ROBERT GRANT WATSON

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE SOUTH AMERICA DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD; VOL. 1

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Spanish and Portuguese South America during the Colonial Period; Vol. 1

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Содержание

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"Fall'n nations gaze on Spain; if freed, she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once enchain'd;
Strange retribution! now Columbia's ease
Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons sustain'd."

Childe Harold.

PREFACE

The following account of the Colonies from which sprang the States of South America owes its origin to the want of such a work felt by myself some years ago. In 1866 I received the appointment of second Secretary to Her Majesty's Legation in the *Argentine Republic* and *Paraguay*. My previous experience having been in quite another part of the world, I had all to learn respecting the regions which I was about to visit. The only book which had been recommended to me was Sir Woodbine Parish's work on *Buenos Ayres*. On reaching my destination, however, I found that this work was already out of date; I also found that there was a considerable amount of literature respecting South America. But this literature being partly in English, French, German, Dutch, Latin, or Italian, and partly in Spanish or Portuguese, was only accessible to persons possessing a reading knowledge of the above-named languages.

Of two years in South America I passed one as Secretary at *Buenos Ayres*, and the other in a similar capacity at *Rio de Janeiro*. During the first year I was sent up the *Uruguay* and to the Province of *Santa Fè*; then to the Welsh colony on the *Chupat* river in *Patagonia*; and, lastly, to the then seat of war in *Paraguay*: in the second year I went on a mission to the Province of *Minas Geraes* in *Brazil*. I had thus opportunities of seeing different parts of the continent, and of becoming more impressed with the want of a work giving anything like a complete account of them.

On my return to Europe I was employed in several countries for a number of years in succession, and have only recently found the necessary leisure to compose a work of the kind mentioned. The materials at my disposal are voluminous; but my effort has been to make this Review as concise as is consistent with clearness. In offering it to the Public I by no means desire it to take the place of the more elaborate and original works referred to in it, but rather to serve as an Index to the contents of these various works.

The History of South America may contain much of general interest; it possesses, moreover, a special interest for merchants, settlers, sailors, and travellers, who may have passed, or may be likely to pass, a portion of their lives on the continent in question; nor should some knowledge of an important portion of the globe be excluded from the sphere of inquiry of any educated person.

That the merest elementary acquaintance with South American geography and politics may be conspicuously absent even in educated English circles, may be gathered from the following circumstances within my own experience:—On my return to England in 1868, I happened to be present on the annual speech-day at Harrow. At luncheon there I sat next to a gentleman whose remarks on the unusual heat of the weather led to his learning that I had recently come from *Rio de Janeiro*. His interest being excited, he asked me to tell him, one by one, the several stages by which one arrived there from England, viz.—Southampton, Lisbon, *St. Vincent*, *Pernambuco*, *Bahia*, and *Rio*. When I had named the last point he repeated the inquiry, "and then?" to which I replied that *then* one was at one's destination.—"But," he asked, "I thought *Rio* was up a river?" I suggested that he was perhaps misled by the name "*Rio de Janeiro*," the River of January, but said that the town was situated on an arm of the sea, which the first European explorers had mistaken for a stream, naming it after the month of the year on which it was discovered. But this explanation did not satisfy him. He was thinking of some other river: would I name one or two? I suggested "*The Amazons*," which he said was the stream he meant, until I informed him that it lay about two thousand miles to the *north* of *Rio de Janeiro*! On this he remarked that there was surely another great stream in that quarter, and that he must have mistaken the name. I suggested the river *Plate*, to which he answered "Yes, yes, of course;" but his speculations collapsed when I informed him that the river *Plate* was about a thousand and fifty miles to the *south* of the Brazilian capital.

About the same time I met at a dinner-party a well-known Member of Parliament, who, on learning the quarter of the world from which I had recently arrived, professed himself as being most

anxious to hear something about the *Paraguayan* War, then much talked of, and the progress of which he said he had followed with close attention. I began with a statement of the contending parties—namely, *Paraguay* on the one hand, and *Brazil*, the *Argentine Republic*, and the Republic of *Uruguay* on the other. "But stop," he said "You have omitted to mention *Corrientes*." I answered that to quote *Corrientes* as being one of the parties to the war would be the same as to mention Yorkshire as having been one of the principals of the Crimean War—since *Corrientes* was merely a province of the *Argentine Republic*. This was a new light to him; the name had so taken hold of his memory that he was at first inclined to argue with me as to the correctness of my statement.

Lest this gentleman should appear exceptionally uninformed, I may mention that, as I had subsequent opportunities of ascertaining, even some men holding high office in the Royal Geographical Society—who were familiar with the latest discoveries near the North Pole and in the interior of Africa, with Central Asia, and with Australia—had somehow in their range of study overlooked South America.

In writing history, one man necessarily builds upon another man's foundation. It was my first intention to compose a wholly original work, comprising the history of the several states of South America from the discovery of that Continent to the present day; but reflection convinced me that the execution of such a plan would require the labour of many years, even were all circumstances favourable. Various writers have formed schemes, the labour entailed by the magnitude of which has led to their collapse. As one example amongst many may be mentioned the scholar Muñoz, who employed nearly fifty years in amassing materials for a history of Spanish discovery and conquest in America, but who had scarcely finished the first volume when he died.

Even were one to attempt to produce an entirely original history of the early Portuguese South America, it would necessarily prove defective in comparison with Southey's "History of *Brazil*." In the preface to his work, that author says of it, under date of 1810, "For the greater part of the last century printed documents almost entirely fail. A collection of manuscripts not less extensive than curious, and which is not to be equalled in England, enables me to supply this chasm in history. The collection was formed during a residence of more than thirty years in Portugal, by a relative. Without the assistance which I have received from him, it would have been hopeless to undertake, and impossible to complete it." With the above instances before me, I have felt it necessary to content myself with writing a historical Review respecting the several Spanish and Portuguese Colonies from which sprang the various countries which collectively form political South America.

R. G. W.

London, 1884.

CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTORY

1498-1503

1498.

Until the approach of the sixteenth century the South American continent, in so far as European knowledge was concerned, was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep that encompassed it. At that time the Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters said, "Let there be light;" and there was light.

On the 30th of May 1498 Columbus set sail from *San Lucar de Barrameda*, with a squadron of six vessels, on his third voyage of discovery, taking a course much further to the south than that which he had hitherto pursued. He stood to the south-west after leaving *San Lucar*; touching at the islands of *Porto Santo* and *Madeira*, where he remained a few days, taking in supplies before continuing his course to the *Canary* Islands. On the 19th of June he arrived at *Gomara*. Leaving *Gomara* two days later, Columbus divided his squadron off the island of *Ferro*, three of his ships being despatched to *Hispaniola* with supplies for the colony. With the three remaining vessels the admiral continued his voyage towards the *Cape de Verde* Islands, where he arrived on the 27th of June.

Leaving the island of *Buena Vista* on the 5th of July, Columbus stood to the south-west. The volcanic summit of *Fuego* was the last point visible of the Old World. On the 13th of July he found himself in the fifth degree of north latitude, in that region which extends for some ten degrees on each side of the line, and is known among mariners as the calm latitudes. There the trade winds from the south-east and north-east, meeting near the equator, neutralize each other. The sea is as a lake of oil, and vessels with their flapping sails appear as if they were destined to remain stationary for ever. The calm lasted for eight days, the air being like a furnace. The mariners lost all strength and spirit beneath the oppressive heat. In addition to sharing the sufferings of those around him, Columbus was at this time afflicted with an attack of gout; but his energy of mind overcame his bodily distress. To escape the heat he altered his course and steered to the south-west.

After making his way slowly for some time to the westward, through calms and mists and heat, the admiral emerged into a region blessed by a cooling breeze that filled his sails and dispelled the mists. The sky became clear, and the sun no longer gave forth an intolerable heat. The ships had been so dried by the parching weather that they leaked excessively, and it was necessary to seek a harbour without delay. He therefore kept on directly to the west; but as no land appeared, he altered his course to the northward, in search of the *Caribbee* Islands. By the 31st of July there was but one cask of water remaining in each ship, when the man on the look-out gave the cry of "land." Three mountain tops were visible on the distant horizon; but as the vessels neared them, these three were seen to be one. It was an emblem of the Holy Trinity, after whom the pious Columbus in his distress had determined to name the first land he should behold. There was thus a peculiar appropriateness in giving to this island, which lies immediately off the South American coast, the name of *La Trinidad*.

On the following day Columbus coasted westward in search of water and of a convenient harbour. There was indeed no lack of water, for he beheld groves of palm-trees and forests rising from the sea-shore amidst running streams. He found the country cultivated in many parts, and having villages and scattered habitations. It produced so pleasant an impression on his mind that, in his letter describing it to Ferdinand and Isabella, he compared its appearance to that of the Spanish province of Valencia in the early spring. At a point to which he gave the name of *La Playa*, he sent his boats

on shore for water. The inhabitants had taken to flight; his men found their footprints as they did the traces of deer.

While coasting *Trinidad*, Columbus beheld land stretching twenty leagues to the south. It was the low coast intersected by the mouths of the *Orinoco*. It does not appear that either the admiral or any of his men landed on this coast; and they sailed away from it, ignorant of the fact that they were the first Europeans who had looked on the *terra firma* or mainland of South America. On the 2nd of August Columbus continued his course to the south-west point of *Trinidad*, which he called *Punta Arenal*, and where his crews were permitted to land and refresh themselves. The anchorage at this place was, however, extremely insecure, and in the night-time Columbus trembled for the safety of his squadron, owing to a sudden rush of water caused by the swelling of one of the rivers which flow into the Gulf of *Paria*, and which tore one of his ships from her anchorage. He was, however, so fortunate as to escape without injury, and on the following day he passed in safety the formidable strait lying between the island and the mainland, and found himself in a tranquil sea beyond. He was now on the inner side of *Trinidad*, with the Gulf of *Paria* on his left.

The admiral now shaped his course northwards, steering for a mountain at the north-western point of *Trinidad*. On nearing it he beheld two lofty capes opposite each other, the one on the island, the other on the promontory of *Paria*, which stretches far out from the mainland. Between these capes there was another strait, which appeared even more dangerous than that he had left behind him, and to which, owing to its formidable appearance, he gave the name of *Boca del Drago*, or the Dragon's Mouth. In order to avoid it he steered westward, under the belief that the promontory of *Paria* was an island. He found the beautiful coast indented with fine harbours, and the country in some places cultivated and in others covered with forest. He was greatly surprised to find the water become fresher and fresher as he proceeded, and likewise to find the sea as tranquil as if it were a vast harbour.

Up to this time he had held no communication with the people of the mainland, although he had in vain endeavoured to enter into parley with the inhabitants of *Trinidad* at *Punta Arenal*. After sailing for several leagues along the coast, he anchored on the 6th of August, and sent his boats on shore. Although traces of men were found, not a soul was to be seen. Columbus therefore proceeded further westward, and once more anchored. Here a canoe came off to the nearest *caravel*, the captain of which contrived to secure the three or four Indians which it bore. They were brought to the admiral, from whom they received beads and hawks'-bells, with which they returned delighted to the shore, and which induced their countrymen to come to the ships in numbers, bringing with them bread, maize, and other articles of food.

Taking with him several of these natives to serve as guides, Columbus proceeded eight leagues still further to the westward, and anchored at a lovely point, to which he gave the name of *Aguja*, or the Needle. The country was highly populous, and was possessed of magnificent vegetation. The natives were friendly, and invited the admiral, in the name of their king, to come to land. Many of them wore collars of an inferior kind of gold, which they called *guanin*. But what chiefly attracted the attention of the Spaniards, was the sight of strings of pearls which they wore round their arms, and which they said were procured on the sea-coast to the north of *Paria*. In order to obtain specimens of these treasures, Columbus sent his boats on shore; his people being received with profound respect on the beach by the natives, headed by their *cacique*, and being regaled to the best of their ability. The Spaniards had no difficulty in obtaining the objects of their desire, the Indians gladly parting with their necklaces and bracelets in exchange for hawks'-bells or articles of brass. It is to the credit of Columbus, in that age of violence towards inferior races, that no act is recorded showing ingratitude for the favour with which he and his men were received on this the first occasion when Europeans mixed with inhabitants of the mainland of South America.

