.

On the eleventh day the latter crossed the boundaries of Atapaha, and entered the province of Cofa,‡ having, accord-

* The river Atapaha may derive its name from this ancient province.

† Supposed to be the Flint river.

‡ We have followed the Portuguese Narrative here, as the Inca is evidently in error in making the Spaniards enter the Province of Achalaque (the country of the Cherokees) at so early a period. This tribe dwelt much further to the northward, on the skirts of the Apalachian Mountains, and was not seen by the Spaniards until a month afterwards. The Portuguese historian calls this province Ocute.

ing to custom, dispatched messengers in advance to the Cacique with offers of peace. This chieftain, in reply, sent a deputation of two thousand Indians to De Soto, with a present of rabbits, partridges, maize, and a great number of dogs. The latter were held in high esteem by the Spaniards; for, next to their want of salt, the greatest cause of suffering was the scarcity of meat. Game was abundant, and amply supplied the natives with food, for they were very skilful in using the bow and arrow, and equally expert at constructing various kinds of traps. The Spaniards, however, being constantly on the march, had no time for hunting; and, moreover, dared not quit their ranks for fear of falling into some ambush of the enemy.

The Cacique of Cofa, received the Spaniards with a generous welcome, giving up his own mansion to the Governor, and providing quarters for the army. The province over which he ruled was fertile and populous. The natives were peaceful, domestic in their habits, and extremely courteous. They treated the strangers with much kindness, and entertained them five days with great hospitality.

The Adelantado had brought with him, thus far, a piece of ordnance, but finding it exceedingly burthensome and of little use, he determined to leave it with the Cacique. That the natives might have some idea of its use, he ordered it to be loaded, and pointed at a large oak without the village. In two shots the tree was laid prostrate, to the infinite amazement of the Cacique and his subjects.

De Soto told the Indians that he should leave this wonderful machine with them as a reward for their friendship and hospitality; to be taken care of until he should return or send for it. The Cacique and his warriors were deeply impressed with this mark of confidence, and promised that it should be guarded with vigilant care.

On the sixth day, the army resumed their march in quest of the adjoining province of Cofaqui, whose Cacique was an elder brother of Cofa's, and much more powerful. Cofa and his warriors escorted the army during one day's march, and would have continued with them to the frontier, but the Governor would not give his assent. The Cacique, having taken an affectionate leave of the strangers, ordered some of his people to accompany them, and do all in their power to

serve them. At the same time he directed a chief to go before, and warn his brother Cofaqui, of their approach, and beseech him to receive them kindly. The Adelantado continued his march through a pleasant and luxuriant country, fertilized by many rivers, and inhabited by a more docile and gentle race than any he had yet seen. At the end of six days he bid adieu to the territory of Cofa.*

The moment the Cacique Cofaqui received the message of his brother, he despatched four chieftains, with a train of Indians, to welcome the Spaniards to his dominions.

This message diffused joy throughout the whole army. They marched cheerfully forward, and soon came to the confines of Cofaqui, where they dismissed the subjects of Cofa. When the Cacique knew by his scouts that the Christians were near, he went out to receive them with a retinue of warriors, richly decorated, carrying their bows and arrows in their hands, wearing lofty plumes upon their heads, and over their shoulders rich mantles of martin skin, finely dressed. Many kind words were exchanged; the Indians and Spaniards unsuspiciously mingling together, entered the village with joyous shouts. The Cacique conducted the Governor to his own house, and retired himself to a neighbouring hamlet.

Early the next morning Cofaqui came to visit De Soto. He freely imparted every information respecting his own territory, and spoke of a plentiful and populous province, called Cosa, which lay to the north-west.† As to the province of Cofachiqui, he said it was contiguous to his dominions, but that a vast wilderness of seven days' journey intervened.‡ Should the Governor, however, persist in seeking it, he offered to send a band of his warriors to accompany him, and promised to furnish him with all necessary supplies for the journey. De Soto had fixed his mind too intently upon Cofachiqui to be diverted from his course, and signified his intention of continuing on. Scouts were accordingly sent out in every direction, to assemble the natives, and in four days the village was thronged with them. Four thousand warriors were selected to escort the Spaniards, and four thousand retainers to carry their supplies and clothing. The chief

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13. † Portuguese Relation, c. 14.

‡ Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 4.

articles of provisions were, maize, dried plums, grapes, walnuts, and acorns; for the Indians had no domestic animals, and depended for flesh upon the produce of the chase.

The Spaniards, seeing themselves surrounded by such a multitude of natives, although assembled for their service, kept unremitting watch day and night, lest, under the guise of friendship, they should attempt their destruction. But it soon appeared that these troops were destined for warfare in another quarter.

A few days before the time appointed for the departure of the Spaniards, the General and his officers being in the public square, the Cacique ordered his chief warrior to be called. "You well know," said he to him, "that a perpetual enmity has existed between our fathers and the Indians of Cofachiqui. That bitter hatred, you are aware, has not abated; the wrongs we have suffered from that vile tribe still rankle in our hearts, unrevenged! The present opportunity must not be lost.

"You, the leader of my warriors, must accompany this Chief, and under his protection wreak vengeance on our enemies! I need say no more; I leave our cause and our honour in your hands!"

The Indian leader, whose name was Patofa, was of a graceful form and striking features. His expression was haughty and noble, showing dauntless courage for war, and gentleness and kindness in peace. His whole demeanour showed that the Cacique had not unwisely bestowed his trust. Throwing aside his mantle of skin, and seizing a broadsword, made of palmwood, which a servant carried behind him, as a badge of his rank, he cut and thrust with it, as skilfully as a master of fence, much to the admiration of the Spaniards. After going through many singular evolutions, he stopped suddenly before the Cacique, and made a profound reverence. "I pledge my word," said he, "to fulfil your commands as far as may be in my power; and I promise, by the favour of these strangers, to revenge the insults, deaths, and losses our fathers have sustained from the natives of Cofachiqui. My vengeance will be such, that the memory of past evils shall be wiped away for ever. My daring to re-appear in your presence will be a token that your commands have been executed. For, should my hopes

be denied, never again shall you behold me,—never again shall the sun shine upon me ! If the enemy refuse me death, my own hand shall inflict it. I will execute upon myself the punishment which my cowardice or fortune may merit !”

The Cacique Cofaqui rose and embraced him. “I consider,” he replied, “that what you have promised is as certain to be done as though it were already accomplished, I therefore reward you, as for services already rendered.” Saying this, he took from his shoulders a mantle of beautiful martin skins, and placed it with his own hand, upon the shoulders of Patofa. A present of a mantle or plume, or any other article of dress, was considered by the natives of that country as the greatest honour their chief could confer upon them, more especially when presented in person.*

A singular event happened the night before the departure of the army. One of the two boys taken prisoner in the province of Apalachee, had guided them thus far. The other, whom they named Pedro, was now to conduct them to the dominions of Cofachiqui, where they expected to find gold, silver, and precious stones. About the mid-watch, this youth woke the soldiers with screams of murder, and cries for help. The alarm spread throughout the camp ; the Spaniards dreaded some treachery from the Indians ; the trumpets sounded to arms ; all was tumult ; the former buckled on their armour, seized their weapons, and prepared for action. When it was discovered that no enemy was at hand, an inquiry was made whence the alarm had proceeded. The Indian boy Pedro, half dead, trembling with fear and terror, and foaming at the mouth like a maniac, when asked why he had called for help with such strange outcries, declared that a demon with a horrible visage, accompanied by frightful imps, had appeared to him, and forbidden him, under pain of death, to guide the Spaniards to the land he had promised ; at the same time dragging him out of his hut and beating him, until he was so bruised and weakened that he could not move. He added, that the demon, seeing the Christians approach, had vanished, together with his imps ;—he knew, therefore, from this, that the devils feared the Christians, and begged they would baptize him immediately, lest the demon should return and kill him.”

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 5.

The Spaniards were perplexed by this story, which seemed to be corroborated by the contusions and swellings on the boy's face and body. The priests, being called in, baptized him, and remained with him during this night and the following day, to confirm him in the faith.* As the boy proved to be an elaborate liar on various occasions, the foregoing tale may be considered a marvel of his own invention. The Cacique accompanied the army two leagues on their march, when charging Patofa anew, faithfully to serve the Spaniards, he took an affectionate leave and returned to his home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1540. THE Spaniards marched, formed into squadrons, with a van and rear-guard. Patofa and his four thousand warriors marched in like order, the Indians who carried the provisions being in the centre; for the natives sought eagerly to rival the white men in every thing relating to the art of war.

By night, they lodged separately, and as soon as the Indians who carried the provisions had delivered them to their allies, they went away and slept with their companions. Both armies posted sentinels, and watched each other as though they had been enemies. The Spaniards were particularly vigilant; for, seeing the order and regularity observed by the Indians, they mistrusted them. The latter, however, were entirely free from any evil designs; on the contrary, they manifested a desire to please the strangers in every thing. The stationing of sentinels and the observance of other camp forms, were intended more to show that they were accustomed to war, than from any doubts of the Spaniards. These precautions were observed by both parties the whole time they were together. The second night of their march, they encamped on the borders of an extensive uninhabited tract, lying between the provinces of Cofaqui and Cofachiqui.

The country upon which they now entered, though deserted, was pleasantly diversified with easy hills, open forests, and numerous streams.

On the fourth day an Indian deserted, and took the

* The Portuguese narrator says the gospel was read over him and he recovered.

direction for his home. Patofa immediately sent four young warriors in pursuit of him, with orders to bring him back manacled. These set off with the swiftness of deer, and soon returned with their prisoner. Patofa ordered him to be led to the banks of a small stream that flowed through the encampment. Here he was stripped and commanded to throw himself upon the ground and drink the streamlet dry. The culprit drank until he could contain no more, but the moment he raised his head from the water, five Indians who were placed over him, with clubs in their hands, belaboured him cruelly until he resumed his task. Some of his comrades hastened to the Governor, and implored him to intercede with Patofa, or the poor wretch would be compelled to drink until he died. The intercessions of the Governor prevailed; the prisoner was released, but was half dead with the quantity of water he had been forced to swallow.

In the course of their march through this unpeopled tract, they came to two rivers, a cross-bow shot broad, and so deep and rapid that the infantry could not maintain their footing in crossing. They made, therefore, a kind of dam by placing their horses side by side across the stream, in order to break its fury, until the foot soldiers and Indians had forded it.

About noon on the seventh day, their march was arrested, and the whole army thrown into confusion by the sudden termination of the broad road which they had followed thus far. They pursued many narrow winding paths leading into thick and tangled forests, but these paths, after being followed for a short distance, likewise entirely disappeared.

Their native allies were here quite as much at a loss, not one of them being able to point out the proper track. De Soto then ordered Patofa into his presence. "Why," said he to him, "have you, under the mask of friendship, led us into this wilderness, from whence we can discover no way of extricating ourselves? I will never believe, that among eight thousand Indians, there is not one to be found capable of showing us the way to Cofachiqui. It is not at all likely that you, who have maintained perpetual war with that tribe, should know nothing of the public road and secret paths leading from one village to another."

Patofa replied to this by assurances that neither he nor

any of his followers had ever visited this district before. "The wars," said he, "which have been waged between the two provinces, have not been carried on by pitched battles, nor invasions of either party; but by skirmishes between small bands, who resort to the streams and rivers we have crossed, to fish; and also by combats between hunting parties; as the wilderness we have traversed is the hunting ground common to both nations. The natives of Cofachiqui are more powerful and have always worsted us in fight; our people, therefore, were dispirited and dared not pass over their own frontiers. Do you suspect that I have led your army into these deserts that you may perish? If so, demand what hostages you please. If my head will suffice, take it—if not, you may behead every Indian, as they will all obey my mandate even to death."*

The frank and feeling manner in which these words were delivered, convinced the Governor of Patofa's truth. He then called to him Pedro, the Indian boy who had guided them thus far, with such a perfect knowledge of the country, that the previous evening he had pointed out exactly where they would find the road on the following morning. De Soto threatened to throw him to the dogs for thus deceiving him. The poor boy, however, appeared to be really bewildered, and seemed to have suddenly lost all his former sagacity; he said it was four or five years since he had travelled through the wilderness, and could not now tell where they were.

Resuming their march, they wandered through the glades and openings of the forests, and at sun-set were arrested by a wide, deep, and unfordable river. This sight filled them with dismay. They had neither rafts nor canoes with which to cross the stream, nor food to keep them alive, while these should be constructed. Their provisions were consumed, as they had only brought supplies for seven days, which it had been computed they would take to traverse the desert. The road lost, without a guide, without food, before them a deep impassable river, behind them an uninhabitable wilderness, and on each side a trackless forest;—their situation was indeed dreary and disheartening.

1540. The Governor leaving the army encamped in a

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 6.

grove of pine trees, took a guide and a detachment of horse and foot, and struck into the depths of the forest. He returned late in the evening, greatly perplexed, having penetrated five or six leagues into the wilderness, without discovering any signs that the country was inhabited.

Early the next morning, he called a council of his officers, to consider the critical situation of the army, and decide whether they should turn in another direction or retrace their steps. Their supplies of maize were exhausted; both horses and riders were way-worn, dispirited, and enfeebled for want of food, and it was extremely doubtful whether the troops would be able to reach a place of refreshment; moreover, the Indians, taking advantage of their weakened condition, might assail them; so that their return would probably be in the face both of war and famine. It was resolved, therefore, not to move their camp, until some road or outlet from this wilderness should be discovered. The Governor then despatched parties of troopers in every direction, to seek for habitations. These returned at night-fall, some leading their wearied horses by the bridle, others driving them before them, having discovered neither road nor human dwelling.* De Soto then ordered four bands of horse and two of foot to start, two up the course of the river, and two down it; one party keeping along the bank, and the other a league inland, in hopes that one or the other would find a road or an inhabited place. He directed each of the captains to return in five days.

Captain Juan de Añasco, commanding one of the detachments, was accompanied by Patofa, and the Indian boy Pedro; the former being unwilling to remain in the camp, and the latter abashed at having lost the track, thought that by going on this expedition he might succeed in redeeming his character. With each company of Spaniards went a thousand Indian warriors who scattered themselves about the forests in search of a road.

The Governor awaited their return on the river bank, where he and his troops suffered great distress for want of food; having little to eat except the tendrils of wild vines, which they found in the woods. The four thousand Indians who remained with him sallied out every morning and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

returned at night, some with herbs and roots that were eatable, some with fish, and others with birds and small animals which they had killed with their bows and arrows. All these they brought to the army; although they were exhausted and almost famished themselves, yet such was their fidelity and respect, that they tasted nothing until they had first presented the fruits of their chase to the Spaniards. The hardy soldiers were touched by this generosity of spirit, and gave them the greater part of the food they brought. These supplies, however, were by no means sufficient for the subsistence of such a multitude.

During three days the army suffered extreme privations. The Governor finding they could no longer endure this excess of hunger, ordered some of the hogs brought for the breed to be killed, and half a pound of meat was portioned out to each Spaniard. This, however, rather served to augment than allay the hunger of half-famished men; yet notwithstanding their pressing wants, they generously divided their pittance with the poor savages, whose necessities were equally great.

De Soto fared precisely the same as his men; and though anxious for the fate of his great expedition, he wore a sunny countenance in order to cheer his followers. These chivalrous spirits appreciated his kindness, and to solace him, concealed their sufferings, assumed an air of contentedness, and appeared as happy as though they had been revelling in abundance.

Meanwhile, the four captains who went in search of a road, suffered no less from hunger than the Governor and his army. Juan de Añasco having travelled three days along the river, came to a small village on its banks.* Here he found few natives, but a great supply of food; in one house alone were deposited five hundred measures of meal, formed from toasted maize, besides a considerable quantity of grain. The joy both of Indians and Spaniards may easily be imagined. After having searched the houses, they ascended to the roof of the highest, from which they could see that further on the country was studded with villages and hamlets, surrounded by extensive corn-fields. When they

* The Portuguese Narrator says, the Indians called this hamlet Ay-may;—the Spaniards gave it the name of the "Village of Good Relief."

had subdued the cravings of hunger, shortly after midnight they despatched four horsemen to the Governor with tidings of their success. These took with them many ears of corn, and horns of the buffalo or bison. The sight of these latter perplexed the Spaniards, who conjectured them to be the horns of tame cattle. Several times in the course of their expedition, they had found fresh beef, and importuned the Indians to tell them where they kept their herds, but not being able to obtain any satisfactory information on the subject, it was naturally conjectured that they purposely concealed the truth.

This night Patofa and his warriors stole stealthily out of the camp, so as not to alarm the Spaniards, sacked and pillaged the temple, massacred every Indian they found within the village and its neighbourhood, sparing neither sex nor age, and taking their scalps as trophies to show their Cacique, Cofaqui; for it was afterwards discovered that this village was in the long wished for province of Cofachiqui.

On the following day at noon, Añasco set forward to meet the Governor, not daring to await his arrival in the village, fearing a general assault from the natives, in revenge of the massacre of Patofa.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1540. THE four horsemen who had been sent as messengers, proceeded on at a rapid pace, and reached the army in one day; having performed a distance of twelve leagues, which they had previously spent three days in travelling. The news they brought diffused new life among the troops, rendering them as wild with joy as if they had been rescued from the jaws of death. When morning dawned, De Soto ordered the four troopers to lead the way to the village they had discovered. Before he decamped, however, he buried a letter at the root of a tree, upon the bark of which he inscribed the following words: "Dig at the root of this pine, and you will find a letter." This was to make known to the other captains, who were seeking a road, the direction the army had taken.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

The idea of a plentiful supply of food so revived the half-famished troops that they spurred their horses through the forest, each striving to pass the other, and before noon on the following day they were all within the village. Here the Governor determined to halt for some days, that his men might recruit after their late privations and fatigue, and likewise await the arrival of the three Captains, who had been sent in search of a path.

These three Captains had the good fortune to find the letter of their comrades, and in the course of four days rejoined the main body with their different detachments almost famished: having, during more than a week's absence, had nothing to eat but a scanty supply of roots and herbs.

De Soto remained seven days in this frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; during this time Patofa and his warriors were not idle, but sallying forth stealthily ravaged the country for leagues round, slaying and scalping man, woman, and child, sacking and pillaging villages and hamlets, temples and sepulchres, and refraining only from setting fire to them, through fear that the flames might betray their actions to the Spaniards.

When De Soto heard of this cruel ravage, he made all haste to get rid of his sanguinary allies. Sending for Patofa, he thanked him for his friendly conduct and valuable escort; and loading him with presents of knives, trinkets, and clothing for himself and his Cacique, dismissed him and his followers.

The savage warrior set off on his return, well pleased with the presents, but still more gratified at having fulfilled the vow of vengeance which he had made to his Chieftain.

Two days after the departure of Patofa, the Spaniards resumed their march along the banks of the river. They met with no living thing, but witnessed many dismal proofs of the dreadful carnage which Patofa had committed. For miles the ground was strewn with the scalpless corpses of the slain. The natives had fled into the interior leaving a plentiful supply of provisions in the villages.

On the afternoon of the third day, the army halted in a verdant region, covered with mulberry and other fruit trees, laden with fruit. The Governor, unwilling to advance until he had ascertained what province he was in, ordered Juan de

Añasco with thirty foot soldiers, to pursue the road which they had followed thus far, and endeavour to capture some Indians from whom they might obtain some information, and who would serve as guides. In order to encourage Añasco, he declared that he sent him in preference to any other person, because he was always successful.

Añasco and his thirty comrades quitted the camp on foot before night-fall. They marched forward in profound silence, with the noiseless pace and watchful eye of a marauding party. As they advanced the road became wider. They had proceeded nearly two leagues without seeing a living thing, when on the still night-breeze was borne a low, murmuring sound, like the near hum of a village. As they moved forward, the sounds grew more distinct. At length emerging from the thickets which had obstructed their view, they saw lights and heard the barking of dogs, the cries of children, together with the voices of men and women. Satisfied that a village was near, they advanced in silence to seize some Indians secretly in the suburbs, each striving to be first, in order that he might have the honour of being considered the most diligent. They were, however, disappointed in their hopes, the river which they had followed flowing between them and the village. Walking for some time on the opposite bank, at what appeared to be a landing place for canoes, after having supped, and reposed until two o'clock at night, they set off for the camp, and arriving a little before day-break, related to the Governor what they had seen and heard.

When the day dawned, De Soto set out with a hundred horse to reconnoitre the village. Having reached the opposite bank, Juan Ortiz and Pedro, the Indian boy, shouted to the natives to come over and receive a message for their Cacique.

The Indians, terrified at the strange sight of the Spaniards and their horses, ran back to the village to report what they had seen. In a little while a large canoe was launched, and bent her course directly across the river, managed by several rowers. Six Indians of noble appearance and from forty to fifty years of age landed from it.

The Governor, perceiving they were persons of consequence, received them with much ceremony, seated in a kind of chair of state, which he always carried with him for occa-

sions of this kind. As the Indians advanced, they made three profound reverences, one to the sun, with their faces eastward, the second to the moon turning westward, and the third to the Governor. They then asked him the usual question, "whether he came for peace or war?" He replied, "Peace; and a free passage through your lands." He moreover requested provisions for his people, and canoes or rafts to assist him and his army in passing the river.

The messengers answered that their supplies were small, the country having been ravaged by pestilence during the preceding year;—that most of the people had therefore abandoned their houses and villages, and taken refuge in the woods, neglecting to sow their corn, adding that they were governed by a young female, just of marriageable age, who had recently inherited the sovereignty. To her they engaged to return and repeat the circumstances of their interview, assuring the Spaniards they made no doubt, that from her discreet and generous nature, she would do every thing in her power to serve them. With these words they departed.

The Indians had not long returned to the village, when the Spaniards perceived movements of preparation, and observed a kind of litter borne by four men to the water's side. From this alighted the female Cacique, and entered a highly decorated canoe, which had been prepared for her reception. A kind of aquatic procession was then formed; a grand canoe, containing the six ambassadors, and paddled by a large number of natives, led the van, towing after it the state bark of the Princess, who reclined on cushions in the stern, under a canopy supported by a lance. She was accompanied by eight female attendants. A number of canoes filled with warriors closed the procession.*

The young Princess stepped on shore, and as she approached the Spaniards, they were struck with her appearance. She was finely formed, possessing great beauty of countenance, and exhibiting considerable grace and dignity. Having made her obeisance to the Governor, she took her seat on a kind of stool placed by her attendants, and entered

* The account of this Princess and her territory is taken from the Spanish and Portuguese account. The former is by far the most ample and circumstantial; though it evidently magnifies the importance both of the Princess and her dominions.

into conversation with him;—all her subjects preserving a most respectful silence.

Her conversation confirmed the previous reports of the ambassadors. Her province had been ravaged by pestilence, during the preceding year, and provisions were very scarce. She offered, however, to share with the strangers a quantity of maize which had been collected for the relief of her village, and to put them in the way of getting similar supplies from other villages. She offered, likewise, her own house for the Governor's accommodation, and half of the village for that of his officers and principal soldiers; undertaking that wigwams of bark and branches should be put up for the rest. She added, that rafts and canoes should be provided for the army to cross the river on the following day. De Soto being extremely gratified by her generosity, endeavoured in the best manner he could, to express his sense of her kind and hospitable offers, assuring her of the constant friendship of his sovereign and himself. The cavaliers, too, listening with admiring attention to her discourse, and the answers she gave to various inquiries concerning her province, were as much charmed with her intelligence and judgment as they had been with her beauty. They were surprised to find such natural dignity, grace, and true politeness in a savage brought up in a wilderness.

While the Princess of Cofachiqui was conversing with the Governor, she was slowly disengaging a string of large pearls, which passed three times round her neck, and descended to her waist. The conference ended, she requested Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, to present the necklace to the General. Ortiz replied, that the gift would be more valuable if presented with her own hand. This she scrupled to do from a dread of infringing the decorum, which women, especially sovereigns, ought never to violate. When De Soto was apprised of her scruples, he directed Ortiz to tell her, that he should more highly prize the favour of receiving the gift from her own hand, than he would value the jewel itself, and that she would commit no breach of decorum, as they were persons unknown to each other, treating of peace and amity.*

This being interpreted to the Princess, she arose, and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 11.

placed the string of pearls about the neck of De Soto;* he likewise stood up; and taking from his finger a ring of gold, set with a fine ruby, presented it to her, as a token of friendship. She received it very respectfully and placed it upon one of her fingers. This ceremony ended, she returned to her capital, leaving the Spaniards much struck with her native talent, and personal beauty.†

CHAPTER XXX.

1540. ON the following day, the Indians having constructed large rafts, and brought a number of canoes, the Christian army crossed the river. The passage was not, however, effected without accident. Several of the horses, urged by their riders into the stream, were carried by the current amid quicksands and whirlpools, and four of them unfortunately drowned. Their loss was as much lamented by the Spaniards, as though they had been brothers in arms.

When the army had all crossed, they were lodged in wigwams, under the shade of luxuriant mulberry trees, with which the province abounded. Around the village were scattered many forsaken wigwams; the rank grass growing within, as if they had long been untenanted—a token that the pestilence had, indeed, passed over them.

The province of Cofachiqui, as well as the neighbouring provinces of Cofaqui, and Cofa, are represented as being extremely populous and fertile. The natives were of a tawny complexion; well formed; frank, gentle, and sincere in their dispositions, and less warlike than any of the tribes among which the Spaniards had sojourned.

They were at war, however, with their neighbours, and had many captives among them, whom they employed in cultivating the fields and in other servile labours. To prevent the escape of these captives, they were maimed by having the sinews of the leg cut above the heel or the instep.

* According to the Portuguese narrator, the Indians in this interview assured the Spaniards that their province was but two days' journey from the sea-coast; but subsequent circumstances gave reason to believe, either that the information was incorrect in itself, or erroneously rendered by the interpreters.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 27.

In the course of his various enquiries about the affairs of the province, De Soto learnt that the mother of the Princess, a widow, was still living, at a retired place about twelve leagues down the river. He felt a strong desire to see her, wishing thoroughly to secure the friendship of the people; but his desire was probably quickened by learning that the queen-mother had in her possession a large quantity of pearls.

On making known his wishes to the Princess, she immediately despatched twelve of her principal subjects to her mother, to entreat the latter to come and behold the wonderful strangers, and the extraordinary animals they had brought with them.

The queen-mother, however, refused to accompany the messengers, and expressed herself scandalized at what she termed the levity of her daughter, in so readily holding intercourse with persons whom she had never before seen. She rebuked the envoys for having permitted such a departure from her proper dignity; and manifested in various ways the vexation which stately dowagers are somewhat prone to indulge in similar cases.

The Governor hearing this, summoned Juan de Añasco, who was the very man for undertakings of this kind, ordered him to assemble thirty companions, depart for the retreat of this coy widow, and by fair but gentle means prevail upon her to come to the encampment.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades set off at once, on foot, although the morning was already somewhat advanced. They were guided by a youthful warrior, whom the Princess had commanded to accompany them. This youth was a near relative to the widow, and had been reared by her, and being kind and noble in his nature, she was as dear to him as though he were her own son. For this reason her daughter had chosen him to go with the Spaniards, and had instructed him to proceed in advance of them when they approached the residence of her mother, in order to secure for them a favourable reception.

He showed his generous blood in countenance and bearing. He was about twenty-one years of age; with handsome features, a vigorous and graceful form. His head was decorated with lofty plumes of different coloured feathers;

he wore a mantle of dressed deer-skin; in his hand he bore a beautiful bow, so highly varnished as to appear as if finely enamelled, and at his shoulder hung a quiver full of arrows. With a light and elastic step, an animated and gallant air, his whole appearance was that of an ambassador, worthy of the young and beautiful Princess whom he served.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades having proceeded nearly three leagues, as the heat was oppressive, stopped to make their mid-day meal and take their repose beneath the shade of some widely spreading trees. The Indian guide had proved a cheerful and joyous companion, entertaining them all the way with accounts of the surrounding country and the adjacent provinces. On a sudden, after they had halted, he became moody and thoughtful, and leaning his cheek upon his hand, fell into a reverie, uttering repeated and deep-drawn sighs. The Spaniards noticed his dejection, but, fearing to increase it, forbore to ask the cause.

After a while he quietly took off his quiver, and placing it before him, drew out the arrows slowly, one by one. They were admirable for the skill and elegance with which they were formed. The shafts were reeds. Some were tipped with buck's horn, wrought with four corners like a diamond; some were pointed with the bones of fishes, curiously fashioned; others had barbs of the palm and other hard woods; and some were three pronged. They were feathered in a triangular manner, to render their flight more accurate.

The Spaniards could not sufficiently admire their beauty; they took them up, and passed them from hand to hand, examining and praising the workmanship, and extolling the skill of their owner. The youthful Indian continued thoughtfully emptying his quiver, until, almost the last, he drew forth an arrow with a point of flint, long and sharp, and shaped like a dagger; then, casting round a glance, and seeing the Spaniards engaged in admiring his shafts, he suddenly plunged the weapon into his throat, and fell dead upon the spot.

Shocked at the circumstance, and grieved at not having been able to prevent it, the Spaniards called to their native attendants, and demanded the reason of this melancholy act, in one who had just before been so joyous.

The Indians broke into loud lamentations over the corpse;

for the youth was tenderly beloved by them, and they knew the grief his untimely fate would cause to both Princesses. They could only account for his self-destruction by supposing him perplexed and afflicted about his embassy. He knew that his errand would be disagreeable to the mother, and apprehended that the plan of the Spaniards was to carry her off. He alone was acquainted with the place of her concealment, and it appeared to his generous mind an unworthy return for her love and confidence to betray her to strangers. On the other hand he was aware that, should he disobey the mandates of his young mistress, he should lose her favour and fall into disgrace. Either of these alternatives would be worse than death; he had chosen the latter, therefore, as the lesser evil, and as leaving a proof to his mistresses of his loyalty and devotion.

Such was the conjecture of the natives, to which the Spaniards were inclined to give faith. Grieving at the death of the high-minded youth, they mournfully resumed their journey.

They now, however, found themselves at a loss respecting the road. None of the Indians knew in what part of the country the widow was concealed, the young guide who had killed himself being alone master of the secret. For the rest of that day and until the following noon, they made a fruitless search, taking some of the natives prisoners, who all professed utter ignorance on the subject. Juan de Añasco, being a fleshy man and somewhat choleric, was almost in a fever with vexation, which was increased by the weight of his armour, and the heat of the day; he was obliged, however, to give up his quest after the widow, and return to the camp, much mortified at having for once failed in an enterprize.

Three days after his return, an Indian offered to guide the Spaniards by water, to the retreat of the Princess. Añasco accordingly set out a second time with twenty companions, in two canoes; but at the end of six days returned with no better success. The old Princess having heard of the search made after her, had taken refuge in the depths of a forest which they found it impossible to penetrate. The Governor, therefore, gave up all further attempt to obtain an interview with this wary and discreet matron.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1540. While Juan de Añasco was employed in his search after the widow, the Governor endeavoured to inform himself respecting the riches of the province. For this purpose he summoned the two Indian lads, who had formerly accompanied traders into this part of the country : they told him that their masters had trafficked here for yellow and white metal, similar to the gold and silver shown by the Spaniards, and also for pearls. He made these youths describe the articles to the Princess, and begged her, if such yellow and white metals existed in her territories, to order that specimens should be immediately brought to him.

The Princess cheerfully complied, and in a little while several Indians appeared, laden with the supposed treasure. To the great disappointment of the Spaniards, however, the yellow metal proved to be a species of copper of a yellowish tint much resembling gold ; and the white metal, though a shining substance, having somewhat the appearance of silver, was extremely light, and crumbled in the hand like dry earth. Some have supposed it was a species of quartz, but it is probable that it was mica. Thus of a sudden vanished the golden treasures of Cofachiqui.

To console the Spaniards under their evident disappointment, the Princess pointed out a kind of temple or mausoleum at one end of the village, informing them that it was the sepulchre of all the chieftains and eminent warriors of the place, and adorned with great quantities of pearls. She further assured them that at another village, called Talomeco, about a league distant, the ancient capital of her territory, was a larger mausoleum, in which all her ancestors were interred. There still greater quantities of pearls were deposited, all which, she assured the Governor, should be entirely at his disposal.

De Soto was in some degree consoled for his disappointment in not finding gold, by the assurance of these immense hoards of pearls ; though many of his followers did not give up their hopes of eventual success, insisting that there were veins of that precious metal in the copper and brass of the country. They were destitute, however, of aquafortis, or touchstones to assay them.

Juan de Añasco, the Contador, or royal accountant of the expedition, being absent, the Governor deferred visiting the temple until he should be present in his official capacity. In the mean time, he placed trusty persons round the edifice to keep watch by day and night.

As soon as Añasco returned, the Governor visited the mausoleum at Talomeco, accompanied by the officers of the royal revenue, and a number of his principal officers and soldiers. It was a hundred paces in length and forty in breadth, being covered with a lofty roof of reed. At the entrance to this temple were gigantic statues of wood carved with considerable skill, the largest being twelve feet high. They were armed with various weapons, and stood in threatening attitudes, having grim and ferocious countenances. The interior of the temple was likewise decorated with statues of various shapes and sizes, and with a great profusion of conches, and different kinds of sea and river shells.

Around the sepulchre were benches on which were wooden chests skilfully wrought, but without locks or hinges. These contained the bodies of the departed Caciques and chieftains of Cofachiqui, left to the natural process of decay;—for these edifices were merely used as charnel houses. Besides the chests, there were baskets wrought of cane, filled with furs and Indian robes of dressed skins, and mantles made of the inner rind and bark of trees, and others of a species of grass, which, when beaten, resembled flax. There were some formed with feathers of various colours worn by the natives during winter. But above all, the baskets contained pearls of every size, and in incredible quantities, together with figures of children and birds entirely composed of them. The Portuguese historian says they obtained fourteen bushels of these gems, and that the female Cacique assured them, that, if they searched the neighbouring villages, they might find enough to load all the horses of the army. Nor is the Inca less extravagant in his account. All this, however, must be taken with a large deduction for those exaggerations with which the riches of the new world were always described by its discoverers, when beyond the reach of proof.

The Intendants of the revenue would have made general spoil of these precious articles had not De Soto interfered. He represented that they were at present merely discovering

the country, not dividing it, and having to make their way through a vast wilderness, it would not do to burthen themselves with treasure. They should, therefore, only take specimens of these riches to send to Havana, and leave every thing in the temples in their present state until they came to colonize, when all should be properly divided, and a fifth of the amount set apart for the crown. He, however, distributed handfuls of large pearls among his officers, exhorting them to make rosaries of them; and permitted the officers of the crown to retain a considerable quantity which they had already weighed out.

Annexed to the principal sepulchre were several buildings, which served as armories, containing weapons of various kinds, all arranged in great order. The whole establishment was maintained with exact care and evidently under the charge of numerous attendants.

While ransacking these depositories of arms, to their astonishment, the Spaniards found a dagger and several coats of mail. Nothing could equal their surprise at meeting with these European reliques in the heart of this unknown wilderness. They questioned the Indians on the subject, who informed them that many years before a number of white men, like themselves, had landed at a seaport, about two days' journey from thence;—that the commander of the party dying soon after he had landed, factions and brawls immediately took place among the followers for the command, in which several were slain;—that the survivors having reassembled on board their vessel, put to sea and quitted the country.*

The Spaniards pondered over these facts and concluded that the white men in question must have been the unfortunate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, and his ill-fated followers; and those who were experienced in maritime affairs gave it as their opinion, that, from the course of the river which

* “We found in the town a dagger and some coats of mail; whereupon the *Indians* told us that many years before, the Christians had landed in a port, two days' journey from thence, (this was certainly *Ayllan*, who undertook the conquest of *Florida*.) that the Governor died upon his landing, which had occasioned great factions, divisions, and slaughter among the chief gentlemen who had followed him, every one aspiring to the supreme command: so that at length they left the port, and returned to *Spain*, without discovering the country.”—*Portuguese Narrative*, c. 14. London, 1686.

passed from Cofachiqui, it must be the same which on the sea-coast was called St. Helena.*

Elated with the riches they had found, the Spaniards besought the Governor to fix a colony there, urging that as the country was fertile, they might establish a lucrative pearl fishery, and carry on a trade with Spain from the seaport at the mouth of the river.

De Soto persisted, however, in his original plan of making an exploring tour, and of meeting Maldonado at the port of Achusi, according to appointment. He observed that the surrounding country would not afford provisions for a month,—that it would always be open for them to return to in case they should find none richer, and that, in the mean time, the Indians would sow their land with maize in greater plenty.

After a long stay, therefore, in this fertile and opulent province, De Soto prepared for his departure. During the time he remained here several broils took place between his people and the natives. These had originated in the ill conduct of some of the low and base-minded of the soldiery;—probably in their rapacious eagerness for gain. They had produced a general ill-will among the natives toward themselves and their countrymen generally, as well as a change in the feelings of the young Princess; who, instead of evincing her usual kindness, grew cold in her conduct, and appeared to eye the Spaniards with great distrust. De Soto remarked this change, and received private intelligence, that she was about to fly and leave him without guides for his march, or porters to convey the baggage of his army. As his route would lie through various tracts of country under the dominion of this female Cacique, any hostility on her part, or that of her subjects could not but prove extremely embarrassing. He, therefore, determined to adopt a precaution, which he had more than once practised in the course of his expedition, and which the Spaniards had found so efficacious in their Mexican and Peruvian conquests; this was to secure the sovereign's person by way of ensuring the peaceful conduct of her people.

* "El rio caudaloso, que pasava por Cofachiqui, decian los hombres Marineros, que entre estos Espanoles iban, que era el que en la costa, llamavan de Santa Elena, no porque lo supiesen de cierto, sino que, segun su viage, les parecia que era el. Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 18."

Accordingly, he placed a guard round the Princess, and signified to her, that she was to accompany him in his march ; but while he thus detained her as a hostage, he took care that she should be attended with the respect and ceremony due to her rank. The policy of this measure was apparent in the cessation of all brawls between Spaniards and Indians ; and in the good treatment which De Soto's army experienced during its subsequent march through the territories of his royal captive.

NOTE.—In detailing the march of the Spaniards, in search of Cofachiqui, we have, as usual, availed ourselves both of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives, reconciling them as far as possible, and exercising our own judgment where they vary from each other. Nothing is more perplexing than to define the route in conformity with modern landmarks. The discovery of the coats of mail and dagger, the reliques of the unfortunate Ayllon and his comrades, throws an unexpected light upon one part of the route, and shows that the province of Cofachiqui was at no very great distance from the sea-coast of Georgia, or South Carolina ; though it could not have been within two days' journey, as the Portuguese narrator intimates. The armour and weapons of Ayllon and his followers had probably been divided among the savages, and carried as trophies into the interior. The river which passed by Cofachiqui, and which the Spaniards supposed to be the St. Helena, has been variously conjectured to be the Ocone, the Ogeeghee and the Savannah. As to the vast quantities of pearls found in the temples, and said to abound in the villages, they surpass belief ; yet, both the Spanish and Portuguese writers are very positive and circumstantial in their account of them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1540. ON the third of May, 1540, De Soto again set forward on his adventurous journey, taking with him the beautiful Princess of Cofachiqui and her train.* His route now lay towards the north or north-west, in the direction of the province of Cosa, which was said to be at the distance of twelve days' journey. As the country through which the troops were to march, was represented as being destitute of provisions, Gonzalo Silvestre and two other cavaliers were detached with a large body of horse and foot to a village,

* The captivity of this Princess is given on the authority of the Portuguese historian. The Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega, makes no mention of it. The former intimates that she was treated with neglect ; but this is contrary to the general conduct of De Soto towards the Caciques whom he detained as hostages.

twelve leagues off, where there was a large deposit of grain, with which they had orders to load themselves, and rejoin the main army.

Silvestre and his companions, having successfully executed these orders, took as much maize as they could carry, and hastened back to the army, but were five days before they could succeed in coming upon its traces. When they did so, they found that the troops, having continued their march, were a considerable distance in advance. Here some difficulties occurred. The foot soldiers were eager to press forward, but the troopers demurred. Three of their horses were lame, and it would not do to leave any of these valuable animals behind, for they were considered the sinews of the army, not merely on account of their real services, but from the extreme dread with which they inspired the savages.

A mutinous spirit showed itself for a while among the infantry, who dreading a separation from the main force, set forward in a tumultuous manner. Their captains, however, threw themselves before them, and with difficulty compelled them to continue with the cavalry, who were obliged to proceed at a slow pace, proportioned to the condition of the maimed horses.

On the following day, as they were marching under the heat of a noon-tide sun, there suddenly arose a violent hurricane, accompanied with tremendous thunder, lightning, and hail of such size as to wound whatever it struck. The Spaniards sheltered themselves under their bucklers, or took refuge beneath some large trees which happened to be at hand. Fortunately, the hurricane was as brief as it was violent; yet the soldiers were so severely bruised by the hail-stones, that they remained encamped for the remainder of that and the ensuing day.

Resuming their march on the morning of the third day, they passed through various deserted hamlets, and at length crossed the frontiers of a province called Xuala, where, to their great joy, they found the Adelantado and his troops encamped in a beautiful valley, awaiting their arrival.

In the course of his march, De Soto had traversed the province of Achalaque,* the most wretched country, says

* Spelt Chalaque in the Portuguese narration. Supposed to be the barren country of the Cherokees.

the Portuguese narrator, in all Florida. The inhabitants were a feeble, peaceful race, nearly naked. They lived principally on herbs, roots, and wild fowl, which they killed with their arrows. Their Cacique brought the Governor two deer-skins, which he seemed to think a considerable present. Wild hens abounded in such quantities, that in one village the inhabitants brought seven hundred into the Spanish camp.* Most of the inhabitants of this miserable province fled to the woods on the Spaniards' approach, leaving few inhabitants in their villages, except the old, blind, and infirm.

The army remained several days in Xuala, to recruit the horses.† Their principal village, bearing the same name as the province, was situated on the skirts of a mountain, with a small but rapid river flowing by it. Here the Spaniards found maize in abundance, as well as different kinds of fruits and vegetables common to the country.

This place was under the domination of the youthful Princess of Cofachiqui; and here, as everywhere else along the route, the Spaniards found the advantage of having her with them. She was always treated with great reverence by the inhabitants of the villages, who, at her command, furnished the army with provisions, and with porters to carry the baggage. And here it is proper to observe that De Soto endeavoured, on all occasions, as far as his means permitted, to requite the kindness of the natives; making presents to such of the chieftains as treated him amicably, and leaving with each a couple of swine, male and female, from which to raise a future stock.

On leaving Xuala, a number of the inhabitants accompanied the Spaniards, laden with provisions. The first day's march was through a country covered with fields of maize of luxuriant growth. De Soto had directed his march to the westward, in search of a province called Quaxale, where the territories of the Princess, or rather of her tributary Caciques, terminated. While they were on the march, the female Cacique alighted from the litter on which she was borne, and eluding the Indian slaves who had charge of her,

* Evidently the species of grouse, commonly called the Prairie hen.

† Xuala, or Choula, is supposed to have been on the site of the present town of Qualatehe, at the source of the Catahootche river. Vide M'Culloch's Researches, Appendix III.

fled into the neighbouring forest. Her escape is related by the Portuguese historian, but no particular reason is given for it; probably, she dreaded being carried away captive beyond the bounds of her dominions. What seems to have caused much regret to the Spaniards, if we may believe the authority already so often referred to, was, that she took with her a small box made of reeds, called by the Indians *Petarca*, filled with beautiful unpierced pearls of great value.* Two negro slaves and a Barbary Moor accompanied her in her flight, and as it was afterwards understood, were concealed by the natives, who rejoiced at having something among them that had belonged to the white men.

During the next five days the Spaniards traversed a chain of mountains covered with oak and mulberry trees, with intervening valleys, rich in pasturage, and irrigated by clear and rapid streams. These mountains were twenty leagues across, and quite uninhabited.† In the course of their weary march throughout this desolate tract, a foot soldier, calling to a horseman, who was his friend, drew forth from his wallet a linen bag, in which were six pounds of pearls, probably filched from one of the Indian sepulchres. These he offered as a gift to his comrade, being heartily tired of carrying them on his back, though he had a pair of broad shoulders, capable of bearing the burthen of a mule. The horseman refused to accept so thoughtless an offer. "Keep them yourself," said he; "you have most need of them. The Governor intends shortly to send messengers to Havana, where you can forward these presents, and have them sold, and obtain three or four horses with the proceeds, so that then you will have no further need to travel on foot."

Juan Terron was piqued at having his offer refused.

* Portuguese Narration, c. 15.

† Probably the termination of the Apalachian or Allegany range, running through the northern part of Georgia. Martin, in his History of Louisiana, makes the Spaniards traverse the state of Tennessee, and even penetrate the state of Kentucky, as far north as the thirty-seventh degree of north latitude. This is evidently erroneous, as both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers state, that from the province of Xuala, De Soto struck off in a westerly direction, and we find him, in a few days, on the banks of the river Canasauga.

Belknap, V. 1. p. 189, suggests, that the Spaniards crossed the mountains within the thirty-fifth degree of latitude.

“ Well,” said he, “ if you will not have them, I swear I will not carry them, and they shall remain here.” So saying he untied the bag, and whirling it round, as if he were sowing seed, scattered the pearls in all directions among the thickets and herbage. Then putting up the bag in his wallet, as if it was more valuable than the pearls, he marched on, leaving his comrade and other bystanders astonished at his folly.

The soldiers made a hasty search for the scattered pearls, and recovered thirty of them. When they beheld their great size and beauty, none of them being bored and discoloured, they lamented that so many had been lost; for the whole would have sold in Spain for more than six thousand ducats. This egregious folly gave rise to a common proverb in the army, that “ there are no pearls for Juan Terron.” The poor fellow himself became an object of constant jests and ridicule, until at last, made sensible of his absurd conduct, he implored his comrades never to banter him further upon the subject.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1540. HAVING made their way over this mountainous waste, the army reached the province of Guaxule. When within half a league of the principal town, they saw the Cacique approaching, followed by a train of five hundred warriors, arrayed in rich mantles of various skins, and adorned with gaily coloured feathers. In this state he advanced to the Governor, received him with great courtesy and escorted him to his village, which consisted of three hundred houses. It stood in a pleasant spot, bordered by small streams that took their rise in the adjacent mountains. The Governor was quartered in the Cacique's house, erected on a mound, and surrounded by a terrace, wide enough for six men to go abreast.

Here De Soto halted four days, to obtain information respecting the neighbouring country, during which time the Cacique made him a present of three hundred dogs, the flesh of which the Spaniards used as food; though they were

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 20.

not eaten by the natives.* The many streams that traverse this province mingled their waters, forming a grand and majestic river, along the banks of which the army resumed their journey.†

On the second day of their march they entered the small town of Canasauga,‡ where they were met by twenty Indians, bearing baskets of mulberries,—a fruit which abounded in this region, as did likewise the hazel-nut and plum. Continuing forward for five days, through a desert country, on the 25th of June they came in sight of Ichiaha,§ thirty leagues from Guaxale.

This village stood on one end of an island, more than five leagues in length. The Cacique came out to receive the Governor, and gave him a friendly welcome; his warriors treating the Spanish soldiers in the same kind and frank manner. They crossed the river in canoes, and on rafts prepared for the purpose, and were quartered by the Indians in their houses. Most of the soldiers, however, encamped under trees around the village, their worn-out horses enjoying rich and abundant pasturage in the neighbouring meadows. The Spaniards found in this village a quantity of bears' grease preserved in pots, likewise oil made from the walnut, and a pot of honey. The latter they had not before seen, nor did they ever again meet with it during their wanderings.

While he remained in the town of Ichiaha, the Governor, as usual, was diligent in his inquiries after the precious metals. In reply, the Cacique informed him, that about thirty miles to the northward there was a province called Chisca, where there were mines of copper, and also of another metal of the same colour, but finer and brighter. He stated, that it was not used by the natives as much as copper, because it was softer, but that they sometimes melted these metals together. This intelligence roused the attention of De Soto. It agreed with what he had been told at Cofa-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 15.

† Mr. M'Culloch suggests that this river was the Etowee, which falls into the Coosa.

‡ This Indian village has probably given the name to the Connesargo, one of the small tributaries of the river Coosa.—Vide M'Culloch's Researches, p. 525.

§ This is spelt Chiaha in the Portuguese Chronicle.

chiqui, where he had met with small axes of copper, mingled with gold. He consequently determined to set off in search of the mines, but the Cacique informed him, that he would have to traverse an uninhabited wilderness, and mountains impassable for horses, and therefore advised him to send persons to visit the province of Chisca, offering to furnish them with guides.

De Soto adopted his advice. Juan de Villalobos and Francisco de Silvera, two fearless soldiers, forthwith offered their services, and accordingly set off on foot, leaving their horses behind, as these would only delay and embarrass them in the rough country through which they would have to travel.

After an absence of ten days, they returned to the camp and made their report. Part of their route was through excellent land for grain and pasturage, where they had been well received, and entertained by the natives. They had found among them a buffalo's hide, an inch thick, with hair as soft as the wool of a sheep: this hide they mistook as usual for the hide of an ox. In the course of their journey they had crossed mountains, so rugged and precipitous that it was impossible for an army to traverse them. As to the yellow metal of which they had heard, it proved to be nothing but a fine kind of copper or brass, such as they had already met with; nevertheless, from the appearance of the soil they thought it probable that both gold and silver might exist in the neighbourhood.*

During the time De Soto remained at the village awaiting the return of the two soldiers from the mines, several circumstances had occurred. The Cacique came one day to the Governor, bringing a present of a string of pearls, five feet in length. These pearls were as large as filberts, and had they not been bored by means of fire, which had discoloured them, would have been of immense value. De Soto thankfully received them, and in return presented the Indian chief with pieces of velvet, and cloth of various colours and

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 20. Portuguese Relation, c. 16. The mountains here mentioned are supposed to be the Apalachian chain, running through the northern parts of Alabama. The existence of gold in various parts of the Southern States, ascertained of late years, proves that many of these Indian reports were founded in truth.

other Spanish trifles, held in much esteem by the natives. In reply to the demand of De Soto, the Cacique stated that the pearls had been obtained in the neighbourhood. He further told him that in the sepulchre of his ancestors was amassed a prodigious quantity, of which the Spaniards were welcome to carry away as many as they pleased. The Adelantado thanked him for his good will, but replied, that much as he wished for pearls, he never would insult the sanctuaries of the dead to obtain them; adding, that he only accepted the string of pearls as a present from the chieftain's hands.

De Soto having expressed a curiosity to see the manner of extracting pearls from the shells, the Cacique instantly despatched forty canoes to fish for oysters during the night. At an early hour next morning, a quantity of wood was gathered and piled up on the river bank, and being set on fire, was speedily reduced to glowing embers. As soon as the canoes arrived, the embers were spread out and the oysters laid upon them. They quickly opened with the heat, and from some of the first, thus opened, the Indians obtained ten or twelve pearls as large as peas, which they brought to the Governor and Cacique, who were standing together looking on. These were of a fine quality, but somewhat discoloured by the fire and smoke. The Indians were apt further also to injure the pearls thus obtained, by boring them with a heated copper instrument.

De Soto having gratified his curiosity, returned to his quarters to partake of the morning meal. While eating, a soldier entered with a large pearl in his hand. He had stewed some oysters, and in eating them felt the pearl between his teeth. Not having been injured by fire or smoke, it retained its beautiful whiteness, and was so large and perfect in its form, that several Spaniards who pretended to be skilled in these matters, declared it would be worth four hundred ducats in Spain. The soldier would have given it to the Governor to present to his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, but De Soto declined the generous offer, advising him to preserve it until he should arrive at Havana, where he might purchase horses and other necessities with it; moreover, as a reward for his liberality, De Soto insisted upon paying the fifth of the value due to the crown.

About this time, one Luis Bravo de Xeres, a cavalier, while strolling, with his lance near the borders of a river, saw a small animal at a short distance, and cast his weapon at it. The lance missed its mark, but, slipping along the grass, shot over the river bank. Luis Bravo ran to recover it, but to his horror found he had killed a Spaniard, who had been fishing with a reed on the margin of the stream. The steel point of the lance having entered one temple and passed out at the other, the poor Spaniard had dropped dead on the spot. His name was Juan Mateos; he was the only one in the expedition that had gray hairs, from which circumstance he was universally called father, and respected as such. His unfortunate death was lamented by the whole army.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1540. ON the ensuing day, after the return of the soldiers from the mines of Chisca, the Governor departed from the village of Ichiaha, leaving the natives well contented with the presents they had received in return for their hospitality.

This day he marched the whole length of the island, and at sunset, on the 2nd of July, came in sight of the village of Acoste, built on the extremity.* The army encamped about a cross-bow shot from the town, while De Soto proceeded, accompanied by a guard of eight troopers, to visit the Cacique. This chieftain, a fierce warrior, placed himself in battle array, at the head of fifteen hundred followers, decorated with war plumes and equipped with arms. He received the Governor with great courtesy, and appeared very kindly disposed; but while they were conversing together, some of the foot soldiers had arrived, and began pillaging the houses. The Indians, exasperated at this outrage, seized some war-clubs that were at hand, and assailed the aggressors. De Soto saw at a glance the peril of his situation, surrounded by enemies. With his wonted presence of mind he seized a cudgel and began beating his own men, at the same time that

* The Portuguese narrator says, this town was seven days' journey from Ichiaha. The Inca is probably the most correct, as he states the length of the island to be about five leagues, which would not be more than a day's march.

he secretly despatched a trooper to order the horse to arm and come to his rescue. This attack upon his own followers, as if indignant at their conduct, re-assured the savages. De Soto then prevailed upon the Cacique to visit the encampment with his chief warriors, and no sooner had the Indians left the village with this intent than the troopers surrounded them and carried them off prisoners.* Notwithstanding their captivity, they maintained an arrogant air, answering every question insolently, shaking their fists, and insulting the Spaniards with taunts and menaces, until the latter lost all patience, and were only restrained from coming to blows by the peremptory commands of the Adelantado. This night they posted sentries, and kept as vigilant a watch as though they had been in an enemy's country.

On the following day, the natives were more peaceable and friendly; the Cacique furnishing the Governor with maize for his journey, and offering him every other necessary that his dominions afforded. A message received from Ichiala was the cause of this civility. De Soto thanked him for his offer, liberated him and his warriors, and in return for the maize, made him presents that greatly pleased him. The same morning they quitted the village, and crossed the river on rafts and in canoes, rejoicing at having extricated themselves from this village, without bloodshed.

They now travelled more than a hundred leagues through a fertile and populous province, called Cosa, at the rate of four leagues a day; sometimes lodging in the hamlets, sometimes encamping in the fields. Through the whole distance they were treated with great kindness, by the inhabitants, who quartered them in their houses, supplied their wants, and escorted them from one village to another. In this way they proceeded for twenty-four days, until they came in sight of the village of Cosa, from which the province took its name. This was the residence of the Cacique, who had sent them repeated and friendly messages in the course of their journey. He came to meet them in a kind of litter, borne by four of his chief warriors. From his shoulders hung a mantle of martin skins, fashioned much after the manner of the mantles worn by Spanish females, and on his head was a diadem of feathers. Several Indians walked beside the litter, singing and playing upon musical instruments.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

He was a young man about twenty-six years of age, of a fine person and noble countenance, and attended by a train of a thousand warriors, tall and well formed, as were generally the people of this country. His followers were in their finest array, adorned with lofty plumes of different colours, and wearing mantles composed of various fine skins, many of them martins, scented with musk. Being marshalled in squadrons, with their gay plumes waving in the breeze, they made a brilliant spectacle.

The village was situated on the banks of a river,* amidst green and beautiful meadows, irrigated by numerous small streams. The country round was populous and fruitful; the houses were well stored with maize and a small kind of bean; and fields of Indian corn extended from village to village. There were plums of various kinds; some like those of Spain, others peculiar to the country. Vines clambered to the very tops of the trees which overhung the river. There were others in the fields, with low stocks, which produced large sweet grapes.†

The village contained five hundred dwellings, and as they were very spacious, the captains and soldiers were all well accommodated. De Soto was quartered in the residence of the Cacique.

De Soto often took the precaution, in populous villages, where there was any danger to be apprehended from the inhabitants, to surround the Cacique with guards, which kept him in a kind of honourable durance, and prevented his escape. In this way he served as a hostage to ensure the peaceful conduct of his subjects. It was also a part of the Governor's policy, as has been already shown, to carry the Cacique along with him, as he marched through his dominions; by which means he secured a supply of guides from the villages, as well as of Indians to attend upon the army and transport the baggage. During their march, the Cacique was always treated with great respect and ceremony, having

* Supposed to be the river Coosa, which takes its rise in the Apalachian mountains and empties itself into the Alabama. From the site and description of the village, Mr. M'Culloch presumes it to be the same called in the maps "Old Coosa" situated on the river of the same name in north latitude, about 33° 30'.—See M'Culloch's *Researches*, p. 524.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 17. This is supposed to have been the same native grape, called the Isabella, which has since been cultivated.—Vide Bancroft, *Hist. U. S. c. 2. p. 54.*

fine raiment provided for him ; and if so inclined, a horse was furnished him. On arriving at the territories of another Cacique the preceding one and his subjects were dismissed at the frontier.

The Indians of Cosa were indignant at the restraint put upon their Chief ; and manifested a hostile disposition towards the Spaniards . Several of them were taken prisoners and put in chains, but after a short time, most of them, at their Cacique's intercession, were set at liberty.* After this a good understanding prevailed, and the Spaniards were hospitably entertained during twelve days that they remained in the village.

The Cacique would fain have persuaded the Governor to make Cosa his residence and seat of government, or at least to winter there ; but De Soto was anxious to arrive at the bay of Achusi, where he had appointed Captain Diego Maldonado to meet him in the autumn. Since quitting the province of Xula, therefore, he had merely taken a circuitous course through the country, and was now striking off in a southerly direction for the sea-coast.

During their stay in this village, a soldier of dissolute character having deserted, concealed himself among the natives, and was nowhere to be found. A negro, also, being too infirm to travel, was left in charge of the Cacique.

On the 20th of August the Governor departed from Cosa, taking with him, as usual, the Cacique and many of his warriors, together with a train of his subjects, bearing provisions. At one of the villages named Ullabali, a number of Indian warriors assembled, painted and plumed, with bows and arrows in their hands. They welcomed the Spaniards in the name of their Chief, and escorted the Governor into the town, where he found all their men in arms, and judged by their hostile aspect, that they meditated an assault. In fact, he was afterwards informed that they had intended to attempt the rescue of the Cacique Cosa, had he approved of their design ; but he gave them no encouragement.† The army continued forward to the frontier town of Talise.‡

This was an important Indian post, fortified with ramparts

* Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

† Ibid. c. 17.

‡ Supposed to be the same with Tallassee, lying at the elbow of Talapoosa river.—M'Culloch, p. 525. Spelt in the Portuguese Narrative, Tallise.

of earth and strong palisades, and situated on the bank of a rapid river which nearly surrounded it. Though subject to the Cacique of Cosa, it was represented as disaffected to his rule, and inclined to revolt in favour of a powerful chieftain of the neighbourhood, named Tuscaluza. It was supposed, therefore, that the Cacique of Cosa had gladly accompanied the Spaniards to this frontier town, in hopes of overawing his refractory subjects and even his formidable neighbour, by appearing in company with such redoubtable allies.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1540. TUSCALUZA, the Cacique, on whose frontiers the Spaniards had now arrived, appears to have been one of the most potent, proud, and warlike among the native chieftains of the south. His territories must have comprised a great part of what are now the states of the Alabama and Mississippi, and he is one of the few native heroes who have left local memorials behind them. The river Tuscaloosa,* which waters his native valley, bears his name, which has likewise been given to the capital of the state.

This chieftain had heard, with solicitude, of the Spaniards approach to his territories, and probably feared some hostility on their part, in combination with his rival, the Cacique of Cosa. He sent, therefore, his son, a youth eighteen years old, attended by a train of warriors, on an embassy to De Soto, offering him his friendship and services, and inviting him to his residence, which was about thirteen leagues from Talise. The young ambassador was of a noble stature, taller than any Spaniard or Indian in the army, and acquitted himself of his mission with great grace and courtesy. The Governor, struck with his appearance and manners, received him with great distinction; dismissing him with presents for himself and his father, and with assurances that he accepted the latter's friendship and would shortly visit him. The noble youth accordingly crossed the river with his army, in canoes and on rafts, it being too deep at Talise to be forded, and then set forward on his march, taking with him a number of the subjects of the Cacique of Cosa. The latter, being

* Likewise called the Black Warrior River.

on the frontiers of his province, took a friendly leave of the Spaniards.

On the following night they encamped in a wood, about two leagues from the village in which the Cacique of Tuscaluza was quartered, which, however, was not the capital of his province. De Soto set off at an early hour of the morning for this village, preceded by his Camp-Master-General and several of the cavaliers.

The Cacique having already received notice from his scouts, that the Spaniards were at hand, had made some preparations to receive them in state. They consequently found him posted on the crest of a hill, which commanded a wide view over a rich and beautiful valley. He was seated on a kind of stool, made of wood, somewhat concave, but without back or arms. Such was the simple throne used by Caciques of the country. Around him stood a hundred of his principal men, dressed in rich mantles and decorated with plumes. Beside him was his standard-bearer, who bore on the end of a lance a dressed deer-skin, stretched out to the size of a buckler, of a yellow colour, and crossed by three blue stripes. It was the great banner of this warrior chieftain, and the only military standard that the Spaniards met with throughout the whole of their expedition.

Tuscaluza, or Tuscaloosa, (to adopt the modern mode of writing the name,) appeared to be about forty years of age; and his person corresponded with the formidable reputation which he bore throughout the country. Like his son he was of gigantic proportions, being a foot and a half taller than any of his attendants. His countenance was handsome, though stern, expressive of his lofty and indomitable spirit. He was broad across the shoulders, small at the waist, and so admirably formed, that the Spaniards declared him altogether the finest looking man they had ever yet beheld.

The chieftain took not the least notice of the cavaliers and officers who preceded De Soto. These sought in vain to excite his attention, by making their horses curvet and caracole as they passed, and sometimes spurred them up to his very feet. He still maintained the most imperturbable gravity, now and then casting his eyes upon them in a haughty and disdainful manner, but without condescending to utter a word.

When De Soto, however, approached, the Cacique arose

and advanced fifteen or twenty paces to receive him. The Governor alighted, and having embraced him, they remained conversing, while the troops proceeded to take up the quarters allotted them, in and about the village. After this, the Cacique and the Governor proceeded, hand in hand, to the quarters prepared for the latter, which was in a house near that of Tuscaloosa. Here the Indian chief retired with his followers; but De Soto, who knew his warlike character, took care to order that a vigilant watch should be kept upon his movements.*

About this time a strange malady, which was attributed to the want of salt, broke out among the Spaniards. With some, the consequences were fatal. After a little while they were seized with a low fever, the surface of the body became discoloured and of a greenish hue, from the breast downward. At the end of three or four days, their bodies emitted a fetid odour, and they perished of a general mortification of the intestines. A few cases spread horror through the camp; for no one knew how to treat the disorder. In this dilemma some adopted a remedy or rather a preventive, recommended by the Indians; it was a lye made from the ashes of a certain herb, and used with their food, instead of salt. Those who made use of this condiment escaped the fatal mortification of the bowels; others, who rejected it as nauseous, or as the quackery of ignorant savages, fell victims to their prejudices. Some adopted it, but too late, for when the fever and its accompanying mortification had seized a patient, the lye was no longer effectual. So much did the Spaniards suffer for want of salt during their long marchings in the interior, that one of their historians attributes to this cause alone the death of more than sixty within a year.†

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1540. AFTER a halt of two days, the Governor continued his march accompanied by Tuscaloosa, whom, for his own security, he kept with him. De Soto, as usual, ordered that a horse should be provided for the Cacique; but for some

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 24. Portuguese Relation, c. 17.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 3.

time they sought in vain for one of sufficient size and strength to bear so gigantic a rider. At length they found a stout hackney, belonging to the Governor, which, from its powerful frame, was used as a pack-horse; when, however, the Cacique bestrode it, his feet nearly touched the ground. The Governor had given Tuscaloosa a dress of scarlet cloth, and a flowing mantle of the same, which, with his towering plumes, added to the grandeur of his appearance, and made him conspicuous among the steel-clad warriors around him.

After a march of thirty-six leagues, they arrived at the principal village, called Tuscaloosa,* from which the province and the Cacique derived their name. Like Talise, it was situated upon a peninsula formed by the windings of the same river, which had here become wider and deeper.†

During the following day the Spaniards were busily employed in passing the stream on light rafts made of reeds and dry wood, the inhabitants not having any cañoes. As the river was gentle, the troops crossed it without difficulty, but not having completed their transit until near sunset, they encamped for the night in a beautiful valley about a league beyond.

The next morning two soldiers were missing. One of them, named Juan de Villalobos, was much given to wander by himself to explore the country, and it was supposed that they had strayed together, and either lost themselves in the woods or been cut off by the natives. De Soto enquired after them of the Indians who accompanied Tuscaloosa. They were abrupt and insolent in their replies. "Why do you ask us about your people?" they asked; "Are we responsible for them? Did you place them under our charge?"

The suspicions of De Soto were the more excited by these replies. He had high words with their Cacique on the subject, and threatened to detain him until the Spaniards should be produced. Seeing this menace was of no avail,

* This town is called Piache by the Portuguese narrator.

† It is supposed that this was really the Alabama river, formed by the confluence of the Coosa and Talapooso (the latter being the stream which flowed by Talise.) There is a ford on the Alabama, about sixty leagues above its confluence with the Tombeche, which the Choctaws called Tas-kaloussas. Here the army may have crossed.—Vide M'Culloch, p. 525; Bossus' Travels in Louisiana, p. 282.

the Governor concluded that the soldiers had been massacred; but dissembled his indignation for the present, lest he should create difficulties and delay his progress. He continued his march, therefore, in company with Tuscaloosa, apparently on amicable terms, though they were secretly distrustful of each other, and the Cacique felt that he was a kind of prisoner. In the course of their march, Tuscaloosa despatched one of his people to a town called Mauvila,* under pretext of ordering a supply of provisions and Indian attendants for the army. On the third day, as they drew near to Mauvila, their route lay through a very populous country. At a very early hour the next morning, De Soto summoned two confidential men, named Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, and Diego Vasquez, sent them in advance, with orders to enter the village, observe what was going on, and there await his arrival.

Assembling a hundred horse and a hundred foot as a vanguard, he then set off with these for the village, ordering Louis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master General, to follow speedily with the remainder of the forces. The Cacique Tuscaloosa, accompanied the Governor; being evidently retained as a kind of hostage.

About eight o'clock in the morning of October the 18th, they arrived before Mauvila.† This was the Cacique's stronghold, where he and his principal warriors resided; and being on the frontiers of his territories, it was strongly fortified. It stood in a fine plain, surrounded by a high

* Maville, in the Portuguese account.

† This town is supposed to have stood on the north side of the Alabama, about the junction of that river with the Tombecbe, within a hundred miles from Pensacola. There is little doubt that it gave the name to the present river and bay of Mobile. The letters *v* and *b* are often used indifferently in Spanish, in place of each other, and articulated in nearly the same manner. Charlevoix, in his *Journal Historique*, Let. 33, p. 452, says: "Garcilaso de la Vega, dans son *Histoire de la Floride*, parle d'une Bourgade appelée *Mauvila*, laquelle a sans doute donnée son nom à la Rivière, et à la nation, qui était établie sur ses bords. Ces Mauviliens étaient alors très-puissans; à peine en reste-t-il aujourd'hui quelques vestiges." In the account of these marchings, and of the affairs at Mauvila, I have collated the narratives of the Inca and the Portuguese author, and have availed myself of both accounts, where they were not totally irreconcilable. The Inca, as usual, is much the most minute, graphic, and characteristic, and supports his main authority in various places, by extracts from the journals of the two soldiers.

wall formed of huge trunks of trees driven into the ground, side by side, and wedged together. These were crossed within and without by others smaller and longer, bound to them by bands made of split reeds and wild vines. The whole was thickly plastered over with a kind of mortar, made of clay and straw trampled together, which filled up every chink and crevice of the wood-work, appearing as if smoothed with a trowel. Throughout its whole circuit, the wall was pierced with loopholes, from whence arrows might be discharged at an enemy, and at every fifty paces it was surmounted by a tower, capable of holding seven or eight fighting men. Numbers of the trees which had been driven into the ground had taken root, and flourished, springing up out of the rampart, and spreading their branches above it, so as to form a circle of foliage round the village. There were but two gates to the place, one to the east the other to the west. In the centre was a large square, around which the principal dwellings were erected. The whole number of houses in the place did not exceed eighty, but they were of large size, capable of lodging from five to fifteen hundred persons each. They were built after the Indian fashion, not divided into apartments, but consisting simply of one great hall, like a church; and as they belonged either to the Cacique or to his principal subjects, they were constructed with more than usual skill.*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1540. WHEN the Governor and his van-guard appeared before the town, a splendid train of warriors came forth to receive them, painted, decorated, and clad in robes of skins and flaunting feathers of every brilliant colour. This cavalcade advanced singing and dancing, and playing on rude instruments of music. To these succeeded a band of young damsels, beautiful in form and feature, as the natives of this part of the country generally were.

In this way the Governor entered the village, side by side with the Cacique in his flaming mantle of scarlet, followed by a train of horsemen in glittering armour, and preceded

* This description of Mauvila is entirely from the Inca.

by groups of Indian dancing. Having reached the square, they alighted, the Governor ordering that the horses should be taken outside the village and tethered until quarters were provided for them. The Cacique then, addressing Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, pointed out one of the largest houses which had been prepared for De Soto and his principal officers, and an adjacent one for his servants and attendants. The rest of the troops were lodged in cabins of bark and branches, constructed for their reception about a bow-shot without the walls. The Governor, although not well pleased with an arrangement which would separate him from his troops, replied, that it should be attended to when the Camp-Master arrived. The Cacique then signified a wish to be left to himself, but was given to understand that he must continue with De Soto. The haughty spirit of Tucaloosa warmed at being thus kept in thralldom. He told De Soto that he might depart in peace whenever he pleased ; but that he must not attempt to carry him out of his dominions. So saying, he entered a house where some of his subjects were assembled, armed with bows and arrows. The moment he was gone, Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, one of the cavaliers who had been sent forward to observe the movements of the Indians, approached the Governor, and reported that various circumstances had led him to suspect some dark and treacherous plot. He stated that, in the few houses within sight, more than ten thousand chosen warriors were assembled ; not one of them old, or of the servile class, but all fighting men, young, noble, and well armed : and that many of the houses were filled with weapons. Not a child was to be found in the place ; and though there were many females, they were all young girls. The inhabitants, too, had been diligently employed in strengthening the palisades round the town, and in clearing the fields, for a considerable distance round the village. The very roots and herbage had been pulled up by the hand as if to clear the ground for battle.

The Governor reflecting for a moment, directed word to be passed secretly from one to the other, among the troopers, to hold themselves ready for action. He also charged Xaramillo to communicate all that he had observed to the Master of the Camp, the moment he should arrive, in order that he might make his arrangements accordingly. Meanwhile he

determined to observe a friendly demeanour, and endeavour to conciliate the Cacique by courteous treatment.

Word was now brought to the Governor that his servants had prepared the morning's meal in one of the houses which looked upon the square; he immediately sent Juan Ortiz to invite Tuscaloosa to the repast, as they had been accustomed to eat together.

Juan Ortiz presented himself at the door of the large house into which the Cacique had entered, but several Indians met him at the threshold and refused him admittance. The message he brought was passed in to their Chief, and word returned that he would come to the Governor immediately.