Still imagining the coast of *Paria* to be an island, the admiral left this lovely spot and again set sail, coasting to the westward in search for an outlet to the north. He found the water, however, growing shallower and fresher, so that he could not venture to proceed any further with his own ship.

He therefore came to anchor, and sent forward a *caravel* to ascertain whether there was an outlet to the ocean. On the following day he learned, on its return, that there was an inner gulf beyond, which contained the mouths of four great rivers, the waters of which sweetened the neighbouring sea. As it was impossible to proceed further westward, he had no alternative but to retrace his way and seek an exit by "the mouth of the Dragon." Although he would gladly have remained to explore this opulent coast, he was compelled, as well by the condition of his health as by the scarcity of sea-stores in his ships, to hasten his departure for *Hispaniola*.

The admiral, therefore, on the 11th of August, set sail eastwards, and was borne along swiftly by the currents. On the 13th, he anchored near to the strait; and on the following day, towards noon, the ships approached the *Boca del Drago*. The mouth of this formidable ocean-pass is about five leagues wide; but there are two islands lying between its extremities. The immense body of fresh water which flows through the gulf in the rainy season, meeting the incoming waves, causes a terrific commotion extremely dangerous to ships; and this was the first occasion on which vessels were to go through it. The great navigator had neither chart nor pilot to guide him; but fortunately no sunken rock obstructed his way, and the current of fresh water prevailing over the incoming waves carried him safely through.[1]

Columbus now shaped his course to the westward, along the outer coast of *Paria*, which he still supposed to be an island; and he was borne still further unconsciously on the same course (whilst he lay to at night in order to avoid running on rocks and shoals) by the Gulf Stream which sets across the Caribbean Sea. It took some time for him, with all his experience, to realise the fact that this great body of fresh water, brought by the rivers to the ocean, could not be the outcome of mere islands, but must proceed from the *Terra Firma* which was the object of his search. On leaving the coast of *Paria*, the navigator saw to the north-east, at some distance, in succession, the islands of *Tobago* and *Granada*, which form part of South America; but here we must for the present take leave of the great sea-king;[2] for the limits of this work merely include the continent of South America and the islands immediately belonging to it. As the minute study of American geography does not form part of the education of every one, it may be proper to remark that the geographical limits of South America are perfectly distinct from those of the various countries forming Central America, as well as from the islands of the Spanish Main.

The next Spanish navigator who appeared in these seas was the celebrated Alonzo de Ojeda, who had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage, being then but twenty-one years of age. Through the influence of a cousin of his own name, a Dominican friar, he had obtained from Bishop Fonseca a commission, authorising him to fit out an armament, and to proceed on a voyage of discovery, provided that he should not visit any territories belonging to Portugal, nor any lands discovered for Spain before 1495. It was stipulated that a certain proportion of his profits should be reserved for the Crown.

With this license in his pocket, Ojeda had now to find the means of turning it to account. He had a high reputation for courage and conduct; but he was destitute of wealth. This element, however, was supplied by some merchants of Seville, who had so much faith in him that they believed he would soon find the means of enriching them as well as himself. With their assistance he was soon enabled to equip a squadron of four vessels, with which he set sail from St. Mary's, near Cadiz. He had on board several seamen who had accompanied Columbus to *Paria*, for which coast Ojeda shaped his course. But the man on whom he chiefly relied was Juan de la Cosa, who had sailed with Columbus on his second voyage, and who was one of the ablest mariners of the day. Ojeda had likewise with him

[1] The scene, well-deserving to be painted, might be described in the following lines:—"As rolls the river into ocean,In sable torrent wildly streaming;As the sea-tide's opposing motion,In azure column proudly gleaming,Beats back the current many a roodIn curling foam and mingling flood;Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,The lightnings of the waters flashIn awful whiteness o'er the shore,That shines and shakes beneath the roar."The Giaour.

[2] "Valiant sea-captains! Great sea-kings!And thou, Columbus! my hero! greatest sea-king of all!"Carlyle.

Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine merchant, then established at Seville, whose fame arose, not from any part which he took in this expedition, but from his published narratives and from his subsequent voyages to another part of the South American continent.

Ojeda and his companions, who sailed from St. Mary's on the 20th of May 1499, were guided by the charts which the admiral had sent home. Touching at the *Canaries*, they followed the route of Columbus, and at the end of twenty-four days reached the New World, about two hundred leagues further south than the point where the admiral had landed, being somewhat near *Surinam*. Thence Ojeda coasted northwards, passing the mouths of many rivers, more especially the *Orinoco*. The first natives they beheld were at *Trinidad*, the people of which are described in the letters of Vespucci.[3]

After touching at several points of *Trinidad* and of the Gulf of *Paria*, Ojeda passed through the *Boca del Drago*, and then steered his course to the westward along the coast of *Paria*, until he arrived at *Cumana* or the Gulf of Pearls. Thence he stood for the opposite island of *Margarita*, which had been discovered by Columbus. This island and others adjacent were now explored; after which Ojeda returned to the mainland. At *Maracapana* he careened his vessels and built a small brigantine. The natives were friendly, and brought him abundance of provisions, in return for which they besought Ojeda to assist them in an expedition against the inhabitants of an island, who were wont to carry off their people to be eaten.

Such a request was greatly to the mind of the enterprising Castilian, and after sailing for seven days, he arrived at what are supposed to be the *Caribbee* Islands, one of which was pointed out by his guides as the abode of their foes. His landing was at first stoutly opposed; but on hearing the sound of his guns, the savages fled in terror, whilst Ojeda and his men pursued them to the shore. The Carib warriors, however, rallied and courageously fought for a long time, but they were at length driven to the woods, leaving many killed and wounded. The fight was renewed on the succeeding day with the same result, after which the Spaniards set out on their return to the mainland, where Ojeda anchored for three weeks, to give his men time to recover from their wounds.

When his crew were again fit for the sea, Ojeda made sail and touched at the island of *Curacoa*. Entering a vast gulf, he beheld on the eastern side a village of strange construction. It consisted of a few large houses, shaped like bells, and built on piles driven into the bottom of the shallow lake. The houses were provided with drawbridges, and the communication was carried on by means of canoes. In this slight resemblance to the Queen of the Adriatic originated the name of *Venezuela*, or Little Venice. The native name was *Coquibacoa*. At sight of the ships the natives fled in terror, as did the rowers of a squadron of canoes which entered the harbour from the sea. They soon returned, however, bringing a peace-offering of sixteen young girls. The peace was of short duration; at a signal from some old women the Indians discharged a flight of arrows, and the girls plunged into the sea. But Ojeda was in no way taken aback. Manning his boats, he dashed amongst the canoes, sinking some of them, and killing and wounding a number of Indians, whilst the remainder took to flight.

Leaving this inhospitable spot, Ojeda proceeded to explore the gulf and reached the port of *Maracaibo*, where, in compliance with the entreaties of the natives, he sent a party on shore to explore the country. The Spaniards on this occasion were treated with the utmost hospitality. Indeed the whole country poured forth its population to do them homage, looking upon them and treating them as beings of a superior race or world. The Spaniards were permitted to take away with them several of the beautiful females of the country, one of whom accompanied Ojeda in a subsequent voyage.

Ojeda, in his report of this voyage, stated that he met with English voyagers near *Venezuela*, or *Coquibacoa*. Of the expedition here alluded to, no other record has yet been brought to light. The North-American continent had ere this time been visited in 1497, by John Cabot, a Venetian, in the service of Henry VII., together with his son, the celebrated Sebastian Cabot, of whom more will be said hereafter. These navigators discovered the coast of *Newfoundland* on the 24th of June of the

[3] *Viaggi de* Amerigo Vespucci.

above-mentioned year, and coasted southwards as far as to *Florida*. The Cabots were thus the first discoverers of the mainland of America, having preceded Columbus by one year.

Ojeda continued his route along the western shores of the Gulf of *Venezuela*, doubling Cape *Maracaibo* and following the coast until he reached the headland of Cape *de la Vela*, whence he stood across the Caribbean Sea for *Hispaniola*. He reached Cadiz on his return in June 1500.

1499.

Contemporary with this voyage of Ojeda was a similar one by Pedro Alonzo Niño, undertaken, not with the object of discovery, but for gain. This mariner sailed from Palos, and, following the chart of Columbus, reached the coast of *Paria*, where he landed to cut dye-wood, and where he established friendly relations with the natives. He, too, passed through the *Boca del Drago*, and encountered the Carib pirates, by whom he was boldly assailed, but who fled at the discharge of his artillery. Niño and his companions then steered for the island of *Margarita*, where they obtained a large quantity of pearls. They afterwards skirted the coast of *Cumana*, and were invariably well treated by the natives; and they inferred that this was a part of the mainland from the fact of their meeting with deer and rabbits, these animals not having been seen by them on any of the islands. Niño next proceeded to a country called *Cauchieto*, where, however, the inhabitants, who had been visited by Ojeda, prepared to resist his landing. Not wishing to provoke hostilities, Niño returned to *Cumana*; whence, when he had amassed a sufficient number of pearls, he set sail for Spain, where he arrived in April

1500.

The next Spanish navigator who furthered geographical discovery in this quarter of South America was Rodrigo de Bastides of Seville, who set out with two *caravels* in October 1500, having with him the veteran pilot Juan de la Cosa, who had sailed with Columbus. Bastides had likewise on board Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, afterwards the celebrated discoverer of the Southern Sea.[4] This expedition extended the acquaintance with the coast of *Terra Firma* from Cape *de la Vela* to the spot afterwards named *Nombre de Dios*. Bastides has left a name for himself, as distinguished from the great mass of his countrymen who appeared in that part of the world, for his kind treatment of the natives. His vessels became, unfortunately, pierced by the worm which abounds in those waters, and it was with great difficulty that he contrived to reach *Hispaniola*.

Alonzo de Ojeda, in consideration of his past services, received a grant of land in *Hispaniola*, and likewise the government of *Coquibacoa*, which place he had discovered. He was authorized to fit out a number of ships at his own expense and to prosecute discoveries on the coast of *Terra Firma*. It is said that one of the chief reasons for granting this government, and the privileges which accompanied it, to Ojeda, was the fact of his having met with an English expedition near *Coquibacoa*. The Spanish sovereigns were alarmed at the idea of foreign intrusion, and they wished to confide the most advanced post in their dominions to a governor of the resolute valour of which Ojeda had given such abundant proof. He was instructed to set up the arms of Castile and Leon in every place he should visit, as a hint to the intrusive English that these places had already been taken possession of.

1502.

With four vessels, Ojeda set sail for the *Canaries*, in 1502, and thence proceeded to the Gulf of *Paria*, from which locality he found his way to *Coquibacoa*. Not liking this poor country, he sailed on to the Bay of *Honda*, where he determined to found his settlement, which was, however, destined to be of short duration. Provisions very soon became scarce; and one of his partners, who had been sent to procure supplies from *Jamaica*, failed to return until Ojeda's followers were almost in a state of mutiny. The result was that the whole colony set sail for *Hispaniola*, taking the governor with them in

[4] "Voyages of the Companions of Columbus;" by Washington Irving.

chains. All that Ojeda gained by his expedition was that he at length came off the winner in a lawsuit, the costs of which, however, left him a ruined man.

We have now once more, in following according to time the progress of discovery towards the Isthmus, to return to the voyages of Columbus. He was already sixty-six years of age when he embarked on his fourth and last voyage. His squadron, consisting of four small *caravels*, set out from Cadiz on the 9th of May 1502, and, after some delay on the coast of Morocco, reached the *Caribbee* Islands on the 15th of June. Having been refused admission to enter the port of *San Domingo*, Columbus, after riding out a fearful storm, sailed for some time along the coast of *Honduras*, with the object, which was ever before him in this expedition, of finding a supposed strait opening out into the Indian Ocean. On the 17th of October he arrived off the coast of *Veragua*, where he found the natives possessed of many ornaments of gold. The Spaniards likewise found in this quarter the first signs of solid architecture which they had discovered in the New World.