Some time having elapsed without his appearing, Juan Ortiz delivered a second message, and received a similar reply. After another interval, he returned a third time, and called out, "Tell Tuscaloosa to come forth; the food is upon the table, and the Governor is waiting for him."

Upon this, an Indian who appeared to be the General, stepped from the threshold. He was in a furious heat, and his eyes flashed fire. "Who are these robbers? these vagabonds!" he cried, "who keep calling to my Chief, Tuscaloosa, Come forth! come forth! with as little reverence as if he were one of them? By the sun and moon! this insolence is no longer to be borne. Let us cut them to pieces on the spot, and put an end to their tyranny."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when a follower stepped up behind him, and placed in his hand a bow and arrows. The Indian general threw from his shoulders the folds of a superb mantle of martin skins, which was buttoned round his neck, and baring his arm, drew to the head an arrow, levelled at a knot of Spaniards in the square. Before he had time to wing the shaft, a blow from the sword of Baltazar de Gallegos laid open the whole of the side exposed by throwing back his mantle: his entrails gushed out, and he fell dead on the spot.*

His son, a youth of eighteen, of noble demeanour, sprang forward to avenge his death, and discharged six or seven arrows as fast as he could draw them; but seeing that they struck harmless upon the armour of Gallegos, he took his bow in both hands, and closing with the Spaniard, gave him

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

three or four blows on the head, with such rapidity and force, that the blood spouted from beneath his casque, and ran over his forehead. Gallegos, as soon as he could recover from the surprise, gave the savage two thrusts in the breast with his sword, that laid him dead at his feet.

The war-whoop now rang through the village. Multitudes of warriors, ready armed, poured from every house, and attacked the Spaniards who were scattered about the principal street. Though overwhelmed by numbers, the Spaniards kept a bold face to the enemy, fighting stoutly, and disputing the ground inch by inch, until they retreated out of the capital, leaving five of their number slain.

Numbers of the cavalry who had tethered their horses outside the walls, and returned into the street, seeing the furious onset of the natives, ran out of the gate to the places where their steeds were tied. Those who made most speed were enabled to mount. Some who lingered, had only time to cut the reins or halters of their horses and drive them off; while others, still more pressed, were obliged to abandon them to their fate; having the grief of seeing them shot by innumerable arrows, amidst the exulting yells of the savages.

The enemy being in great force, divided into two bands; one to encounter the retreating Spaniards, the other to kill their horses, and gather the baggage and effects of the army, which had by this time arrived, and lay heaped under the wall and about the fields. Every thing thus fell into the enemy's hands, except the baggage of Andres de Vasconcellos, which had not yet been brought up. The spoils were conveyed by the Indians into their capital with great triumph, and put into their houses. They knocked off the chains of the slaves who carried the baggage of the Spanish army, and gave them weapons to fight with.

Meanwhile the few cavaliers who had been able to mount their horses, together with some troopers, just arrived from the main body, united their forces and endeavoured to protect their comrades who were fighting on foot. The approach of the cavalry checked the impetuosity of the Indians and afforded time for the Spaniards to rally and form themselves into two bodies, one of horse the other of foot. They then charged the enemy with a fury, inspired by their recent

maltreatment, and drove them back into the village, whither they would have followed them, but were assailed with such showers of stones and arrows from the wall and loop-holes, that they were compelled to draw back.

The savages seeing them retreat, again rushed forth, some by the gate, others letting themselves down from the wall; and closing with their enemies, seized hold of the very lances of the horsemen, struggling with them until drawn more than two hundred paces from the wall.

In this way they fought backwards and forwards for three hours without intermission; the Spaniards always standing by each other and keeping their front to the enemy, in which alone consisted their safety, being so few in number. They found, however, that they suffered too severely when near the village, from the missiles launched from the wall, and that their best chance was in the open fields where they had room to manage their horses and wield their lances.

Throughout all these attacks and defences, Baltazar de Gallegos,—the same who had struck the first blow in the battle,—was ever in front, and in the hottest of the fight. His perilous deeds were anxiously watched from afar, by his brother, Fray Juan de Gallegos, a worthy Dominican friar. Mounted on horseback, in his monk's dress, with a broad clerical hat on his head, he hovered about the skirts of the battle, spurring after the squadron in its attacks, wheeling round and galloping off in its retreats. The worthy friar was not a fighting man; his only object was to call his brother out of the affray, and mount him on the horse which he bestrode, that he might fight with more effect and less danger.

The bold Baltazar, however, heeded not his brother's calls. Considering that his honour would not permit him to leave his post, he continued fighting on foot. At length, the peculiar dress of the priest, and his loud and repeated calls to his brother, attracted the notice of the enemy, who probably supposed him some chieftain encouraging his soldiers. Accordingly, in one of the retreats, as the friar's broad back was turned upon the foe, and he was galloping off at full speed, an Indian warrior sped a shaft with so true an aim, that, though at a great distance, it struck him between the shoulders. Fortunately, he was protected by the two hoods of his dress, which lay in thick folds upon

his back ; his broad hat also, secured by a cord under his chin, had fallen back in his flight, and hung like a shield upon his shoulders ; the arrow, therefore, met with so much resistance as to make but a slight wound. It, however, damped the fraternal zeal of the spiritual warrior, who from that time kept himself at a wary distance from the battle.

A harder fate befell Don Carlos Enriquez, a youthful cavalier, who had married a niece of the Adelantado, and was beloved by the whole army for his urbanity and his virtues. From the commencement of the battle he had fought valiantly, and was conspicuous in every assault. In the last charge his horse was wounded in the breast by an arrow, which remained buried in the flesh. As soon as the squadron had retreated, Don Carlos endeavoured to draw forth the shaft. Passing his lance from his right to his left hand, he leaned forward, and stooping over the neck of his horse, seized the dart, and endeavoured to pull it forth. In his exertion, he leaned so much on one side as to expose his neck, the only part of his person unprotected by armour. In an instant, an arrow, tipped with flint, came with the swiftness of lightning, buried itself in his throat, and the poor youth fell from his horse mortally wounded, though he did not expire until the following day.

The Spaniards suffered severely in these repeated conflicts ; but their loss was nothing in comparison with that of the Indians, who had no defensive armour, and on whom every blow was effective. Seeing what advantage the Spaniards derived from their horses in the open field, their enemies now shut themselves up within their village, closing the gates and manning the ramparts.

Upon this the Governor ordered the cavalry, being the best armed, to dismount, and taking bucklers for their defence, and battle-axes in their hands, to break open the gates, and strive to take the village by storm.

In an instant a band of two hundred resolute cavaliers dashed forward to the assault. The savages received them valiantly, and beat them back several times. The gate, however, was soon broken open and the Spaniards rushed in, pell-mell, amidst a shower of darts and stones. The opening being too narrow to admit them all readily, some attacked the wall with their axes ; quickly demolished the frail facing

of clay and straw, and laying bare the cross-beams and their fastenings, assisted each other to scramble up by them, and thus got into the village to the aid of their comrades.

The savages fought desperately, both in the streets and from the tops of houses. The Spaniards, galled by missiles from the latter, and fearful that their enemies would retake the houses already gained, set them on fire. Being composed of reeds and other combustible materials, they were soon wrapped in flames and smoke, which added to the horror of the scene.

While this conflict was raging in one part of the village, a kind of siege was going on in another. The moment they had closed their gates, the enemy turned their attention to the large house in the square, which had been assigned for the use of the Governor's retinue, and in which all his camp equipage was deposited. They had not assailed it before, supposing it to be in their power: they now, therefore, repaired to it merely to share the spoils, but, to their surprise, found it strongly defended. Within were three cross-bowmen, five halberdiers of the Governor's guard, who usually accompanied his camp equipage, and an Indian, armed with bow and arrows, who had been made prisoner by the Spaniards on their first landing, and had ever since proved faithful to them. Besides these fighting men, there were a priest, a friar, and two slaves belonging to the Governor. One and all defended the house stoutly: the laymen with their weapons, the priests with their devotions. The savages tried in vain to gain the portal. They then mounted on the roof, and made an opening in three or four places; but so well did the cross-bowmen and the Indian ply their weapons, that when an enemy showed himself at any of the openings, he was immediately transfixed by an arrow.

Thus did this little garrison maintain a desperate and almost hopeless defence, until De Soto and his followers having fought their way into the village, as has been mentioned, arrived at the door of the dwelling, and dispersed its assailants. The fighting portion of the garrison mingled with their comrades and continued the strife; the clerical portion took refuge in the fields, where they could carry on their spiritual warfare with equal vigour and more security.

The wild and mingled affray had now lasted four hours, but nothing could quell the fury of the Indians, who dis-

dained either to yield or ask quarter. Many of the Spaniards, exhausted by the fierce strife, fainting and choked with thirst, ran to a pool of water, crimsoned with the blood of the dead and dying, and having refreshed themselves, hastened back and rushed again into the battle.*

De Soto had hitherto fought on foot, but as usual, waxing hot with his exertions, he hastened out of the village, seized a horse, sprang into the saddle, and followed by Nuño Tobar, galloped back into the square, lance in hand, shouting the battle-cry of "Our Lady and Santiago!" Calling out to the Spaniards to make way for him, he dashed among the thickest of the enemy;—Tobar followed. They spurred their chargers, up and down, through the multitude in the square and principal street; trampling down some, lancing others right and left, and leaving a track of carnage wherever they passed.

In this wild *mêlée*, as the Governor rose in his stirrups to pierce an Indian, another, who was behind, aimed at the part exposed between the saddle and the cuirass, and buried an arrow in his thigh. In the confusion of the combat, De Soto had no time to extract the arrow, which remained rankling in the wound for several hours, during which time, though unable to sit in his saddle, he continued fighting on horseback; "a proof," says the Inca Garcilaso, "not merely of his valour, but of his good horsemanship."

Meanwhile the fire was raging through the village, and making horrible ravages among the enemy. Those who continued within doors were consumed by the flames or stifled by the smoke: those who fought from the roofs were either cut off by the fire, or obliged to throw themselves down. Many women and children perished in their dwellings.

At one time, a strong wind swept both flames and smoke along the street upon the Indians, who, while thus blinded and bewildered, were charged by their enemies and driven back; but the wind veering, favoured them in turn, and they soon regained all the ground they had lost.

Maddened at seeing their ranks thinned, and their warriors lying slaughtered in heaps, the savages called upon their women to seize the weapons of the slain and revenge their death. Many had already been fighting by the side of their husbands, but on this appeal every one rushed to the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 16.

conflict. Some armed themselves with the swords, lances, and partisans of the Spanish soldiery, who had been either killed or disarmed, and thus wounded them with their own weapons; others seized bows and arrows, which they plied with strength and skill almost equal with that of their husbands. In their fury, they threw themselves before the men, and even rushed upon the weapons of their enemies; for the courage of woman, when once roused, is fierce and desperate, and her spirit more reckless and vehement than that of man. The Spaniards, however, having consideration for their sex, and pity for their despair, abstained from slaying or wounding them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1540. WHILE the battle was thus raging at Mauvila, Luis de Moscoso, Master of the Camp was loitering by the way with his forces. Instead of speedily following the vanguard led by De Soto, he had sallied forth late from his encampment and permitted his men to scatter themselves about the fields, hunting and amusing themselves. So long a time having now elapsed since they experienced any hostility from the natives, they had lost all fear and precaution.

In this way they straggled negligently and tardily forward, unsuspecting of danger. At length, those in front heard the distant clangour of trumpet and drum, mingled with the yells and shouts of combatants, and beheld a column of smoke rising in the air. Suspecting the cause, they passed the alarm, from mouth to mouth, to those who were behind, and pressed forward with all speed to the scene of action. It was late in the afternoon before they reached it.

Among the foremost who arrived before the village was Diego de Soto, nephew to the Governor. Learning the fate of his cousin Don Carlos Enriquez, to whom he was tenderly attached, he vowed to revenge his death. Throwing himself from his horse, and seizing a buckler, he rushed into the village, sword in hand, and plunged into the thickest of the fight. Scarcely, however, had he entered, when an arrow pierced his eye and came out at the back of his head. He fell to the earth, without uttering a word, and died the following day in great agony. His death added to the afflic-

tion which the army felt for that of his brave cousin. The two young friends and relations, thus united in death, were generous spirits, worthy alike of each other's affection, and of such an uncle.

When the rear-guard arrived at the village, great numbers of the savages were fighting in the adjacent fields, where the ground had been cleared and prepared for action. The Spaniards assailed them vigorously, and had a long and obstinate combat; for many of the native warriors had clambered over the walls, and advanced into the field. At length the Indians were routed and fled. Being pursued by the horsemen, few escaped destruction.

Although it was now near the hour of sunset, the shouts and battle cries of the combatants still arose from the burning village. As yet, from want of space, no horseman had fought within the walls, except De Soto and Nuño Tobar; but now a great number of cavalry dashed in at the gate, dispersing themselves through the streets, routing and killing all the natives they encountered.

Ten or twelve cavaliers spurred up the main street, where the battle was hottest, and coming upon the rear of a body of Indians, male and female, who were fighting with the fury of demons, broke through them with such impetuosity, as not merely to overturn them, but also several of the Spaniards with whom they were contending. The carnage was horrible, for the savages refused to surrender or lay down their arms, but fought until all were slain.

Thus ended this sanguinary struggle, which had continued during nine hours. The village was a smoking ruin, covered with slain, and victory declared for the Spaniards, just as the sun went down. The last Indian warrior that wielded a weapon was one of those who fought in the village. He was so blinded by fury as to be unconscious of the fate of his comrades, until glancing his eye around, he beheld them all lying dead. Seeing further contest hopeless, he turned to fly, and reaching the wall, sprang lightly to the top, thinking to escape into the fields. Here, however, to his dismay, he beheld squadrons of horse and foot below him, and the field covered with his slaughtered countrymen. Escape was impossible; death or slavery awaited him. In his despair, he snatched the string from his bow, passed it round his neck, and fastening the other end to a branch of one of the trees

that grew out of the rampart, threw himself from the wall, and was strangled before the Spaniards had time to prevent the catastrophe.

Such was the deadly battle of Mauvila, one of the most sanguinary, considering the number of combatants, which had occurred among the discoveries of the new world. Forty-two Spaniards fell in the conflict; eighteen of them received their fatal wounds either in the eyes or mouth, for the Indians, finding their bodies cased in armour, aimed at their faces. There scarcely remained a Spaniard that was not more or less wounded, some in many places. Thirteen died before their wounds could be dressed, and twenty-two after, so that in all eighty-two perished. To this loss must be added that of forty-two horses killed by the enemy, and mourned by the Spaniards as if they had been so many fellow-soldiers.

Among the Indians, the havoc was almost incredible. Several thousand are said to have perished by fire and sword. The plain around the village was strewn with more than twenty-five hundred bodies. Within the walls the streets were blocked up with dead. A great number of persons were destroyed in their houses by fire. In one building alone a thousand perished, the flames having entered by the door, prevented their escape, and thus all were either burnt or suffocated: the greater part were females.

Without the walls, the body of Tuscaloosa the younger was found among the slain; but the fate of his father was never satisfactorily ascertained. According to the Portuguese narrative, several Indian prisoners affirmed, that on the grand assault of the village by De Soto and his horsemen, Tuscaloosa's warriors entreated him to withdraw from the conflict, and put himself into a place of security, in order that, should they perish in battle, as all had resolved to do, rather than turn their backs, he might survive to govern the country. The proud Cacique at first resisted their entreaties, but at length, overcome by their urgent supplications, he fled from the ill-fated town, accompanied by a small body of natives, carrying with him his scarlet mantle and the choicest things he could find among the Spanish baggage. According to the Inca, however, the account generally believed by the Spaniards was that he had perished in the flames; and this, in fact, is most consistent with his haughty and patriotic spirit, which would scarcely permit him to survive

so ruinous a defeat, and desert his capital and people, in the moment of their most imminent peril. He was evidently one of the bravest as well as proudest and most potent of the native princes. His name is still heard in that land which he loved so well, and defended so desperately; and it is a name which deserves to be held in veneration as that of a hero and a patriot.

NOTE.—The Inca and the Portuguese historian differ widely in their estimate of the killed and wounded in this action. Garcilaso de la Vega states the loss of the Spaniards to have been eighty-two, and of the Indians above eleven thousand. The Portuguese narrator states the Spanish loss to have been eighteen killed and one hundred and fifty wounded, and of the Indians twenty-five hundred slain; which is the number stated by the Inca to have been killed in the battle outside the town. The statement of the Inca is given more in detail, and apparently with a more intimate knowledge of facts; having the statements of three several eye-witnesses, from which to make up his account. That of the Portuguese is more vague and general. The estimate of the Inca may be somewhat exaggerated; yet it must be taken into consideration that the Mauvilians were a numerous and powerful tribe, and joined in this battle by the warriors of neighbouring provinces. Their number must consequently have been very great. It is stated by both writers that they all fought to the last gasp, so that the slaughter was no doubt prodigious. In so desperate and protracted a conflict, the number of eighty-two slain on the part of the Spaniards, appears much more probable than that of eighteen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1540. THE situation of the Spaniards after the battle of Mauvila was truly deplorable. Most of them were severely wounded,—all exhausted by fatigue and hunger. The village was reduced to ashes around them, and the whole of their baggage with its supplies of food and medicine had been destroyed.

The first care of De Soto, though badly wounded himself, was for his troops. Having ordered that the dead should be collected together for interment on the following day, he directed that immediate relief should be administered to the wounded. Here, however, was the difficulty. There was but one surgeon in the army, and he slow and unskilful. There were at least seventeen hundred grievous wounds, requiring a surgeon's care; several having fallen to the share of a single soldier. The mere flesh wounds were left for the patient himself to cure; but those in the joints, and other

critical parts, which threatened to maim and disable the patient, required more skilful attention. Unfortunately, they had no ointments nor medicines of any kind, nor linen for bandages; all had been consumed. Not even shelter was to be found from the cold and night-dews, for not a house in the village remained standing. At length branches of trees having been brought from the cabins, erected without the village, sheds were put up against such of the walls as still stood. Under these the wounded were conveyed for shelter, and straw spread for their reception. Those who had been least harmed, exerted themselves to relieve their suffering companions. Some opened the bodies of the dead Indians, and converted their fat into ointment; others took off their own shirts and those of their slaughtered comrades, to make bandages for the disabled. As these were of linen, they were set apart for the severest wounds; those which were slight, the Spaniards bound with the doublets of their slain comrades, and lining of their hose, or other materials of a coarser kind.

The horses which had been killed were cut up, and their flesh preserved for the sustenance of the wounded. In spite of every exertion, however, many Spaniards died miserably, before any relief could be administered to them. Thus passed that wretched night, amid bitter lamentations and dying groans. Such as were able to bear arms, patrolled both the camp and village, maintaining a vigilant watch, in case of an assault.

The wounded Spaniards remained eight days in these miserable shelters. They were then removed to those cabins which their enemies had erected without the walls, where they had more comfortable quarters. Here fifteen more days were passed. During this period, the least disabled sallied forth on foraging expeditions, confining these to a circuit of about four leagues, and found abundant supplies of provisions in the numerous deserted hamlets scattered about the country.

In every thicket and ravine they discovered dead or dying Indians, who had not been able to reach their homes. Many, also, had taken shelter in the hamlets, and lay there, apparently without any one to minister to their necessities. It was understood, however, that their friends brought them nourishment by night, but returned to their retreats in the

forests before dawn. The Spaniards treated these poor savages with kindness, sharing their food with them.

In foraging the woods, the troopers captured fifteen or twenty natives. On being asked whether their people were meditating another attack, they replied, that their bravest warriors having fallen in the late battle, none were left to make war. Their information appeared to be true; for, during all the time the Spaniards remained in this neighbourhood, no Indian ventured near their camp.

From the prisoners thus taken, and others captured in different villages, they enquired concerning the past stratagems and design of Tuscaloosa, which had produced such mischief.

That implacable and warlike chieftain, from the time he first heard of the Spaniards' approach towards his dominions, had meditated their destruction. With that object, he had sent his son, accompanied by a train of warriors, to watch their movements; and had engaged the natives of several contiguous provinces to join in the plot, promising to share with them the spoils of conquest.

The women, too, most of whom had accompanied their husbands and lovers from the neighbouring districts, declared they had been enticed to Mauvila, by promises of rich robes of scarlet cloth, silks, linen, and velvet, with which to decorate themselves for their dances. They were to have horses, on which to ride in triumph, and Spaniards to wait upon them as slaves. Many came for the purpose of being present at a great feast, others to participate in the rejoicings intended to be held after their victory, and to witness the exploits of their lovers.

On arriving at the village with the Adelantado, Tucaloosa had held a council with his principal warriors, in which it was debated whether they should attack the van-guard which had already arrived, or wait until the whole should be within their power. It is probable that the Indian General's heat and impatience caused the plot to explode before the appointed time.

It has been shown that the Spaniards lost all their baggage and private effects in the conflagration of the village. What gave them the greatest concern, however, was the loss of a small portion of wine and of wheaten flour which they had carefully preserved for the performance of mass. All the

sacerdotal dresses, together with the chalices, and other articles of worship, were destroyed; but the loss of the wheaten flour was irreparable. Consultations were held between the ecclesiastics and laymen, whether bread made of maize might not be adopted in case of extremity; it was, however, decided, that the use of any thing but wheat was contrary to the canons of the church.

From this time therefore, on Sundays and on saints' days, an altar was prepared, and the priest officiated, arrayed in robes of dressed deerskins, fashioned in imitation of his sacerdotal dresses; performing all parts of the ceremony, except consecrating the bread and wine. This constituted what the Spaniards called "a dry mass."

CHAPTER XL.

1540. WHILE encamped at the village of Mauvila, overwhelmed with care and anxiety, De Soto was unexpectedly cheered by tidings that ships with white men on board had arrived on the sea-coast toward which he was shaping his course. He had heard a rumour of this kind before the battle, and it was confirmed by some prisoners taken in the village. He further learnt from them, that the bay of Achusi, where he had directed Gomez Arias and Diego Maldonado to cast anchor, was not more than seven days' journey distant.* He doubted not, therefore, that the ships in question were commanded by those officers, and brought reinforcements and supplies from Spain for his projected settlement. He now considered himself on the eve of accomplishing his wishes;—of founding that colony which would assure the possession of the country he had explored, and enable him to pursue with advantage his search for gold.

He had brought with him thus far the Cacique made prisoner by Maldonado at the port of Achusi. He had always treated him with great kindness, but had not sent him to his home, because of the distance and the hazard he would incur of being killed or captured by the way. Learning, however, that the road was now secure, he granted him permission to return; at the same time, earnestly charging

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 19. The Inca states the distance at about thirty leagues.

him to preserve the friendship of the Spaniards who would soon be residents in his country. The Cacique departed with expressions of gratitude for the kindness he had experienced, and assurances to the Governor that he would be happy to welcome him to his territory.

While De Soto regarded the ships as the means of conquest and colonization, many of his followers only looked forward to their arrival as supplying the means of escape out of a disastrous country. Some of them had been engaged in the Conquest of Peru, and contrasted the wealth of that golden empire with the poverty of the land through which they had recently struggled, where neither gold nor silver was to be found; and they did not fail to dwell upon this contrast when conversing with their companions. The Spaniards generally were disheartened by the disasters of the recent battle, and the implacable fierceness displayed by the natives. They saw that such a people were not to be easily subjugated. Instead, therefore, of wearing themselves out in this unpromising land, it seemed better to seek other countries already conquered, and abounding with wealth, as Mexico and Peru, where they might enrich themselves with less risk and less toil. For these reasons they determined, on reaching the sea-shore, to abandon Florida and seek their fortunes in New Spain.

Secret information of these rumours was brought to De Soto by some of his most devoted followers. He could scarcely credit it, and went through the camp at night, alone and in disguise, to ascertain the truth. In this way he overheard a conversation in the hut of Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, in which that cavalier and several of his comrades expressed their determination to abandon the enterprise, and either sail for Mexico or Peru, or return to Spain in the ships at Achusi.

De Soto stood aghast at hearing these resolves. He saw that his present force would disband the moment his followers could shift for themselves; and he was aware that it would be impossible for him to raise a new army. He had no booty of gold and silver to display, with which to tempt new adventurers; and the specimens of pearls which he had intended to send to Cuba, were all lost in the conflagration of Mauvila. Should his present forces desert him, therefore, he would be stripped of his dignity and command, blasted in

reputation, his fortune would be expended in vain, and his enterprise, which had cost so much toil and trouble, a subject of scoffing rather than of renown. De Soto was a man extremely jealous of his honour; and as he reflected upon these gloomy prospects, they produced sudden and desperate resolves. He disguised his anger and his knowledge of the schemes he had overheard; but determined to frustrate them by turning his back upon the coast, and striking again into the interior.

He resolved neither to seek the ships, nor furnish any tidings of himself until he should have completed his enterprise gloriously, by discovering new regions of wealth, like those of Peru and Mexico.*

A change came over De Soto from this day. He was frustrated in his favourite scheme of colonization, and had lost confidence in his followers. Instead of manifesting his usual frankness, energy, and alacrity, he became a moody, irritable, discontented man. He no longer attempted to strike out any great undertaking, but stung with secret disappointment, wandered recklessly from place to place, apparently without order or object, as if careless both of time and of life, and only anxious to terminate his existence.

1540. It was on Sunday, the 18th of November, that De Soto, finding his troops sufficiently recovered from their wounds to bear the march, broke up his encampment at Mauvila, and turned his face to the northward, to penetrate provinces which he had not yet visited. His feelings and motives for thus turning his back upon the sea-coast he kept to himself. He was always a man strict and peremptory in exacting military obedience, and if his troops murmured at the route he chose, it is probable they were overawed and reduced to tacit submission, by the increased sternness of his manner.

The soldiers were provided with two days' provisions of maize, yet they were five days traversing a pleasant though uninhabited country:—upon the sixth they entered the province of Chicaza.† The first village at which they arrived was called Cabusto. It was the largest in the province, and situated on a river, wide and deep, with high banks.‡

* It was a Sunday. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 22. Portuguese Relation, c. 19.

† The Portuguese narrator says, they entered into the province of Pafallaya.

‡ Supposed to be the Black Warrior, or Tuscaloosa river.

The Governor, as usual, sent offers of peace to the inhabitants, who rejected them with scorn. "War is what we desire," was the reply; "a war of fire and blood." Approaching the village, the Spaniards saw more than fifteen hundred warriors drawn out before it. These skirmished with them for a time, but, overpowered by the fury of their attack, fled to the river. Some sprang into canoes, others plunged into the water, and thus soon crossed to the opposite bank, where their main force, to the number of eight thousand warriors, was posted to dispute the passage.

The Spaniards found the village perfectly stripped and abandoned. The inhabitants had sent off all their effects, together with their wives and children, and were prepared for war. They determined to risk no open battle, but to dispute the pass of the river, which, on account of its depth and high banks, they could easily do. For this purpose they had stretched their forces two leagues along the bank, hoping to compel the army to take a different route.

When night closed in the Indians annoyed their enemies greatly, by sudden attacks and frequent alarms. They crossed the river in their canoes at different places, and then, uniting in a band, attacked De Soto's camp. The Spaniards made use of stratagem in their defence. There were three landing places where the natives disembarked. Here the Spaniards dug pits, in which a party of archers and arquebusiers concealed themselves. As soon as they saw the Indians leap on shore and quit their canoes, their ambushed enemies rushed out, sword in hand, and cut off their retreat. Three several times they repeated this successfully, after which the savages did not again attempt to land, but contented themselves with vigilantly guarding the passage of the river.

The Governor now ordered one hundred of the most skilful men to build two large boats, or piraguas, nearly flat, and very spacious. That the enemy might not perceive their operations, he directed them to be built in a forest, a league and a half further up the river, and about a league from its banks.

So assiduous were the workmen, that in twelve days the piraguas were finished. In order to transport them to the river, two carriages were constructed, on which they were drawn by mules and horses, and pushed forward by men, who in the most difficult places carried the vessels on their shoulders. In this way, one morning, before daybreak, they

were conveyed to the water and launched, where there were convenient landing-places on either bank.

De Soto, who was present at the launching of these boats, ordered ten horse and forty foot soldiers to embark in each, and hasten to cross the stream before their enemies should assemble to oppose them. The infantry were to row, and the horsemen to keep their saddles, that they might not lose time in mounting when they should reach the opposite shore.

Notwithstanding the silence observed by the Spaniards in launching their boats, they were discovered by a band of about five hundred savages drawn up on the other side. These gave a loud yell by way of spreading alarm, and rushed down to dispute the landing.

The Spaniards, fearing their enemies might collect in greater numbers, hurried to embark. De Soto would have gone in the first boat, but his followers prevented his exposing himself to this unnecessary hazard.

Those in the first bark bent to their oars and quickly reached the opposite bank, amid a shower of arrows, by which every Spaniard was more or less wounded. The first horseman who leaped on shore was Diego Garcia, and close behind him followed Gonzalo Silvestre; they charged the enemy together, put them to flight, and pursued them for more than two hundred paces. Fearful of being surrounded, they then turned their horses, and spurred back to their companions. In this manner, now charging, now retreating, these hardy cavaliers fought alone for a short time; in the fifth charge, however, being joined by some horsemen, they were enabled to keep the Indians in check.

The moment the infantry landed, they took shelter in a hamlet close by; this they dared not quit, as their number was very small, and every soldier more or less hurt. While this was passing, the second boat, in which De Soto had embarked, was carried down the current. The troops attempted to land, but found it impracticable on account of the steep banks; they were therefore compelled to pull up the stream, with great labour, to the landing place, which by this time was cleared of the enemy. The Governor, followed by seventy or eighty Spaniards, leaped on shore, and hastened to the relief of those who were fighting on the plain.

On their approach, the Indians retreated, and seeing the Spaniards had effected a landing, collected their forces, and

fortified themselves with palisades, in a swamp covered with reeds, from which they made frequent sallies. They were, however, as often driven back, and lanced by the cavalry. Thus the day passed in unimportant skirmishes. The troops finally crossed the river without molestation, and at night-fall every Indian disappeared.*

CHAPTER XLI.

1540. THE country in the neighbourhood of the river was level and fertile, dotted here and there with small hamlets, in which were quantities of maize and dried pulse. Having broken up the piraguas for the sake of the nails, the army resumed its march, and after travelling five days through a desert country, came to another river,† where the Indians were assembled to dispute the passage. Unwilling to expose his men to further loss, De Soto halted for two days, until a canoe had been constructed, in which he sent over an Indian messenger to the Cacique, with offers of peace and friendship. The savages seized their countryman, massacred him on the banks of the river in sight of the Spaniards, and then, as if triumphing in their barbarity, dispersed with horrid yells.‡

There being no longer any enemy to oppose his passage, De Soto conducted his troops across the stream, and then marched onward, until, on the 18th of December, he arrived at the village of Chicaza, from which the province took its name.§ It stood upon a gentle hill, stretching from north to south, being watered on each side by a small stream, and bordered by groves of walnut and oak trees.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, *Lib. 3. c. 35.* Portuguese narrator, c. 20.

† Supposed to be the Tombigbe. ‡ Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

§ Considering the nature of the country through which the Spanish army passed, agreeing with the modern accounts of that region, the direction of the march, the time, and the distance, it is very evident that this was the country of the Chickasaws, in the upper part of the state of Mississippi; and this village probably stood on the western bank of the Yazoo, a branch of the Mississippi, about eight leagues to the north-west of Mobile. Charlevoix remarks, "*Garcilaso de la Vega parle des Chicachas dans son Histoire de la Conquête de la Floride, et il les place à peu près aumême endroit, ou ils sont encore présentement.*" — Vide Charlevoix, *Jour. Hist. Let.* 29. p. 408.—Belknap's *Am. Biography*, v. 1. p. 191.—Flint's *Geog. and Hist. of the Mississippi*, v. 1. p. 496.

The weather was now severe. A great deal of snow had fallen; this having frozen, the troops suffered extremely in their encampments. The Governor, therefore, determined to take up his winter quarters at Chicaza. For this purpose he commanded wood and straw to be brought from the neighbouring hamlets, in order to construct houses; for, notwithstanding there were two hundred in the village, they were too small to shelter the army.

The Spaniards remained nearly two months in this encampment without molestation, and enjoying some repose. The cavalry daily scoured the fields, and captured many natives, whom De Soto sent to the Cacique with presents and offers of peace and friendship. The Cacique returned favourable replies, promising, from day to day, to visit the camp, but as often excusing his delay, and sending presents of fruits, fish, and venison. The Governor gave the principal warriors of this chieftain a feast, at which some pork was served up. This the Indians had never before tasted, but found it so palatable and delicious, that from this time they prowled about the encampment every night, to steal and kill the swine. Two of them, who were caught in the act, were shot by order of the Governor, a third had his hands cut off, and was sent to the Cacique as an example to his countrymen.

About this time, four soldiers repaired to the dwelling of the Indian chief, about a league from the camp, without the Governor's permission, and carried off by force some skins and mantles, which so enraged the Indians, that many of them abandoned their homes. When de Soto heard of this violence, he had them all arrested; condemned the two ring-leaders, Francisco Osorio and one Fuentez, to death, and confiscated the goods of all the four culprits.

The priests and officers of the army supplicated the General to mitigate the sentence, and begged the life of Francisco Osorio. De Soto, however, was inflexible. The unfortunate criminals were led into the public square to be beheaded. At this moment a party of Indians arrived, having been sent by the Cacique, to make his complaints. This event, which seemed calculated to hasten the death of the criminals, was the means of their salvation. Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, instigated by Baltazar de Gallegos, and other officers of rank, gave a false interpretation of the complaints to the

inexorable Governor. He told him that the Indian Chief had sent these messengers to say, the soldiers had not offended him, and that he should consider it as a favour if they were pardoned and set at liberty. Upon this, De Soto pardoned the criminals.* On the other hand, Ortiz assured the Indians, that the soldiers who had injured them were in prison, and that the Governor would punish them in such a manner as should serve for an example to the whole Spanish army.

To the great annoyance of the Spaniards, the subjects of this Cacique kept up constant alarms at night, as if about to assail the Spanish cantonment; but the moment the soldiers sallied out, they took to flight. The Governor suspected, however, that these were but feigned attacks, intended to render his sentinels careless and put them off their guard, when a real attack should be made. He, therefore, exhorted his Camp-Master, Luis de Moscoso, to be unceasing in his vigilance, and maintain a strict watch upon the camp at night. His suspicions proved in the issue to be correct, though unfortunately they were but little heeded.

1541. A dark and cloudy night, when the wind was blowing furiously from the north, was chosen by the Cacique for a grand assault upon the village occupied by the Spaniards. Dividing his forces into three separate bodies, in order to attack three several points at the same time, he led on the centre in person, and approached in the dead of night, with such silence, as to arrive within a hundred paces of the Spanish sentinels without being perceived. Having learnt by his scouts that the two other divisions were equally advanced, he gave the signal of attack.

Immediately the air resounded with blasts of conch-shells, the rumbling of wooden drums, mingled with yells and war-whoops of savages, who rushed like demons to the assault. Many had lighted matches, resembling cords made of a vegetable substance, which when whirled in the air, burst into a flame; others had arrows tipped with the same inflammable matter. These they directed against the houses, which being of reeds and straw, instantly took fire, and, the wind blowing strongly, were soon wrapped in flames.

The Spaniards, although surprised by this sudden and furious assault, rushed out to defend themselves. De Soto,

* Portuguese Narration, c. 20.

who always slept in his doublet and hose, that he might be prepared against such emergencies, clasped on his casque, drew on a surcoat of quilted cotton an inch and a half thick, the best defence against the enemy's arrows, seized buckler and lance, mounted his horse, and dashed fearlessly into the midst of his foes. Ten or twelve horsemen followed him, though not immediately.

With their wonted spirit, the soldiers started up in every direction to repel the Indians; but they fought under great disadvantages. The strong wind blowing the flames and smoke directly in their faces extremely disconcerted them. Some were obliged to crawl out of their quarters on all fours to escape the fire; some, bewildered, fled from house to house; others rushed out into the plain; whilst some flew to rescue the sick and wounded, who were in a dwelling apart. Before succour arrived, however, many of these latter had perished in the fierce conflagration.

The cavalry had not time to arm themselves or saddle their steeds. Some succeeded in rescuing theirs from the flames; others, who had fastened up their horses with iron chains, because they were restive from high mettle, not having time to release them, were obliged to leave them to their fate and fly for their own lives. A few who were enabled to mount, galloped to the assistance of the Governor, who, with a scanty band of followers had been engaged some time with the Indians. The other two bodies of the enemy entering the village, simultaneously attacked the Spaniards on each flank; and, aided by the fire and smoke, made dreadful havoc.

Forty or fifty soldiers stationed at the eastern end of the village, where the fire and the battle raged most fiercely, fled into the fields. Nnño Tobar rushed after them sword in hand, having in the hurry left unbuckled his coat of mail. "Turn, soldiers! turn!" he cried; "whither are you flying? Here is neither Cordova nor Seville to give you refuge. Your safety lies in your courage and the vigour of your arms, not in flight." At this moment thirty soldiers, from a part of the village which the flames had not reached, came up to intercept the fugitives. They taunted their recreant comrades with their shameful flight, and inducing them to join forces, they hastened together to renew the combat.

At this time, Andres de Vasconcelos, with twenty-four

chosen cavaliers of his company, all Portuguese hidalgos, most of whom had served as horsemen in the wars on the African frontier, charged the enemy's main body. He was accompanied by Nuño Tobar on foot. The fury of their attack forced the savages to retire.

This timely reinforcement gave new courage to the handful of Spaniards, who, headed by the Governor, were fighting in that quarter. De Soto had marked an Indian warrior who had fought with great fury. Closing with him, he gave him a thrust with his lance, but leaning with all his force upon the right stirrup to repeat the blow, the saddle, which had been left ungirt in the confusion of the assault, slipped off, and De Soto fell into the midst of his enemies. The Spaniards, seeing the imminent peril of their General, both horse and foot dashed forward to his rescue, and kept the Indians at bay until he was extricated and his steed saddled. De Soto instantly vaulted upon his back, and plunged again into the fight.

The Indians, at length completely vanquished, fled from the field. De Soto pursued them with his troopers as long as they could be distinguished by the light of the burning village; then ordering the recall to be sounded, returned to ascertain his loss. He found this greater than he had imagined. Forty Spaniards had fallen in the conflict. Among the dead was a Spanish woman, the wife of a worthy soldier, and the only female who had accompanied the army. Her husband had left her behind when he rushed forth to fight. She had escaped from the house, but returned to save some pearls; the flames cut off her second retreat, and she was afterwards found burnt to death.

Fifty horses also had perished and many were wounded. Above twenty had been either burnt or shot with arrows in the houses where their masters were obliged to leave them tied up. The darts had been skilfully aimed at the most vital parts. One horse had two shafts through the heart from opposite directions. Another, one of the broadest and heaviest in the army, had been shot by such a vigorous arm, that the arrow, passed through both shoulders, the head protruding beyond.

Another loss which grieved the Spaniards, was that of the swine which they had brought with them to stock their projected settlement. These, having been shut up in an

enclosure roofed with straw, nearly all perished in the flames.

In examining the bodies of those Indians who had perished in the battle, the Spaniards found three cords wound round several of them. These, it is said, they had brought to secure their anticipated spoils; one being intended to bind a Spanish captive, another to lead off a horse, and the third to tie up a hog. The story, however, savours strongly of camp gossip.

This disastrous battle, following the ruinous one of Mauvila, increased the Governor's gloom and exasperation of spirit. Having made strict enquiry into the night attack, and the circumstances which had enabled the enemy to approach undiscovered and surprise them so fatally, he attributed it to gross negligence on the part of Luis de Moscoso in placing sentinels, and going the rounds. The tardy arrival of Moscoso on the fatal battle-field of Mauvila had before excited his indignation, which was now renewed, and in this fresh cause of vexation, forgetting his feelings of friendship for an old brother in arms, he deposed Moscoso from his post of Master of the Camp, and appointed in his place Baltazar de Gallegos.*

CHAPTER XLII.

1541. THREE days after this disastrous battle, the Spaniards shifted their encampment to a more advantageous position called Chicacilla,† about a league distant. Here they set up a forge, and employed themselves in newly tempering their swords, which had been injured by the fire, and in making saddles, shields, and lances to replace those consumed.

In this village they passed the remainder of the winter, suffering grievously from extreme cold. They were in wretched plight, having saved no clothing from the late conflagration except what they chanced to have on their backs. When the savages learnt the extent of the havock they had made, their fierce spirits were aroused anew, and they hovered every night round the camp, making repeated assaults and causing continual alarms. The Spaniards were obliged to be

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 36, 37. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

† This is a little Chicaza.

constantly upon their guard, formed into four different squadrons with sentries posted, lest the Indians should fire the houses as they had done those of Chicaza. They maintained a vigilant watch, for the savages burst upon them at all hours. In these nocturnal skirmishes many were killed and wounded on both sides.

Every morning De Soto despatched four or five parties of horse, in different directions, to scour the country; these cut down every Indian they encountered, and always returned at sunset, with the assurance that there was not one remaining within four leagues. In four or five hours afterwards, however, hordes of savages were again prepared to attack them. It seemed almost incredible that such hosts should have assembled in so short a time.

One night a band of natives warily approached the place where Captain Juan de Guzman was posted, with his company. De Guzman perceiving them by the light of some blazing faggots, sprang upon his horse, and followed by five troopers and a few foot, charged them vigorously. De Guzman, who was a cavalier of unflinching spirit, though of a delicate form, singled out an Indian in the van-guard, who carried a banner, and made a lunge at him with his lance. The Indian avoiding the blow, caught the lance with his right hand, wrested it from De Guzman, then seized him by the collar and giving him a violent jerk, hurled him from the saddle to his feet—all this while holding the banner in his left hand.

The soldiers witnessing the imminent danger of their leader, rushed forward, slew the Indian, and routed the whole band of savages. The troopers dashed after them in hot pursuit, and the ground favouring the movements of their horses, the Spaniards would have signally avenged their late disaster had not their career been suddenly arrested by the cry of "To the camp! to the camp!" At this startling summons, wheeling about, they galloped back to the encampment, and thus the fugitives escaped. The alarm had been raised by a monk, who was fearful that the troopers, in their eagerness of pursuit, might fall into some ambush of the enemy. Forty Indians fell in this affray. The Spaniards lost two of their horses, and two were wounded.

The army remained in this encampment until the end of March. Besides being unceasingly harassed by their enemies,

they suffered bitterly from cold, which was rigorous in the extreme; especially to men who had to pass every night under arms, with scarcely any clothing.

In this extremity, however, they were relieved by the ingenuity of one of the common soldiers. He succeeded in making a matting, four fingers thick, of long soft grass, or dried ivy, one half of which served as a mattress, and the other half was turned over as a blanket.

These rustic beds were brought every night to the main guard, and with their aid the soldiers on duty were enabled to endure the severe cold of the winter nights. The army also found abundant provisions of maize and dried fruits in the neighbourhood.*

On the first of April, the army broke up their encampment. They travelled four leagues the first day, through an open country, thickly studded with small hamlets, and halted in a plain beyond the territory of Chicaza; vainly fancying that, having quitted their province, the Indians would no longer molest them.

A strong party of horse and foot, commanded by Juan de Añasco, which was foraging for provisions, came in sight of an Indian fortress, garrisoned by a large body of savages, who looked like devils rather than men. Their bodies were painted in stripes, white, black, and red, appearing as if clothed with fantastic garments. Their faces were blackened, and they had red circles round their eyes, which gave them a ferocious aspect. Some wore feathers upon their heads, and others horns. On seeing the Spaniards, they sallied forth, shouting, yelling, and beating wooden drums.

De Añasco, retreating to an open field within a cross-bow shot of the fortress, drew up his cross-bowmen with their bucklers before the horses to protect them. In this way he received the light skirmishing assaults of the Indians. The latter, seeing the numerical inferiority of the Spaniards, taunted them from a distance, by a singular piece of mummery. Having kindled a great fire in front of their fort, they pretended to knock one of their companions on the head with a club, and then swung him by the feet and shoulders, as if they would throw him into the flames: thereby giving the Spaniards to understand the treatment they were to expect. Juan de Añasco was of too irritable a temperament to bear

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 39. Portuguese Narrative, c. 21.

such taunts patiently, but being sensible that his force was insufficient to attack the fortress, he despatched three troopers to the Governor, to entreat a reinforcement.

Leaving one-third of the infantry and cavalry to guard the camp, De Soto immediately marched out with the remainder, to assault the fort, which was called Alibamo.* It was built in the form of a quadrangle, fenced with strong palisades. The sides were each four hundred paces in length. Within, the area was traversed from side to side by two other palisades, dividing it into three separate parts. In the outer wall were three portals, so low and narrow that a man could not enter on horseback. Beyond these, there was a second wall, with three entrances, and behind this a third; so that if the outer wall were gained, the garrison could retreat to the second, and so on. In the last wall were likewise three portals, opening upon a narrow and deep river, that flowed in the rear of the fort.† So high were the banks of this stream that it was exceedingly difficult to clamber up on foot; they were consequently inaccessible to horses. A few rude, dilapidated bridges were thrown across the river, affording a difficult passage.

The Indians had constructed their fortress in this manner, that the Spaniards might not avail themselves of their horses, but be obliged to contend with them on foot; in which mode of encounter they fancied they were not only equal, but superior to their enemies.

De Soto, having carefully reconnoitred the fortress, ordered a hundred of the best armed horsemen to dismount, and forming three squadrons, advanced three abreast, and commenced the attack; whilst the foot, who were less completely cased in defensive armour, supported their rear. The squadrons were ordered to attack the three entrances simultaneously. Juan de Guzman led on one of the squadrons, Alonso Romo de Cardeñosa another, and Gonzalo Silvestre the third.

The Indians, who had until this moment remained shut up in their fortress, perceiving the preparations which the Spaniards were making for the assault, sallied out to battle, a hundred men from each portal. At the first discharge of

* We give the name according to the Inca. The Portuguese narrator calls it Alimamu.

† Supposed to be the Yazoo river.

their arrows, Diego de Castro, Luis Bravo, and Francisco de Figueroa, were brought to the ground mortally wounded. All three were pierced in the thigh with shafts barbed with flint; for the savages having gained some experience during their warfare with the Spaniards, always aimed at the thigh, which was never guarded. The Spaniards, seeing their companions fall, shouted to one another to rush in, and leave the Indians no time to gall them with their arrows; then charging furiously, they drove the enemy before them, to the very portals of the fortress.

While Juan de Añasco and Andres de Vasconcelos attacked the savages on one flank, De Soto, with twenty horse, charged upon the other. As the Governor was spurring onward, an arrow struck him upon his casque with such force, that it rebounded a pike's length in the air, and De Soto confessed afterwards that it made his eyes flash fire. Pressed by the united shock of horse and foot, the Indians tried to reach the entrances of their fort, but these were so narrow, that a great number were slaughtered without the walls. The Spaniards rushed in with them pell mell.

The carnage within the fortress was dreadful. The savages were crowded together, and the Spaniards, remembering the injuries they had received from them during the past winter, gave vent to their rage, and massacred them without mercy. As they wore defensive armour, they were easily despatched. Many, trusting to their agility, leaped from the wall into the plains, and falling into the hands of their enemies, were instantly slain. Many escaped to the bridges by the portals in the rear; but in their haste to cross, several were jostled into the river which flowed beneath. Others, pressed by their foes, threw themselves from the banks and swam across. In a short time, the fortress was abandoned and in the power of the Spaniards; but those Indians who reached the opposite bank formed themselves in battle array.

One of the savages who had escaped, desirous of showing his skill with the bow and arrow, separated himself from his companions, and shouted to the Spaniards, giving them to understand by signs and words, that he challenged any archer to come out and have a shot with him, in order to prove which was the better marksman. Upon this, Juan de Salinas, an Asturian hidalgo, who, with some companions,

had sheltered himself among trees from the arrows, stepped forth, and walking down to the river bank, took his stand opposite to the Indian. One of his companions called to him to wait until he should come to guard him with his shield; but Salinas refused to take any advantage of his enemy. He placed an arrow in his cross-bow, while the Indian also selected one from his quiver, and both drew at the same moment.

The dart of Juan de Salinis took effect, and entered the Indian's breast. He would have fallen, but was received in the arms of his companions, who bore him away more dead than alive. The Indian's arrow pierced the Spaniard in the nape of the neck, and remained crossed in the wound. Salinas returned with it in this state to his comrades, well pleased with his success; the comrades of the fallen Indian allowing him to depart without molestation, as the challenge had been man to man.

The Adelantado determined to punish the impudence and daring of these Indians, called on the cavalry to follow him; and crossing the river by an easy ford above the fort, galloped out upon the plain; then, charging the savages, he pursued them for more than a league, with great slaughter; and had not night interposed, not one would have survived to tell the disastrous tale. As it was, the carnage was very great.

When the Spaniards gave up the pursuit, they returned to their encampment and halted four days, in order to afford relief to the wounded. Fifteen subsequently died. Among these were the three cavaliers who had fallen at the commencement of the battle. They were greatly lamented by their companions, for they were noble, young, and valiant;—not one of them had reached his twenty-fifth year.*

CHAPTER XLIII.

1541. AFTER four days the Spaniards departed from their encampment at Alibamo, still marching towards the north, to avoid the sea. For seven days they traversed an uninhabited country, full of forests and swamps, where they had sometimes to swim their horses.† At length they came in

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 35. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 22.

sight of a village, called Chisca, situated near a wide river. As this was the largest they had discovered in Florida, they called it Rio Grande; it was the same now called the Mississippi.* The Indians of this province knew nothing of the strangers' approach, owing to their unceasing warfare with the natives of Chicaza, and the country lying between them being unpeopled. The moment the Spaniards descried the village they entered it, in a disorderly manner, took many Indians prisoners of either sex and of all ages, and pillaged the houses.

The dwelling of the Cacique, which served as a fortress, stood on a high artificial mound, on one side of the village. The only ascent to it was by two ladders. Many of the Indians took refuge there, whilst others fled to a wood, between the village and the river. Chisca, the chieftain of the province, was very old, and lying ill in his bed. Hearing the tumult and shouts, however, he quitted his couch and sallied forth. Beholding the attack upon his village and the capture of his vassals, he seized a tomahawk and began to descend in a furious rage, threatening extermination to all who had dared to enter his domains without permission. With all these bravadoes, the Cacique, beside being infirm and exceedingly old, was of very diminutive stature;—the most miserable little Indian the Spaniards had seen in all their marchings. He was animated, however, by the remembrance of the deeds and exploits of his youth, for he had been a doughty warrior, and ruled over a vast province.

The women and attendants of the Cacique surrounded him, and with tears and entreaties, prevailed upon him to retire; at the same time, those who came from the village informed him that the enemy were men, such as they had never before seen or heard of, and that they came upon strange animals of great size and wonderful agility. "If you desire to fight with them," said they, "to avenge this injury, it will be better to summon together the warriors of the neighbourhood, and await a more fitting opportunity. In the meantime, let us put on the semblance of friendship, and not by any inconsiderate rashness, provoke our destruction."

* The Inca, on the authority of Juan Coles, one of the followers of De Soto, says that the Indian name of this river was Chucagua. The Portuguese narrator says, that in one place it was called Tumaliseu, in another, Tapata, in another, Mico; and at that part where it enters the sea, Ri. It is probable it had different names among the different Indian tribes. The village of Chisca is called Quizquiz, by the Portuguese historian.

With these and similar arguments, the women and attendants of the Cacique, prevented his sallying forth to battle. He continued, however, in great wrath, and when the Governor sent him a message, offering peace, he returned an answer refusing all intercourse, and breathing nothing but vengeance.

De Soto and his followers, wearied out with the harassing warfare of the past winter, were very desirous of peace. Having pillaged the village and offended the Cacique, they were in a dilemma; accordingly, they sent him many gentle and soothing messages. Added to their disinclination for war, they observed, that during the three hours they had halted in the village, nearly four thousand well-armed warriors had rallied round their Chief, and they feared, that if such a multitude could assemble in so short a time, there must be large reinforcements in reserve. They perceived, moreover, that the situation of the village was as advantageous to the Indians as unfavourable to them; for the plains around being covered with trees and intersected by numerous streams, would impede the movements of their cavalry. But more than all this, they had learned from sad experience, that these incessant conflicts did not in the least profit them. Day after day, men and horses were slain; in the midst of a hostile country, and far from home or hope of succour, their number was gradually diminishing.

The Indians held a council to discuss the messages of the strangers. Many were for war: they were enraged at the imprisonment of their wives and children, and the pillage of their property; to recover which, according to their fierce notions, the only resource was arms. Others, who had not lost anything, were nevertheless hostile to an accommodation, from a natural inclination for fighting. They wished to exhibit their prowess, and to try what kind of men those were, who carried such strange arms. The more pacific savages, however, advised that the offered peace should be accepted, as the surest means of recovering their wives, children, and effects. They added, that the enemy might burn their villages, and lay waste their fields, at a time when their grain was almost ripening, and thus add greatly to their calamities. The valour of these strangers, said they, is sufficiently evident; for men who have passed through so many enemies, cannot be otherwise than brave.

This latter council prevailed. The Cacique dissembling

his anger, replied to the envoy, that since the Spaniards desired peace, he would grant it, and allow them to halt in the village, and give them food, on condition that they would immediately set his subjects free and restore their effects. He also stipulated that they should not enter into his presence. If these terms were accepted, he said, he would be friendly : if not he defied them to the combat.

The Spaniards readily agreed to these conditions. The prisoners and plunder were restored, and the Indians departed from the village, leaving food in their dwellings for the Spaniards, who remained here six days to tend the sick. On the last day, with the permission of the Cacique, De Soto visited him, and thanked him for his friendship and hospitality, and on the following morning the army resumed their march.

CHAPTER XLIV.

1541. DEPARTING from Chisca, the army travelled by slow journeys of three leagues a day, on account of the sick and wounded. They followed the windings of the river until the fourth day, when they came to an opening in the thickets. Hitherto, they had been threading a vast forest, bordering the stream, the banks of which were so high on both sides, that they could neither descend nor mount them. De Soto found it necessary to halt in this plain twenty days, for the purpose of building boats or piraguas to cross the river ; for on the opposite bank a great number of Indian warriors were assembled to defend the passage, well armed, and with a fleet of canoes.

The morning after the Governor had encamped, some of the natives visited him. Advancing, without speaking a word, and turning their faces to the east, they made a profound genuflection to the sun ; then facing to the west, they made another to the moon, and concluded with a similar, but less humble reverence to De Soto. They said they came in the name of their Cacique and in that of all his subjects, to bid the Spaniards welcome, and to offer their friendship and services ; adding, that they were desirous to see what kind of men the strangers were, as there was a tradition handed down from their ancestors, that a white people would

come and conquer their country.* The Adelantado said many kind things in reply, and dismissed them, well pleased with their courteous reception. The Cacique sent him repeated messages of kindness, but never visited the encampment; excusing himself on account of ill-health. His subjects aided the Spaniards with much cheerfulness; while the Indians from the opposite side of the river, harassed them continually; crossing over in their canoes, and discharging arrows at them, while they were at work. The archers and cross-bowmen, however, as on a former occasion, concealed themselves in pits, until the enemy drew nigh; then suddenly rising, dispersed them with great slaughter.

One day, the Spaniards perceived a fleet of two hundred canoes descending the river. These canoes were filled with armed Indians, painted after their wild fashion, adorned with feathers of every colour, and carrying shields in their hands, made of the buffalo hide, with which some sheltered the rowers, while others stood on the prow and poop of the canoes with their bows and arrows. The canoes of the Cacique and chief warriors were decorated with fanciful awnings, under which they sat and gave their orders to those who rowed. "It was a pleasing sight," says the Portuguese narrator, "to behold these wild savages in their canoes, which were neatly made and of great size, and with their awnings, coloured feathers, and waving standards, appeared like a fleet of galleys."

They paddled to within a stone's throw of the shore where the Governor was standing, surrounded by his officers. The Chief addressing him, professed that he came to offer his services, and to assure him of obedience, as he had been informed that the Spanish leader was the most powerful prince of the whole earth. De Soto returned him thanks, and begged him to land, that they might converse more conveniently. The Cacique made no answer, but sent three canoes on shore with presents of fruit, and bread made of the pulp of a certain kind of plum† The Governor again importuned the savage to land, but seeing him hesitate, and suspecting treachery, he marshalled his men in order of battle. Upon this, the Indians turned their prows and fled. The

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22.

† The persimmon. Loaves are still made of this wild fruit among the Indians and settlers of the West.

cross-bowmen sent a flight of arrows after them, and killed five or six of their number. They retreated in good order, covering the rowers with their shields. Several times after this, they landed to attack the soldiers, as was supposed, but the moment the Spaniards charged them, they fled to their canoes.

At the end of twenty days four piraguas were built and launched. About three hours before dawn De Soto ordered them to be manned and four troopers of tried courage to go in each.

The rowers pulled strongly; when within fifty yards of the shore, the troopers dashed into the water, and meeting with no opposition from the enemy, easily effected a landing and made themselves masters of the pass. Two hours before the sun went down, the whole army had crossed the Mississippi.

The river in this place, says the Portuguese historian, was half a league from one shore to the other, so that a man standing still could scarcely be discerned from the opposite bank. It was of great depth, of wonderful rapidity, and very muddy; besides being always filled with floating trees and timber carried down by the force of the current.*

Breaking up the boats as before, to preserve the nails, the Spaniards proceeded onward four days through a wilderness intersected in many places by morasses which they were obliged to ford. On the fifth day, from the summit of a high ridge, they descried a large village, containing about four hundred dwellings. It was situated on the banks of a river, the borders of which, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with luxuriant fields of maize interspersed with groves of fruit trees.† The natives, who had already received notice of the strangers' approach, thronged out in crowds to receive them, freely offering their houses and effects for their use.

In a short time two Indian chiefs arrived with a train of warriors bearing a welcome from their Cacique and an offer of his services. The Governor received them very courteously, and treated them with such kindness that they went away well pleased.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22. This place where De Soto and his army crossed the Mississippi was probably the lowest Chickasaw Bluff, one of the ancient crossing places between the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth parallel of latitude.

† Probably the river St. Francis.

The Spaniards finding abundance of food for man and horse remained six days in the village which bore the name of Casquin or Caqui, as did the whole province and its Cacique.*

Resuming their journey, they marched through a populous and free country, where the land was more elevated and the soil less alluvial than any they had yet seen on the borders of the Mississippi. The fields were exuberantly fruitful; the pecan nut, the red and gray plum, and mulberry trees grew there in abundance.† In two days they came to the chief town, where the Cacique resided. It stood on the same side of the river, about seven leagues above, in a very fertile and populous neighbourhood. Here the Spaniards were well received by the Cacique, who made De Soto a present of mantles,‡ skins, and fish, and invited him to lodge in his habitation, which was on a high artificial hill on one side of the village, and consisted of twelve or thirteen large houses for the accommodation of his numerous family of women and attendants. The Governor declined the invitation, for fear of incommoding him. A part of the army was quartered in houses, the remainder lodged in bowers, which the Indians quickly built of green branches, in groves close by. It was now the month of May, and as the weather was becoming oppressively warm, the tenants of these rustic bowers found them truly delightful.

CHAPTER XLV.

1541. THE army remained tranquil in the village during three days, with much good feeling on both sides. On the morning of the fourth, the Cacique, accompanied by all his principal subjects, came into the presence of De Soto and making a profound obeisance, "Señor," said he, "as you are superior to us in prowess, and surpass us in arms, we

* Supposed to be the same as the Kaskaskias Indians, who at that time peopled a province south-west of the Missouri. Vide Nuttall's *Arkansas*, p. 82, 250, 251. Charlevoix, *Journal Historique*, v. 3. let. 28.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 23. Supposed to be the country of the Little Prairie and that chain of high land extending to New Madrid; in the vicinity of which are to be seen many aboriginal remains. Vide Nuttall's *Arkansas*, p. 251.

‡ These mantles were fabricated from coarse threads of the bark of trees and nettles.

likewise believe that your God is better than our god! These you behold before you are the chief warriors of my dominions. We supplicate you to pray to your God to send us rain, for our fields are parched for want of water!"*

De Soto replied, that although he and all his followers were but sinners, yet they would supplicate God, the father of mercies, to show mercy unto their heathen brethren. Then, in the presence of the Cacique, he ordered his chief carpenter, Francisco, the Genoese, to hew down the highest and largest pine tree in the vicinity and construct a cross.

Accordingly, a tree was immediately felled of such immense size, that a hundred men could not raise it from the ground. Having formed a perfect cross, the Spaniards erected it on a high hill on the banks of the river, which served the Indians as a watch-tower, overlooking every eminence in the vicinity. Every thing being prepared in two days, the Governor ordered that the next morning all should march to it in solemn procession, except an armed squadron of horse and foot, who were commanded to be on the alert to protect the army.

The Cacique walked beside the Governor, and many of the savage warriors mingled with the Spaniards. Before them went a choir of priests and friars chanting the litany, to which the soldiers responded. The procession, in which were more than a thousand persons, both Spaniards and Indians, wound slowly and solemnly along until it arrived before the cross, where all fell upon their knees. Two or three prayers were now offered up: the multitude then rose, and two by two approached the holy emblem, bent the knee before it, worshipped and kissed it.

On the opposite shore of the river were collected fifteen or twenty thousand savages of either sex and of all ages, to witness the singular but imposing ceremony. With their arms extended and their hands raised, they watched the movements of the Spaniards. Ever and anon they elevated their eyes to heaven, and made signs with their faces and hands, as if asking God to listen to the Christians' prayer. They then raised a low wailing cry, like people in excessive grief, which was echoed by the plaintive murmurings of their children's voices. De Soto and his followers were

* The Portuguese narrator says, that the Cacique besought him to restore to sight two blind men he had brought with him.

moved to tenderness to behold in a strange land, a savage people worshipping with such deep humility and tears, the emblem of our redemption. The procession returned observing the same order; the priests chaunted *Te Deum laudamus*, and with this closed the solemnities of the day.

God, in his mercy, says the Spanish chronicler, willing to show these heathens that he listeneth unto those who call upon him in truth, in the middle of the ensuing night, sent down a plenteous rain upon the earth, to the great joy of the Indians.*

The Cacique with his warriors, astonished and overjoyed at this unhopèd-for blessing, formed a procession in imitation of the Christians, and repaired to De Soto to express gratitude for the kindness his God had shown them through his intercession. The Governor answered them, that they must give thanks to God, who created the heavens and earth, and was the bestower of these and other far greater mercies.

It is an interesting reflection, that nearly three centuries ago, the cross, the type of our divine religion, was planted on the banks of the Mississippi, whose silent forests were awakened by the Christian's hymn of gratitude and praise. The effect was vivid but transitory. The "voice cried in the wilderness," reached and was answered by every heart, but died away and was forgotten, and was not to be heard again in that savage region for many generations. It was as if a lightning gleam had broken for a moment upon a benighted world, startling it with sudden effulgence, only to leave it in tenfold gloom. The real dawning was yet afar off from the valley of the Mississippi.

As the army had been already quartered nine or ten days in this village, De Soto gave orders for them to prepare to march the following morning. The Cacique, who was about fifty years of age, obtained permission of the Governor to accompany him with a train of warriors and domestics; the one to escort his troops, the other to carry his supplies, as they would have to traverse a wilderness; also to clear the road, gather wood for their encampment, and fodder for their horses. The Cacique's true object, however, was to avail himself of the presence of the Spaniards to wreak vengeance on a neighbouring chieftain called Capaha.† A war had existed

* Las Casas, L. 4. c. 6.

† In the Portuguese narrative, the name of this Cacique is spelt Pacaha.

between their respective tribes for several generations; but the present Cacique of Capaha had gained the ascendancy, and kept Casquin in continual subjection by the superiority of his forces.

In the morning, Casquin assembled his followers to escort the Governor. He had three thousand Indians laden with supplies, and with the baggage of the Spanish army;—they were all armed with bows and arrows. But besides these, he was accompanied by five thousand of his choicest warriors, well armed, grotesquely painted, and decorated with war-plumes. With these he secretly meditated a signal revenge on his enemy, Capaha.

With the Governor's permission, he took the lead under pretence of clearing the road of any lurking foe, and of preparing every thing for the Spanish encampment. He divided his men into squadrons, and marched in good military order, a quarter of a league in advance. By night he posted sentinels in the same manner as the Spaniards.

In this way they travelled for three days, when they came to a great swamp, miry on the borders, with a lake in the centre, too deep to be forded, and forming a kind of gulf on the Mississippi, into which it emptied itself.* Across this piece of water Casquin's Indians constructed a rude bridge of trunks of trees laid upon posts driven into the bottom of the lake, with a row of stakes above the bridge, for those who crossed to hold by. The horses were obliged to swim, and were got over with great difficulty on account of the mire. This swamp separated the two hostile provinces of Casquin and Capaha. The Spaniards were nearly the whole day crossing it, and encamped in beautiful meadows about half a league beyond.

After travelling two more days, early on the third day they arrived at some elevated ridges, whence they descried the principal town of Capaha, the frontier post and defence of the province.†

It contained five hundred large houses, situated on a high ground which commanded the surrounding country, being nearly encircled by a deep moat fifty paces broad, and where the moat did not extend, was defended by a strong wall of timber and plaster, such as has already been described. The moat was filled with water by means of a canal, cut from the

* Inca, Lib. 4. c. 7. Portuguese Relation, c. 23.

† This was the most northern point reached by De Soto on the Mississippi.

Mississippi, three leagues distant. The canal was deep and sufficiently wide for two canoes to pass abreast, without touching each others' paddles. Being filled with fish, it supplied all the wants of the village and army.

Capaha had received intelligence by his scouts of the formidable allies who accompanied his old antagonist, Casquin. His own warriors were dispersed, and not sufficient in number to resist such additional force. As soon, therefore, as he saw the enemy approaching, he sprang into a canoe on the moat, and passing along the canal into the Grand River, took refuge in a strong island. Such of his people as had canoes followed him, others fled into the neighbouring woods, while some lingered in the village.

Casquin marching, as usual, in advance, arrived with his warriors at the village some time before the Spaniards. Meeting with no resistance, he entered it warily, suspecting an ambuscade. This gave time for many loiterers to escape.

As soon as Casquin ascertained that the village was at his mercy, he gave full vent to his vengeance. His warriors scoured the place, killed and scalped all the men they met to the number of a hundred and fifty; plundered the houses, making captives many boys, women and children. Among the captives were two of the numerous wives of Capaha; they were young and beautiful, and had been prevented from embarking with the Cacique, in consequence of the confusion occasioned by the enemy's approach.

The hostility of Casquin and his warriors was not confined to the living, but extended, likewise, to the dead. They broke into the grand mausoleum, in the public square, which the Indians hold so sacred. Here were deposited the remains of numerous ancestors both of the Cacique and great men of his tribe, and here were treasured the trophies gained from Casquin's people in many a past battle. These trophies they tore from the walls and stripped the sepulchre of all its ornaments and treasures. They then threw down the wooden coffins in which were deposited the remains of the dead, trampled upon the bodies, scattered about the bones, and wreaked upon them all kinds of indignities, in revenge for past injuries, which the deceased had inflicted upon their tribe. At the entrance of the sepulchre, stuck on the ends of pikes, were heads of many of their warriors, slain in former battles. These they bore away with them,

replacing them with those of their enemies whom they had just massacred. They would have completed their triumph by setting fire to the mausoleum and to the whole village, but were restrained by a fear of offending the Governor. All these outrages were perpetrated before the Spaniards had reached the place.

De Soto was much concerned at the cruel ravage committed by his allies. He immediately sent envoys to Capaha, to the island on which he had fortified himself, with offers of friendship. These were indignantly rejected; and the Governor learnt that Capaha, breathing vengeance, had summoned all his warriors.

Finding every effort to conciliate the Chieftain fruitless, De Soto determined to attack him in his strong hold. Casquin provided above seventy canoes for the purpose; and an invasion of the island was made by two hundred Spaniards and three thousand Indians.

The island was covered with a thick forest of trees and underwood, and the Cacique had fortified himself strongly with barricades. The Spaniards effected a landing with great difficulty; gained the first barrier by hard fighting, and pressed on to the second within which the women and children were sheltered. Here the warriors of Capaha fought with redoubled fury, and struck such dismay into the people of Casquin that they abandoned their Spanish allies and fled to their canoes; nay, they would have carried off the canoes of the Spaniards also, had there not been a couple of soldiers in each to guard them.

The Spaniards, thus deserted by their pusillanimous allies, and being overpowered by numbers, began to retreat in good order to their canoes. They would all, however, have been cut off had not Capaha restrained the fury of his warriors, and suffered the enemy to regain the shore and embark unmolested.

This unexpected forbearance on the part of the savage chieftain, surprised the Adelantado. On the following day four principal warriors arrived on an embassy from Capaha. They came with great ceremony; bowed to the sun, the moon, and the Governor; but took no notice of Casquin who was present, treating him with utter contempt and disdain. In the name of their Cacique they prayed oblivion of the past and amity for the future, declaring that their Chief-

tain was ready to come in person and do homage. The General received them with the utmost affability, assured them of his friendship, and sent them away well pleased with their reception.

Casquin was vexed at this negotiation, and would fain have prolonged hostilities between the Spaniards and his ancient enemies; but the Governor was as much charmed with the frankness and magnanimity of one Cacique as he had been displeased with the craft and cruelty of the other. He issued orders forbidding any one to injure the natives of the province or their possessions.

In order to appease the Governor for the dastardly flight of his warriors, Casquin made him presents of fish, together with mantles and skins of various kinds; and moreover, brought him one of his daughters as a handmaid. De Soto, however, was not thoroughly to be reconciled. He permitted the Cacique to remain with him, and to retain a sufficient number of vassals for his personal services, but obliged him to send home all his warriors.*

CHAPTER XLVI.

1541. On the following morning, Capaha came to De Soto at the village attended by a train of a hundred warriors decorated with beautiful plumes and with mantles of skins. He was about twenty-six years old, of a handsome person and noble demeanour. When he entered the village his first care was to visit the sepulchre of his ancestors. The indignities that had been offered to their remains were such as an Indian feels most acutely. The Cacique, however, concealed the grief and rage that burnt within his bosom. Gathering the scattered bones in silence, he kissed them, returned them reverently to their coffins; and having arranged the sepulchre, as well as circumstances would permit, proceeded to the Governor's quarters.

De Soto came forth to receive him, accompanied by Casquin. The Cacique paid homage to the Governor, acknowledging himself his vassal, but took no notice whatever of his old adversary, Casquin. De Soto embraced Capaha as a friend, and he was honourably treated by all the officers.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 4. c. 7, 8, 9. Portuguese Narrative, c. 24.

The Cacique answered numerous questions concerning his territories with great clearness and intelligence. When the Governor had ceased his interrogations, and there was a pause, Capaha could no longer restrain his smothered indignation. Turning suddenly to his rival: "Doubtless, Casquin," said he, "you exult in having revenged your past defeats; a thing you could never have effected with your own forces only. You may thank these strangers for it. They will go, but we shall remain in our own country as we were before. Pray to the sun and moon to send us good weather, then!"

The Governor interposed, and endeavoured to produce a reconciliation between the Chieftains. In deference to him, Capaha repressed his wrath and embraced his adversary; but there passed between them occasional glances that portended a future storm, and the proud Capaha was constantly on the alert on all points of ceremony and precedence, making Casquin give way to his superior pretensions.