The great discoverer is honourably distinguished from others in that the advancement of science, rather than the acquisition of the precious metals, was the object of his quest. Although told by his interpreters, when sailing along the coast of *Veragua*, that in five towns which he passed he might obtain great quantities of gold, and although the natives placed so little value on objects of this mineral that they were always ready to exchange them for Spanish trifles, Columbus preferred to continue his course in order the sooner to arrive at the supposed strait. “I would not rob nor outrage the country,” says the admiral in one of his letters, “since reason requires that it should be settled, and then the gold may be procured without violence.” Columbus was an Italian; but it is safe to affirm that the sentiment expressed in the above sentence would not have been uttered by any one amongst the Spanish adventurers of the period.

On the 2nd of November Columbus reached the spacious harbour of *Porto Bello*, so named by its illustrious discoverer, and which was destined afterwards to hold so important a position as being the spot where the yearly fleet of *galleons* discharged its cargoes of European commodities for the supply of Spanish South America. The admiral found the neighbouring country open and cultivated, the houses surrounded by fruit-trees and groves of palms, and the fields producing maize, vegetables, and pine-apples. After a week’s delay, Columbus proceeded eastward to the point afterwards known as *Nombre de Dios*. His vessels, however, now began to be pierced by the tropical worm. Landing, therefore, in a small harbour, to which he gave the name of *El Retrete*, he found himself in such inconveniently close vicinity to the shore, that troubles soon arose between the natives and his unruly seamen; and these were not quelled without some display of force. It was at this point that the great navigator at length consented to relinquish his long and painful search after the supposed strait. Indeed, though he knew it not, the whole coast along the Isthmus had now been navigated by expeditions starting from opposite directions. In compliance with the wishes of his companions, the admiral now agreed to return to the coast of *Veragua*.

With the above object in view, the expedition sailed from *El Retrete* on the 5th of December, but it was only to encounter a continuance of the most stormy weather, in which the *caravels* were tossed about day and night, and subjected to the most serious risk of being swamped. On the 17th they entered a port resembling a canal, where they enjoyed some days’ repose. On leaving this place of refuge they were again tossed about until the day after Christmas, when they entered another port, in which one of the vessels was repaired. On the day of Epiphany, to their great joy, they anchored in a river close to that of *Veragua*, to which Columbus, in honour of the day, gave the name of *Belen* or Bethlehem.

The accounts which the Spaniards had received were now confirmed by what they saw. In exchange for articles of the most trifling nature, they procured ornaments of gold of considerable value; and *Don* Bartholomew, the admiral’s brother, set off in armed boats to ascend the *Veragua*, as far as to the residence of the *Cacique* Quibian. By him he was hospitably entertained, receiving from him the golden ornaments which he wore. But the ships and mariners were not long to rest in

quietness, even under the shelter of a river; for a sudden swelling of the waters drove them from their anchors and tossed them helplessly against each other; whilst they were prevented by a violent storm from seeking safety at sea.

Early in February, *Don* Bartholomew again proceeded with an armed party to explore *Veragua*, and to seek for the mines. He was misled by the *cacique*, who directed him into the territories of a neighbouring chief, with whom he was at war. The *Adelantado*, however, on finding his mistake, set out on a second excursion, during the course of which he was continually met by proofs of abundance of gold, the natives generally wearing plates of that metal suspended from their necks. He was entertained in a friendly manner by the *caciques* whom he visited, and he found the country cultivated.

On hearing the report of his brother, Columbus resolved to set up a colony on this promising coast, with the object of securing possession of the country and of exploring the mines. The *Adelantado* was to remain with the greater part of the expedition, whilst the admiral should return to Spain. On this resolve being taken, no time was allowed to be lost. Eighty men were to be left behind, and these were forthwith employed in building houses and a magazine. The chief portion of the artillery and ammunition was stored on board of one of the *caravels*, which was to be left for the use of the colony. Although the stores were somewhat scarce, no apprehension was felt lest provisions should run short; for the country produced fruits and grain in abundance, whilst the rivers and sea-coast supplied large quantities of fish.

Such was the condition of affairs, and Columbus was on the point of departing, when an unlooked-for obstacle occurred to delay him. He could not of course anticipate the various changes of season in this strange country. The river, which had but recently been a source of danger to him from its becoming flooded, now suddenly became so dry that there was but half a fathom of water on its bar; and over this it was impossible even for the admiral's small vessel to pass. He had no remedy, therefore, but to have recourse to patience—that virtue of which he stood so much in need throughout his memorable career—and to await the return of the rainy season.

Meanwhile the *Cacique* Quibian, as was but natural, looked with jealousy upon the proceedings of the strangers who were making themselves so much at home within his territories. Under pretext of preparing for war upon a neighbouring chief, he summoned his fighting men to assemble on the river *Veragua*. But suspicion was aroused in the mind of the admiral's notary, who obtained permission to reconnoitre the Indian camp. On his return, he gave it as his opinion that a large party of natives whom he had observed on the march had been on their way to surprise the Spanish settlement. Columbus, being unwilling to accept this view without further confirmation, gave permission to Mendez to proceed on a second scouting expedition, the result of which was such as to dispel his doubts; whilst any lingering disbelief was banished by information conveyed to him by a native who had acted as interpreter, and who revealed to the admiral the designs of his countrymen, which he had overheard. It had been the intention of Quibian to surprise the harbour at night; to burn the ships and houses; and to effect a general massacre.

In view of the above disclosures, Columbus set a double watch upon the harbour: but his brother, the *Adelantado*, resolved upon more vigorous measures. At the head of seventy-four men, together with the interpreter, he set off in boats for the *Veragua*, and landed below the house of Quibian, before the latter had notice of his movements. Then taking with him only five men, he ascended the hill, ordering the others to follow with great caution. On a given signal they were to surround the dwelling. The *cacique* was seized by *Don* Bartholomew, and, after a violent struggle, was bound hand and foot. His household, consisting of about fifty persons, were likewise made prisoners; and so well were the *Adelantado's* measures taken that no blood was shed on the occasion.

Committing his prize to the care of his pilot, with orders to take him on board his boat, the *Adelantado*, with a portion of his men, set out in pursuit of the Indians who had escaped. But the wily *cacique* was more than a match for the honest pilot. On his complaining piteously of the pain caused

by his bonds, the soft-hearted Sanchez was induced to loosen the cord; upon which Quibian, watching his opportunity, plunged into the water and disappeared. On the following morning the *Adelantado*, being convinced of the futility of pursuit, returned to the ships with the spoils of Quibian's mansion, which amounted to the insignificant value of three hundred ducats.

All was now apparently tranquil; and the rainy season having once more set in, Columbus took leave of his brother, and got under weigh with three of the *caravels*, leaving the fourth for the use of the settlement. The ships, having been towed over the bar, anchored within a league of the shore, to await a favourable wind. It was the intention of the admiral to touch at *Hispaniola*, and thence to send his brother supplies and reinforcements. As the adverse wind detained him for some time, he sent a boat on shore to procure wood and water. It was well for the colony that he did so. The *Cacique* Quibian had not perished, as was supposed, but had found his way ashore. When he saw the vessels bearing his family to afar, he was driven to despair, and thought only of vengeance. Assembling his warriors, he approached the settlement secretly, and fell upon the Spaniards when they were completely off their guard. After a severe struggle, the Indians were driven back, but not before they had killed one Spaniard and wounded eight others. Notwithstanding this warning, the boat's crew sent by Columbus proceeded up the river, and, being surprised by the Indians, were cut off, one man alone escaping.

This misfortune filled the colony with dismay, more especially as the Indians forthwith renewed hostilities. As it was considered no longer safe to remain in the fortress, owing to its vicinity to the wood, the *Adelantado* erected a barricade in an open space by the sea. The Indians were deterred by the firearms of the Spaniards from venturing forth from the forest; but the latter looked forward with the utmost dread to the hour when the ammunition should be exhausted, and when they should be driven forth in search of food.

In the meanwhile Columbus was subjected to scarcely less anxiety. The non-return of his boat foreboded disaster; and he did not venture to risk his only remaining boat, on account of the heavy surf on the shore. An occurrence had also taken place which added not a little to the gloom on board of the squadron. It had been the intention of Columbus to carry Quibian's family to Spain, as hostages for the good behaviour of the Indians during his absence. The captives, however, were determined to secure their liberty, if possible. The hatchway above the forecastle where they slept had not been fastened, as it was out of reach of the prisoners, and as some of the crew slept upon it. This neglect being observed by the captives, despair lent them ingenuity. Collecting together a quantity of the ballast, they raised a heap beneath the hatchway. Several Indians mounting on the stones, by a simultaneous effort, then raised it, violently dislodging the sleeping seamen. The Indians instantly sprang forth, and many, plunging into the sea, swam ashore. Some, however, were caught and forced back into their place of imprisonment. In the morning it was found that all the prisoners had hanged themselves.

1503.

In this state of perplexity, one brave man volunteered to bring relief to the admiral's mind. Pedro Ledesma of Seville offered, if the boat should take him to the edge of the surf, to swim ashore through it, a feat which he successfully accomplished. He returned to the ships, to tell his commander that the *Adelantado's* party were in all but open mutiny, and that they were sworn, if the admiral should refuse to take them on board, to depart in the *caravel* so soon as it might be practicable. Columbus, as may be supposed, was in no slight alarm for his brother, placed as he was between mutineers and savages. There appeared nothing to do but to take the whole party on board, and to return to the settlement at some future day; but the state of the weather was such as to render the execution of this plan not a little difficult. After nine boisterous days, however, the sea again became calm, and great exertion was made to get the people off ere the bad weather should return. In this emergency, the services of Diego Mendez were especially useful. Having lashed two Indian canoes together, he erected on them a raft, upon which the stores left on shore and on the *caravel* were

towed out to the ships. In this manner, in the course of two nights and days, everything of value was conveyed on board the squadron, Mendez and five companions being the last to leave the shore.

The joy of the Spaniards was unbounded on finding themselves once more afloat. The wind becoming favourable, Columbus, towards the end of April 1503, set sail for the last time from the disastrous coast from which his descendant takes his title.[5] Instead, however, of making direct for *Hispaniola*, he, to the surprise of his pilot and crews, stood along the coast to the eastward.

This study of the currents had taught him that, in order to avoid being carried beyond his destined port, he must first gain considerable way to the east. At *Porto Bello* he was obliged to leave one of his *caravels*, it being so pierced by worms that it could no longer be kept afloat. Even his two remaining vessels, into which were now crowded the crews of the four, were in a very unseaworthy condition, and were only kept afloat by incessant labour at the pumps. Continuing onwards, they passed *Porto Retrete* and approached the entrance of the Gulf of *Darien*, when, yielding to the remonstrance of his captains and pilots, the admiral bade final farewell to the mainland; and on the 1st of May he stood northward in quest of *Hispaniola*. At this point of his career we must take leave of the discoverer of America. To pursue further the narrative of his last voyage would take us beyond the limits within which this work must be confined, that is to say, beyond the limits of South America.

Note.—The problem of rendering in English the names of places in foreign countries is one of some difficulty, and rests rather on conventionality than on principle. It is solved by different writers in different fashions. Greek purists have for some time past lost no opportunity, in writing Greek words, of substituting the original Greek K for the Roman C; but they still respect the latter in names of such places, familiarized to our ears by Scripture, as Corinth and Crete. In like manner Oriental purists, such as Sir Frederic Goldsmid and Colonel Malleson, have done their best to introduce into English literature a system of orthography as to Oriental names which is, of course, in place in the schoolroom of a professor of Oriental languages, but which has not yet made itself fully accepted by the general English reader. Those of us whose acquaintance with Indian history began with the reading of Macaulay's Essays on Clive and Hastings, are loth to accept *Pílasi* for Plassey and *Lakhnao* for the capital of the princely House of Oude.

To look nearer home, it would be pedantic to use *El Kahira* for Cairo, or *Dimishk* for Damascus. It would be little less so, although strictly correct, to use *Venezia* for Venice, *Roma* for Rome, or *Livorno* for Leghorn. We have added an *s*—why, I know not—to the French spelling of the word *Marseille*. That port is as familiar in our mouths as Liverpool or Glasgow, but we invariably write it and pronounce it Marseilles. In writing Spanish or Portuguese words applied to names of places in South America, I find a considerable divergence of custom amongst authors. To take the one name of *Assumption*, for instance. The capital of *Paraguay* is so written by the Robertsons and other writers, whilst in Southey's History of Brazil it is throughout written *Assumpcion*. In Washburn's History of Paraguay it becomes *Asuncion*, the original Spanish name, which I see no reason to supersede. As a rule I have followed the native names of places in Portuguese or Spanish America, they being for the most part those by which they are known in England.

[5] Duke of Veragua.

CHAPTER II.
THE DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN

1508-1514

1508.

In the return of Columbus to Europe after his fourth and last voyage, King Ferdinand was roused by the accounts which he gave of *Veragua* into an ardent longing to possess that wealthy territory. He resolved, therefore, to found colonies upon that coast, and to place them under an able governor. But before he had proceeded to carry his resolution into practice, the great admiral was no more. In looking about for a capable commander, it might have been supposed that the king would have selected his brother, *Don* Bartholomew, who had accompanied him in his last voyage. Columbus had, however, left vast claims behind him, of which his family were the heirs, and which the mean and jealous monarch was unwilling to recognise. His choice of an officer, therefore, fell on the gallant and enterprising Alonzo de Ojeda, who at this period was idling his time in *Hispaniola*,—his purse being empty, but his spirit as high as ever. His generous character and reckless bearing had endeared to him the veteran pilot, Juan de la Cosa, who offered him the use of his savings for the purpose of fitting out his expedition.

Ojeda, however, had a rival in the person of Diego de Nicuesa. Both were accomplished cavaliers, well fitted by their spirit of enterprise to do what men could do in fulfilment of the unforeseen and almost superhuman tasks that lay before them. King Ferdinand, being unwilling to lose the services of Nicuesa, appointed him, too, to a government; that is to say, he granted to each permission to conquer and govern a portion of the continent which lies along the Isthmus of *Darien*, —the boundary line to pass through the Gulf of *Urabá*. The eastern portion, extending to Cape *de la Vela*, was named New Andalusia, and was granted to Ojeda. The country to the west, including *Veragua*, and reaching to Cape *Gracias à Dios*, was assigned to Nicuesa. Both governors were to draw supplies in common from the island of *Jamaica*, and each was to enjoy for ten years the profits of the mines he might discover, with the usual deduction for the Crown.

Ojeda, by the aid of Juan de la Cosa, fitted out a ship and two brigantines, carrying between them about two hundred men. Nicuesa furnished four large vessels, carrying a much larger force. Ojeda, being somewhat jealous of the superior show of his rival, persuaded one of his friends, a lawyer called the Bachelor Enciso, to invest his money—two thousand *castillanos*—in his enterprise.

He was to remain behind in *Hispaniola*, to enlist recruits and provide supplies. Before setting out, the two rival governors, as was perhaps to be expected, fell into a dispute concerning the island of *Jamaica*, which they were to hold in common; and Ojeda took the opportunity of challenging Nicuesa to meet him in single combat. The feud, however, was smothered by the judicious interference of Juan de la Cosa. Nicuesa's engaging manners brought so many volunteers to his standard that he had to purchase another ship in order to convey them. He was not, however, a man of business, and was so over-reached in making his arrangements that he had considerable difficulty in escaping from his creditors and setting out for the scene of his government.

1509.

Never were a set of gallant adventurers exposed to more dire disaster and more grievous suffering and disappointment than were those who composed the armaments of Ojeda and Nicuesa, respectively. On the 10th of November 1509, the former set sail from *San Domingo*, having added to his squadron another ship and another hundred men. Amongst the adventurers on board was one who

was destined to fill a larger space in history than was Ojeda himself,—namely, Francisco Pizarro, the future conqueror of *Peru*. The expedition soon arrived in the harbour of *Carthagena*; but the natives, who had been irritated by the proceedings of previous European visitors, flew to arms at the first sight of the strangers. They were a war-like race, of *Carib* origin, and were given to the use of poisoned arrows.

The pilot, Juan de la Cosa, who had previously visited this coast with Bastides, was much alarmed at the aspect of affairs, and earnestly besought Ojeda to quit this neighbourhood and to found his settlement on the Gulf of *Urabá* where the people were less savage, more especially in respect to the use of poisoned arrows. Ojeda, however, whose daring was excessive, had no objection to fighting, the rather as it would, he hoped, give him an early opportunity of sending a ship full of slaves to *San Domingo*, wherewith to pay his debts. Ojeda, who had escaped from innumerable dangers, and imagined himself to be under the especial protection of the Virgin, boldly charged the Indians, on their declining to make peace. They were soon routed; a number being killed, and others taken prisoners. The dashing leader had the temerity to pursue the enemy far into the forest, where they were driven from their stronghold. Seventy Indians were then made captives and were sent to the ships.

The infatuated Ojeda, not content with these successes, continued his pursuit of the fugitives; but in the dusk of the evening, his men, imagining that the Indians were dispersed and subdued, separated in search of plunder amongst the houses of a deserted village. Of a sudden the savages rushed forth from the surrounding forest. The Spaniards, rallying in small parties, although they fought bravely, fell fast beneath the clubs and poisoned arrows of the numbers that surrounded them. Ojeda, throwing himself upon his knees, and sheltering himself with his buckler, escaped the poisoned shower; but he was only saved by the arrival of La Cosa with a few followers, for all those with him had been slain. A like fate now befell the companions of the veteran pilot; whilst La Cosa himself was wounded, and unable to follow his leader when he sprang like a tiger on the enemy, dealing death to the right and left. La Cosa took refuge in an Indian cabin until but one man with him was left alive. With his dying breath he despatched this last companion with a message to Ojeda. This Spaniard and his commander alone survived of seventy men whom the head-strong Ojeda had led on this rash and uncalled-for expedition.

Alarmed at the prolonged absence of their leader and his men, the Spaniards on board the ships sent armed detachments in boats along the shore, who sounded trumpets and fired signal-guns. They were answered only by the defiant war-whoops of the Indians; but at length, in a tangled thicket of mangroves, the figure of a human being was descried in Spanish attire. It was Alonzo de Ojeda, so wasted with fatigue and hunger that he was for some time incapable of speaking. When they had given him food and wine, he was enabled to recount the wreck his rashness had wrought. His shield bore the marks of three hundred arrows, and he ascribed his safety to the protection of the Virgin alone.

While his friends were still on shore, they beheld some ships standing towards the harbour. It was the squadron of Nicuesa, on whose arrival Ojeda now looked with alarm. He had nothing, however, to dread from the generous cavalier, whose first act was to put himself and his men under the orders of Ojeda, with the object of avenging the deaths of his comrades. This was soon effectually done. Proceeding to the spot where the massacre had occurred, they found the Indian village buried in sleep. It was forthwith wrapt in flames; and the inhabitants, who rushed forth, were either slain by the Spaniards or driven back to perish in the fire. No quarter was shown to sex or age. The spoil in the village was great, for the share of Nicuesa and his men was valued at seven thousands *castillanos*. Nicuesa now pursued his voyage to *Veragua*.

Ojeda, who had by this time had enough of *Carthagena*, embarking, steered for the Gulf of *Urabá*. His people were much disheartened, and the aspect of the coast along which they passed was not such as to console them. They heard the roars of tigers and lions, and were disconcerted when one of their horses, passing along the bank of a river, was seized by an alligator and dragged under the water. Ojeda fixed his settlement on a spot to which he gave the name of *San Sebastian*, trusting

that the martyr, who had himself been slain by arrows, would protect his Spaniards from a like fate. Here he erected a wooden fort and drew a stockade around the place. He further sent a ship to *San Domingo* bearing a letter to his associate Enciso, in which he urged him to join him without delay.

Meanwhile Ojeda determined to make a progress through his territory, and he set out with an armed band to visit a neighbouring *cacique*. On entering the forest, however, he and his followers were assailed by a shower of poisoned arrows from the covert, in consequence of which a number of his men died raving with torments. The rest retreated in confusion, and it was only when their provisions began to run short that Ojeda could persuade them once more to take the field. They were so beset, however, on all sides by the savages, and lost so many by their poisoned wounds, that the Spaniards would no longer venture forth at all, contenting themselves for food with such herbs and roots as they could find. Their numbers became so thinned by disease that it was with difficulty that sentinels could be procured to mount guard.

Through all this Ojeda continued to bear a charmed life; and the Indians determined to test his invulnerability. When they next attacked the fort, and Ojeda as usual sallied forth to repel them, four of their picked marksmen were placed in ambush with orders to single him out. Three of the arrows struck his shield, doing him no injury; the fourth pierced his thigh. He was borne back to the settlement suffering great torments. He had the hardihood to order his doctor to apply two plates of iron, made red hot, to the orifices of his wound, an ordeal which he endured without flinching. Whether or not it was owing to this terrible treatment, his life was preserved, though at the cost of a fearful inflammation.

Whilst the colony was enduring the straits above described, a strange ship was seen making for *San Sebastian*. It did not, however, as was expected, bring Enciso with the looked-for stores. It was a vessel that had belonged to a Genoese, of which a certain Talavera, with some other reckless debtors, had taken possession at *San Domingo*, and who, to the number of seventy, now came to swell the ranks of Ojeda's followers. They sold their provisions to that governor, whose men were thus rescued from starvation.

Still was the arrival of Enciso delayed, and at length Ojeda was forced to come to a compromise with his desperate followers. It was agreed between them that he himself should proceed in one of the vessels to *San Domingo*, in quest of supplies and reinforcements, and that they—that is to say, the bulk of the colonists—should remain for fifty days at *San Sebastian*, at the end of which time, should he not have returned, they were to be free to depart in the other brigantines to *Hispaniola*. Meanwhile Francisco Pizarro was to command the colony in his absence, or until the arrival of Enciso.

Ojeda embarked in the ship that had brought Talavera; but when he attempted to take the command, he was resisted by that individual backed by his entire crew. The result was that the fiery Ojeda was thrown into irons, from which he was only released because no other person on board was capable of managing the ship. As it was, the pirates had allowed the vessel to be carried so far out of her course for *San Domingo* that Ojeda had no other resource but to run it ashore on the southern coast of *Cuba*.

When on shore the truce was continued between Ojeda and his late associates; for they felt that none of the party but he could guide them in their forlorn plight. They were too disheartened to force their way through the inhabited country, where they would have to fight the irritated natives; and therefore Ojeda, who had only before him a choice of evils, led them through the savannas and marshes, whence, with incredible labour, they at length emerged on an Indian village. Their sufferings had been intense and incessant, and out of the number of seventy who had set out, but one-half survived. With these Ojeda continued his march to Cape *de la Cruz*, whence, by means of a canoe, he was able to communicate with the Spaniards on the island of *Jamaica*. A *caravel* was sent to bring the party to the latter island, and from there, after a short delay, Ojeda set sail for *San Domingo*, leaving Talavera and his friends behind him. These were, however, soon afterwards arrested, and tried for their act of piracy, Talavera and several of his accomplices being hanged. At *San Domingo* nothing

was known respecting the Bachelor Enciso, who had long since set out to join his chief, and who had not afterwards been heard of. Thus was the last hope of Ojeda gone. He was reduced to beggary, and his gallant spirit was at length so crushed by misfortune, that with his last breath he asked that he might be buried at the gate of the monastery of *San Francisco*, so that, in expiation of his former pride, every one who should enter might tread upon his grave.

To return to Nicuesa:—On leaving *Carthagena*, he continued his voyage to the coast assigned to him as a government. The squadron arrived in due course at *Veragua*, but during a storm the vessel of Nicuesa became separated from her companions. Being stranded in a river, and his ship being in danger of falling to pieces, Nicuesa and his companions had to save themselves by passing to the shore by means of a rope. No sooner had they reached it than the *caravel* broke up, their provisions and clothing being carried off by the waters. Fortunately their boat was cast ashore, and in it four seamen put to sea, keeping abreast of the main body, which had to find its way along the shore, and ferrying them across the rivers and bays in their way. The sufferings of Nicuesa and his men were extreme, and their food consisted only of such herbs and roots and shellfish as they could gather. They were, however, proceeding in a wrong direction. The boat's crew were convinced of this fact, though they despaired of being able to convince Nicuesa; and so one night they took the law into their own hands and departed in the boat, leaving their commander and his party on an island. As they had anticipated, they ere long fell in with the other vessels, who had taken refuge in the river of *Belen*, and a boat was forthwith sent to rescue the forlorn party.