The Governor and the rival Caciques partook of a repast together, after which the two young and beautiful wives of Capaha, who had been captured, were brought to be restored to him. He received them with many acknowledgments for the generosity thus shown towards him, and then offered them as presents to the Governor. On De Soto's declining to accept them, Capaha begged that he would give them to some of his officers or soldiers, or to whom he pleased, as they could not be admitted again into the household of their prince, nor remain in his territories. The Governor, perceiving that they were considered dishonoured, was persuaded to receive them under his protection, knowing the laws and customs of these savages to be cruel in the extreme when the chastity of their wives was concerned.*

In the town of Capaha, the Spaniards found a great variety of skins of deer, panthers, bears, and wild cats. These they converted into garments, of which they stood in great need, many being nearly naked. They made moc-

* The Portuguese historian says that these beautiful females were the sisters of the Cacique Capaha, and that he begged De Soto to accept them and marry them as pledges of his affection. The one, he added, was called Macanоче, and the other Mochifa. They were both handsome and well shaped; especially the former, whose features were beautiful, her countenance expressive, and her air majestic. We have followed the account of the Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega.

casons of deer-skins, and used the bear-skins as cloaks. They found Indian bucklers formed of buffalo hides, which the troops took possession of.

While quartered in the village, they were abundantly supplied with fish, taken from the adjacent moat, that formed a kind of weir, into which incredible quantities entered from the Mississippi. Among these was a kind called bagres, the head of which was one-third of its bulk, and about its fins and along its sides it had bones as sharp as needles. Some of those caught in the Mississippi weighed from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds weight.* There was another fish, also, of a curious shape, having a snout a cubit in length, and the upper lip like a spade or peel.† Neither of these two species had scales. The Indians likewise occasionally brought a fish, as large as a hog, which had several rows of teeth in each jaw.

While in the territory of Capaha, the Governor gathered intelligence from the Indians, that about forty leagues further on, among certain ranges of hills, there was much salt, and also much of a yellowish metal. As the army was suffering from want of salt, and still retained their eagerness for gold, De Soto despatched two trusty and intelligent men, accompanied by Indian guides, to visit this region. At the end of eleven days they returned, quite spent and half famished, having eaten nothing but green plums and green maize, which they found in some deserted wigwams; six of their native companions were laden with rock-salt in natural crystals, and one with copper. The country through which they had passed was sterile and thinly peopled, and the Indians informed the Governor, that still further north, the country was almost uninhabited, on account of extreme cold. The buffalo roamed there in such numbers that the inhabitants could not cultivate their fields; they subsisted, therefore, by the chase, and principally on the flesh of these wild animals.‡

Hearing so unfavourable an account of the country, and that there was no gold in that direction, De Soto returned

* The cat-fish.

† This spade or palat-fish is at present so rare as scarcely to be met with; but seems to have been peculiar to this region.—Vide Flint's Geography of the Mississippi, v. 1. p. 123 and 129. Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 254.

‡ Portuguese Relation, c. 24.

with his army to the village of Casquin, intending to march westward; for hitherto, ever since leaving Mauvila, he had kept northward, to avoid the sea.* After remaining five days in the village of Casquin, he proceeded along the bank of the river, through a fertile and populous country, until he came to the province of Quiguate, where he was well received. Keeping down the river, he arrived, on the fourth of August, at the chief village of the province, called by the same name. Here he took up his quarters, in the Cacique's house, where he remained six days.

One night during his halt here, the Governor was informed, that Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, whose turn it was to patrol at four in the morning, refused to perform his duty, urging as a plea the dignity of his official station. De Soto was angry at such a symptom of insubordination, the more so as this cavalier was one of those who had murmured at Mauvila, and had said he would return to Spain or Mexico, as soon as they reached the ships.

Quitting his bed, and proceeding to the terrace before the house of the Cacique, which overlooked the village, De Soto raised his voice until it resounded through the place. "What is this, soldiers and captains!" he cried. "Do the mutineers still live, who, when in Mauvila talked of returning to Spain or Mexico? and do they now, with the excuse of being officers of the royal revenue, refuse to patrol the four hours that fall to their share? Why do you desire to return to Spain?—have you left any hereditary estates that you wish to enjoy? Why do you desire to go to Mexico?—to prove the baseness and pusillanimity of your spirits?—that, having it in your power to become chieftains in a vast and noble country you have discovered, you prefer living dependants in a stranger's house, and of being guests at a stranger's table, than to maintain house and table of your own! What honour will this confer upon you? Shame, shame! blush for yourselves, and recollect that, whether officers of the royal treasury or not, you must all serve your sovereign! Presume not upon any rank you possess; for, be he who he may, I will strike off the head of that man who refuses to do his duty. And, at once to undeceive you, know that whilst I live, no one shall quit this country until we have conquered and settled it."

* Garcilaso de la Vega, *L. 4. c. 11.*

These words, uttered with great vehemence, showed the cause of that moody melancholy which the Governor had manifested since he left Mauvila. This outbreak had a visible effect upon the soldiery. They saw that their General was not to be trifled with, and thenceforward obeyed his orders without murmuring.

CHAPTER XLVII.

1541. FROM Quiguate, De Soto shaped his course to the north-west, in search of a province called Coligoa, lying at the foot of mountains. He was guided by a single Indian, who led the army for several days through dreary forests and numerous marshes, until they came to the village of Coligoa, on the margin of a small river. The natives, not being apprised of the Spaniards coming, upon their approach, threw themselves into the river and fled. The troopers pursued them, and took a number of prisoners. In a few days the Cacique waited upon De Soto, bringing a present of mantles, deer-skins, and hides of the bison and buffalo, and informed him that about six leagues to the northward there was a thinly peopled country, where vast herds of these wild buffalos ranged;* but that to the southward there was a populous and plentiful province, called Cayas.

The Cacique of Coligoa having furnished the Spaniards with a guide, they resumed their march towards the south, and after a journey of five days, entered the province of Palisema. Its Cacique fled, but left his dwelling furnished and arranged in order for De Soto. The walls were hung with deer-skins, so admirably dyed and dressed, that they appeared to the eye like beautiful tapestry. The floor was likewise covered with skins similarly prepared †

The adventurers made but a short halt in this province, as the supply of maize was scanty, and pushing rapidly onward, in four days crossed the frontiers of the province of Cayas, and encamped on the banks of a river near a village called Tanico.‡

* This province is supposed to have been situated towards the sources of the St. Francis, or the hills of White River.—Vide Nuttall's *Arkansas*, p. 256.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 25.

‡ Supposed to have belonged to the tribe of the Tunicas.—Vide Nuttall's *Arkansas*, p. 257.

The waters of this river, and of an adjacent lake, were impregnated with salt, so much so as to leave a deposit in the blue sand which bordered their shores. The Indians were accustomed to collect this sand in baskets, made wide above and narrow below, and suspended in the air on a pole. Water was then poured upon the sand, and draining through, fell into a vessel beneath, carrying with it the saline particles. The water being then evaporated by boiling, the crystallized salt remained at the bottom of the pot. This the Indians used as an article of traffic, exchanging it with their neighbours for skins and mantles.

The Spaniards, overjoyed at finding an article of which they were so much in need, remained here eight days making salt, and several who had suffered excessively for the want of it indulged so immoderately in the use of it, as to bring on maladies, and in some instances death.

Having laid in a large supply of salt, the army pursued their journey, and arriving at the province of Tula, marched four days through a wilderness, where they halted about mid-day in a beautiful plain, within half a league of the capital. In the afternoon, the Governor set out with a strong party of horse and foot, to reconnoitre the village. It was situated in a plain betwixt two streams. On their approach, the inhabitants seized their arms and sallied bravely forth, the women advancing to combat as fiercely as the men.

The Spaniards soon drove them back, and entered the village fighting. The savages fought from house to house, disdaining to ask for quarter, and struggling with fearless desperation. During the conflict, a soldier entered one of the houses and escaped to an upper chamber, used as a granary, where he found five women concealed. He made signs to them not to be alarmed, as he did not wish to injure them: his caution was unnecessary, for they flew on him like so many mastiffs upon a bull. In his struggle to shake them off, he thrust his leg through the slight partition of reeds, remaining seated on the floor at the mercy of those furies, who, with biting and blows, were in a fair way of killing him. Notwithstanding the strait he was in, the sturdy soldier was ashamed to call for succour, because his antagonists were women.

At this moment another soldier happened to enter below, and seeing a naked leg through the ceiling, at first took it for

the limb of an Indian, raised his sword and was about to strike, but observing it more narrowly, and hearing the clamour over head, he suspected the truth of the matter, and calling two of his companions, they ascended to the rescue of their comrade. So fierce, however, was the fury of the women, that not one of them would quit her hold upon the soldier, until they were all slain.

At a late hour the Governor drew off his men from the village, and returned to the camp; vexed at having been drawn into so unprofitable a battle, in which many of his followers were severely wounded.*

On the following day, the army entered the village and found it abandoned. During the afternoon, bands of horse scoured the country in every direction. They met several of the natives, but it was impossible to bring them in alive, or obtain any information from them. They threw themselves upon the ground, crying, "Kill me or leave me!" Nor could the death of some conquer the obstinacy of the rest.

In this village the Spaniards found the flesh of buffaloes and numerous skins of the same animal; some in a raw state, others dressed for robes and blankets. They sought in vain, however, to meet with these animals alive, but still learnt that they existed in great herds to the northward. The inhabitants of the province of Tula differed from all the Indians they had yet seen. They had found the natives generally handsome and well formed; but these, both men and women, were extremely ill-favoured. Their heads were very large, and narrow at the top—a shape produced by being compressed by bandages from their birth to the age of nine or ten years. Their faces, particularly their lips, inside and out, were frightfully tattooed; and their dispositions corresponded with their hideous aspects.

On the fourth night after the Spaniards had gained possession of the village, the savages came in great numbers, and so silently, that before the sentinels perceived them, they burst upon the encampment in three different parts. Loud were the shouts, and great was the confusion; for, in the darkness, it was impossible to distinguish friends from foes. The Spaniards shouted the names of the Virgin and Santiago, to prevent their wounding one another. The savages, likewise shouted the name of Tula. Many of them, instead

* Portuguese Relation, c. 25, 26. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 12.

of bows and arrows had staves like pikes, two or three yards long, which were new to the soldiers, and with which the Indians inflicted many severe wounds.

They fought stubbornly for more than an hour, and did not retreat to the woods until day began to dawn. The Spaniards did not pursue them, but returned to the village to take care of the wounded, of which there were many, although four only were killed.

After the battle, as usual, several of the Spaniards were scattered about the field examining the dead. Three foot soldiers and two on horseback were thus employed, when one of the former saw an Indian raise his head from among the bushes and immediately conceal it again. He gave the cry of Indians! Indians! The two men on horseback, thinking some of the enemy were coming in large detachments, galloped off in different directions to meet them. In the meantime, the foot soldier who had discovered the Indian among the bushes ran up to kill him.

The savage, seeing he could not escape, stepped forward manfully to the encounter, armed with a Spanish battle-axe, which he had obtained that morning in the village. Taking it in both hands, he struck the shield of the soldier, severed it in two, and badly wounded his arm. The pain of the wound was so great and the blow so violent, that the Spaniard had not strength to attack his foe. The Indian then rushed upon the other soldier who was coming up, struck his shield in the same manner, broke it, wounded him likewise in the arm and disabled him. One of the horsemen, seeing his companions so roughly handled, charged the savage, who took shelter beneath an oak tree. The Spaniard not being able to ride under the tree, drew near and made several thrusts at the enemy, but could not reach him. The Indian rushed out, brandished the battle-axe as before, struck the horse across the shoulder, laying it open from the withers to the knee, and thus deprived the animal of the power of moving.

At this moment, Gonzalo Silvestre, who was on foot, came up. He had been in no haste, deeming two foot soldiers and three horsemen sufficient to manage one Indian. The latter, elated by his success, advanced to receive the Spaniard with great boldness. Grasping the battle-axe, he gave a blow similar to the two first; but Silvestre was more guarded than

his companions. The weapon glanced from his shield and stuck in the ground. Silvestre having the enemy at an advantage, gave him a diagonal blow with his sword, which laid open his face and breast, and, entering his arm, nearly severed the wrist. The infidel, seizing the axe between the stump and his other hand, with a desperate leap, made an attempt to wound Silvestre in the face; but again warding off the blow with his shield, he gave the savage a sweeping cut across the waist, that passed through his naked body, and he fell dead, cut completely asunder.*

CHAPTER XLVIII.

1541. THE Spaniards continued in the village of Tula twenty days, curing the wounded. During this time they made many incursions in different parts of the province, which was very populous; but, although they captured many inhabitants, it was impossible either by presents or menaces, to acquire their friendship, or reduce them to obedience. So extreme was the ferocity of this tribe, that they were the dread of all their neighbours, who used the name of Tula as an object of nursery terror to their unruly children.

The army pursued their march in quest of the province called Utiangue, or Autiamque; about ten days' journey, or eighty leagues from Tula. In that neighbourhood, the Indians said, there was a large lake, which the Spaniards hoped might prove an arm of the sea. Five days of their journey was over a rough, mountainous country, thickly wooded, where they found a village called Quipana;† but could take none of the inhabitants, the forests impeding the speed of their horses.

After a further march of a few days they entered the province of Utiangue. It was very fertile, containing a scattered but warlike population. Though incessantly harassed by ambuscades and skirmishes, the Spaniards proceeded until they reached the village of Utiangue, from which the province took its name. It contained many well-built houses,

* The Inca says, that the blow was so powerful, and the sword so keen, that the Indian remained for a few seconds standing on his feet, and saying to the Spaniard, "Peace be with you," (*quedate en pas*.) fell dead in two halves! The feat, as described in the text, is sufficiently strong for belief.

† Supposed to be in the country of the Kappaws, or Quapaws.

and was situated in a fine plain, watered by the same river which passed through the province of Cayas,* and was bordered by meadows that afforded excellent pasturage for horses. The town was abandoned by its inhabitants, except a few lingerers whom the Spaniards made prisoners. The houses were well stocked with maize, small beans, nuts, and plums.

As the season was far advanced, De Soto determined to winter here. Having encamped in the centre of the village, but apart from the houses, lest the Indians should set fire to them in the night, he commenced fortifying the place. The ground to be enclosed was measured out, and a portion assigned to each soldier, according to the number of slaves he owned. Thus every one had his task, and worked with emulation, the Indians bringing wood. In three days the village was surrounded by strong palisades, driven deep into the ground, and fastened by cross pieces.

In addition to the ample supply of provisions found in this village, the Spaniards foraged the surrounding country, and brought in abundance of maize, dried fruits, and various kinds of grain. They were extremely successful also in the chase; killing great numbers of deer. The province, moreover, abounded to an unusual degree with rabbits, of which they found two species; one of the usual size, the other as large and strong as a hare and much fatter. These the Indians were accustomed to snare with running nooses.

The Cacique of the province sent messengers from time to time with presents and promises of friendly service, but never made his appearance. These messengers, also, always arrived at night, and, after delivering their message loitered about the camp, noticing the men, horses, and weapons; showing evidently that they only came as spies. The Governor, therefore, gave orders that no Indian should be admitted after sun-set; and one, persisting to enter, was killed by a sentinel; which put an end to all similar embassies.

The Spaniards were often waylaid and assaulted, when out on foraging and hunting parties, but generally managed to defeat their assailants.

During the winter, there were great falls of snow for upwards of a month, and at length firewood began to fail. Upon this, De Soto turned out with all the horse, and by

* Supposed to be the Arkansas.

riding backward and forward, made a practicable road from the camp to a forest, about two bow-shots distant, which enabled the men to go thither and cut fuel.*

Upon the whole, though the season was severe, yet, having good quarters, and fuel and food in plenty, the adventurers passed the pleasantest winter they had experienced in the course of their arduous journey, enjoyed their present ease and abundance with the greatest zest, which was sharpened by the frightful hardships and disasters they had encountered.

During their residence in this village, Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, died. His death was a severe loss to the expedition; as he had been the main organ of communication between the Spaniards and natives. It is true, that even with his assistance these communications were extremely imperfect, and subject to many misinterpretations, for he was acquainted merely with the language of the Indians in the neighbourhood of Espiritu Santo; whereas, in the march of the army, they were continually passing through new provinces, which had each its peculiar dialect. It was necessary, therefore, to have an Indian interpreter from almost every tribe, which rendered their mode of communication often difficult in the extreme.

In treating with a Cacique, the word given by the Governor to Juan Ortiz, was passed from mouth to mouth, of perhaps eight or ten Indians of different tribes, before it reached the person to be addressed; and the reply was transmitted in the same tedious method to the Governor. Information, also, concerning any new region was collected in the same manner, subject to perversions and misunderstandings in the course of its transmission.

Hence arose continual errors among the Spaniards, as to the country and its inhabitants, which often bewildered them in their wanderings, and doubtless led to many sanguinary affrays with the natives which a proper understanding might have prevented.

The death of Juan Ortiz increased these disadvantages tenfold. Henceforth, they had no other interpreter but the young Indian brought from Cofachiqui. He, however, had acquired but an imperfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and was deficient in the sagacity, general information, and varied experience, which had distinguished Juan Ortiz.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 27.

CHAPTER XLIX.

1542. THE feelings and views of Hernando De Soto had recently undergone a change. The anger which had induced him so suddenly to alter his plans at Mauvila, and turn his back upon the sea, had gradually subsided. His hopes of finding a golden region were fast fading away. He had lost nearly half his troops by fighting, sickness, and hardships of various kinds. The greater part of his horses, too, were slain or had perished. Of the remainder, many were lame, and all had been without shoes above a year. He was daily more and more sensible, also, of the loss he had sustained in the death of Juan Ortiz. The young Indian of Cofachiqui, who succeeded him as interpreter, made continual blunders as to the nature of the country, the rivers, routes, and distances, and there was danger through his misinformation, that the army might be led into difficulties, and become perplexed or lost in the vast and trackless wildernesses they had to traverse.

De Soto bitterly repented having abandoned his original plan of joining his ships and establishing a colony on the shores of Achusi. Being now too far from the sea to attempt reaching it by a direct march, he resolved to give over his wandering in the interior, make the best of his way to the Mississippi, and choose some suitable village on its banks for a fortified post, where he might securely establish himself. He, moreover, determined to build two brigantines, in which some of his most confidential followers might descend the river, carry tidings of his safety to his wife and friends in Cuba, and procure reinforcements of men and horses, together with a supply of flocks, herds, seeds, and everything else necessary to colonize and secure the possession of the vast and fertile country he had overrun.*

As soon as the spring was sufficiently advanced, therefore, De Soto broke up his winter cantonment at Utiangue, and set out in a direction for the Rio Grande, or Mississippi. He had received intelligence of a village called Anilco, situated on the banks of a great river which emptied into the Mississippi; and towards that village he shaped his course.

After quitting Utiangue, he spent ten days at a village

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 28. Garcilaso de la Vega, lib. 5. 1. c. 3.

near the same river which passed by Cayas and Utiangué,* in the province of Ayas. During his stay there, a boat was constructed, in which the army crossed the stream, but were detained four days on its banks by snow and bad weather. They then journeyed through a low country, cut up by ravines, and perplexed with swamps. It was toilsome marching for the infantry. The troopers, were always up to the stirrup, sometimes to the knees in water, and now and then obliged to swim their horses.

At a town called Tultelpina, they were checked in their march by a lake, which emptied itself into a river. The waters were high and turbulent. De Soto ordered one of his captains to embark in a canoe with five men and cross the lake. The impetuous current overturned the frail bark : some of the men clung to it, others to the trees that were standing in the water ; but one, Francisco Bastian, a Spaniard of rank, was unfortunately drowned.† De Soto then sought in vain to discover a route along the borders of the lake. At length, at the suggestion of two Indians of Tultelpina, he caused light rafts to be made of reeds and the wood-work of houses, and in this way transported his army across.†

Urging their way forward, the Spaniards arrived at the province of Anilco, and penetrated about thirty leagues, passing several villages, until they reached the principal one which gave its name to the district. It was situated in an open country, on the banks of a copious stream, and contained about four hundred spacious houses, built round a square. The residence of the Cacique, as usual, was posted on a high artificial mound. The country was so well peopled that there were several other villages in sight, and such quantities of maize, fruits, and pulse of various kinds, that the Spaniards pronounced it the most fertile and populous country they had met with except Coza and Apalachee.

On the strangers' approach the inhabitants made some show of resistance and skirmished slightly ; but this was only to cover the retreat of their wives and children across the river on rafts and in canoes. Some few were taken before they could embark. Many more, who had not been able to escape, were found in the village.

Soon after the Governor had taken up his quarters in the capital, an Indian of distinction, attended by a few followers,

* Supposed to be the Arkansas. † Portuguese Relation, c. 28.

came to him in the name of the Cacique, with presents of a mantle of martin skins and a string of large pearls. De Soto gave the chief of the embassy a collar of mother-of-pearl and some other trinkets, with which he went away apparently well satisfied. The negotiation which opened thus favourably ended in nothing. The ambassadors proved to be mere spies sent to observe the strangers' force. The Cacique could not be induced to enter into friendly intercourse, treating all messengers sent to him with great haughtiness and exhibiting signs of determined hostility.

The river that ran by the village of Anilco was the same that passed by Cayas and Utiangue; and De Soto was informed that at no great distance it emptied itself into the Mississippi.* He was told, also, that near the confluence of the two streams, on the banks of the Mississippi, was situated a large village, called Guachoya, the capital of a populous and fruitful province of the same name, the Cacique of which was continually at war with the Chief of Anilco.

De Soto determined to proceed to this province, in hopes that the sea might lie at no great distance from it. At any rate Guachoya might prove an advantageous site for building his brigantines and encamping his troops. As soon, therefore, as canoes could be procured and rafts constructed to cross the river, the army resumed its march over a hilly, uninhabited country, and in four days arrived at the village of Guachoya. It contained three hundred houses and was situated about a bow-shot from the Mississippi on two contiguous hills, between which was a small plain that served as a public square. The whole was fortified by palisades. The inhabitants had fled across the Mississippi in their canoes, taking with them most of their effects; but Juan de Añasco foraged the neighbourhood and obtained a great supply of maize, beans, dried fruits, and cakes made of pressed plums, or persimmons.

CHAPTER L.

1542. De Soto took up his quarters in the Cacique's house, which was large and commodious. Four days were passed in negotiations between him and the Cacique who was ex-

* The river is supposed to be the Arkansas.

tremely distrustful of the Spaniards. At length the Chieftain's apprehensions were removed, and on the fifth day he visited the army. He came with a retinue of a hundred warriors, decked in savage finery, and bringing presents of mantles, deer-skins, fish, and dogs.

The Governor received Guachoya very courteously at the door of his mansion, and conducted him into the great saloon, or hall of the building. The Cacique's attendants ranged themselves round the apartment among the Spaniards, while their Chief and the Governor held a long conversation through the medium of interpreters, concerning the territories of the former.

In the midst of their conversation the Cacique happened to sneeze. Upon this, all his attendants bowed their heads, opened and closed their arms, and making other signs of veneration, saluted their prince with various phrases of the same purport—May the sun guard you—may the sun be with you—may the sun shine upon you—defend you—prosper you, and the like; each uttered the phrase that came first to his mind, and for a short time there was a universal murmuring of these compliments.*

Guachoya ate at the Governor's table. His followers remained in attendance and would not go to their own repast, although repeatedly invited, until their chief had finished; they then dined in the soldiers' quarters, where a general repast was provided. The Cacique lodged in a part of his own dwelling with a few of his personal attendants; but at sunset his warriors crossed to the opposite side of the river and returned in the morning. This they continued to do while the Spaniards remained in the village. One of De Soto's first questions to the Cacique was, whether he knew any thing of the sea. Guachoya, however, professed utter ignorance of any such vast body of water; his knowledge of the country down to the river did not extend beyond a great province called Quigualtanqui; the Cacique of which, he said, was the greatest chieftain in all these parts.

The Governor suspecting his ignorance to be feigned, despatched Juan de Añasco with eight troopers to explore the course of the river and ascertain whether the sea was near. De Añasco returned after eight days' absence, during which he had not been able to advance above fifteen leagues

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 5. c. 5.

on account of the great windings of the river and the swamps by which it was bordered.*

This information determined De Soto to build two brigantines at Guachoya, and to establish his projected colony between that place and Anilco, in a fertile country, where supplies were to be easily had. In this settlement it was his intention to remain until the brigantines should return with reinforcements and supplies. To enable him to pursue these plans without molestation, it was important for him to conciliate the friendship of the Cacique Anilco, whose territories lay adjacent, and who would be enabled to render him much assistance as an ally, but great annoyance as an enemy.

Guachoya, apprehending the Governor's inclinations, advised him to return to the province of Anilco, offering to accompany and aid him with his people. As he would have to re-cross the river that ran by the village of Anilco, and united with the Mississippi, the Cacique offered to supply eighty large and numerous small canoes. These would have to proceed seven leagues along the Mississippi, to the mouth of the river up which they would ascend to the village; the whole distance making a navigation of twenty leagues. Meanwhile the Governor and Cacique, with their forces, would proceed by land, so as to arrive opposite the village at the same time with the canoes.

Arrangements were accordingly made. As soon as the canoes were ready, four thousand Indian warriors, besides the rowers, embarked in them; with these, the Governor sent Captain Juan de Guzman and his company, to command the canoes and keep the Indians in order. Three days were allowed for the voyage.

At the moment they pushed off from the shore, the Governor set out by land with his troops, accompanied by Guachoya at the head of two thousand warriors, besides those who carried provisions.

The two expeditions arrived opposite the village at the time appointed. The Cacique of Anilco was absent, but the inhabitants making a stand at the pass of the river Nuño, Tobar fell furiously upon them with a party of horse. Eager for the fight, the Spaniards charged so heedlessly, that each trooper found himself surrounded by a band of Indians. The latter, however, were so panic stricken that they turned

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

their backs and fled in wild disorder to the forests, amid the shouts of the pursuers and the shrieks of the women and children.* Guachoya now gave full vent to his thirst for vengeance. In his alliance with the Spaniards, and in advising the General to revisit this province, he had been actuated, like Casquin, solely by a secret desire to revenge himself upon an ancient enemy. The province of Anilco and that of Guachoya were in continual hostility; but the former had, for some time, obtained the advantage, and brought off many trophies gained in ambuscades, surprises, and midnight forays; the mode in which the savages carried on their warfare.

On entering the conquered village, the first thought of the warriors of Guachoya was to attack the sepulchres of the Caciques. They removed the heads of their own countrymen stuck round the gate, replacing them with those of their enemies. They stripped the sepulchres of all the trophies, scalps, and banners taken from their nation in battle; carried off the relics and ornaments of the dead, threw down their coffins, and scattered about their bones, as had been done on a former occasion. Then scouring through the village, they massacred all they met, being chiefly old men, women, and children, upon whom they inflicted the most horrible barbarities.

In all this they acted with such fury and haste, that the mischief was effected almost before De Soto was aware of it. He put an end to the carnage as soon as possible, reprimanded the Cacique severely, forbade any one to set fire to a house, or injure an Indian, under pain of death, and quitted the village as speedily as possible; taking care that his Indian allies should first pass the river, and not remain behind to do mischief.

His precautions were all ineffectual. He had scarcely disembarked and marched a league forward, when, on looking back, he saw a great smoke arising from Anilco, and found that several of the houses were already in flames. In fact the warriors of Guachoya, being deterred from open hostility, had secretly placed coals among the straw roofs of the houses. These being parched with the summer heat, easily took fire, and burst into a blaze.

The Governor would have returned to extinguish the flames,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

but at this instant he saw many Indians of the neighbourhood running towards the village; therefore, leaving it to their care, he continued his march, exceedingly vexed at having his friendly intentions towards Anilco thus defeated, but concealing his anger, lest he should likewise make an enemy of his crafty ally.*

CHAPTER LI.

ON taking up his quarters again in the village of Guachoya, De Soto set to work with his usual energy and perseverance to construct the two brigantines. He ordered timber to be cut; collected all the ropes and cordage he could find in the neighbourhood, to serve for rigging; employed Indians to gather resin and gums from pines and other trees, and caused all the spikes and nails saved from the old piraguas to be put in order, and an additional quantity made. He had already, in his own mind, selected from among his faithful and trusty followers the officers and men who were to embark in the expedition. With the remainder of his army, amounting to about five hundred men and fifty horses, he intended to await their return. While, therefore, he urged the building of the brigantines, he made diligent search for some fruitful region, where he could be sure of subsistence for his army, during the absence of his envoys.

Having heard much concerning the fertility of the great province already mentioned, named Quigualtanqui, which lay on the opposite side of the Mississippi, De Soto sent a party of horse and foot to explore it. The river was here about a mile in width, seventeen fathoms deep, and very rapid, having both shores thickly inhabited.† Collecting all the canoes of the village, and fastening the larger, two and two, together, he caused the cavalry to be passed over in them, while the infantry crossed in the smaller. They scoured the province of Quigualtanqui, and visited many hamlets, especially the principal one, containing five hundred houses, and immediately opposite to Guachoya. The habitations, however, were everywhere deserted; the inhabitants having fled or hid themselves. The scouting party, therefore, re-

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 5. c. 6. Herrera, Decad. 7. Lib. 7. c. 3.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

turned, without having effected any thing, but giving glowing accounts of the evident fertility and populousness of the province.

These favourable reports determined De Soto to cross the river with his troops, as soon as the brigantines should be despatched, establish his head-quarters in the chief town of Quigualtanqui, and there spend the summer and winter that must intervene before the return of his envoys.

To his infinite vexation, however, a violent hostility was manifested on the part of Quigualtanqui. That Chieftain, being of a haughty character and possessing great power, was extremely tenacious of his territorial sway. He was incensed at the inroad of the Spanish scouts, and sent messengers to De Soto, swearing by the sun and moon, to wage a war of extermination against him and his people, should any of them dare again to enter his dominions.*

At an earlier period, a message of this kind would have been answered by De Soto by an inroad into the Cacique's dominions; but his spirits were gradually failing. He had brooded over his past error, in abandoning the sea-coast until he was sick at heart; and as he saw the perils of his situation every moment increasing, new and powerful enemies continually springing up around him, while his scanty force was daily diminishing, he became anxious for the preservation of the remainder of his followers, and determined to avoid all further warfare. He sent a messenger, therefore, to the Cacique, soliciting his friendship. Availing himself of an Indian superstition with respect to himself, he informed the haughty Chieftain that he was the offspring of the sun; the luminary which the natives professed to worship;—that as such, he had received the homage of the Caciques of all the provinces through which he had passed;—and, inviting Quigualtanqui to come and pay him similar reverence, he promised to take him into especial favour and to reward him with inestimable gifts.

Meanwhile the melancholy which had long preyed upon De Soto's spirits; his incessant anxiety of mind and fatigue of body, added perhaps to the influence of climate, brought on a slow fever, which at length confined him to his bed.

In the midst of his illness, he received a reply from Quigualtanqui, by his own messenger. The stern warrior ob-

* Alonzo de Carmona.—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 5. c. 6.

served, that if what De Soto pretended were true, and he was really the offspring of the sun, he might prove the fact, by drying up the great river; in which case he should be ready to come over and pay him homage. If he could not do so, he must know that Quigualtanqui, being the greatest Chieftain in the land, visited nobody; but received visits and tribute from all. If, therefore, De Soto wished to see him, he must cross the river to his territory.* If he came as a friend, he should be received as such; if as an enemy, he would find Quigualtanqui and his men ready for battle, and resolved never to yield an inch of ground.*

This taunting reply irritated the harassed spirit of De Soto and augmented his malady. He was still more irritated by the information that the Cacique was endeavouring to form a league of all the neighbouring Chieftains against him; and he dreaded that some new disasters might occur to delay if not to defeat his plans. From his sick bed, however, he maintained his usual vigilance for the safety of his army. The sentinels were doubled, and a rigid watch maintained. Each night the cavalry mounted guard in the village suburbs, their horses caparisoned, ready for action; two troopers were constantly upon the patrol, alternately visiting the outposts, and detachments of cross-bowmen kept watch upon the river in canoes.†

The schemes, labours, and anxieties of De Soto, however, were rapidly drawing to a close; day by day his malady increased, and his fever rose to such a height, that he felt convinced his last hour was at hand. He prepared for death with the steadfastness of a soldier, and the piety of a devout Catholic.

He made his will almost in cypher, for want of sufficient paper; then calling together the officers and soldiers of note, he nominated, as his successor to the titles and commands of Governor and Captain-General of the kingdom and provinces of Florida, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado; the same whom, in the province of Chicaza, he had deposed from the office of Master of the Camp; and he charged the troops on the part of the Emperor, and in consideration of the virtues of Luis de Moscoso, to obey him in the above capacities, until further orders should be received from government. To all this he required them to make oath with due form and solemnity.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

When this was done, the dying Chieftain called to him, by twos and threes, the most noble of his army, and after them, ordering that the soldiers should enter by twenties and thirties, he took of all his last farewell, with great tenderness on his own part, and with many tears on theirs. He charged them to convert the natives to the Catholic faith, and augment the power of the Spanish crown, being himself cut off by death from the accomplishment of these great aims. He thanked them for the affection and fidelity which they had evinced, in fearlessly following his fortunes through such great trials, and expressed his deep regret that it was not in his power to show his gratitude, by bestowing upon them such rewards as they merited. He begged forgiveness of all whom he had offended, and finally, entreated them in the most affectionate manner to be peaceful and kind to one another. His fever raged violently, and continued to increase until the seventh day, when, having confessed his sins with much humility and contrition, he expired.*

Thus died Hernando de Soto; one of the boldest of the many brave leaders, who figured in the first discoveries, and distinguished themselves in the wild warfare of the Western World. How proud and promising had been the commencement of his career! how humble and hapless its close! Cut off in the vigour of his days, for he was but forty-two years old when he expired—he perished in a strange and savage land, amid the din and tumult of a camp, and with merely a few rough soldiers to attend him; for nearly all were engaged in making preparations for their escape from the perils by which they were beset.

Hernando de Soto was well calculated to command the independent and chivalric spirits of which his army was composed; for while his ideas of military discipline were very strict, and he severely punished every breach of military duty, he easily pardoned all other offences. No one was

* “He died,” says the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, in his Chronicle, “like a Catholic Christian, imploring mercy of the most Holy Trinity; relying on the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, the intercession of the Virgin, and of all the Celestial Court, and in the faith of the Roman church.”

“With these words, repeating them many times, this magnanimous and never-conquered cavalier, worthy of great dignities and titles, resigned his soul to God, deserving a better historian than an unlettered Indian.”

more prompt to notice and reward merit of whatever kind. He is said to have been courteous and engaging in his manners, patient and persevering under difficulties, encouraging his followers by his quiet endurance of suffering. In his own person, he was valiant in the extreme, and of such vigour of arm, that wherever he entered into battle, he is said to have hewn himself a path through the thickest of the enemy. Some of his biographers have accused him of cruelty towards the Indians; but according to the Inca's account, we find him, in general, humane and merciful; striving to conciliate the natives by presents and kind messages, and only resorting to violent measures where the safety of himself and followers were at stake. A striking contrast to his humanity in this respect, will be presented in the conduct of his successor, Luis de Moscoso.

CHAPTER LII.

1542. THE death of the Governor left his followers overwhelmed with grief. They felt as if they had been made orphans by his loss, as they had looked up to him as a father: and their sorrow was the greater, because they could not perform those solemn obsequies due to the remains of a commander so much beloved and honoured.

They feared to bury him publicly, and with becoming ceremonies, lest the Indians should discover the place of his interment, and outrage his remains, as they had done those of other Spaniards; tearing them from their graves, dismembering them, and hanging them piecemeal from the trees. If they had shown such indignities to the bodies of common soldiers, how much greater would they be likely to commit upon the body of their general? Besides, De Soto had impressed them with a very exalted opinion of his prudence and valour; and the Spaniards, therefore, dreaded lest, when the Indians discovered that the Spanish leader was dead, they should be induced to revolt, and fall upon their weakened and diminished army.*

For these reasons they buried him at midnight, sentinels being posted to keep the natives at a distance, that the sad ceremony might be safe from the observation of their spies.

* Portuguese Relation c. 30.