Nicuesa and his famished companions now rejoined his people at *Belen*, where, of the gallant band of seven hundred men who had sailed with him from *San Domingo*, he now found but three hundred half-starved survivors. His first care was to take measures for their relief; but, as will be remembered from the experience of Columbus and his brother, the Indians of this coast were by no means pleasant to deal with. Many of the Spanish foragers were slain, and those who escaped this fate were so enfeebled that it was with the utmost difficulty they could carry their provisions home.

Disheartened by so many miseries, Nicuesa determined to abandon this disastrous settlement. Amongst his followers was a Genoese sailor who had been on this coast with Columbus, and who now described to his commander the harbour with which the admiral had been so pleased as to give it the name of *Porto Bello*. For this spot, under the guidance of the Genoese, Nicuesa steered, and he found the traces of the admiral's visit as had been described to him. A part of the crew were sent on shore for provisions, but they were assailed by the Indians, whom they were too worn-out to resist. Disappointed in the hope of finding a refuge in this place, Nicuesa continued his course for seven leagues further, and reached the harbour to which Columbus had given the name of *Puerto de Bastimientos*, or Port of Provisions. It was surrounded by a fruitful country, and the weary Nicuesa exclaimed, "Here let us rest, in the name of God!" His followers, interpreting his words as a favourable omen, the harbour received the name of *Nombre de Dios*, which it retains at the present day. The misfortunes of Nicuesa and his band were, however, not yet at an end. On mustering his forces, he found but one hundred emaciated beings left. He then despatched his *caravel* to *Hispaniola* for provisions; but it never returned, and he was equally unsuccessful in his search for supplies upon the spot.

1510.

Meanwhile, as has been already said, long before Ojeda's return to *San Domingo*, his partner, the Bachelor Enciso, set out to rejoin his chief at *Carthagena*. The Bachelor arrived at this fatal spot in ignorance of the conflict in which Juan de la Cosa had met his death, and of that in which he was avenged. He therefore, without hesitation, landed a number of men to repair his boat. A multitude of Indians gathered around them. Their experience of the force of the white men had been so recent as to make it prudent for them to keep at a safe distance. On being convinced, however, that these

strangers came with no hostile intent, the natives threw down their weapons, and treated the Spaniards with the utmost friendship, supplying them with bread, fish, and other provisions.

At *Carthagena* Enciso was not a little surprised by the arrival of a brigantine. It was commanded by Francisco Pizarro, who, it will be remembered, had been left in charge on Ojeda's departure from *San Sebastian*. The small brigantine contained all that was left of the colony that had been founded with such high hopes. On the departure of Ojeda, his followers had remained in the fortress during the term agreed upon of fifty days. As soon afterwards as their numbers became so far reduced by death as to be capable of being contained in the two brigantines, they set sail from the fatal spot. Encountering rough weather, one of the brigantines went down with all hands; the other, as has been said, was steered for *Carthagena*, in order to procure provisions.

Nothing daunted by the experience of his predecessors, and taking with him Pizarro and his crew, though sorely against the will of the latter, Enciso set out for *San Sebastian*. From the very moment, however, of his arrival there, ill-luck attended the unfortunate Bachelor. On entering the harbour his vessel struck on a rock, and he and his crew escaped with difficulty to the brigantine of Pizarro, their vessel going down, together with the whole of the live-stock and supplies destined for the colony. On landing, he found that the fortress and houses had been burnt by the Indians. The Spaniards remained for a few days, subsisting on such supplies as the colony afforded. But they had a conflict with the Indians, which revived their fears of poisoned arrows and thoroughly disgusted them with the locality,—a feeling shared by Enciso. At this gloomy moment, one man stepped forward from the crowd, who from this time till his premature death, stood in the foremost ranks of his countrymen in the New World, and who occupies a place amongst American discoverers second only to Columbus. This was the gallant and famous Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, destined to be the first European who should set eyes on the Pacific Ocean. Vasco Nuñez was a native of Xeres, and was the scion of a noble family. Being a man of prodigal habits, in order to evade his creditors, he had been conveyed on board Enciso's ship, concealed in a cask. He now informed his leader that, several years previously, he had sailed along that coast with Bastides and had explored the gulf of *Urabá*. He remembered an Indian village on the banks of the river *Darien*, situated in a fertile country, which was said to possess gold-mines. Above all, the natives did not use poisoned arrows. Thither he now offered to conduct his chief.

The offer of Nuñez being accepted, Enciso sailed for the spot. On landing, he was opposed by the *cacique*, who, however, was soon put to flight, leaving much plunder and food behind him. Here Enciso determined to establish his colony, to which he gave the name of *Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darien*. No sooner was his colony established, than Enciso, somewhat prematurely, began to make his authority felt. His first edict forbade all private dealings with the natives for gold, on pain of death, —a proceeding little to the taste of the loose band which he had gathered around him. The result was that some of his followers determined to have recourse to the law on their own behalf. The boundary line between the jurisdictions which had been assigned to Ojeda and Nicuesa respectively was drawn through the centre of the Gulf of *Urabá*. As the village of *Darien* lay on the western side, it was clearly within the government of Nicuesa, and therefore Enciso, the lieutenant of Ojeda, possessed no jurisdiction there. In this manner the unfortunate Bachelor found himself reduced to the ranks.

It is proverbially more easy to pull down a government than to set one up, and such proved to be the case on this occasion. Vasco Nuñez and one Zamudio were appointed *alcaldes* by popular election; but it was deemed better to appoint a governor, if they could only agree upon one. Whilst the question was being disputed, the colony was surprised by the arrival of a vessel under the command of Rodrigo de Colmenares, bringing supplies for Nicuesa. This incident determined the colonists' choice in favour of the latter cavalier, if only he could be found. Colmenares accordingly proceeded along the coast in search of him. Looking into every bay and harbour, he at length discovered a brigantine which had been sent out by Nicuesa in search of provisions. By this vessel he was guided to *Nombre*

de Dios, where Nicuesa was discovered, no longer indeed the brilliant cavalier, but a squalid and cast-down wretch. Of his once numerous band of followers but sixty feeble, emaciated men remained.

The arrival of Colmenares with a supply of food had an immediate reviving effect; and, in particular, Nicuesa, on hearing that he was requested to come and rule over the settlement of *Darien*, became changed as if struck by an enchanter's wand. But Nicuesa, whose misfortunes had failed to teach him prudence, now split upon the rock on which the fortunes of Enciso had been wrecked. When he heard that large quantities of gold had been retained by private individuals, he rashly gave out that he would make them refund it. This word was sufficient for the envoys who had been sent by the colonists to request him to come and rule over them. The result was that when Nicuesa arrived at *Darien*—he having delayed on the way on a slave-capturing expedition,—instead of the welcome which he had every reason to anticipate, he was received with the request that he would lose no time in retracing his way to *Nombre de Dios*.

Nicuesa had to pass the night in his vessel, and when next day he was permitted to land, the only friend he found on his side was Vasco Nuñez, who, being himself a well-born cavalier, was touched by the misfortunes of the other. The only terms, however, which Nicuesa could obtain were, that he should be permitted to depart in an old brigantine, the worst in the harbour. Seventeen persons followed the unfortunate gentleman on board. Their vessel set sail on the 1st of March 1511, and was steered for *Hispaniola*. Nothing more was ever heard of Nicuesa and his companions, whose fate added another to the countless secrets of the deep.

We have now to trace the daring adventures of one of the two men who rose to deathless renown on the ruins of the disastrous expeditions whose general fate has been recently narrated. Since the two rival governors, Ojeda and Nicuesa, had started from *San Domingo* in 1509, full of hope, and exulting in power, nearly all their gallant followers had perished by the poisoned arrows of the Indians, by shipwreck, or by the slower process of disease or starvation. The two leaders, after undergoing protracted trials and sufferings of every description, had sunk into the grave, by land or by water, in misery; but two humble followers survived, who were each destined to climb to the highest round of the ladder of fame. These were Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and Francisco Pizarro. We are concerned in the first instance with the doings of the former.

No sooner had Nicuesa quitted for ever the coast of *Darien* than the community fell back into its former condition of being in want of a ruler. The Bachelor Enciso again advanced his claims, but he found in Vasco Nuñez a powerful and popular rival, and one who had every quality likely to give him influence over a fickle populace. Nuñez had likewise the advantage of his position as *alcalde*. Proceeding according to the forms of law, he summoned the Bachelor to stand his trial on the charge of having usurped the powers of *alcalde mayor* beyond the territories under the jurisdiction of Ojeda. The charge being, in point of fact, true, although without any direct evil intention on Enciso's part, that lawyer was found guilty and thrown into prison. He was, however, after a time released, and he obtained permission to return to Spain. Foreseeing that he would not be silent in respect to the treatment he had received, Vasco Nuñez prevailed upon the other *alcalde*, Zamudio, to proceed to Spain in the same vessel, so that he might be at hand to answer any charge which Enciso might advance. He was likewise to put forward the services which had been rendered to the colony by Vasco Nuñez. In the same vessel sailed his friend the *Regidor* Valdivia, who was to alight at *Hispaniola*, and who was charged with a handsome present to the royal treasurer Pasamonte, after delivering which he was to return with provisions and recruits.

Vasco Nuñez was now left in sole control at *Darien*, and he forthwith set about the duties of his government with the remarkable energy peculiar to his character. He despatched two brigantines to bring away the followers of Nicuesa who had remained at *Nombre de Dios*, and who were now overjoyed at being rescued from their miserable position. On returning to the Isthmus, the brigantines met with two Spaniards who had fled from Nicuesa's vessel some time before, and had taken refuge with a *cacique* called Careta, who had treated them with remarkable kindness. Being Spanish

adventurers, their first proceeding on rejoining their countrymen was, as a matter of course, to betray him. Vasco Nuñez, taking with him a hundred and thirty men, set out for the residence of the *cacique*, and was received and entertained with the usual Indian hospitable welcome. On his demanding a supply of provisions for the colony, however, the *cacique*, who naturally did not feel bound to provide, *gratis*, for a whole band of hungry invaders, excused himself on some plea which may not have been exactly true. The Spaniard appeared to acquiesce, and departed with all his men as if for his settlement. Returning, however, in the dead of night, he surrounded the dwelling of Careta, and made prisoners of the *cacique*, his wives and children. Having helped himself to his store of provisions, he then returned in his brigantines to *Darien*.

The above infamous proceeding had a better ending than might have been anticipated. The broken-hearted Careta, bewailing his hard lot to Nuñez, actually so far succeeded in convincing him of the impolicy, if not the infamy of his conduct, that he agreed to set him free, the latter undertaking to be his ally, and leaving his daughter to be the wife of Nuñez. The Spanish leader next repaired to *Coyba*, to assist Careta against a neighbouring chief called Ponca, whom he obliged to take refuge in the mountains. Whilst on a friendly visit to the *cacique* of *Comagre*, Nuñez heard from the son of that chieftain of a region beyond the mountains, on the shores of a mighty sea, which might be discerned from their summits, where gold was as plentiful as was iron with the Spaniards. In reply to his anxious inquiries, Vasco Nuñez learned that the task of penetrating to this sea, and to the golden region by its shores, was difficult and dangerous. It would require, said the son of Comagre, at least a thousand armed men. There was in the way a great *cacique* called Tubanamá, whose territories abounded in gold, but who would oppose their passage with a mighty force. Such was the first intimation received by Vasco Nuñez of the existence of the Pacific Ocean.