The place chosen for his sepulchre was one of many broad and deep pits, in a plain near the village, whence the Indians had taken earth for their dwellings. Here he was interred in silence and in secret, amid the tears of priests and cavaliers, who were present at his mournful obsequies. The better to deceive the natives, and prevent their suspecting the place of his interment, they gave out, on the following day, that the Governor was recovering from his malady, and, mounting their horses, assumed an appearance of rejoicing. In order that all traces of the grave might be lost, they caused much water to be sprinkled over it, and upon the surrounding plain, to prevent the dust from being raised by their horses. They then scoured the plain, galloping about the pits, and over the very grave of their commander; but it was difficult, under this cover of pretended gaiety, to conceal the real sadness of their hearts.

With all these precautions, they soon found out that the Indians suspected, not only the Governor's death, but the place where he lay buried; for in passing by the pits, they would stop, look round attentively on all sides, talk to one another, and make signs with their chins, directing, at the same time, their eyes toward the spot where the body was interred.

The Spaniards perceiving this, and feeling assured that the savages would search the whole plain until they found the body, determined to disinter it, and place it where it would be secure from violation. No place appeared better suited to their purpose than the Mississippi; but they first wished to ascertain whether there was sufficient depth of water effectually to hide the body.

Accordingly, Juan de Añasco, and other officers, taking a mariner with them, embarked one evening in a canoe, under pretence of fishing; and sounding the river where it was a quarter of a league wide, in mid-channel they found a depth of nineteen fathoms. Here, therefore, they determined to deposit the corpse.

As there was no stone in the neighbourhood sufficiently heavy to sink it, they cut down an evergreen cak, and made an excavation in one side, the size of a man. On the following night they disinterred the body with all possible silence, and placing it in the trunk of the oak nailed planks over the aperture. This rustic coffin was then conveyed to the centre of the river,

where, in the presence of several priests and cavaliers, it was committed to the stream. They beheld it sink to the bottom, shedding many tears over it, and commending anew to heaven* the soul of the good cavalier.

The Indians, soon perceiving that the Governor was not with the army, nor buried, as they had supposed, demanded of the Spaniards what had become of him. The general reply prepared for the occasion was, that God had sent for him, to communicate to him great things, which he would be commissioned to perform so soon as he should return to earth. With this answer they were apparently contented.†

The Cacique, however, who believed that he was dead, sent two handsome young Indians to Moscoso, with a message, stating that it was the custom of his country, when any great prince died, to put a certain number of persons to death, in order that they might attend, and serve him on his journey to the land of spirits; and for that purpose, these young men presented themselves. Luis de Moscoso replied, that the Governor was not dead, but gone to heaven, and had chosen some of his Christian followers to accompany him there; he therefore prayed the Cacique to receive again the two youths, and renounce for the future so barbarous a custom. He accordingly set the Indians at liberty on the spot, and ordered them to return home; but one of them refused to go, saying that he would not serve a master who had condemned him to death without a cause, but would ever follow one who had saved his life.‡

De Soto's effects, consisting in all of two slaves, three horses, and seven hundred swine, were disposed of by public sale. The slaves and horses were sold for three thousand crowns each; the money to be paid by the purchaser on the first discovery of any gold or silver mines, or as soon as he should be proprietor of a plantation in Florida. Should neither of these events come to pass, the buyer pledged himself to pay the money within a year. The swine were sold in like manner, at two hundred crowns a-piece. Henceforth, the greater number of the soldiers possessed this desirable article of food, which they ate on all days save Fridays,

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 1. Lib. 4. c. 8.

† Alonzo de Carmona and Juan Coles. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 4. c. 8.

‡ Portuguese Relation, c. 30.

Saturdays, and the eves of festivals; these they rigidly observed according to the customs of the Roman Catholic church.*

This abstinence they were not able to practise before, as they were frequently without meat for two or three months together, and when they found any, were glad to devour it, without regard to days.

CHAPTER LIII.

1542. AFTER their first grief for the loss of their illustrious commander, many in the army began to doubt whether it was really a calamity. Some even thought it matter of rejoicing; for numbers of officers and soldiers had long been disheartened by sufferings and their disappointment of expectations of golden spoils. Nothing but their respect for De Soto and the sway he maintained over them had prevented their abandoning so disastrous a country. They were now in hopes that the new Governor, who was devoutly inclined, would choose rather to seek rest and repose in some Christian land than follow out the schemes of De Soto.

Luis de Moscoso immediately called a council to deliberate upon what was to be done; and it was determined by common consent of the leading men to quit the country as soon as possible. Moscoso requested each officer to deliver in his written opinion whether they should follow the course of the river or cross the country to the westward.

Juan de Añasco, the contador, was for carrying out the views and plans of De Soto. He not only opposed the idea of suddenly abandoning the country, but offered to guide the army to the frontiers of Mexico; for he piqued himself upon his knowledge of geography, and presumed by its aid to deliver his comrades out of all their difficulties.

The proposition of Añasco derived support from the recollection of certain rumours which the Indians had brought some months before, that not far to the west there were other Spaniards then pursuing a course of conquest. These rumours were now received as true; it was therefore concluded that those Spaniards must have sallied forth from Mexico to conquer new kingdoms; and as according to the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

account received they could not be far distant, it was determined to march with all speed in that direction, and join them in their career of successful subjugation.

On the fourth or fifth of June, the army set out on its march, under the command of its new Governor and Captain-General, Luis de Moscoso; directing its course westward, and determined to turn neither to the right nor to the left. By keeping in that direction it was concluded they must arrive at the confines of Mexico: not perceiving they were in a much higher latitude than that of New Spain.

A young Indian, sixteen or seventeen years of age, finely formed, and having a handsome countenance, followed the Spaniards of his own accord when they left this province. From suspicion that he might prove to be a spy, the circumstance was mentioned to Luis de Moscoso, who, ordering the stripling to be brought before him, demanded through his interpreters, the cause of his leaving his parents and friends to follow a people whom he did not know? "Señor," replied he, "I am poor and an orphan; my parents died when I was very young and left me destitute. An Indian chief of my native village, a near relative of the Cacique, took compassion on me, led me to his home, and brought me up among his children. When you left the village he was grievously sick and his life despaired of. His wife and children determined, in case he died, that I should be buried with him alive; because, they said, that my master having cherished and tenderly loved me, I must go with him to serve him in the world whither he had gone. Now, although I am deeply grateful to him for having sheltered and fostered me and love his memory, yet I have no desire to share his grave. Seeing no other way to escape this death but by seeking protection from the strangers, I preferred becoming their slave to being buried alive. This, alone, is the cause of my coming."*

The Spaniards perceived by this and the instance already mentioned, that the superstitious custom of burying wives and servants alive with the dead bodies of their masters and husbands was observed in this region, as in all others yet discovered in the new world.

After quitting Guachoya, the Spaniards passed through the province of Catalte; then crossed a desert country to

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 5. Part 2. c. 2.

another province called Chaguata, where they arrived on the twentieth of June. The Cacique had already visited their camp during the life of De Soto when quartered at Utiangué, and now resumed a friendly intercourse. Near the capital of this province they found the natives busily employed in making salt at a saline spring. Here the troops remained six days supplying themselves with this necessary article. They then continued their march westward in quest of the province of Aguacay, which they were told lay three days' journey onward.

CHAPTER LIV.

1542. ON the second day of their march, the Governor was informed that one of their number, named Diego de Guzman, was missing. He immediately ordered a halt, and entered into a diligent investigation of the matter; apprehending that Guzman might have been detained or murdered by the Indians.

Diego de Guzman was one of the many young Spanish cavaliers who had joined this expedition with romantic notions of conquest, of glory, and of gain. He was of a good family, and rich, and enlisted in the enterprise with costly raiment, splendid armour and weapons, and three fine horses. Unluckily, he was passionately fond of play, and had but too frequent opportunities of indulging in it; for the Spaniards, while they were encamped, passed much of their leisure in gambling, as is usual with soldiers, and especially with such young adventurers as formed a great part of this band of discoverers.

In the conflagration of Mauvila, all their cards being burnt, they made others of parchment, painted with admirable skill; and, as they could not obtain a sufficient supply for the number of gamesters, the packs were lent from one to the other for limited periods. With these they gambled under trees, in their wigwams, or on the river banks.

Diego de Guzman was one of the keenest; but a run of ill luck had gradually stripped him of all he had brought to the army, or captured on the march; and but a few days previously he had lost his clothes, his arms, a horse, and a female captive, recently taken in a foray. De Guzman had honour-

ably paid all his losses, but when he came to part with his captive, there was a struggle between pride and affection. The girl was but eighteen years of age, extremely beautiful, and having conceived a passion for her, he put off the winner, with an assurance that he would give her up to him in the course of four or five days. De Guzman, who had been seen in the camp the day before the march, was now missing, and the girl had disappeared likewise. On hearing all these circumstances, the Governor concluded that, ashamed of having lost his arms and steed, and unwilling to give up his Indian beauty, he had escaped with her to her tribe. He was confirmed in this suspicion on hearing that the female was daughter of the Cacique of Chaguate.

The General now summoned before him four Chiefs of the province, who were among his escort, and ordered them to cause the Spaniard, who had deserted, to be sought out and brought to the camp; telling them, that unless he was produced, he should conclude that the soldier had been treacherously murdered, and should consequently revenge his death.

The Chiefs, terrified for their own safety, sent messengers with speed. These returned declaring that De Guzman was at the dwelling of their Cacique, who was feasting him and treating him with all possible kindness and distinction, and that he could not be prevailed upon to return to the army.

Moscoso refused all credit to this story, and persisted in his surmises that De Guzman had been murdered. Upon this, one of the Chiefs turned to the Governor with a proud and lofty air. "We are not men," said he, "who would tell you falsehoods. If you doubt the truth of what the messengers have said, send one of us four to bring you some testimonial of the facts; and if he bring not back the Spaniard, or some satisfactory proof that he is alive and well, the three of us that remain in your hands will answer for his loss with our lives."

The proposition pleased the Governor and his officers; and after consultation, Baltazar de Gallegos, who was a friend and townsman of De Guzman, was instructed to write to him, condemning the step he had taken, and exhorting him to return and perform his duty as became a soldier; assuring him that his horse and arms should be restored, and others given to him in case of need. A message was also sent to

the Cacique, threatening him with fire and sword, unless he delivered up the fugitive.

Next day the messenger returned, bringing back the letter of Gallegos, with the name of De Guzman written upon it in charcoal; a proof that he was alive. He sent not a word, however, in reply to its contents; but the messenger declared that he had no intention nor wish to rejoin the army.

The Cacique, on his own part, sent word, assuring the Governor that he had used no force to detain Diego de Guzman, neither should he use any to compel him to depart; but would rather treat him with all possible honour and kindness as a son-in-law, who had restored to him a beloved daughter. He further declared that he would do the same to any of the strangers who might desire to remain with him. If, for having done his duty in this matter, the Governor thought proper to lay waste his lands and destroy his people, he had the power in his hands, and could act as he pleased.*

Moscoso, seeing that Diego de Guzman would not return, and feeling that the Cacique was justified in not delivering him up, abandoned all further attempt to recover him, and set the Indian chiefs at liberty, who continued, however, to attend him until he reached the frontier.

CHAPTER LV.

1542. THE next province traversed by the Spaniards was named Aguacay, and abounded with salt; they encamped one evening on the borders of a lake, the waters of which were strongly impregnated with it. The natives formed the salt into small cakes, by means of earthen moulds, and used it as an article of traffic. At the capital of this province, the Spaniards fancied, from the replies of its inhabitants to their questions, that they had some knowledge of the South Sea; but it is probable the Spaniards were deceived by the blunders of their interpreters.

After leaving Aguacay, they crossed the province of Maye, and on the twentieth of July, encamped beside a pleasant wood on the confines of Naguatex. They had scarcely come to a halt when a body of Indians were observed hovering at a distance. A party of horse immediately advanced, and

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 1. Lib. 5. c. 2.

dashing into the midst of them, killed six, and brought two prisoners to the camp. They confessed they were a scouting party sent by the Cacique to reconnoitre the strangers, and that Naguatex himself was at hand with his warriors, aided by two neighbouring chieftains. While they were yet talking, the enemy appeared in two battalions, and assailed the camp, but were soon put to flight. The horse pursued them, and fell into an ambush which had been laid for them by two other bands, but these they quickly succeeded in routing.

Two troopers and four foot soldiers having pursued the first party too hotly, were surrounded and assailed on all sides. The troopers behaved manfully, wheeling round their more exposed companions, charging the savages with their horses, and keeping them at bay with their spears, at the same time calling out lustily for aid. Their cries reaching the camp, twelve troopers galloped to their assistance: the Indians fled at their approach; but several were slain, and one of them was taken prisoner. Moscoso immediately ordered that his nose and right arm should be cut off, and sent him, thus cruelly mutilated, to Naguatex, with a threat that he would next morning enter his country with fire and sword.

The ensuing day Moscoso pushed forward to execute his threats, but a large river intervened between him and the Cacique's residence. He halted on the banks, and beheld a powerful force collected on the opposite side to oppose his passage. Not knowing the ford, and several of the men and horses being wounded, he took counsel in his wrath, and drawing back about a quarter of a league from the river, encamped near a village by a clear and beautiful wood, preferring the open air to any habitation, as the weather was calm and pleasant. Here he remained a few days, in order that his troops might have time to recover from their wounds and fatigues. During his stay, he sent a body of horse, who explored the river, forded it in two places, in spite of opposition from the natives, and found a populous and fruitful country on the other side.

The Governor, having now had time to recover from his anger, sent an Indian with a message to the Cacique of Naguatex, offering him pardon for the past, on condition of repentance and submission; but otherwise denouncing vengeance against him. The message had the desired effect.

The Indian returned with a reply from the Cacique, saying, that he would make his appearance next day. On the following morning a great number of Naguatex's principal subjects came to the Spanish camp, announced that their Cacique was at hand, and having apparently taken notice of the Governor's looks and the disposition of his men, returned to their Chieftain, who was shortly after seen approaching. A large body of his chief warriors marched two and two in front, all weeping and lamenting, as if in contrition for the past. When the head couple arrived in presence of Moscoso, the whole band halted, fell back on each side, and formed a lane, up which the Cacique advanced. Bending in a supplicating manner before the Governor, he begged forgiveness for what he had done, attributing his rash hostility to the bad counsels of one of his brothers, who had fallen in the fight. He acknowledged the Spaniards to be immortal, the Governor invincible, and concluded by tendering his obedience and services. Moscoso accepted his offered allegiance, dismissed him with assurances of friendship, and four days afterwards, breaking up his camp, he marched to the river side, but was surprised to find it swollen and impassable, although it was summer time, and no rain had fallen for a month. The Indians, however, assured him that this swelling of the river often happened without rain, and generally during the increase of the moon.

The Spaniards, perplexed at this phenomenon, being little acquainted with the great extent of these rivers, and the sudden effects of rain among the distant mountains and extensive prairies where they take their rise, surmised that the swellings, during the waxing of the moon, might be caused by the influx of the sea into the river, although none of the natives had any knowledge of the sea.

At the end of eight days the river had subsided sufficiently to be fordable. The army then crossed; but on coming to the Cacique's capital they found it abandoned. The Governor encamped in the open fields, and sent for Naguatex to come to him and furnish him with a guide. The Cacique, however, was afraid to venture into the camp. Upon this, the ire of Moscoso was again kindled, and he despatched two captains with troops of horse to burn the villages and make captives of the inhabitants. The country was soon wrapped in smoke and flame, and several natives were

captured. The Cacique was again brought to terms, and sent several of his subjects as hostages, together with three guides who understood the language of the countries through which the Spaniards were to pass. The Governor was pacified, and set forward on his march. Such were the circumstances that attended the Spaniards' sojourn in the province of Naguatex.*

CHAPTER LVI.

1542. THE army now pressed forward, by forced marches, for upwards of a hundred leagues, through various provinces, more or less populous and fertile; but some of them extremely barren and almost uninhabited. The Portuguese narrative of the expedition gives the names of some of these provinces, such as Missobone, Lacane, Mandacao, Socatino, and Guasco. In one province, the Spaniards observed wooden crosses placed on the tops of the houses, and were struck with the sight of this Christian emblem. They began to flatter themselves that they were approaching the confines of New Spain, and made inquiries in every province they entered, whether the inhabitants knew any Christian people to the west. Where all intelligence had to pass from mouth to mouth, through several interpreters, indifferently acquainted with each other's language, and finally to be communicated by an Indian lad, but moderately versed in Spanish, it is easy to perceive what vague and erroneous ideas must have been imparted. Some of the natives, it is probable, wilfully deceived the Spaniards; others misunderstood the kind of people about whom they were inquiring. In this way they received tidings, as they thought, of Europeans who had been seen further to the west; and whom, they persuaded themselves, were parties of discoverers making incursions from New Spain. They were elated with the hopes of meeting with some of these parties, or, at

* The name of this province is spelled in the same manner (Naguatex) both in the Spanish and Portuguese narratives. It has been identified with Nachitoches, by some modern writers, who suppose the Cacique's capital to have stood on the site of the present town of that name. It appears to the author, however, that the modern Nachitoches lies to the south of Moscoso's route, though it may have been called after the old Indian village, situated more to the northward. It is almost impossible to identify any of the places visited by the Spaniards in their wild wanderings west of the Mississippi.

any rate, of coming to regions subjugated and colonized by their countrymen, where they would no longer be in danger of perishing in a trackless wilderness, but might choose either to abide securely in the new world, or return to their native country.

Thus they went on, from place to place, lured by false hopes and idle tales. When they reached places where it had been asserted they would come upon the traces of white men, the inhabitants declared their utter ignorance of any such people. In a transport of disappointment, Moscoso ordered several poor savages to be put to the rack. This only served to extort false replies, suited to his wishes, but which led to further unprofitable wandering and additional disappointment.*

The Spanish commander and his followers, moreover, suffered extremely for want of intelligent and faithful guides. Sometimes they erred from misinterpretation of the routes, at others, they were purposely led astray. When they had journeyed far to the west, they came to a vast uninhabited region, where, after wandering for many days, until their provisions were exhausted, they had nothing to appease their hunger but herbs and roots. To their great dismay, also, they found that an old Indian warrior, who had been furnished by a Cacique as guide, was leading them in a circle. Moscoso, suspecting his fidelity, ordered him to be tied to a tree, and the dogs let loose upon him. One of them sprang upon him instantly, and began to shake him. The savage, in his terror, confessed that he had been ordered by his Cacique to bewilder them in uninhabited deserts, but offered to take them in three days to a populous country to the west. Moscoso, however, yielding to the impulses of his indignation at this treachery, again ordered the dogs to be let loose, who, ravenous with hunger, tore the unfortunate wretch to pieces.

Having thus gratified their passions, the Spaniards found themselves worse off than before, for they had no one to guide them, as permission had been given to the other Indians, who had brought the supplies, to return home. In this dilemma, they followed the directions of their victim, by marching westward; thus giving credit, after his death, to what they disbelieved while he was living.

They travelled three days, suffering excessively for want

of food. Fortunately the forests were clear and open; for had these been so thick as those which the troops had formerly traversed, they must have perished with hunger before they could have made their way through them. Travelling always towards the west, at the end of three days the Spaniards descried, from a rising ground, signs of human habitations; but on their approach they found the country generally barren and the villages abandoned. These differed from those they had before visited in other provinces, the houses being scattered about the fields in groups of four and five, rudely constructed, and resembling the hovels erected in melon-fields in Spain for the accommodation of persons employed to guard the fruit, rather than habitable houses. In these cabins they found abundance of fresh buffalo meat, with which they appeased their hunger. There were also the hides of many buffalos, recently flayed; but the Spaniards could never meet with the living animals. From the abundant traces of horned cattle thus found in the habitations they called this the Province of the Vaqueros, or Herdsmen.*

CHAPTER LVII.

1542. THE Indians of the Far West have always been noted for their gallant and martial bearing, and their proneness to feats of individual prowess. In their wandering through this wild region, the Spaniards witnessed frequent instances, two or three of which are worthy of especial notice. In the course of their march through the province of Los Vaqueros, having encamped one afternoon in an open plain, the soldiers stretched themselves on the ground, while their native attendants prepared their repast. As they were thus enjoying their repose, they observed an Indian warrior sally out of an adjacent wood and approach the camp. He was gaily painted; a bow was in his hand, a quiver of arrows over his right shoulder, and waving plumes adorned his head.

The Spaniards seeing him advance alone, and peacefully, imagining that he was charged with some message from his Cacique to the Governor, allowed him to draw nigh. He

* It is evident that the Spaniards were on the hunting grounds of the Far West—the great buffalo prairies; and most probably the scattered and slight wigwams thus visited were mere hunting camps.

came within fifty paces of a group of soldiers, who were conversing together; then, suddenly fixing an arrow in his bow, he sent it into the midst of them.

Seeing him bend his bow, some of the Spaniards sprang aside, others threw themselves upon the ground. The arrow whistled by without touching them, but flying beyond, where five or six female Indians were preparing dinner for their masters, under a tree, it struck one in the shoulders, and passing through her body, buried itself in the bosom of another;—both fell and expired. The savage then turned, and fled with surprising speed to the woods. The Spaniards beat the alarm and shouted after him. Baltazar de Gallegos, being by chance on horseback, heard the shout, and saw the savage flying; suspecting the cause, he gave chase, overtook him close to the wood, and transfixed him with his lance. Three days after this, the army halted for a day in a beautiful plain of the same province. During their halt they saw two Indian warriors crossing the plain. They were fine looking fellows, decorated with lofty plumes, bearing their bows in their hands, and their quivers at their backs. They came to within two hundred paces of the camp, and then began to walk round a large nut-tree, not side by side, but circling in opposite directions, so as to pass each other, and guard one another's backs. In this way they continued all day, without deigning to notice the Negroes, Indians, women, and boys who occasionally passed near them, carrying water and wood.

The Spaniards understanding from this that the object of the coming of these Indians referred to them and not to their own countrymen, forthwith reported what they had observed to the Governor, who ordered that no soldier should go out to them.

The savages continued their circumvolutions waiting patiently, as it would seem, for some of the Spaniards to take up this singular challenge. It was near sunset when a company of horse, who had been out since morning scouring the country, returned to the camp. Their quarters happening to be near the place where this extraordinary scene was acting, observing it, they asked, "What Indians are these?" Having learnt the Governor's order that the savages should not be molested, all obeyed except a headlong soldier named Juan Paez, who eager to exhibit his valour, spurred towards

them. When the Indians saw but a single Spaniard advancing to attack them, the one who was nearest to Paez stepped forth to receive him, and the other retiring placed himself under a tree; thus showing a desire of fighting man to man, and disregarding the Spaniard's advantage in being mounted. The soldier charged the savage at full speed, but the latter waited with an arrow in his bow until his adversary came within shot; he then sped his shaft. It struck Juan Paez in the muscular part of the left arm, passed through it and through both sides of a sleeve of mail, and remained crossed in the wound. The arm dropped powerless, the reins slipped from his hand, and the horse feeling them fall, stopped of a sudden, as horses are often trained to do.

The companions of Juan Paez, who had not yet alighted, seeing his peril, galloped to his rescue. The Indians, not choosing to encounter such odds, fled to a neighbouring wood, but before they could reach it were overtaken and lanced to death. In this affair the savages certainly showed a spirit of chivalry and a punctilio as to the laws of duel, which merited a better return at the hands of Spanish cavaliers.*

CHAPTER LVIII.

1542. AFTER traversing the wild waste of country which the Spaniards named the Province of Los Vaqueros, they came to a river called Daycao,—a favourite hunting resort of the Indians. Great quantities of deer were feeding along its banks. Having learned that the country beyond was inhabited, Moscoso sent a party of horse to cross the river and reconnoitre the neighbourhood. They found a village consisting of a few miserable hovels, and captured two of the inhabitants; but none of the interpreters could understand their language.

The Spaniards now perceiving a chain of mountains and extensive forests to the west, and ascertaining that the country was without inhabitants, their hearts began to fail them. The hunger and toil they had already experienced rendered them loath to penetrate those savage regions. The Governor, therefore, determined to remain encamped and send out light parties to explore the country in the direction they were

* Garcilase de la Vega, L. 5. p. 2. c. 4.

travelling. Three bands of horsemen being accordingly despatched each in a different direction, and having penetrated to the distance of thirty leagues, they found it sterile, thinly peopled, and ascertained that these evils would increase the further they proceeded. They captured some of the inhabitants, who assured them that further on it was still more destitute; the natives neither living in villages, dwelling in houses, nor cultivating the soil, but were a wandering people roving in bands, gathering fruits and herbs and roots of spontaneous growth, depending occasionally upon hunting and fishing for subsistence, and passing from place to place according as the seasons were favourable to their pursuits.*

At the end of fifteen days the exploring parties had all returned to the camp, bringing nearly the same accounts. Their united reports embarrassed the Governor not a little. To prosecute his march to New Spain through such a country as that described would be to run the risk of losing himself and his troops in barren and trackless deserts. Recollecting what had been related by Alvar Nuñez of tribes of Indians which he had met with unsettled in their abodes, wandering about like wild Arabs, feeding on roots and herbs and the produce of the chase, Moscoso fancied that similar savage hordes roved about the country before him. Indeed it was probable that all the rumours he had heard of Christians seen by the Indians might relate to Alvar Nuñez and his companions, who, on their way to New Spain, after their shipwreck, with Pamphilo de Narvaez, had passed as captives from tribe to tribe in traversing these lands. It is true they kept near the sea-coast, far to the south of the track of Moscoso, but the fame of such wonderful strangers might have penetrated to the interior; for reports are carried to vast distances among Indian tribes. The crosses also observed by Moscoso in one of the provinces through which he had passed, might have been put up by the natives as talismans, in consequence of the fame of apparently miraculous cures performed by Alvar Nuñez and his men, who always carried a cross in their hands, and made the sign of the cross over their patients.

The delusive reports, therefore, of Christians to the West which had encouraged the Spaniards to proceed, had now

* This description answers to the character and habits of the Pawnees, Comanches, and other tribes of the Far West.

died away. They had nothing but savage wastes before them, infested by a barbarous people, with whom it was impossible to keep up a friendly understanding for want of interpreters. It was already the beginning of October; if they lingered much longer the rains and snows of winter would cut off their return, and they might perish with cold and hunger. Moscoso was weary in soul and body, and longed to be in a place where his sleep might not be broken by continual alarms. Calling a council of his officers, he proposed that they should give up all further progress to the west, make the best of their way back to the Mississippi, build vessels there and descend that river to the ocean.

The proposition was by no means relished by some, who, notwithstanding all their sufferings and disappointments, had still a lingering hope of finding a country sufficiently rich to repay them for all their toils. They represented that Alvar Nuñez Caboza de Vaca had told the Emperor of his having visited a district where cotton grew, and where he saw gold, silver, and precious stones; it was consequently evident they had not yet come to those regions of which Alvar Nuñez spoke, but might do so by keeping forward. Besides, they had actually met with cotton mantles and turquoises at a province called Guasco, and had understood from the natives that these were brought from a country to the west, which was doubtless the country that Alvar Nuñez had spoken of. They were, therefore, for persisting in their perilous march westward; nay, some of them declared they would rather perish in the wilderness than return beggared and miserable to Europe from an expedition undertaken with such high and vaunting anticipations.

More prudent councils, however, prevailed, and after much deliberation it was determined to retrace their steps to the Mississippi.

NOTE.—The march of Moscoso west of the Mississippi has been given from the Spanish and Portuguese accounts; but they vary so much on some points, and are so vague on others; the regions to which they relate are so vast, and, until very recently, were so little known, that it is next to impossible to trace the wanderers' route with anything approaching to precision. They evidently traversed the hunting grounds of the Far West, the range of the buffalo, and got upon the upper prairies, which, in many parts, are little better than deserts. The river Decayo, which is only mentioned by the Portuguese narrator, has been supposed to be the "Rio del Oro" of Cabeza de Vaca. He makes them return from the banks of this river; but the Spanish historian affirms, that they saw great chains of mountains and forests to the west, which they understood were uninhabited.

It has been conjectured that these were the skirts of the Rocky Mountains. As, according to the Portuguese account, the Spaniards departed from the banks of the Mississippi for the Far West on the fifth of June, and did not get back until the beginning of December, they were six months on this march and countermarch, which, with all their halting, would give them time to penetrate a great distance into the interior.

CHAPTER LIX.

1542. THE Spaniards had now a long and dreary march before them, with no favourable prospect to cheer them on, and a country to traverse, the savage inhabitants of which had been rendered hostile by their previous invasion, and its resources laid waste by their foraging parties. They endeavoured, as much as possible, to remedy these disadvantages by altering their course towards the south, so as to avoid the desolate tracts which they had recently traversed, and in hopes of finding regions more abundant in provisions.

They travelled by forced marches, taking every precaution not to provoke the natives; the latter, however, were on the alert, and harassed them at all hours of the day and night. Sometimes the Indians concealed themselves in woods, by which the Spaniards had to pass; in the more open country they lay on the ground covered by tall grass and weeds, and as the soldiers, seeing no enemy, came carelessly along, the wily savages suddenly sprang up, discharged their arrows, and immediately made their escape.

These assaults were so frequent, that one band was scarcely repulsed by the vanguard when another attacked the rear, and the line of march was often assailed in three or four places at the same time, by which the army suffered great loss, both of men and horses. In fact, in this province of Los Vaqueros, the Spaniards, without coming hand to hand with the enemy, received more injury than in any other through which they passed: this especially happened in the course of the last day's march, during which their route was extremely arduous, laying through woods, and across streams and ravines, and other dangerous passes, peculiarly fit for ambush and surprise. Here the savages, who were well acquainted with the ground, had them at their mercy, way-laying them at every step, wounding men and horses, and the native servants who accompanied the army.

The last of these assaults happened as they crossed a brook overhung with trees and thickets, shortly before their arrival at the place of encampment. Just as one of the horsemen, named Sanjurge, was in the middle of the stream, an arrow, discharged from among the bushes on the bank, struck him in the rear, pierced his cuirass of mail, passed through the muscles of his right thigh, then through the saddle-tree and paddings, and buried itself in the horse. The wounded animal sprang out of the water, galloped to the plain, and went on plunging and kicking to disengage itself from the arrow and its rider.

Sanjurge's comrades hastened to his assistance. Finding him nailed, in a manner, to the saddle, and the army having halted close by, they led him on horseback to his allotted quarters. Lifting him gently from his seat, they cut the shaft between the saddle and the wound; after which, taking off the saddle, they found that the injury to the horse was slight. What surprised them, however, was, that the shaft, which had penetrated through so many substances, was a mere reed, with the end hardened in the fire. Such was the vigour of arm with which these Indian archers plied their bows.

This Sanjurge had enjoyed a kind of charlatan reputation among the soldiers, for curing wounds with oil, wool, and by certain words, which he called a charm. All the oil and wool, however, having been burnt at the battle of Mauvila, Sanjurge's miraculous cures were at an end. His whole surgical skill being confined to his nostrum and charm, he was now fain to call in the aid of the surgeon to extract the head of an arrow lodged in his knee. This caused him so much pain, that he railed at the operator for a bungler, swearing that he would rather die than be placed again under his hands. The surgeon replied, that he might die before he would have any thing further to do with him.

In his present wounded state, therefore, Sanjurge was in a sad dilemma, having no nostrums of his own, and the surgeon refusing to visit him. At length he thought of a substitute for his old remedy; making use of hog's lard, instead of oil, and the shreds of an Indian mantle, instead of wool, he dressed his wound with them, and pronounced his vaunted charm. Faith and a good constitution work miracles in quackery. In the course of four days Sanjurge had so far recovered as to

resume his saddle, galloping up and down among the soldiers, whose belief in the efficacy of his nostrum and charm became stronger than ever.*

CHAPTER LX.

1542. AFTER quitting the disastrous province of Los Vaqueros, the Spaniards continued for twenty days, by forced marches, through other lands, of which they did not know the name, taking little pains to gain information, their only object now being to reach the Mississippi.

Although they avoided all pitched battles with the natives, they continued to be harassed by them incessantly. If a soldier chanced to wander a short distance from his comrades, he was instantly shot. In this manner no less than forty Spaniards were picked off by lurking foes. By night the Indians would enter the camp on all-fours, and drawing themselves along like snakes, without being heard, shoot horses, and even sentinels who were off their guard.

One day, when the army was about to march, Francisco, the Genoese carpenter, obtained the Governor's permission for himself and several troopers, who were in want of servants, to lie in ambush at the place of encampment; the Indians being accustomed to visit those places as soon as the Spaniards had abandoned them, to pick up any articles the latter might have left behind.

Accordingly, a dozen horse and twelve foot concealed themselves in a thick clump of trees, one of their companions climbing to the top of the highest to look out and give notice if any Indians approached. In four sallies they captured fourteen of the enemy without resistance. These they divided among themselves, two falling to the share of Francisco, the shipwright, as leader of the detachment. The party would then have rejoined the army, but Francisco refused, alleging that he wanted another Indian, and would not return until he had captured one.

All the efforts of his comrades to shake this determination were vain. Each offered to give up the Indian that had fallen to his share, but their leader refused to accept the boon. Yielding, therefore, to his obstinacy, they remained with him in ambush.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 2. Lib. 5. c. 5.

In a little while the sentinel in the tree gave warning that an Indian was near. One of the horsemen, the same Juan Paez who had recently been wounded in the arm, dashed forward with his wonted impetuosity, and rode at him full speed. The Indian, as usual, taking refuge under a tree, Paez galloped close by him, giving a passing thrust with his lance across the left arm at the savage. He missed his aim, but his enemy was more successful; for, as the horse passed, he drew an arrow to the head, and buried it just behind the left stirrup leather. The horse plunged several paces forward and fell dead. Francisco de Bolanos, a comrade and townsman of Paez, followed close behind him, attacked the Indian in the same way, and failing likewise in his blow, his horse received a similar wound, and went stumbling forward beside his predecessor.

The two dismounted horsemen recovering from their fall, attacked the foe with their lances, while from the other side, a cavalier, named Juan de Vega, galloped towards him on horseback. The savage, thus assailed on both sides, rushed forth from under the tree to encounter the horsemen, knowing that if he should kill the horse, he could easily escape from his dismounted antagonists by his superior swiftness of foot.

With this intent, as the animal came towards him full speed, he discharged at its breast an arrow, which would have cleft its heart but for a breast-plate of three folds of tough bull-hide with which its rider had provided it. The arrow passed through the breast-plate, and penetrated a hand's breadth into the flesh; nevertheless the horse continued its career, and Juan de Vega transfixing the savage with his lance.

The Spaniards, grieved for the loss of the two horses, the more valuable now that their number was so much diminished; but their chagrin was doubly heightened when they observed the enemy who had cost them so dear. Instead of being well made and muscular, like most of the natives, he was small, lank, and diminutive; his form giving no promise of the energy of his spirit. Cursing their misfortune, and the wilfulness of Francisco, which had caused it, they set forward with their companions to rejoin the army.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. Lib. 5. c. 5 and 6.

CHAPTER LXI.

1542. THE Spaniards continued their weary journey with similar disastrous adventures. Fearful of going too far south, and of arriving at the Mississippi below the province of Guachoya, which was the point they wished to reach, they inclined to the north-east, so as to get into the track they had made on their western course.

This led them back through the province of Naguatex, where they found the villages which they had burnt, already rebuilt, and the houses well stocked with maize. In this province the natives made earthenware of a tolerably good quality.

In passing through the province of Chaguete, Moscoso thought of Diego de Guzman, who had taken refuge among the natives, and sent twelve troopers in search of him; but he had received notice of their approach from the Indian spies, and concealed himself. The army, in the mean time, were suffering from scarcity of food, so that the Governor, seeing Guzman was bent upon remaining among his new friends, gave up all further search after him, and proceeded on his march.

The winter now set in with great rigour: it was accompanied with heavy rains, violent gales, and extreme cold; yet, in their eagerness to arrive at the termination of their journey, the troops continued to press forward, travelling all day, and arriving at their place of encampment just before nightfall, drenched with rain, and covered with mud. They had then to go in quest of food, and were generally compelled to obtain it by force of arms, and sometimes at the expense of many lives.

The rivers became swollen by the rain; even the brooks were no longer fordable, so that almost every day the soldiers were obliged to make rafts to cross them. At some of the rivers they were detained seven or eight days, by the unceasing opposition of their enemies, and the want of sufficient materials for constructing rafts. Often, too, at night they had no place to lie upon, the ground being covered with mud and water. The cavalry passed the night sitting upon their horses, and the water was up to the knees of the infantry. For clothing, they had merely jackets of chamois

and other skins, belted round them, which served for shirt, doublet, and coat, and was almost always wet through. They were in general bare-legged, without shoes or sandals.

Both men and horses began to sicken and die under such dreadful privations. Every day two, three, and at one time, seven Spaniards fell victims to the hardships of this journey, and almost all the Indian servants perished. There were no means of carrying the sick and dying, for many of the horses were infirm, and those that were well were reserved to repel the constant attacks of a vigilant enemy. The sick, therefore, dragged their steps forward as long as they could, and often died by the way, while the survivors, in their haste to proceed, scarcely stayed to bury them, but left them half covered with earth, and sometimes entirely unburied. Yet, in spite of sickness and exhaustion, the army never failed to post sentinels, and keep up their camp-guard at night in order to prevent surprise.

At length they arrived at the fertile province of Anilco, the Cacique of which had experienced such rough treatment from them and their savage ally, Guachoya, on their previous visit. They had been cheering themselves on their march with the prospect of relief in this province, which abounded in maize, and of procuring a sufficient supply to sustain them during the time necessary for the construction of their vessels; to their bitter disappointment, however, they found the province of Anilco almost destitute of maize, and had the additional mortification of knowing that they were the cause of this scarcity. The hostilities they had pursued against Anilco, during their residence at Guachoya, had deterred the inhabitants from cultivating their lands; thus seed-time passed unimproved, and the year had produced no harvest.

Many of the Spaniards, worn out by past trials, could not support this new disappointment, but gave way to despair. Without a supply of maize, it would be impossible to subsist through the winter, or to sustain the daily and protracted toils of building the vessels for their departure. Their imaginations magnified the difficulties before them, and painted every thing in the most gloomy colours. How were they to construct vessels fitted to stand a sea voyage, destitute as they were of pitch and tar, of sails and cordage? How were they to navigate, without map, or sea-chart, or pilot?—how

were they to ascertain at what place the great river on which they were to embark mingled with the ocean? They sorely lamented having returned from the Far West, and given up their project of reaching New Spain by land. As to the plan of escaping by sea, it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle could enable them to carry it into effect.

Such were the despondings of many; and, indeed, a general gloom prevailed through the camp, when they were again encouraged by intelligence derived from some Indians of Anilco, who told them, that, at the distance of two days' journey, on the banks of the Mississippi, there were two towns near each other, in the country of Aminoya, in which they would probably find maize and other provisions in abundance.

On receiving this cheering intelligence, Moscoso immediately despatched Juan de Añasco, with a strong party of horse and foot, to visit those places.* They were accompanied by several Indians of Anilco, who were at war with those of Aminoya. After a severe march of two days, they arrived at the towns, which were situated close together, in an open country, and surrounded by a creek or ditch, filled with water from the Mississippi, so as to form an island.

De Añasco entered the towns without opposition, the inhabitants having abandoned them on their approach. To the great joy of the Spaniards, the houses were abundantly stocked with maize and other grain; likewise with vegetables, nuts, acorns, and dried fruits, such as grapes and plums. In one house they found an old woman, too infirm to make her escape. She asked them why they came thither. They replied, to winter. The old beldam shook her head, and told them that was no place for winter quarters. Every fourteen years, she said, there was such a rise of the great river as to inundate all the surrounding country, and compel the inhabitants to take refuge in the upper part of their houses. This, she added, was the fourteenth year, and an inundation was to be expected. The Spaniards, however, made light of her warning, considering it an old wife's fable, without reflecting that ancient inhabitants are generally the chroniclers of local fact.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 35.

CHAPTER LXII.

1542. HAVING fixed himself in one of the towns, De Añasco sent advice to the Governor of his success, and of the abundance around him. Moscoso immediately set off with the remainder of the army to join him. Notwithstanding their prospect of speedy repose and good quarters, this was as hard a march as any the troops had yet experienced. Enfeebled by sickness and famine, they had to traverse several swamps, in a drenching storm of rain, accompanied with a bitter north wind.

The hearts of the poor wayworn Spaniards leaped within them when they once more came in sight of the Mississippi, for they regarded it as the highway by which they were to escape out of this land of disaster. They entered the village of Aminoya as a haven of repose, and thanked God that they had at length reached a spot where they might rest awhile from their toils. Indeed, had they not at this juncture found a seasonable supply, it is probable most of them would have perished under the extreme rigours and privations of the winter. As it was, many reached this place of rest but to die. The excitement of the march had stimulated them beyond their strength; when exertion was no longer necessary, they fell into a lethargy, and, in the course of a few days, above fifty expired.

Among those who had thus survived the toils and perils of the march to perish in this place of refuge was Andres de Vasconcellos, a Portuguese cavalier of noble blood, who had distinguished himself on various occasions in the course of this fatal enterprise.

No one, however, was more lamented by the army than the brave Nuño Tobar, a cavalier no less valiant and noble, than unfortunate. Having had the misfortune, at the outset of the enterprise, to displease De Soto by the indulgence of a criminal passion, he had never been forgiven, although he had repaired his injury to the lady by marriage, and atoned to his commander by repeated acts of chivalrous bravery. On the contrary, he had ever been treated by De Soto with a rigour and disdain, from which his great services should have shielded him; nor had he been restored to his military rank under that general's successor, Moscoso.

Seeing the favourable situation of the village of Aminoya, and the fruitfulness of the surrounding country, the Governor resolved to establish his winter quarters, and build his brigantines here.* It is true, it was about sixteen leagues above the residence of Guachoya, where he had intended to winter, but that was immaterial; the grand object was attained, a secure place on the Mississippi for the construction of vessels, for his proposed embarkation. In order to render his position more comfortable and secure, he destroyed one of the two adjacent villages, and carried all its provisions, wood, and other necessaries to the other. This being surrounded by pallisades, he set about strengthening its defences, but such was the debilitated state of his men, that it cost him twenty days to accomplish the work. Being now, however, in good quarters, with plenty of food, and suffering no molestation from the natives, they soon began to recover from their fatigues and maladies, and with the renovation of their strength, their spirits likewise revived.

They now set to work to construct seven brigantines for the embarkation of all their forces. These were built under the superintendence of Francisco, the Genoese, the same who, on various occasions, had been so proficient in constructing bridges, rafts, and boats, being the only person in the army who knew any thing of ship-building. He was assisted by four or five carpenters of Biscay. Another Genoese, and a Catalonian, skilled as their countrymen usually are in nautical affairs, engaged to caulk the vessels.

A Portuguese, who, having been a slave among the Moors of Fez, had learned the use of the saw, instructed some of the soldiers in the art. He undertook to reduce the timber felled in the neighbouring forests into suitable planks; while a cooper, who was almost at death's door, promised, as soon as he should be able to work, to make water-casks for the vessels.

Every bit of iron was now collected in order to be converted into articles necessary for the construction of the vessels. Their chains were knocked off the Indian captives; even the troopers' iron stirrups were given up and wooden ones substituted. A forge was erected to work up these ma-

* Mr. M'Culloch supposes the village of Aminoya to have been situated in the neighbourhood of the present town of Helena, about thirty miles above the Arkansas.

terials into the necessary forms, and thus the whole undertaking soon began to wear an encouraging aspect.

Assistance was also rendered from other quarters. Guachoya, the old friend and ally of the Spaniards, hearing of their return, came with presents of provisions and renewed his former intercourse. The Cacique Anilco also, taught by the severe treatment he had brought upon himself by former hostility, now sent his Captain-General with a numerous retinue, entreating the Governor's friendship, and pleading ill-health as an excuse for not coming in person. The Captain-General was received with great ceremony and respect; he was shrewd and intelligent, and acquitted himself with great address in his intercourse with the Spaniards. He mingled among them familiarly, acquainted himself with their plans and wishes, and transmitted an account of every thing to his Cacique, who immediately contributed all the assistance in his power. Every day or two came supplies from Anilco of fish and other provisions, together with different materials for the ships, such as cordage of various sizes, made of grass and fibrous plants, and mantles woven from an herb resembling mallows, containing a fibre like flax, which the Indians wrought into thread, and dyed of many colours.

Guachoya emulated Anilco in supplying the wants of the Spaniards, but fell short of him in assiduity. Both Caciques furnished numbers of their subjects to serve in the camp, and to do the rough work of the ships.

In order to carry on their shipbuilding without interruption from storms and inundations, the Spaniards erected four large buildings. Within these, both officers and men toiled without distinction, sawing planks, twisting cordage, making oars, and hammering out iron. The only pride shown was in striving who should do the most work.

The cordage furnished by Anilco was made into rigging and cables, and when this was not sufficient, the rinds of mulberry trees were substituted. The Indian mantles, when sound and entire, were formed into sails, the old ones being picked into shreds to caulk the vessels. For this latter purpose, also, use was made of an herb resembling hemp, called Enequen; and in place of tar, the seams were payed with the rosin and gum of various trees, and with an unctuous kind of earth.

During the whole winter the Captain-General of Anilco

was continually with the Spaniards, officiating as the representative of his Cacique, mingling in all their concerns, administering to their wants, and seemingly taking as much interest in their plans as if they had been his own. His important services, and the hearty good will with which they were rendered, made him so popular with both officers and soldiers, that he received on all occasions the same honours as would have been paid to his Cacique.

All this awakened the jealousy and anger of Guachoya. He had secretly sought to revive former hostilities between the Spaniards and Anilco, but his intrigues had been baffled. His spleen at length broke forth in presence of the Governor and his officers, on some new honours being paid to the Captain-General, whom he represented as a mere servant and vassal, base in origin, poor in circumstances, and remonstrated with the Spaniards for paying more respect to a man of such mean condition, than to a powerful chieftain.

The General of Anilco listened with a calm, unchanging countenance, until Guachoya had finished; then asking permission of Moscoso, he replied with generous warmth, showing his honourable descent from the same ancestors as his Cacique, and his high standing, being second only to his chieftain, and commander of his forces. He reminded Guachoya of victories which he had gained over his father, himself, and his brothers, all of whom he had, at different times, had in his power and treated magnanimously; finally, as a mortal trial of prowess, he challenged Guachoya to enter alone into a canoe, that he would enter into another, and then each should launch his boat into the Mississippi. The abode of Guachoya lay several leagues down the river, that of the General of Anilco as far up the tributary stream which entered into the Mississippi. The challenger proposed that he who should survive the mortal struggle of the voyage and navigate his canoe to his home should be declared victor.

The Captain-General of Anilco concluded his indignant speech, but Guachoya neither accepted the challenge nor answered a word, but remained with confused and downcast countenance. From that time forward Anilco's General was held in higher estimation than ever by the Spanish army.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 5. p. 2. c. 10.

CHAPTER LXIII.

1543. WHILE the Spaniards were diligently employed in building their brigantines, the natives of the surrounding provinces were plotting their destruction. On the opposite side of the Mississippi, a few leagues below Aminoya, extended the vast, fruitful, and populous province of Quigualtanqui;—the same which had been visited by a scouting party despatched by the late Hernando De Soto during his halt at Guachoya; on which occasion the reader may recollect several taunting messages were sent by the Cacique to the Governor. The Cacique of Quigualtanqui was young and warlike; beloved throughout his extensive dominions, and feared by his neighbours on account of his great power.

Retaining his former enmity to the Spaniards, he learnt with alarm that they were again in his neighbourhood and building large barks, which might give them the command of the river, or enable them to quit the country and return in greater force to conquer it. He consequently sent envoys to the neighbouring Caciques on both sides of the river, and a league was formed to combine their forces at a certain time for a general assault upon the Spaniards.

The Cacique of Anilco was invited to enter into the league, but he remained true to his Christian allies, and sent the Governor secret intelligence of the conspiracy. Moscoso immediately ordered additional guards to be stationed about the camp, patrols to be kept up night and day, and vigilant watch maintained over those places where the arms and ammunition were deposited. Envoys arrived at all hours of the day and night from the Cacique of Quigualtanqui and his allies, bearing offers of friendship and various presents. The Governor perceived, by their roving about the camp and taking note of every thing, that they were mere spies, he therefore gave orders that no Indian should be admitted into the village by night: these orders, however, were disregarded.

One night, Gonzalo Silvestre, with a comrade, was on duty at one of the gates. He was just recovering from severe illness, and still feeble. About mid-watch, in the clear moonlight, he saw two Indians approaching, with bows and arrows in their hands, and lofty plumes upon their heads. They advanced towards the gate across a fallen tree, which

served as a bridge over the fosse. Silvestre, who knew the Governor's orders and the lurking treachery which surrounded them, felt his blood boil at sight of these intruders. "Here are two savages," said he to his comrade; "how dare they come at night, in defiance of the Governor's prohibition! By the mass, the first that enters this gate shall feel the edge of my sword."

His comrade begged him to leave the Indian to him, as he was strong and well, and Silvestre but feeble. "By no means," replied the other, "I am strong enough to give these impudent savages a lesson."

The Indians drew nigh, and finding the gate open, entered without hesitation. In an instant, Silvestre gave the foremost a blow in the face with his sword, and felled him to the earth. The savage recovered himself, snatched up his bow and arrows, and plunging into the fosse, swam to the other side. His companion sprang over the fallen tree, and leaping into his canoe, made the best of his way across the Mississippi.

At sunrise, four native warriors appeared in the camp, complaining, in the name of all the neighbouring Caciques, of this violation of the peace existing between them, and demanding that as the wounded Indian was a warrior of rank, the soldier who struck him should be put to death. A similar embassy was repeated at noon, and in the evening a third, announcing that the warrior had died of his wound.

Luis de Moscoso gave evasive and haughty replies to the ambassadors, which greatly incensed the chieftains of the league. They concealed their rage, however, consoling themselves with the idea that the day of vengeance was at hand. In the mean time each Cacique assembled his warriors, and prepared for a signal blow. Their plan was to burst suddenly upon the Spaniards, and massacre every one of them. Should they fail in this, they proposed setting fire to the hulks of the vessels, and thus preventing their departure. They might then, as they imagined, exterminate their foes by degrees; for they were aware of their diminished numbers, and that but few horses, the chief objects of their terror, survived:—above all, they knew that the brave Hernando de Soto was no more.

The Spaniards were aware that the momentous day was at hand; for some of the spies who visited the camp had

comforted the captives with assurances of speedy deliverance and revenge—all which the native women had revealed to their masters. Added to this, as the nights were still and serene, they could hear the murmuring sound of Indian gatherings on both sides of the river, and see the camp-fires gleaming in different directions.

When this storm of war was about to burst upon the Spaniards, there came on a sudden rising of the waters. The prediction of the old Indian woman was verified. Although there had been no rain for several weeks, yet the Mississippi, in the month of March, swelled above its banks, and inundated the country for several leagues. The green fields and forests were transformed into a broad sea,—the branches and tops of the trees rising above the surface, and canoes gliding between them in every direction. The town in which the Spanish army was quartered stood on a rising ground, yet the water rose to the lower stories of the houses, and obliged the troops to take refuge in the garrets, or on sheds erected on strong piles. They had to quarter their horses in the same manner; and for some time it was impossible to go abroad, except in canoes, or on horseback, when the water reached the rider's stirrups. It was in consequence of these inundations, says the Spanish historian, that the Indians built their villages on high hills, or artificial mounds. The houses of the chieftains were often erected upon piles, with upper floors, where they might take refuge from the freshets.

CHAPTER LXIV.

1543. THE swelling of the Mississippi and inundation of the surrounding country, dispersed the hordes of savages, and forced them to take refuge in their villages. The Caciques, however, did not abandon their design, but maintained an appearance of friendship, sending repeated messages and presents. Moscoso, ordered a vigilant watch to be kept about the village, and especially over the brigantines, permitting no Indians to approach them in their canoes, through fear of some treacherous intention.

The swollen river subsided as slowly as it had risen, and it was two months before it shrank within its natural channel. As soon as the surface of the country was sufficiently dry,

the Caciques again collected their forces for the premeditated attack.

Anilco's General gave the Governor warning of their movements, and offered to bring a large force of Indians to assist him ; but Moscoso declined his offer, lest the services of this generous Chief should embroil him with his neighbours, after the Spaniards' departure.

Anxious to procure particular information of the conspirators' plans, Moscoso ordered a native, who was loitering about the town, and whom he suspected to be a spy, to be put to the rack. This is always a sure mode of forcing round assertions, whether true or false. The savage, under torture, declared that twenty Caciques of the neighbourhood were about to attack the camp with a large army :—that, to put the Governor off his guard and conceal their own treachery, they were to send a present of fish three days before the attack, and another on the appointed day ; that the Indians who brought the fish, having first joined such of their countrymen as served in the camp, were to seize upon all weapons at hand, and set fire to the houses ;—at the sight of the flames, the Caciques, with their troops, were to rush from the places where they lay in ambush, and in the height of their confusion, assail the Spaniards on all sides.

The Governor having heard this story, ordered the Indian to be kept in chains. On the day mentioned, thirty natives came into the town, bearing presents of fish and messages of kindness. The Governor immediately ordered them to be seized, taken aside separately, and examined concerning the conspiracy. They attempted no defence, but made a full confession of the plot. Moscoso, with his usual rigour, ordered forthwith that their right hands should be cut off, and that thus mutilated, they should be sent back to their Caciques, to give them warning that their treachery was discovered. The stoical savages bore this dreadful punishment without flinching ; scarcely was the hand of one stricken off, when another laid his arm upon the block. Their patience and firmness extorted the pity and admiration even of their enemies.

This sanguinary punishment of their envoys put an end to the league of the Caciques, who gave up their plan of attacking the camp, and returned, each to his province, but with hearts bent on further hostility.

Guachoya had more than once been suspected by the Spaniards of secret participation in this plot, and had even been charged with it by the Indian spy, when under torture. There does not, however, appear to have been any proof of this; and, indeed, all these stories of plots and conspiracies related by Indians of each other, are to be received with great distrust. The Spaniards, doubtless, were often deceived by their allies, who sought through their means to cripple their rivals; and they brought upon themselves much needless hostility by their harsh measures to punish or prevent imputed treason.

Moscoso and his officers, convinced of their perilous situation, thus surrounded by open and secret foes, applied themselves assiduously to complete their armament, and provide stores for the voyage. Guachoya, conscious of the late suspicions entertained of him, redoubled his zeal in furnishing maize, fish, and other supplies, and Anilco continued his friendly offices to the last. Throughout all their wanderings the Spaniards had preserved a number of the swine which they had brought with them to stock their intended settlement. These had, in fact, multiplied during the march, and others which had strayed or been given to the Indians, had likewise produced their increase. The Spaniards now killed those that remained, except a dozen and half which they retained alive, in case they should yet form a settlement near the sea-coast, and a few which they presented to Anilco and Guachoya. The carcasses were then cut up and made into bacon for ships' provisions. Of fifty horses that remained, they determined that twenty of the least valuable should be killed for food. This was a painful alternative, on account of their long companionship in danger, and the faithful services they had rendered. The poor animals were tied to stakes at night, a vein was opened, and they were thus left to bleed to death. Their flesh was then parboiled, dried in the sun, and laid up among the sea stores. Canoes were linked together, two and two, to convey the rest, their fore-feet being placed in one canoe and their hind feet in another, and the canoes barricaded with boards and hides to ward off the arrows of their foes.

When the brigantines were ready for service, there was such an unusual swelling of the river, that the water reached the stocks, on which they stood, so that they were launched

with great ease. This was a fortunate circumstance, for being built of very thin planks, and fastened with short nails, they might have bulged in being transported overland. These vessels were merely large barks, open, except at the bow and stern, where they had covered decks to protect the sea stores. Bulwarks of boards and hides extended along the gunwales, and planks were laid athwart them to serve as decks. Each had seven oars on either side, at which all the Spaniards, except the captains, were to take their turns indiscriminately. Every brigantine had two commanders, so that in emergencies one might act on land, while the other remained on board.

The little squadron being now afloat and all ready for embarkation, Moscoso made his final arrangements on shore. Two days before his departure he took a kind farewell of Guachoya, and the Captain-General of Anilco, sending them both back to their homes, first making them promise to live in friendship with each other after he was gone. Next day he dismissed the greater part of those Indians, male and female, who had been in the service of his camp, retaining such only, of either sex, as belonged to distant tribes, and had followed the army in its wanderings. But not above thirty survived, out of a multitude which, from time to time, had been captured and reduced to servitude in the course of their extensive marchings. The rest had perished by degrees, under their various hardships. These survivors had, for the most part, become attached to the Spaniards, and, moreover, dreaded being left among the strange tribes, who might enslave and maltreat them.*

CHAPTER LXV.

1543. ON the second day of July, the Spaniards embarked on board their seven brigantines. The largest, named the Capitana, was commanded by Luis de Moscoso, as admiral of this little fleet. Of that numerous and brilliant host which had entered upon this heroic but disastrous expedition

* The Portuguese historian makes the number of Indians thus embarked amount to one hundred. The number given by the Inca is more probable, both narratives having previously stated that the greater part of those Indians who had followed the army in its last march perished before arriving at Aminoya.

for the conquest of Florida, not quite three hundred and fifty survived; and these were in a most wretched plight: their once brilliant armour was battered, broken, and rusted; their rich raiment reduced to rags, or replaced by skins of wild beasts.

The sun was setting as they got under weigh, and the gloom of evening seemed an emblem of their darkening fortunes. They were abandoning the fruit of all their labours and hardships,—the expected reward of their daring exploits,—the land of their golden dreams. They had launched on a vast and unknown river, leading they knew not whither, and were to traverse, in frail and rudely constructed barks, without chart or compass, great wastes of ocean, to which they were strangers, bordered by savage coasts, in the vague hope of reaching some Christian shore, on which they would land beggars!

With sail and oar they pursued their course all night, and on the following morning passed the residence of Guachoya. Here they found many inhabitants waiting in canoes to receive them, and beheld a rustic bower of branches prepared for their reception. The Governor, however, excused himself from landing, upon which the Indians accompanied him in their canoes to where the river diverged into two branches. Then warning him that he was near the residence of Quigualtanqui, they offered to accompany him, and make war upon that Cacique; but Moscoso, who desired nothing less than any hostile encounter with the natives, declined their offer and dismissed them.

This little fleet continued its course by the main branch of the river in which there was a rapid current; and in the afternoon hauled to shore on the left bank, where the Spaniards passed the remainder of the day in a spacious wood. At night they again embarked, and continued their course. Next morning they landed near a village which had been abandoned, and took a woman prisoner, who informed them that the Cacique of Quigualtanqui had assembled all his forces further down the river, and was waiting to attack them.

This intelligence put them upon their guard, but made them ready to suspect hostilities, which perhaps were not intended. They had not proceeded much further down the stream, when, as they were foraging on shore, and supplying themselves with provisions, they perceived a number of

canoes hovering on the opposite side, and, as they thought, menacing hostilities. The cross-bowmen immediately leaped into the canoes that were astern of the brigantines, pushed across, and readily dispersed the savages.

No sooner, however, had the cross-bowmen returned to their brigantines, and the latter got under weigh, than the light barks of their enemies were again in sight. Keeping a-head of the squadron, and drawing up near a village that stood on a high bank, they seemed disposed to make battle. The canoes were again manned, the Indians once more dispersed, and the Spaniards landing, fired their village; after which, they encamped for the night in an open plain.

Whatever may have been the previous disposition and intentions of the Indians, they had now fair grounds for hostility; nor did they fail to exercise it to the utmost. On the following morning a powerful fleet of canoes was in sight, apparently the combined force of the hostile Caciques. Some of them were of great size, with from fourteen to twenty-five paddles on each side, and carrying from thirty to seventy warriors. They darted across the water with the swiftness of racehorses.

Some of the principal warriors were brilliantly painted; so likewise were their canoes, both within and without. The paddles and rowers, even the warriors themselves, from the feet to the scalping-tuft, were severally painted of one colour. Some were blue, others yellow or white, green, violet, or black, according to the device or taste of the chieftain.

For that day and part of the next they followed the Spaniards without attacking them, keeping time in rowing by chanting wild songs of different cadences, short or long, slow or fast, according to the speed with which they desired to move; closing each chant with a deafening yell, and shouting the name of Quigualtanqui. The burthen of these war songs, was the chivalrous exploits of their ancestors, and the daring deeds of their chieftain, by recalling the memory of which they roused themselves to battle. Proudly boasting of their own valour, at the same time taunting the Spaniards with cowardice in flying from their arms, they threatened to overthrow them, and make them food for fishes.

The second day at noon there was a movement among the fleet of canoes. Separating into three different divisions, and forming a van, centre, and rear, they approached the

right bank of the river. The canoes in the van darted forward, gliding along to the right of the brigantines, and crossing the river obliquely, discharged a shower of arrows, which wounded many Spaniards, in spite of their shields and bulwarks. They then wheeled round, and recrossing the stream in front of the brigantines, stationed themselves on the right bank. The second squadron, composing the centre of the fleet, performed the same manœuvre, and having discharged their arrows, returned and stationed themselves in front of the van. The rear did likewise, and then took up their position in front of all.

As the caravels advanced, the Indians repeated their attack, always returning to the right bank of the river. In this manner the savages fought with the Spaniards all day, never giving them a moment's rest, and interrupting their repose during the night by incessant alarms.

When the Spaniards were first attacked, they manned the canoes in which they had secured their horses, for the purpose of protecting them, as they expected to fight hand to hand with the savages. Perceiving, however, the enemy's intention to keep at a distance, and gall them with their arrows, and finding themselves exposed to these formidable missiles, they returned to the brigantines, leaving the horses with no other defence than the skins of animals, which they had thrown over them.

In these contests the Spaniards had recourse only to their cross-bows, for their arquebusses had never been of use since the destruction of their gunpowder, at the conflagration of Mauvila, and they had been wrought with other articles into iron-work for the brigantines. They acted, however, only on the defensive, endeavouring merely to keep the enemy at bay, while the rowers plied their oars; sheltering themselves as well as they were able with buffalo skins, and shields made of double mats, through which an arrow could not penetrate.

This harassing warfare continued for several days and nights, until most of the Spaniards were wounded, and all were worn out with fatigue and watching, and the weight of their armour. Of the horses, only eight remained alive. The savages at length desisted from their attacks, and hovered at a distance.

Moscoso imagining they had given over all further hostili-

ties, and supposing that the sea could not not be far off, was desirous of procuring a fresh supply of provisions. Observing a small village on the banks of the river, he sent Gonzalo Silvestre on shore with a hundred men and the eight horses, to seek supplies. The inhabitants fled with loud yells at the approach of such strange people and animals. Silvestre found abundance of maize and dried fruits, with various skins, and among the rest a martin skin, decorated with strings of pearls, which appeared to have been used as a banner. While he and his party were taking possession of everything in their way, they heard the trumpet sounding their recall. Hurrying to the river bank, they beheld a fleet of canoes pulling towards them with all speed, while a band of Indians were running to cut them off by land. Springing into their canoes, they pulled with desperate exertions to the brigantines, abandoning the horses to their fate. The savages turned to vent their fury upon the latter. The gallant creatures defended themselves by kicking and plunging, and some of the Indians were so frightened at what they took for ferocious monsters that they leaped into the water; the rest, however, hunted the poor horses like so many deer, transfixed them with their arrows, and finally destroyed them.

Thus miserably perished the remnant of the three hundred and fifty noble steeds which had entered Florida in such gorgeous array. As the Spaniards beheld these faithful animals slaughtered before their eyes, without being able to aid them, they shed tears, as though the horses had been their own children.*

CHAPTER LXVI.

1543. THE Indians continued to follow at some distance in the rear of the Spaniards, attacking any of their vessels that lagged behind, until the sixteenth day of their harassing voyage.

On board one of the brigantines was a soldier named Estevan Añez. He was of low birth, but had joined the expedition as a trooper. His steed, though of sorry appearance, being tough and strong, was among the last that perished. Owing to his being mounted, Añez had been engaged in

* Garcilaso de la Vega, I. 6. c. 5. Portuguese Relation, c. 38.

some of the most perilous services of the expedition, and though he had never performed any thing of note, had gained the reputation of a gallant man, which, added to his natural rusticity and narrow spirit, had rendered him weak and vain-glorious. This day he got into a canoe, attached to the stern of the brigantine, under pretence of speaking with Moscoso, but in reality on a hair-brained project. He induced to join him five young cavaliers of buoyant spirits and daring valour, promising them some brilliant exploit. One of them, Carlos Enriquez, scarcely twenty years of age, graceful in form, and with a countenance of extreme beauty, was the natural son of Don Carlos Enriquez, who fell bravely fighting in the battle of Mauvila.

Estevan Añez, with these five gallant youths, pulled directly for the Indian fleet that stretched across the river in the rear. The Governor, witnessing this mad freak, ordered the trumpets to sound a recall. The captains of the brigantines likewise shouted and made signs for them to return. The louder they shouted, the more obstinate and vain-glorious Estevan Añez became, and instead of returning, he made signs for the brigantines to follow him. When Luis de Moscoso beheld the stubbornness of this madman, he despatched forty-six Spaniards after him in three canoes, vowing to hang him the moment he should be brought back. Juan de Guzman, the commander of one of the brigantines, was the first to leap into a canoe, followed by his friend Juan de Vargas. Guzman prided himself upon his skill in managing a canoe, and resisted the entreaties of his friends that he would remain in the brigantine.

The savages perceiving the Spaniards' approach, made a retrograde movement for the purpose of leading them away from the brigantines, which, having furled their sails, were pulling slowly against the current to support them. Estevan Añez, however, being blinded by his vanity, instead of mistrusting the enemy's designs, was deceived by this stratagem, and pulled with redoubled might towards them, crying, "They fly! they fly! at them! at them!" The other three canoes increased their efforts, likewise hoping either to detain him or give him succour.

The Indians having allowed their foes to draw nigh, altered the disposition of their forces, the centre retreating, so as to form a half moon, and thus luring the Christians into

the midst of them. They then assailed them furiously in front and flank. Some leaped into the water and overturned the canoes of the Spaniards, many of whom were carried down by the weight of their armour and drowned. Some who kept themselves up by swimming were shot with arrows, or struck over the head with paddles, and others who clung to the overturned canoes were beaten off. In this manner, without being able to make the least defence, forty-eight Spaniards miserably perished. Four alone escaped. One was Pedro Moron, the half-breed, who was an expert swimmer, and exceedingly skilful in the management of a canoe; he had fallen into the river, but with great dexterity and strength, recovered his bark and made his escape, bearing off with him three other soldiers. One of them, named Alvaro Nieto, fought alone, and kept the savages at bay, whilst Pedro Moron guided the canoe; but neither the prowess and valour of the one, nor the dexterity and skill of the other would have availed, had not the brigantine of Juan de Guzman fortunately been near. This bark was in advance of the rest, the crew having made greater exertion, aware that their much-loved leader was in the midst of the affray; thus they rescued four of their comrades. Another Spaniard, Juan Terron, reached the brigantine, but as his companions were raising him out of the water, he breathed his last in their arms, being pierced with more than fifty arrows. The survivors asserted, that they had seen the gallant De Guzman borne off by the Indians in one of their canoes, but whether dead or alive, they could not tell.

Luis de Moscoso once again arranged his fleet in order, and resumed his eventful voyage, deeply lamenting the loss of these generous and valiant cavaliers.

This was the last assault of the savages, who seemed satisfied with this signal blow. All the rest of the day, and during the succeeding night, they kept up continual shouts of triumph. When the sun rose on the following morning they appeared to worship him and to return thanks for their victory, then raising a deafening din of voices, mingled with the sound of trumpets, shells, and drums, they turned their prows up the river and departed for their homes.

CHAPTER LXVII.

1543. THE harassed Spaniards began once more to breathe freely, when they saw their cruel enemies depart. They now reflected seriously upon their position. The river had expanded until it was several leagues in breadth ; thus, when in the midst, they could not descry land on either side. The departure of the Indians led them to conjecture that the sea was near at hand. Keeping the centre of the current, therefore, lest they should wander into some deep bay, they continued onward, with sail and oar and favouring breeze, until, on the twentieth day, a broad expanse of water opened before them. On their left lay a large island, formed by vast quantities of drift-wood swept down the river, and piled up by the repercussion of the waters from the sea. About a league further was an uninhabited island, such as is often found at the mouths of great rivers, formed by alluvial deposits. The Spaniards were convinced by these signs that they had reached the mouth of the Mississippi, and that the boundless ocean lay before them.

They now steered for the island of drift-wood, and found a secure harbour for their brigantines ; for they could lay them beside the floating masses of timber, which rose and fell with the tide, and, fastening them to trunks of large trees imbedded there, leave them as secure as if at a pier head. Here they landed and overhauled their vessels, to repair any damage they might have sustained, and fit them for the buffeting of the ocean, killed the few hogs that yet remained alive, and converted them into bacon. These labours, however, required but little time ; the great object in landing was repose. So exhausted were they from the constant watchfulness they had been obliged to maintain for three weeks past, that during two days they did little else than sleep ; and that so profoundly, that they lay about like so many dead bodies.

About noon on the third day, they were roused from their repose by the appearance of enemies. Seven canoes issued from among reeds and rushes, and approaching within hail, a gigantic Indian, black as an Ethiopian, either from paint or natural complexion, stood up in the prow of the foremost, and addressed them in a thundering voice. After a brief

harangue, accompanied by menacing looks and gestures, he turned his prow, and followed by his companions, shot back again among the rushes, where from time to time other canoes were perceived gliding about as if in ambush.

The words of this black warrior being explained, for they were partially understood by the Indian domestics, they proved to be insulting epithets, and threats of hostility. Moscoso, fearing his enemies might put their threats into execution, and attempt to surprise him in the night, and burn his vessels, determined to be beforehand with them, and strike the first blow. He accordingly detached, in five canoes, a party of picked men, to beat up the cane-brake. Among these were twenty-two cross-bowmen and three archers. One of the archers was an Englishman by birth; another had lived in England from his boyhood until his twenty-eighth year, and had acquired there his skill with the long-bow and the cloth-yard arrow, for which the English were renowned. Throughout the expedition these two archers had used no other weapon, and had been noted for their deadly aim. The third archer was an Indian, servant of the gallant Juan de Guzman, who had fallen in the late battle, whom he had served faithfully on all occasions since his master's first landing in Florida.

This detachment was commanded by Gonzalo Silvestre and Alvaro Nieto. They discovered the enemy's canoes drawn up in battle array among the rushes, in formidable numbers. The savages waiting until their foes were within bow-shot, and, having discharged a cloud of arrows that wounded several soldiers, swept in among the rushes, and came to a second stand. In this way they shot and wheeled about, and came again to the charge like so many horsemen. The cross-bowmen and the three archers kept up a well-directed discharge, and galled the Indians excessively; at length the Spaniards were able to come to close quarters, overturned three of the canoes of the enemy, killed several of the crew, and put the whole armament to flight. They, however, came out of this affray very roughly handled; most of them being wounded, and among the number their two commanders.

Fearing an attack in the night, and that fire might be set to the vessels, Moscoso embarked all his forces and made sail for the uninhabited island, under the lea of which he

anchored, in forty fathoms water. All that night the Spaniards slept on their arms, on board their vessels, ready for action : the enemy, however, offered no further molestation.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

1543. WHEN day dawned, the Governor called a council of his officers to determine what course they should steer. To attempt crossing to Cuba or Hispaniola was considered entirely out of the question, as they knew not where to seek these ports, nor were they provided with nautical instruments necessary for such a voyage : it was determined, therefore, to make for the coast of Mexico, or New Spain ; in steering towards which, they would have the land always on their right, whither they might resort as occasion should require.