On his return to *Darien*, the whole soul of the Spaniard became absorbed in the idea of prosecuting the discovery of the sea beyond the mountains. The brigantine which had returned with Valdivia from *Hispaniola*, was again despatched to that colony, bearing a letter to *Don* Diego Columbus, in which Vasco Nuñez informed him of the intelligence which he had received, and in which he entreated him to use his influence with the king, in order that the necessary thousand men might be obtained. Nuñez at the same time transmitted fifteen thousand crowns in gold, to be remitted as the royal fifths of what he had collected.

About this time the settlement of *Darien* was threatened with destruction, in consequence of a conspiracy on the part of certain Indian *caciques*, and which was only frustrated owing to the devotion to Vasco Nuñez of an Indian girl whom he had captured, and to whom her brother had revealed the plot. Being forewarned of the hostile intentions of the conspirators, Nuñez promptly took steps to defeat them, getting possession of the persons of the Indian general and several of his confederates. The general was shot, and the other leaders were hanged; whilst, as a further precaution, a wooden fort was erected at the settlement.

It was not merely with the natives that Nuñez had to contend; for the colony of *Darien*, not being as yet under any authority properly constituted by the crown, seems to have been more than usually fractious. Evil tidings, too, reached Nuñez from Spain. His late colleague, the *alcalde* Zamudio, wrote that the Bachelor Enciso had laid his complaints before the throne, and had succeeded in obtaining a sentence, condemning Vasco Nuñez in costs and damages. Nuñez was likewise to be summoned to Spain, to answer the charges against him on account of his treatment of Nicuesa.

The captain-general of *Darien*—for to such rank had Nuñez been advanced by a commission from the royal treasurer of *Hispaniola*—was at first stunned by this communication; but, being a brave man, he did not long remain cast down. His intelligent and energetic mind quickly conceived the idea of anticipating his summons to Spain by some gallant service which would convert his disgrace into triumph; and what service could be so effective, with this object in view, as the discovery of the Southern Sea and the gold-laden realms by its shores! He had not, it is true, the thousand soldiers

which the youthful *cacique* had said were needed for the enterprise; but, since time was pressing, and fame and fortune were at stake, he must make the best use of those he had.

1513

Inspecting the band of adventurers by whom he was surrounded, Nuñez selected one hundred and ninety from the most resolute amongst their number. In addition to these well-armed men, he was aided in his enterprise by a detachment of Indian allies, as likewise by a number of blood-hounds. With this strangely-composed force, Vasco Nuñez set out from *Darien* on the 1st of September 1513, in a brigantine and nine canoes. Landing at *Coyba*, he was welcomed by Careta, and supplied by him with guides. Leaving nearly half his men at *Coyba* to guard his brigantine and canoes, he set out upon his march, having previously caused mass to be performed for the success of his expedition. His march, as might be expected, was troublesome; for the Spaniards were oppressed by the weight of their armour as well as by the tropical sun. In climbing the rocky mountains, however, and in struggling through the forests, they were relieved by the Indians from the burthen of their provisions, and were guided by them in finding the paths. From time to time they had to change their guides, sending back those who had previously accompanied them. They had likewise to make frequent halts, to recruit the health of some of their number after their fatigues.

Vasco Nuñez was possessed of an engaging manner which won the confidence of every one with whom he was brought into contact, and which had a peculiar fascination for the Indians. When Ponca, the enemy of Careta (whom the latter had driven into the mountains), was induced to come into his presence, he not only showed him no ill-will, but freely imparted to him such information as he possessed regarding the countries whither Nuñez was bound. Pointing to a lofty mountain in the distance, he informed him that when he should have scaled its summit he should behold the sea spread out below him. Animated by this cheering intelligence, and furnished with fresh guides, Nuñez resumed his march; having first sent back to *Coyba*, such of his men as he deemed too feeble for the enterprise.

So toilsome did the journey now become that it took Nuñez and his party four days to accomplish ten leagues—they suffering much, meanwhile, from hunger. They had now arrived in the territory of a *cacique* at war with Ponca, and who set upon the Spaniards with a numerous body of warriors, thinking, on account of their small number, that he was secure of a victory. On the first discharge of their firearms, however, he had reason to alter his opinion, his people being forced to hasty flight, leaving the *cacique* and six hundred men dead upon the field. The *caciques* brother and other chiefs who were taken prisoners, were clad in white robes of cotton; which circumstance led to their being accused of crimes so revolting to the Spaniards, that they gave them to be torn to pieces by the blood-hounds. It is stated that amongst the prisoners taken on this occasion were several negro slaves. If this were so, their appearance in South America at this time has never been explained.

Vasco Nuñez, having distributed the spoil taken in the village of the late *cacique*, selected fresh guides from amongst his prisoners. His effective Spaniards now numbered only sixty-seven, and with these he started at the dawn of day on the 26th of September, to climb the last height that lay between him and the vision to which he looked forward. About ten o'clock the party emerged from the forest and stood on the open summit, which alone remained to be ascended. Vasco Nuñez, commanding his followers to halt, set out for the mountain top, in order that he might be the first European to gaze on the longed-for sea. At sight of the glorious prospect his first impulse was to sink upon his knees and pour out his heart to Heaven. He then made his people ascend, in order that their eyes too might be gladdened, and that their hearts should rejoice. It was a solemn moment in the lives of all; and with the deep religious feeling with which these pioneers of discovery were animated, they joined in one general prayer to God that He would guide and aid them to conquer for their king the sea and lands before them, which till now their Holy Faith had never reached. His men, for their part, embracing Vasco Nuñez, promised to follow him till death. Amongst them there happened to

be a priest, who now led the chaunt *Te Deum laudamus!* Their last act before leaving the spot was to witness an attestation that Nuñez took possession of the sea, its islands and surrounding lands, in the name of the sovereigns of Castile, in token of which a cross was erected and a pile of stones raised, the names of the Castilian sovereigns being carved on trees.

Having performed this important duty, Vasco Nuñez now descended into the regions that lay between the mountains and the Pacific. He was again encountered by a warlike *cacique*, who forbade him to set foot upon his territory. The result, however, of the first onset of the Spaniards was the same as had been the case with their last enemy. The Indians having taken to flight, Nuñez commanded his men to refrain from useless slaughter. The *cacique*, having been brought before him, presented five hundred pounds weight of gold as a peace-offering. A scouting party having found the sea at a distance of two days' journey, and Nuñez having been rejoined by his men whom he had left behind him, he now established the headquarters at the village of this *cacique*, while he himself proceeded with a small party to explore the coast. After traversing a region clothed down to the water's edge by thick forests, Nuñez arrived on a bay to which, on account of the date, he gave the name of *St Michael's*. When the receding tide had risen, he marched into the water, and waving his banner, formally took possession of these seas and coasts, and of all appertaining to them, in the name of the Castilian sovereigns. He likewise cut crosses on three trees, in honour of the Three Persons of the Trinity.

The Spaniards were now to encounter a new form of danger, of the nature of which, notwithstanding all their previous experience, they had never dreamt. Having been successful in obtaining a considerable quantity of gold whilst at his headquarters of *Chiapes*, Nuñez determined to explore the borders of a neighbouring gulf; nor was he deterred by the warnings of his host against the danger of venturing to sea in the stormy season then commencing. Vasco Nuñez, who looked upon himself as being an apostle of the faith, had a firm belief in the especial protection of God, and therefore despised the caution given. His Indian host, whose experience of the stormy gulf by no means led him to entertain a like confidence, was nevertheless too polite not to accompany the daring stranger, whose party of sixty men embarked in nine canoes on the 17th of October.

When the Spaniards were fairly launched, and when it would have seemed pusillanimous to retreat, the wisdom of the *cacique's* advice began to be perceived. The wind raised a heavy sea, which broke over the rocks and reefs with which the gulf abounded. Even the Indians, accustomed as they were to those seas, showed signs of alarm. They succeeded, however, in lashing the canoes together, two and two, and thus prevented them from upsetting, until, towards evening, they reached a small island. Here landing, they fastened the canoes to the shore, and sought a dry place where the party might repose. But they were soon awakened by the rapid rising of the water, upon which they had not counted; and they at length found themselves almost to their waists in water. The wind, however, lulled, and the sea became calm, and after a time it began to subside. They found their canoes seriously damaged; whilst their clothing and food were washed away. There was nothing for it but to repair the canoes as best they could; after which they set out on their return to the shore. They had to labour all day long, enduring severe hunger and thirst; but at night they had the satisfaction of reaching the land.

Leaving a portion of his men with the canoes, Nuñez set out for the neighbouring Indian village, from which the inhabitants were driven before the firearms and dogs of the invaders. A quantity of provisions, besides pearls and gold, rewarded the brigands; and on the following day the *cacique*, who had been so violently driven into the woods, was induced to return to his home, the object of his despoiler in inviting him being a desire to ascertain the source whence he procured his pearls. Fear opened the heart of the poor Indian, who, in his awe of the superhuman strangers, as he thought them, gave Vasco Nuñez golden ornaments weighing six hundred and fourteen crowns, and two hundred pearls of great beauty; he further sent a number of his men to fish for pearls for the Spaniards.

The *cacique* informed Nuñez that the coast which he saw before him continued onwards without end, and that far to the south there was a country abounding in gold; its inhabitants, he said (alluding to the *llama*), made use of quadrupeds to carry burdens. Inspired by this intelligence, Nuñez determined

to emerge from the gulf and to take possession of the mainland beyond. The *cacique* having furnished him with a canoe of state, he departed in it on the 29th of October, and was piloted by the Indians as far as to the point of the gulf, when he again marched into the sea and took possession of it. He saw before him a line of coast rising above the horizon, which the Indians said abounded in pearls. To this island and the surrounding group he gave the name of the Pearl Islands. On the 3rd of November he set out to visit other parts of the coast. Entering a great river, which the party ascended with difficulty, Nuñez next morning surprised a village on its banks, and obtained from the *cacique*, as the price of his liberty, more gold and pearls, and a supply of provisions.

From this point Vasco Nuñez determined to set out on his return to *Darien*. After having been entertained during three days by the *cacique* whom he had robbed, he set out well furnished with provisions, which were carried by the subjects of the Indian chief. His route now lay over sterile mountains, and he and his men suffered much from the absence of water; for the burning heat had dried up all the mountain streams. The fevered Spaniards were, however, gently urged by the Indians to proceed, and were at length rewarded by arriving in a deep glen which contained a cool fountain. They were now in the territory of a chief called Poncra, who had the reputation of possessing great riches. At the approach of the Spanish bandits, Poncra and his people fled from their village, in which Nuñez and his men appropriated to themselves property to the value of three thousand crowns of gold. Poncra having been caught, was brought before Nuñez, together with three of his subjects; but neither threats nor torture could compel him to betray the locality of his treasures. Under these circumstances, the unfortunate wretch was accused by his enemies of certain practices of which he may or may not have been guilty. In any case Nuñez had no sort of authority to be his judge. He was enraged, however, at his obstinacy in refusing to reveal his treasures, and Poncra and his three companions were given to be torn, to pieces by the blood-hounds. We shall soon have to ask the reader's sympathy for the fate of Vasco Nuñez himself; meanwhile, it may be well to bear in mind of what atrocious conduct he could on occasion be guilty towards others.

The Spaniards halted during thirty days at the village of the ill-fated Poncra, during which time they were rejoined by their companions who had been left behind. And here it may be observed that it appears somewhat strange that the energetic Vasco Nuñez, over whose head a grave accusation at this time hung, and who had undertaken his expedition to the Pacific in order to anticipate its evil results, should have apparently wasted so much time at this spot, since it was everything to him that not an hour should be lost in making his magnificent discovery known in Spain.

On departing from the village of Poncra, the Spaniards were accompanied by one of the *caciques* of the mountain, who not only lodged and fed them, but further presented them with the value of two thousand crowns. The Spaniards, on leaving the district, bent their course for some time along the river *Comagre*. When they abandoned it, owing to the precipitous nature of its banks, they had to trust entirely to their Indian guides. Had these deserted them, they would have been lost in the thick forests and unseen morasses. In their journey they were the victims of their own avarice; for they had loaded most of the Indians with gold alone, and now found themselves destitute of provisions. Many of their Indian bearers, oppressed by their burdens, sank down to perish by the way.

The Spaniards had still to pass through the territories of the most warlike *cacique* of the mountains. His reputation was so considerable that Nuñez dreaded to attack him with his worn-out followers; he therefore had recourse to stratagem. Taking with him seventy of the strongest of his party, he made a forced march to the neighbourhood of the *cacique's* residence, which at midnight he suddenly assaulted, capturing Tubanamá and all his family. The *cacique*, being threatened with death, agreed to purchase his life with jewels of gold to the value of three thousand crowns, and further to levy double that sum from his subjects; which having done, he was set at liberty.

1514.

Nuñez, returning to the village where he had left his men, now resumed his march to *Darien*. He and his party being much affected by the climate, could proceed but slowly; but they at length arrived on the sea coast in the territories of their ally Comagre. That *cacique* was now dead, and had been succeeded by his son, the youth who had first given information to Nuñez of the existence of the Southern Sea. Nuñez next proceeded to *Ponca*, where he heard of the arrival of a ship and *caravel* from *Hispaniola*. Hastening onwards to *Coyba*, the residence of his ally Careta, he embarked in the brigantine on January 28th, 1514, and arrived at *Darien* on the following day. He had been absent for five months, and was met with the most joyful welcome on the part of the entire colony.

CHAPTER III.
THE COLONY OF DARIEN; FATE OF VASCO NUÑEZ

1514-1517

Once more at *Darien*, Vasco Nuñez lost no time in drawing up for the king a report of his expedition across the mountains to the Southern Sea, in which report he states that during the expedition he had not lost a single man in battle. But, by a singular mischance, the vessel which bore his friend and messenger, Arbolanche, who had himself taken part in the toils and dangers which he was to describe, did not sail from *Darien* until the beginning of March. This delay ruined the rising fortunes of Vasco Nuñez.

The Bachelor Enciso, as has been already said, had carried his complaints against Nuñez to the foot of the throne; and when, in May 1513, he was followed by Caÿzedo and Colmenares with their glowing account of the province of *Zenu*, with its mountain streams that flowed over golden sands, their news served but to hasten the appointment of a governor over this favoured region. The royal choice fell, on the recommendation of Fonseca the Bishop of Burgos, upon *Don* Pedro Arias Davila, commonly called Pedrarias, who, on July 27th of the same year, was appointed ruler over *Darien*. The new governor was an elderly gentleman of rank, who had been brought up in the royal household and had afterwards distinguished himself as a soldier; but he has been well called, as his subsequent actions proved him to be, "a suspicious, fiery, arbitrary old man."[6]

The envoys of Nuñez had asked King Ferdinand for a thousand men, wherewith to enable their master to make the discovery of the Southern Sea. Ferdinand fully appreciated the importance of the enterprise; and, although he did not intend it for Nuñez, he assigned twelve hundred men to Pedrarias for its accomplishment. It so happened that at this time the Great Captain, the famous Gonsalvo de Córdova, was preparing to return to Naples; and the chivalry of Spain were thronging to enlist under his banner. His armament was, however, countermanded when on the point of sailing; and thus a large number of young nobles and cavaliers, who had set their hearts on winning their spurs, had their plans suddenly thwarted. Pedrarias had a host of volunteers anxious to join his expedition to the country which had already received the appellation of *Castilla del Oro*, or Golden Castile. In order to enable him to comply with the wishes of these applicants, he was permitted to increase his force to the number of fifteen hundred men; but in the end some two thousand embarked. Pedrarias was likewise accompanied by a bishop and four principal officers, one of whom was the Bachelor Enciso, now appointed *alguazil mayor*. He was also accompanied by his wife *Doña* Isabella de Bobadilla. He received instructions not to admit any lawyers into his colony,—an instruction subsequently more than once repeated in respect to Spanish-American colonies.

1514.

Scarcely had his fleet of fifteen vessels set sail from *San Lucar*, on the 12th of April 1514, when Arbolanche arrived, bearing the news of the glorious exploits of Nuñez. Had he come but a few days earlier, how widely different would have been the future of that cavalier! King Ferdinand gazed with delight on the pearls and gold which the messenger of Nuñez laid before him, and his imagination was carried away by the tale of the unknown seas and wonderful realms which were about to be brought under his sway. The popularity of Nuñez suddenly became unbounded, and the fame of his exploits resounded throughout Spain. The ill impression which had been produced on the king's

[6] Helps.

mind by the reports of Enciso was forthwith obliterated, and the Bishop of Burgos was instructed to devise some means of rewarding his surpassing services. But meanwhile the cavalier himself was afar off, and the waves of the Atlantic were fast bearing to *Darien* the jealous old man who was to see in Nuñez only one who had robbed him of the glory which he had proposed to himself of being the first discoverer of the Southern Sea and the conqueror of the regions of gold and pearls on its shores.

Meanwhile Vasco Nuñez was governing the region subjected to his rule in such a manner as to prove that the popular selection which had elevated him to the position of chief was justified by his qualities as a peaceful ruler no less than by his exploits as a warlike adventurer. The settlement contained upwards of two hundred houses or huts, and the constant effort of the captain-general was to bring the neighbourhood into such a state of cultivation as to render *Darien* independent of Europe for supplies. Its population now amounted to about five hundred Europeans and fifteen hundred Indians. The climate being depressing, Nuñez, who was a born governor, took advantage of every means to keep his people in good spirits, devoting the holidays as they came round to national sports and games, including tilting matches. He was singularly successful in securing the friendship, as well as in gaining the respect, of the natives; so that the Spaniards could travel, even singly, all over the district in perfect safety. It was certainly a circumstance full of misfortune, as well for Spain as for the inhabitants of the Isthmus, that when, after the experience of so many unfortunate colonising expeditions and so many incapable leaders, one was at length found admirably suited alike for the requirements of peace and of war, he should have had so soon to give place to a man whose age unfitted him to fulfil the duties of leader, and whose temper prevented him from recognising the merits of those who acted under him.

1514.

In June the fleet of Pedrarias arrived in the Gulf of *Urabá*. The new governor, knowing the character and the renown of Nuñez, was somewhat apprehensive lest he should decline to render up peaceful possession of his government, and he accordingly thought it prudent to cast anchor about a league and a half from the shore, and to send a messenger in advance to announce his arrival. He need not, however, have felt any misgiving; for Nuñez forthwith sent back his messenger with congratulations on his safe arrival, and with the expression of his own readiness and that of all the colony to obey his orders. It is true that some fiery adherents of the popular leader expressed their desire to repel the intruder; but these were at once discountenanced by their chief. The new governor, disembarking on the last day of June, made his entrance into *Darien* at the head of two thousand armed men, he leading his wife by the one hand and having Bishop Quevedo on the other; whilst a train of youthful cavaliers formed his body-guard. Vasco Nuñez came forth unarmed to meet him, attended by a detachment of his scarred and veteran troops. He conducted his guests to his humble straw-thatched abode, where he laid before them such a repast as this embryo city of the forest might afford, the only beverage procurable being water. We may well believe that the courtly cavaliers who formed the governor's train were somewhat taken aback by the simple nature of their first entertainment in Golden Castile.

Pedrarias, on the day of his arrival, summoned Vasco Nuñez to his presence and held with him a long private conference, at which the historian Oviedo assisted. In accordance with the governor's request, Vasco Nuñez gave an account in writing, in the course of two days, of his administration during the past three years. He likewise described the rivers and mountains where he had found gold, the *caciques* who were his allies, and his journey to the Southern Sea and to the Isle of Pearls. Having thus obtained the information which he required, and which Nuñez alone could furnish, Pedrarias next proceeded to take the *residencia* of the late captain-general, that is to say, he instituted an inquiry into his past conduct, the result being that for the injuries done to Enciso and others, Nuñez was condemned to pay a large amount, although he was acquitted of the criminal charges brought against him. The governor was now his declared enemy, and would have sent him in chains to Spain, to be

tried for the death of Nicuesa, had he not been warned by the Bishop Quevedo, who was Nuñez' friend, that his arrival in Spain would be the signal of his triumph, and that the result would in all probability be his return to *Panamá* with increased power and position. Nuñez had likewise found an advocate in the wife of the governor, who could not but admire his character and exploits. Under these circumstances it was thought better to detain him at *Darien* under a cloud. His property, which had been sequestrated, was, however, restored to him.

Nuñez, in his letter to the king, had advised the creation of settlements in the territories of Comagre, Ponca, and Pocorosa, with a view to establishing a line of posts across the mountains between *Darien* and the Southern Sea; and it was now determined to carry out this plan. Whilst preparations were being made with this view, the Spaniards who had accompanied Pedrarias began to suffer greatly from the effects of the climate, and were likewise sorely pressed by hunger. The colony had not been in any way prepared for such an accession to its numbers; nor were there any neighbouring friendly Indians on whom to fall back for a supply of provisions. Men brought up in luxury, and who were clad in fine raiment, were glad to procure herbs and roots, or were actually perishing from starvation. One of the principal *hidalgos* dropped down dead in the street, starved. Within a month's time seven hundred men had perished, whilst Pedrarias himself was taken seriously ill. The provisions which had been brought out were now exhausted, and the horrors of famine stared the whole colony in the face. In this gloomy state of affairs Pedrarias was glad to give permission to a ship-load of starving adventurers to depart for *Cuba* and for Spain.

When the governor had recovered from his malady, he urged on the expeditions which he had planned; but he was careful not to permit Vasco Nuñez to acquire additional renown by taking part in them. That cavalier was still allowed to remain under the cloud of a judicial inquiry hanging over him. Notwithstanding the provision which had been made not to admit lawyers into the colony, the legal profession was at this time so flourishing at *Darien* that it was estimated that there were about forty lawsuits to each colonist.

Vasco Nuñez, oppressed by this inaction, determined to prosecute his plans on his own account, without reference to the governor; and he despatched one Garabito to *Cuba* to enlist men for an expedition across the mountains and to found a colony on the Southern Sea. Whilst Garabito was absent, Nuñez was condemned to behold his schemes ruined, owing alone to the incapacity and brutality of those entrusted by Pedrarias with the mission of carrying them out. Amongst the leaders employed by the governor was one Juan de Ayora, who was sent with four hundred men to build forts in the countries ruled over by Comagre, Pocorosa, and Tubanamá respectively. This officer proved himself an exceptional ruffian even amongst the Spanish transatlantic adventurers of the day. According to Oviedo, who was at this time notary of the colony, he not only demanded of the chiefs and their subjects the authorised requisitions to avert war, but, pouncing upon the *caciques* and principal men by night, he put them to the torture in quest of gold. Some he then caused to be put to death; others were given to be devoured by the dogs; whilst others again were reserved for new forms of torment. Their wives and daughters were taken from them, and were made slaves and concubines according to the good pleasure of this Ayora.

One of the first victims of this expedition was Comagre himself, the same youthful *cacique* who had given to Vasco Nuñez the earliest information of the existence of the sea beyond the mountains, and who had told him that a thousand men would be needed for its discovery. Little did he imagine that he himself would be one of the victims of the thousand men who had now been brought by his advice! The chiefs with whom Vasco Nuñez had cemented a friendship came forth in turn to lay their gold before Ayora. The valiant Tubanamá, being of a less submissive turn of mind, took to arms, but to no avail. Another *cacique*, having put his women and children in safety, laid wait in ambuscade and attacked the Spaniards, wounding Ayora himself.

The proceedings of Ayora towards another *cacique* are thus described by a lawyer sent on a mission of inquiry to the West Indies a few years later by Cardinal Ximenes. On the approach of

the Spaniards, the *cacique* in question, under the belief that he was about to welcome his old friend Nuñez, had prepared for him the best entertainment within his means, including roast-meat, game, and wine. On his inquiring for the chief, Ayora was pointed out to him, but he replied that this was not Nuñez. He was, however, to become well acquainted with his present guest during their brief intercourse. After having partaken of his hospitality, Ayora sent for him and demanded gold. This not being forthcoming in sufficient quantity, the *cacique* was bound, upon which his vassals were desired by him to bring all the gold in their possession. The amount, however, did not satisfy the invader, who ordered the *cacique* to be burnt alive.[7]

Not being troubled as to the means he took to obtain it, it was but natural that this scoundrel should gather together a considerable quantity of gold; it is some satisfaction to the moral sense to know that neither Ayora nor any one else was any the better for it. The idea of delivering up his ill-gotten treasures was repugnant to the avarice of this robber, who secretly made off with them to sea and was never more heard of. The colony which he had founded at *Santa Cruz* met with no better fate. The garrison, having given much offence to the Indians, were beset at night by Pocorosa and his people; a desperate struggle ensued, but when morning broke, only five Spaniards were left alive to carry the tale to *Darien*. It may here be mentioned that Hurtado, who had been sent by Pedrarias to discover the causes in the delay of the return of Ayora, brought back with him to *Darien* a hundred peaceful Indians, of whom he disposed as slaves. A number of these had been lent to him as carriers by the *cacique* Careta, the friend and ally of Nuñez.