Juan de Añasco now stood forward with his usual bustling zeal, whenever any important measure was to be adopted. He piqued himself much upon his knowledge of maritime affairs, as he did upon various other kinds of knowledge, and declared that, according to maps which he had seen, from the place where he supposed they then were, the coast bore east and west to the river of Palms, and from that river to New Spain ran north and south, making a considerable curvature. He advised, therefore, that they should put out to sea in a south-west direction, so as to steer across the gulf ; by this route they might reach the Mexican shores in ten or twelve days, whereas, if they kept near the land, and followed the windings of the coast, the voyage would necessarily be prolonged, and they might be overtaken by winter before they could arrive at a Christian country. To illustrate his ideas, he drew upon a piece of parchment, made from a deer's skin, a rough chart, according to his notions of the coast ; he also produced an old astrolabe, which, being of metal, had escaped the conflagration at Mauvila, and which he had preserved with curious care ; likewise a forestaff, which he had made from a carpenter's rule. With these to take observations and to steer by, he offered to pilot the squadron across the gulf to the shores of New Spain.

The Governor was at first inclined to adopt this council, especially as it was concurred in by some of the officers.

The majority, however, opposed it; partly through doubts of the nautical knowledge of Juan de Añasco, who they knew had but little practical experience; partly, perhaps, from jealousy of the lead so often given to him in services of moment, but chiefly because of the real dangers of his proposition. They argued that the brigantines, being so slightly built, and without decks, would be in danger of foundering in the least storm;—that their peril would be almost equally great on the high sea, in calms or head-winds from want of fresh water, having so few casks to put it in, and that it would be the height of rashness to attempt to cross a vast and unknown gulf without a compass to steer by and an experienced pilot to direct them. They concluded, therefore, that though it might be the slower, it would be the far surer course to keep along the coast, where they could land occasionally for supplies, and take refuge in creeks, bays, and mouths of rivers, in case of tempestuous weather. This council finally prevailed, much to the vexation of Juan de Añasco.

Orders were now given to make sail, when, as they were weighing anchor, the cable of the Governor's brigantine parted. Unfortunately, there was no buoy to mark the place, and the water was extremely deep. For six hours the most expert divers were employed to search for it, but in vain; they therefore supplied its place with a heavy stone, and bits from the troopers' bridles to increase its weight.

It was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that they made sail. The Governor and Añasco took the lead. They kept on for two or three leagues into the broad sea, when the captains of the other vessels bore up, and hailing Moscoso, demanded whether he intended to quit the shore, contrary to the resolution of the council, declaring that if he did they would abandon him, and take each his own course.

Moscoso replied that he stood to sea for the purpose of sailing with more security during the night, but that he should return to the coast in the daytime. All that night and the next day this little fleet kept on with a fair wind, and to their surprise, in fresh water, owing to the immense quantity disembogued by the Mississippi. About nightfall, they anchored at a small rocky island, to take a little repose.

Here Juan de Añasco again produced his deer-skin chart, and inveighed against the loss of time and labour in thus creeping pusillanimously along shore, instead of standing

boldly across the gulf. His arguments at length prevailed, and, on the following morning, all the vessels stood out to sea. For two days Juan de Añasco piloted them triumphantly, with the aid of his astrolabe and forestaff, and frequent consultations of the deer-skin chart. At length, their water growing scanty, they felt inclined to stand toward the shore, but were met in the teeth by a contrary wind.

This wind continued two days, and kept them beating about on the high seas till their water was nearly expended. They now bitterly inveighed against Juan de Añasco for giving his advice, and the Governor for following it, and swore that if they once more got in with the land they would keep along shore, let Moscoso and his nautical counsellor take what course they pleased. On the fourth day, when they were at their last drop of water, the wind veered a little, and, plying every oar, they made for the coast. Those on board the vessels, who knew any thing of nautical matters, now vented their spleen upon Juan de Añasco as a meddling pretender, who had never been at sea before this expedition, and knew nothing of maritime affairs. The common soldiers made merry at the expense of his astrolabe and deer-skin chart. This coming to Añasco's ears, he flung his forestaff into the sea, with the chart tied to it, and would have sent the astrolabe after them, but prudence tempered his wrath. Fortunately, the forestaff and chart floated, and were picked up by the brigantines which followed, and Juan de Añasco was gradually pacified. He seems, in fact, to have been the only person in the squadron who had a just notion of their situation and true course, and his idea of the run of the coast was in the main correct.

CHAPTER LXIX.

1543. IT was with much toil and difficulty that the Spaniards rowed to shore, where they landed on a sandy beach without shelter. In the evening the wind blew fresh from the south, and drove the vessels from their weak anchors, so that they were in danger of stranding. The crews were obliged to leap into the water, and bear up against them to keep them from bilging. When the wind had subsided, they dug pits in the sand, from which they procured fresh water enough

to fill their casks. In this way they supplied themselves with water throughout the voyage, whenever there were no springs or streams at hand. After sailing about fifteen days, they came to four or five small islands, not far from the main land. Here they found innumerable quantities of sea-birds, which built their nests upon the sand, and so close together, that it was almost impossible to walk without treading upon them. The men landed and returned to the vessels, laden with eggs and young birds, which were almost too fat to eat. Quitting these islands, they coasted along until they came to a beautiful beach, free from rushes, skirted by a grove of large trees, clear of bush, brake, or underwood. Here they found great quantities of that scum of the sea called copeck, resembling pitch. They therefore remained here several days, careening their brigantines on the beach, caulking their seams, and smearing them with the copeck, mixed with hog's lard. While thus employed, they were visited several times by a few natives, armed with bows and arrows, but pacific in their conduct, who brought maize in exchange for skins. Continuing their voyage, the Spaniards were exceedingly molested in some parts of the coast by clouds of mosquitoes, so virulent in their sting that the men's faces were swollen out of all shape. It thus became necessary to stand by the rowers, and drive off these pestilent insects from their heads as they laboured at the oar.

When the weather was pleasant some of the men fished while others went on shore and gathered shell fish, for they were on short allowance, their pork being expended, and they had but little maize remaining. Some of the fish taken were of a very large size, and one jerked with such violence as to pull the unwary fisherman into the water.

For fifty-three days the Spaniards kept along the coast, steering to the westward. A great part of the time, however, was employed in repairing the vessels, in fishing, and in sheltering themselves from rough weather. Juan de Añasco, calculating the distance they had come, insisted that they must be near the river of Palms, from which, as he had before represented, according to his recollections of the map he had seen, the coast bore north and south. The fleet consequently stood a little out to sea, and next morning early they perceived palm trees at a distance rising above the surface of the water, and observed that the coast actually lay

north and south. In the afternoon high mountains began to loom up afar off—the first they had seen on any part of the sea-coast since their first landing at Espiritu Santo. The opinions of Juan de Añasco now rose in the estimation of his companions, and it was concluded that they had passed the river of Palms in the night-time. If so, they could not be above sixty leagues from the river of Panuco, in the neighbourhood of Spanish settlements.

They had not proceeded far, however, when a violent gale sprang up from the north. Five of the brigantines, and among them that of the Governor, made for the land; the other two caravels, one under command of the treasurer, Juan Gaytan, who since the untimely death of De Guzman had been sole captain, and the other, commanded by Juan Alvorado and Christoval Mosquera, not taking timely warning of the threatening gale stood off too far from the coast, and were consequently exposed all night to its fury. The caravel of Juan Gaytan was at one time in imminent peril. A sudden squall struck her, wrenched her mast out of the beam, and it was with the utmost difficulty they could right it again. When morning dawned, instead of lulling as the mariners had predicted, the gale raged with renewed violence. Observing the other five brigantines enter a creek and anchor in safety, it stimulated the crews of the two caravels to redouble their efforts to reach their companions. All their efforts were however vain, for the wind was directly a-head, and they were several times in danger of foundering in spite of their struggles. They still persisted until the afternoon, when, convinced that further toil would be unavailing, they bore off and ran along the coast with the wind on their quarter, the billows all the while breaking over them, so that they were in continual danger of being swamped.

For six and twenty hours the gale continued with unabated fury, during which time the Spaniards were struggling with the winds and waves without a moment's repose and scarcely tasting food. Just as the sun was going down there was a cry of "land a-head." A boy named Francisco, in the brigantine under the command of Juan de Alvorado and Francisco Mosquera, said to those captains, "Señores, I know this coast, as I have visited it twice before as cabin-boy of a ship; the dark land stretching to the left is a rough and rock-bound shore, extending to the harbour of Vera Cruz.

In all that distance there is neither port nor shelter, but it is studded with sharp-pointed rocks; if we strike upon these we must all perish. The light-coloured land to the right is a soft sand beach, which we can attain before nightfall. Should the wind drive us upon those gloomy shores we have little chance of our lives!"

So soon as the vessels drew near each other, the two captains warned Juan Gaytan and his crew of their danger. The latter immediately determined to shape their course for the white shore, but Juan Gaytan, who was a better treasurer than captain, opposed this measure, saying it was not well thus to lose a valuable bark. This exasperated the crew, who began to mutiny and murmur. "Is this vessel of more worth than our lives?" said they. "You presume upon your rank of royal treasurer. Did you cut wood, or make charcoal for the forges, or beat out iron for the nails, or caulk the vessels, or in fact do any thing? No! you excused yourself as an officer of the Emperor; pray then what do you lose if the brigantine is wrecked?"

Not heeding their commander, the principal soldiers set to work trimming the sails, and a Portuguese, named Domingos de Acosta, seized the helm and turned the prow of the bark towards the desired shore. After making several tacks, they struck upon the beach before the sun had set, and succeeded in unlading and hauling the vessel on dry land. The other brigantine effected a landing in a similar manner, and with like success.

CHAPTER LXX.

1543. THE crews of the two barks now assembled together to decide what should be done. It was unanimously resolved to send messengers to seek the Governor, with tidings of their situation. But who would undertake this perilous journey? They would have to travel thirteen or fourteen leagues through an unknown land, to ford rivers, and peradventure encounter enemies.

Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo and Franciso Muñoz undertook the task. Taking a small supply of provisions, and buckling on their shields and swords, they set forth at midnight on their hazardous expedition.

Their comrades then returned to their brigantines, posted sentries, and took a refreshing repose after their arduous labours. The morning had no sooner dawned than they chose three captains to set out, each with twenty men, and explore the country. One party followed the coast to the north, another to the south, and the third, under Gonzalo Sylvestre, took a westwardly direction into the interior.

The two first parties returned in a short time, one bringing half a dish of white porcelain, of Spanish manufacture, the other a broken porringer of painted earthenware. The rapture of their comrades at beholding these signs of the neighbourhood of some Spanish settlement, is easier to be conceived than described.

Gonzalo Sylvestre and his band had penetrated little more than a quarter of a league, when they beheld a beautiful lake of fresh water spread out before them, half a league in extent. Upon its waters were several canoes with Indians fishing. Fearing that these might see them, and spread an alarm, they struck into a wood that bordered the lake, and keeping silently on for a quarter of a league, they saw two Indians beneath a Guava tree, gathering the fruit. Dragging themselves along the ground among the herbage, until sufficiently near, they rose at the same time and rushed to seize the Indians, one of whom plunged into the lake, and escaped by swimming; they took the other prisoner; at the same time making prize of two baskets of Guavas, a Mexican turkey, two Spanish fowls, and some maize;—they then proceeded with all haste towards the vessels.

On arriving at the sea-shore they found their comrades examining those tokens of civilization discovered by the two Captains. When, however, the Spaniards beheld the articles brought by Sylvestre and his party, they leaped about like madmen. A surgeon, who had formerly been in Mexico, asking the Indian captive the name of a pair of scissors, which he held in his hand, the latter immediately called it by its Spanish name. This convinced them that they were in the territory of Mexico, which elated them to such a degree, that they embraced Sylvestre and his men, and hoisting that Captain upon their shoulders, bore him about the shore in triumph.

When this ebullition of joy had subsided, upon inquiring

more particularly respecting the country, they learnt that the river into which Luis de Moscoso, with the five brigantines, had taken refuge, was the Panuco; and that on its banks, twelve leagues above, stood a city of the same name. The Indian told them, moreover, that about a league off lived a Cacique who could read and write, and had been educated by Christian priests.

These joyful tidings gladdened their hearts, and having feasted the Indian, and given him presents, they despatched him to the Christian Cacique, with a request that the latter would either bring or send a supply of ink and paper. Their messenger soon returned, and with him the Cacique, followed by a train of eight Indians, laden with fowls, bread of maize, and various fruits and fish, together with paper and ink. The Spaniards immediately sent off a native with a letter to Moscoso, giving him an account of all that had happened, and requesting directions as to their future movements.

Meanwhile, Moscoso, when he took refuge in the river from the gale, with his five brigantines, to his great joy beheld several Indians on shore, clothed in the Spanish costume. Addressing them in Spanish, he demanded in what country they then were. The Indians answered in the same language, that they were on the Panuco river, and that the town of that name was not fifteen leagues distant. Upon this the Spaniards leaped on shore, kissed the ground repeatedly, and throwing themselves on their knees, poured out their thanks to God.

They now made the best of their way to the town of Panuco, where, in a few days, they were joined by their shipwrecked comrades. On entering the town their first act was to repair to the church, and offer up thanks to God for having preserved them through so many perils and hardships. The burghers crowded to the church to offer them assistance. The Corregidor took Moscoso into his house, made him his guest, and quartered his followers among the inhabitants.

The town was for the most part built of stone, and contained about seventy families, who lived simply but abundantly, the wealthiest not possessing incomes of above five hundred crowns. Many of the inhabitants, however, were courteous cavaliers, and all were touched with pity at be-

holding this forlorn remnant of the gallant armament, which had excited such expectations on its outset from Cuba.

The survivors, in fact, were blackened, haggard, shrivelled, and half naked ; being clad only with the skins of deer, buffaloes, bears, and other animals, so that, says the Spanish historian, they looked more like wild beasts than human beings.

CHAPTER LXXI.

1543. THE Chief Magistrate of Panuco despatched a messenger forthwith to Don Antonio de Mendoza, of Mexico, which city lay seventy leagues distant, to apprise him that a small remnant of Hernando de Soto's army had returned from Florida. The Viceroy sent word, without delay, that they should be shown every kindness, and furnished with whatever was necessary for their journey when sufficiently recovered from their fatigues. He accompanied his message with a supply of shirts and sandals, and also four mules laden with delicacies and medicines for the sick.

While Luis de Moscoso and his men continued in this city, they had time to reflect upon the beautiful country they had abandoned, and began to draw comparisons between it and Panuco. They found that here the people were but indifferently circumstanced, having neither mines of gold nor of silver, nor any other treasure. Their dresses were mere garments of cotton ; their only sources of wealth the breeding of horses and planting of mulberry-trees. The adventurers now began to retrace in memory the beautiful provinces they had discovered ; their wild fertility and prodigal abundance ; their capabilities for raising maize, grain, and vegetables ; their verdant meadows and rich pastures ; their vast tracts of woodland, watered by running streams, so well adapted to the raising of flocks and herds. But, above all, they called to mind the treasures of pearls, which they had not appreciated, as each adventurer fancied himself lord of boundless domains.

Turning over these things in their minds, they began to murmur among themselves. "Could we not," said they, "have dwelt in Florida, as these Spaniards live in Panuco ?

and had we settled there, should we not have been more opulent than our hosts here? Is it just that we should come and receive hospitality from others poorer than ourselves, when we might have entertained all Spain? Is it creditable to our honour that we, who might have been chieftains, have come here to beg? It would have been far better to have bravely perished in the beautiful country we have quitted, amid the struggles of war and the labours of discovery, than to dwell here in inglorious inaction!"

These murmurings in their poverty produced violent discord among the discontented soldiers. Their greatest rage, however, was against the officers of the royal revenue, and those who, after the death of the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had insisted upon quitting Florida, and had obstinately forced Luis de Moscoso to undertake that disastrous journey to the province of Los Vasqueros, instead of sending two brigantines for reinforcements, as had been intended. Several affrays took place in which blood was shed, and some lives lost. The officers and cavaliers were obliged to keep within doors, and the town was continually distracted by broils among the soldiery.

The Corregidor of Panuco, finding that this discord increased from day to day, sent word to the Viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, who ordered Moscoso and his disappointed troops to be sent immediately to Mexico, in small detachments of ten and twenty, and that care should be taken to separate those who were at variance, lest they should fight by the road.

In pursuance of this order, they left Panuco twenty-five days after their arrival there. The inhabitants along the road thronged to see them; eager to behold men who had survived such toils and endured such hardships. The fame of their great sufferings and daring exploits had spread throughout the land, and both Indians and Spaniards entertained them with great kindness during their journey. When they arrived at the renowned city of Mexico, throngs of citizens flocked out to receive them, and conducted them to their homes, where they feasted them and clothed them in sumptuous apparel. The Viceroy treated the Governor and his officers with distinguished attention, and extended his liberality to the humblest of their followers.

Some of the skins and furs which the army had preserved were highly prized in Mexico. A few strings of pearls, also, which they had brought with them, proved to be of immense value. The beautiful martin skins, however, were valued above all. Finding that men of wealth prized so highly what they had despised, their despondency increased; they brooded bitterly over their folly in abandoning a country which had cost them so much to discover, and where such valuable articles abounded. Discontented with themselves, they forgot their former brotherhood in arms, and again broke out into sanguinary brawls.

In order to console them, the Viceroy promised that, if they desired to return to Florida, he would himself undertake the conquest of that country; in fact, he had an inclination for the enterprise, and offered salaries to many of the officers and men, if they would accompany him. Some accepted his proposals, but most of them, when put to the proof, shrank from returning to a country where they had suffered so many hardships.

The enterprising spirit of Juan de Añasco was somewhat broken by disappointment, and, disgusted with the new world, where he had squandered his fortune, he returned to Spain. Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, Baltazar de Gallegos, Pedro Calderon, Alonso Romo de Cardenios, Arias Tinoco, and many others of less note, followed the example of De Añasco. Gomez Suarez de Figuero returned to the estate of his father. Some embraced the priesthood; a few remained in New Spain, among whom was the Governor, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, who married a relative, a woman of rank and wealth in Mexico. The greatest number, however, went to seek their fortunes in Peru.

CHAPTER LXXII.

1543. To close this eventful history, it only remains to give some account of the movements of Diego Maldonado and Gomez Arias. The former, as we have before related, set sail from Espiritu Santo for the Havana, with two brigantines, to visit Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, wife of Hernando de Soto; Gomez Arias having preceded him in a caravel.

These two cavaliers had received orders to procure vessels in Havana, load them with supplies of food, arms, and stores, and sail for the Port of Achusi in the course of the following autumn, where De Soto, after exploring the interior of Florida, was to meet them.

They accordingly joined each other in the Havanna, and, having sent to all the adjacent islands an account of the discovery of Florida, purchased three vessels and freighted them with supplies, together with the two brigantines and, the caravel. They could have laden two additional vessels; for the inhabitants of the islands, hearing such a favourable report of Florida, and prompted by their own interest as well as by their love for De Soto, sent all the provision they could collect.

The two captains set sail and reached the Port of Achusi in safety, but not finding De Soto there they separated and coasted in opposite directions, thinking it probable that he might have come out at some other place, either to the eastward or westward. They left signals in the trees and cut letters in the bark, with statements of their intended movements the following summer, but after cruising about in vain until the winter set in, they returned dejected to the Havana. The following summer they revisited the shores of Florida, running along the coast as far to the westward as Mexico, and a great distance to the eastward, but meeting with no success, they returned to the Havana on approach of winter. Early the ensuing summer they again sailed for Florida, and after having consumed seven months in fruitless search, were compelled by the weather to return and winter in the harbour of Cuba.

Determined, however, not to give up the search until they had discovered traces of De Soto, for they could not believe that every soul of the expedition had perished; as soon as the spring of 1543 opened, they again put to sea. They cruised about all this summer, suffering grievous privations and undergoing excessive labour, and about the middle of October arrived at Vera Cruz. Here they heard the melancholy account that the Spaniards had abandoned Florida, that only three hundred of the gallant army had escaped, and that the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had perished in the country he sought to conquer. With these sad tidings,

the two captains repaired to Havana, and communicated them to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla. During three long years she had been racked with anxiety for her husband's safety, and now came news of the failure of his magnificent enterprise, the loss of his treasures, the ruin of his estate, the downfall of his house, and his own melancholy death. It was an overwhelming blow; Doña Isabel never held up her head from this time, but died soon after of a broken heart.

Thus closes this history of blasted hope and baffled enterprise.

APPENDIX.

As the principal authority in the foregoing work is Garcilaso de la Vega, a few particulars concerning him and his writings may be acceptable to the reader. He was a Peruvian by birth, a native of the city of Cuzco. His father was a Spanish adventurer of noble descent, and his mother the sister of Huayna Capac, the last of the renowned Incas. Hearing much in his youth of the land of his father, he quitted his country and repaired to Spain, where he took up his residence at Cordova, and soon distinguished himself by his translation of the Dialogues of Love of Leon Hebreos, and by his Royal Commentaries on the History of the Incas. These won him the favour of the Sovereigns and the esteem of the learned. Don Gabriel Deza de Cardenas, in his preface to the second edition of Garcilaso's History of Florida, remarks, that he was admired by the world as a man of piety, virtue, modesty, and devotion to letters, and held in the highest estimation as a historian. He died in Cordova in 1616, and was honourably interred, in the cathedral in one of the chapels called the Chapel of Garcilaso, where monumental inscriptions on each side of the altar record his valour, his virtues, and his literary merits.

Such is the general character of Garcilaso de la Vega; which will enable the reader in some measure to judge of his credibility as a historian. In his introduction to his work on Florida he gives an account of the sources whence he drew his facts. He says, that he had frequently, and in divers places, held long conversations with an old friend who had been present in the expedition of Hernando de Soto, and that, struck with the achievements both of Spaniards and Indians related by this chevalier, he determined to rescue such heroic deeds from oblivion by recording them. His laudable resolve was for a time, however, postponed. He was called to lay down the pen and take up the sword: other causes concurred to separate them, and thus twenty years elapsed before he could carry his plan into execution.

The desire, however, of perpetuating this heroic expedi-

tion, and the names of the brave men engaged in it, increased with his years, and fearing that the death either of his friend or of himself might defeat his wishes, he left his home and took up his residence for a time in the village where the cavalier resided. Here he took down the particulars of the expedition, as related by word of mouth, questioning his friend minutely and repeatedly as to persons, places, and transactions; thus stimulating his memory, and drawing piecemeal from him those anecdotes of individual prowess and adventure, which give such stirring interest and vivacity to his narrative.

Garcilaso does not give the name of his friend, but says, he was a brave soldier, who had been present in all the scenes of the expedition, and had many times acted as leader in the exploits related. He adds that he was of noble rank, an *hidalgo*, and as such piqued himself on uttering nothing but the truth. Such confidence was placed in his veracity that the Council Royal of the Indies frequently sent for him to consult him about the events that chanced in this and other expeditions in which he had been engaged.

Besides the oral testimony of this cavalier, the Inca informs us that he had likewise written documents from two soldiers who were engaged in the expedition. One of them, named Alonzo de Carmona, a native of the town of Priego, having returned to Spain, wrote his "Two Peregrinations," as he called them, in Florida and Peru. They contained brief notices of facts and circumstances, skipping from one remarkable transaction to another, without much regard to dates or places, or the regular succession of events. These memoirs he sent to Garcilaso de la Vega for his inspection, not knowing at the time that he was occupied on the same subject.

The other soldier was Juan Coles, a native of Zafra; who also wrote an irregular and brief notice of the principal events of the expedition. This he gave to a Franciscan monk, named Fray Pedro Aguado, who incorporated it in a collection of narratives relative to the new world, which he intended to publish. The manuscripts of the friar, however, remained in a crude and neglected state in the hands of a printer at Cordova, where the Inca found them covered with dust and half destroyed by rats. There was nearly a ream of paper, divided into quires, in the hand-writing of the different narrators. From among these Garcilaso extracted the

manuscript of Juan Coles, shortly after he had received that of Alonzo de Carmona. At the time these documents fell into his hands he had already completed his narrative as taken from the lips of his friend; but having now two additional eye-witnesses, he went over the whole subject anew, availing himself of the particulars thus unexpectedly furnished, to corroborate, strengthen, and enlarge the details already recorded.

Such are the sources from whence Garcilaso de la Vega derived his facts, and for which we have the guarantee of his general character as a man of judgment and veracity. His account of the expedition of Hernando de Soto was held in such credit in former times, and by those most capable of judging, that it was incorporated almost at full length by Herrera, the great Spanish historian, in his history of American discovery.

ROUTE OF HERNANDO DE SOTO.

IN order to assist any future research as to the route of Hernando de Soto and his followers, we here subjoin the various marchings, distances, and points of the compass, as gleaned from different parts of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives. They will be seen to be contradictory and exaggerated, and have frequently caused us great perplexity: we have, however, endeavoured to guide ourselves through the maze they present, by certain general landmarks, and by the researches of various travellers.

Indeed, the Inca himself remarks, "I cannot hold myself responsible for the distances I give, for although I have spared no exertion, and have used all diligence to arrive at the truth, yet I have been unavoidably compelled to leave much to conjecture. The Spaniards had no instruments with them by which they could compute distances; their main object was to conquer the country, and seek for silver and gold, consequently they gave themselves but little trouble to note down the route."

"De Soto and his followers," says the Inca, "landed at the Bay of Espiritu Santo, whence they marched a little more than two leagues in a north-east direction, and halted at the village of Hirihigua; resuming their march to the

north-east, a journey of twenty-five leagues brought them to the village of Urribarracaxi; hence to the province of Acuera, where they next arrived, was twenty leagues. Departing from Acuera, and marching towards the north, and sometimes to the north-east, about twenty leagues, they came to the town of Ocali. Here they crossed the river Ocali, and journeying sixteen leagues, reached Ochile, a frontier village of the province of Vitachuco. The Spaniards," says the Inca, "marched more than fifty leagues through this province. We next find them in the village of Vitachuco. Setting out from thence, they marched four leagues to the river of Osachile. Crossing this, they continued on six leagues, and came to the village of the same name. Twelve leagues further, they found the great swamp; traversing this, which was one league and a half across, they continued on six leagues, and were arrested by a deep stream:—having crossed this, they marched four leagues to the chief village of Apalachee, where they went into winter quarters." The Inca here states that the bay of Aute was about four leagues distant.

Leaving Apalachee, the ensuing spring, they marched to the northward five days, and came to the province of Atapaha; ten days more brought them to the province of Achalaque.* They were five days in traversing this province, and in four days more, came to the frontier village of the province of Cofa. Leaving this village, in six or seven days they came to the province of Cofaqui; from thence, a march of seven days brought them to a river: marching up this for twelve leagues, they came to a frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; in four days more they arrived at the capital. Quitting this province, they came, at the end of eight days, to the province of Chalaque. Three days more brought them to the province of Xuala. The Inca here observes, that the Spaniards were fifty-seven days marching from Apalachee to Xuala. He supposes, that they must have marched about four leagues and half a day, and that consequently Xuala must have been nearly two hundred and fifty leagues from the province of Apalachee, and about four hundred from the Bay of Espiritu Santo.

* It will be seen, by referring to chap. xxvi of this work, that we consider the Inca under a mistake in bringing them so soon to this province. We prefer the Portuguese account, which makes their arrival a month later.

They now struck, he says, in a westwardly direction, making a bend towards the south, and in five days came to the province of Guaxule: a march of six days more, or thirty leagues, brought them to Ychiaha. Their next journey was to the village of Acoste, five leagues from Ychiaha. Quitting this, they traversed the provinces of Cosa, and in twenty-three or four days came to the village of Cosa, which was more than a hundred leagues distant from Acoste. Continuing onward towards the south, five days' march brought them to the town of Talise; a journey of five or six days more found them in Tascaluza, and marching two leagues further, they halted in the town of Manvila. From hence, De Soto, to avoid the sea, struck northwardly, and, marching seven days, came to the village of Chicaza: a league distant from this village was Chicacilla, where they passed the winter.

Setting out the following spring, the first place they arrived at was Alibamo, four or five leagues from Chicacilla: a march of three days brought them to the village of Chisca, on the banks of the Mississippi. Following the banks of this river four days, they crossed it, and, marching on four or five days longer, they came to the village of Casquin: a journey of about six days brought them to Capaha; from hence the army returned to the village of Casquin. Leaving that town behind them, they continued along the river nine days, when they reached the village of Quiguate. Still following the course of the river, in five days, they came to Colima. The next province they reached was Tula, ten days' journey from the last: a march of six days more brought them to the town of Utiangué, where they wintered.

In the spring the army resumed its wanderings, and, in seven days came to the village of Naguategu. A march of five days brought them to the frontiers of the province of Guancané, which they were eight days in traversing. From hence they struck in a south-eastwardly direction, to reach the Mississippi. They traversed seven provinces, a distance, the Inca conjectures, of about one hundred and twenty leagues, and arrived at the province of Anilco. Marching on through this province for thirty leagues, they came to the capital: a journey of four days further, brought them to the province of Guachoya, where De Soto died.

The army, says Garcilaso, set out for the westward under

Luis de Moscoso, and marching more than a hundred leagues came to the province of Auché: continuing on for six or seven days, they arrived at the province of Los Vasqueros. They penetrated more than thirty leagues into this province, when their westward march was arrested by the sight of lofty mountains. From hence they set out on their return to the Mississippi, and making a bend to the southward, arrived at the village of Aminoya, three months from the time of their departure from Guachoya. The whole distance of their march to the west of the Mississippi, going and returning, he computes to have been more than three hundred and fifty leagues.

Garcilaso de la Vega remarks, that it is difficult to give precisely the length of the Spaniards' voyage down the Mississippi, as they were so engaged in fighting that they had not time to calculate the probable distance; but he adds, that some time afterwards, in Mexico, they consulted among themselves, in the presence of some men who were skilled in maritime matters, and it was computed that having had the aid of sails and oars, the average of a day and night must have been about five and twenty leagues; and as they were nineteen days and nights in performing the voyage, the whole distance was not far short of five hundred leagues. According to the memorandum of Juan Coles, he says it was considered seven hundred leagues.

Garcilaso adds, that the Mississippi, at Aminoya was nineteen fathoms deep and a quarter of a league wide; but that some persons, who pretended to a knowledge of cosmography, asserted the distance from this place where the Spaniards embarked, to where the river takes its rise, was three hundred leagues, and some averred much more; but I adopt, says he, the opinion most within bounds, that would make this river eight hundred leagues in extent,—which was the distance the Spaniards penetrated into the country. Having given a sketch of the route, as stated by the Inca in his narrative, we annex a memorandum of the route, according to the Portuguese narrator.

From the port of the Holy Ghost, (*Espiritu Santo*,) he says, the army marched round the bay about two leagues, and came to the town of Ucita; from thence they went thirty leagues to the coast of Paracoxi; marching on through the small villages Acela and Jocaste, they came to Cale;

quitting Cale they passed through Itara and Potano, and on the third day came to Utinama. They next came to a habitation, which, he says, the Spaniards called de Mala Paz; and from thence went to Cholupaba. Here they crossed a river, and having marched two days, arrived at Caliquen; five days' march brought them to Napetaca; continuing on by Pelaya, they next reached Uzachil; in two days' march they came to Axille. Having crossed a river they halted in Vitachuco, a village of the province of Palache; passing through the town of Uzelu, they came to Anhayca of Palache, where they went into winter quarters. He states here, that the sea was only ten leagues distant from this place.

On the third of March, they left Anbayca of Palache, and came to Capachiqui on the eleventh: continuing on, they arrived at Toalli on the twenty-first of the same month. Quitting Toalli the twenty-third, they crossed a river and came to Achese: resuming their journey on the first of April, they were at Altaraca on the fourth, and arrived at Ocute on the tenth; and passing through Cofaqui came to Patofa. The writer here observes, that it is fifty leagues from Ocute to Patofa, and not less than three hundred and sixty leagues from Ocute to Espiritu Santo.

Leaving Patofa, they marched nine days, at the rate of seven or eight leagues a day, crossing two large rivers, and encamped in a desert: from hence they marched about twelve or thirteen leagues down the banks of a river, and came to a small village called Aymay: they next arrived at the province of Cutifachiqui, two days' journey distant from Aymay: departing from Cutifachiqui, they marched a hundred leagues in this province, and came to Chalaque: a journey of five days more brought them to the province of Xualla. The narrator observes here, that from Ocute to Cutifachiqui it is reckoned a hundred and thirty leagues, and from Cutifachiqui to Xualla, two hundred and fifty. Quitting Xualla, they came, in five days, to Quaxule: two days' march brought them to Canasaqua. They journeyed on five days and came to Chiaha: the next town they reached was Acoste, seven days' journey distant. On the ninth of July the army left Acoste, and went to Tali, and thence to Coza, where they arrived on the fifteenth: they departed from Coza on the twentieth, and passing through Tallimuchase, Ulliballi and Toasi, arrived at Tallise on the eighteenth of September. The narrator

remarks in this place, that they usually marched five or six leagues a day in uninhabited countries; but that in the wilderness they journeyed as fast as possible, lest they should be straitened for want of provision. He says, it is computed that Tascaluza is twenty leagues south of Cosa; Cosa one hundred and eighty leagues west of Xualla; Xualla two hundred and fifty leagues north of Cutifachiqui; Cutifachiqui four hundred and thirty leagues north-east of Palache, and Palache one hundred west from Espiritu Santo. Leaving Tallise, the Spaniards passed through Casiste, and came to the town of Piache, here they crossed a wide river, and continuing on, arrived at Maville the eighteenth of October; they departed from Maville on the eighteenth of November, and in five days entered the province of Pafallaya. Passing through the village of Taliepatave and Cabusto, and crossing a wide river, they arrived at Chicasa on the eighteenth of December, where they went into winter quarters.

Resuming their march in the spring they came to the village of Alinamu, and after seven days arrived at Quizquiz;—a march of half a league further brought them to the Mississippi. From Tascaluza to the great river, observes the Portuguese, we reckon three hundred leagues. Crossing this river they marched a league and a half to a village in the province of Aquixo: continuing on they came to the village of Casqui. They next reached the village of Pacaba, about a day's journey distant from Casqui: returning to the latter place they continued their march and arrived at Quigate, which was one hundred and twenty leagues from Pacaba. Quitting Quigate they marched about forty leagues to the province of Coligoa; five days more brought them to Palisema. They next came to Tafalicoya; four days' journey distant was the province of Cayas, which they entered, and halted in the town of Tanico. After a march of three days they came to Tulla; they next arrived, at the end of five days, at Quipana. Continuing onward they passed through Anoixi and Catamaya and arrived at Autiamque, where they passed the winter.

Departing from Autiamque on the sixth of March, they passed through the province of Ayays and came to the town of Tultelpina. After three days' march they arrived at Tianto, and the next day, the fifteenth of March, came to Nilco; soon after, they reached Guachoya, where De Soto died.

Luis de Moscoso set out on the fifth of June, and passing through the province of Catalte arrived at Chaguata on the twentieth. Three days' journey from thence brought them to the province of Aguacay. They continued on, and passing by Pato, on the fourth day came to the province of Maye: they next reached Naguatex. At the end of three days' march they came to the small hamlet of Missobone: thence they passed through Lacane, Mondacao and the province of Ayays, and arrived at Socatino. After twenty days' march they came to the province of Guasco. They continued on to the river Daycao, ten days' journey from Guasco, where they arrived in the beginning of October. The Portuguese says here, that from Daycao to the great river it was one hundred and fifty leagues, which they travelled, marching always to the westward.

From hence they set out on their return, and passing through Naguatex, Chaguata and the town of Cilano arrived at Nilco in the beginning of December: from thence they went two days' journey to Minoya. Here they embarked upon the Mississippi. Their course, says the narrator, continued seventeen days, during which they travelled two hundred and fifty leagues.

THE END.



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