1515.

In a letter addressed to Vasco Nuñez, King Ferdinand expressed his high sense of his merits and services, and constituted him *Adelantado* of the Southern Sea, and governor of the provinces of *Panamá* and *Coybá*. He was, however, to be subordinate to Pedrarias. A letter was likewise written at the same time to the latter, informing him of this arrangement, and requiring him to consult with Vasco Nuñez upon all affairs of importance. This communication was a severe blow to the vanity of the jealous old man; and upon its receipt, he summoned a council to deliberate as to what action should be taken. It was finally arranged that the above-mentioned titles and dignities should be nominally conferred upon Nuñez, but that for the meantime he was not to enter into possession of the territories assigned to him.

At this critical moment Carabito, the agent of Nuñez, happened to return from *Cuba* with a vessel freighted with arms and ammunition, and having seventy men on board. He anchored at some distance from *Darien*, but sent word of his arrival to Nuñez, all of which became speedily known to Pedrarias. The suspicious mind of the latter taking the alarm, he at once ordered Nuñez to be seized and confined; but he was prevailed upon by the bishop to inquire into the matter calmly, the result being that, as nothing treasonable was proved against him, Nuñez was set at liberty.

The bishop next endeavoured to persuade Pedrarias to employ Vasco Nuñez on an expedition which he was about to despatch to the Southern Sea and to the Isle of Pearls. As, however, there was much credit and probably much wealth to be derived from it, Pedrarias preferred to give the command to his own kinsman, Morales, with whom he associated Francisco Pizarro, who had been in Nuñez' expedition to the same region. Gaspar Morales accordingly started with sixty men, and traversed the mountains by a shorter route than that which had previously been taken. He arrived at the territories of a *cacique* named Tutibrá, where he left one-half of his men under Peñalosa, whilst with the remainder he set out in canoes for the Pearl Islands. On arriving at the *Isla Rica*, so named by Nuñez, they experienced a warm reception from the *cacique*, who sallied forth four times against them, but who was as often repulsed with loss. His warriors were paralysed by the firearms and the blood-hounds, and the *cacique* was at length obliged to sue for peace. He presented to his guests as a

[7] Navarrete.

peace-offering a basket filled with pearls, two of them being of remarkable size and beauty. Taking Morales and Pizarro to the summit of a wooden tower, he pointed proudly to a long vista of islands subject to his sway, and promised his new friends as many pearls as they might desire so long as they should continue to give him their friendship.

Turning towards the mainland, which stretched away mountain upon mountain as far as the eye could reach, the communicative chief told his guests of a country of inexhaustible riches that lay in that direction. His words and suggestions were not lost upon one of the two men who listened to him. The *cacique* further agreed to become the vassal of the king of Castile, and to pay him an annual tribute of one hundred pounds weight of pearls. The party then returned to the mainland at another point than that at which they had embarked, when Morales sent a detachment of ten men to conduct Peñalosa and his party from the village of *Tutibrá*.

During the absence of the Spanish leaders at the islands, a conspiracy had been formed by a large number of the *caciques* along the coast to massacre the whole band of invaders. This measure was undoubtedly the result of grossly tyrannical conduct on the part of the Spaniards. By some writers the provocation is ascribed to Peñalosa; by others it is given to Morales himself, who is stated on one occasion to have come upon an Indian town or village in the midst of a festivity, when the men and women were seated apart, and to have taken advantage of the opportunity to capture the females. We shall not be far wrong if we assign both to Peñalosa and to Morales a full share of the enormities which brought about the conspiracy.

The party sent in quest of Peñalosa put up for the night in the village of one of the conspirators; but in the dead of night the house was wrapped in flames, and most of the strangers perished. There was at this time with the Spaniards under Morales a *cacique* named Chirucá, who, on learning of the above-mentioned massacre, instantly fled during the night. He was pursued and taken, and, on being put to the torture, confessed the whole conspiracy. Morales and Pizarro were appalled by the unsuspected danger into which they had fallen. They, however, compelled Chirucá to send a message to each of the *caciques* inviting him to a conference. The *caciques* fell into the snare, and eighteen of them were put in chains. At the same time Peñalosa with his thirty men arrived from *Tutibrá*. Being thus in strength, the Spaniards lost no time in attacking the unsuspecting Indians, of whom seven hundred were slain. The eighteen captive *caciques*, and likewise Chirucá, were given to the blood-hounds.

After the above-mentioned occurrence, Morales attacked by night a warlike *cacique* named Biru, setting fire to his town. The chief, who at first fled, soon turned upon his pursuers and fought for the entire day, which ended not much to the advantage of the Spaniards. In his retreat, Morales was harassed by the people of the twenty *caciques* whom he had caused to be slaughtered. Being much pressed, he had recourse to the expedient of stabbing his Indian captives at intervals as he went along, hoping thus to occupy and delay his pursuers. In this manner, says Oviedo, perished ninety or a hundred persons. Vasco Nuñez could not be called an over-scrupulous commander; but though in circumstances of difficulty he had to provide for the safety and wants of his men as best he could, he was by nature neither cruel nor treacherous. It would be an outrage to name him together with such men as Ayora and Morales, of which latter's proceeding, just mentioned, he writes to the king that a more cruel deed had never been heard of.

For nine days the Spaniards were hunted about the woods and mountains, at the end of which time they found themselves at the point from which they had set out. It was all their commanders could do to prevent them from yielding to despair. Entering a thick forest, they were again assailed by Indians, with whom they now fought like wild beasts. They at length owed their safety to the fact of their surprising some canoes, in which they traversed the Gulf of *St. Michael*, landing at a less hostile locality, from which they again set out to cross the mountains. After incredible sufferings they returned to *Darien*, with the satisfaction of having brought with them their precious pearls from *Isla Rica*, one of which was afterwards presented to the Empress of Charles V.

Another expedition sent out by Pedrarias was still more unfortunate than that above referred to. It was commanded by Becerra, and consisted of one hundred and eighty men. Of this force the sole survivor was an Indian youth, who returned to *Darien* almost famished with hunger. His leader, he said, had entered by unknown ways the province of *Cenú*, where the Indians were fully prepared to receive him. His men were wounded by poisoned arrows; the paths were blocked by felled timber; and finally, when Becerra's men, under the guidance of Indians, were crossing a great river, the latter contrived to destroy them all.

About this time the historian Oviedo became so disgusted with the intolerable conduct of his countrymen in the Isthmus of *Darien*, that he resolved to return to Spain for the purpose of giving information to the king, and in order that he might live in a country more secure for his conscience and his life. It is interesting to note that he was charged with complaints to the king by the governor against the bishop and by the bishop against the governor. Pedrarias too seems to have begun to take this state of things to heart. He ordered the melting-house to be closed, and, together with the bishop, caused public prayers to be offered up that God would remove his anger from the colony. Of evil deeds there was certainly enough to rouse the wrath of the Almighty. With one expedition sent out by Pedrarias under the *Alcalde Mayor* Espinosa, there was a Franciscan monk named San Roman. In writing to the head of the Dominicans, San Roman begs the latter, for the love of God, to speak to the authorities at *San Domingo* and urge them to provide a remedy for the *Terra Firma*, which these tyrants were destroying. This letter was given by Pedro de Cordova to Las Casas. On his return to Spain, the same Franciscan, it is to be hoped with some exaggeration, stated at Seville that in this expedition of Espinosa's he had seen killed by the sword or thrown to the dogs above forty thousand souls. Espinosa returned with two thousand captives, all of whom are said to have perished at *Darien*.

We have seen so far the results of the policy of Pedrarias and his lieutenants as regards the inhabitants of the Isthmus. We have now to turn to his treatment of the most capable and distinguished Spaniard within the colony, namely, the *Adelantado* Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. In the midst of the general gloom in which the settlement of *Darien* was enveloped, Pedrarias was continually haunted by the fear that the able *Adelantado* would one day oust him from his office. Had the choice of a leader depended on the people, he knew that Nuñez would have been elected by acclamation; and he had but recently received proofs of the high estimation in which his services were regarded by the king. He was further aware of the gloomy tales of misrule and consequent misery which were being constantly sent to Spain with reference to his own government. Whilst Pedrarias was in this frame of mind, a new idea was presented to him by Bishop Quevedo, the fast friend of Nuñez, who suggested a matrimonial alliance between the *Adelantado* and the governor's daughter. The suggestion seemed to be a happy one and was readily accepted by both parties, a regular contract being entered into, and the young lady being sent for from Spain.

1516.

Vasco Nuñez was now the ally of the governor, whose jealousy was lost sight of in his desire to further the interests of his daughter's future husband. Nuñez was authorised to build brigantines and to make the necessary preparations for an expedition of discovery on the Southern Sea. A town named *Acla* was founded at a point to the west of *Darien*, whence there was supposed to be the most convenient route across the mountains. Here Nuñez commenced his operations, having two hundred men placed under his command and being aided by an advance from the treasury. He was also assisted with funds by a notary of *Darien*, named Hernando de Arguello. Nuñez pursued his undertaking with his accustomed energy, and had in a short time constructed the materials of four brigantines. The timber was felled in the forest of *Acla*, and was then, with the anchors and rigging, transported to the opposite shore of the Isthmus. On this service were engaged Spaniards, negroes, and Indians. As there were no other roads save Indian paths through the primeval forests or up the rugged defiles, the work of transportation was similar to that with which the journals of Mr. Stanley in Africa have made

us familiar in our own day. Many of the Indians perished over the task; but at length the ponderous loads were conveyed to a river which flowed into the Pacific.

Even then the labours of Nuñez and his men were far from being complete; for, with all their trouble, the Spaniards found that the timber which they had brought at such cost of labour and of life was useless, being worm-eaten from having been cut near salt water. They were obliged, therefore, to fell trees near the river and begin their work afresh. But the perseverance and good management of Nuñez at length overcame every difficulty. As food was scarce he divided his people into three bands, assigning to one the task of foraging for provisions, to another that of cutting and sawing the timber, and to the third that of bringing the rigging and the ironwork from *Acla*.

The patience of the working party was still further to be tried; for when the rainy season set in, the river rose so rapidly that the workmen had barely time to save their lives by climbing the nearest trees. The wood on which they had expended so much labour was either buried out of sight or carried away by the torrent. The same cause prevented the foraging party from returning with food; and the workmen were thus reduced to feed on roots. In this extremity the Spaniards owed their relief to the ingenuity of the Indians, who contrived to fasten a number of logs together, thus making a floating bridge on which they were able to cross to the opposite bank, where they procured provisions.

When the river had subsided, the workmen resumed their operations; and, after immense toil, Vasco Nuñez had the satisfaction of seeing two of the brigantines afloat on the river *Balsas*. As soon as they could be fitted and manned for sea, he embarked in them with his companions on the mighty ocean which he had been the first European to discover. His first cruise was to the Pearl Islands, on one of which he disembarked the greater part of his men, sending back his vessels for the remainder. On their arrival, taking a hundred men with him, he set out on a reconnoitering cruise to the eastward, in the direction to which the natives pointed as being that of the land which abounded in gold. Nuñez and his party sailed for about twenty leagues beyond the Gulf of *San Miguel*, the seamen being alarmed at the number of whales which they met with. On this account he anchored for the night, intending to continue his cruise in the same direction next day. But when daylight came the wind had changed, whereupon he steered for land. It was at the point where a party of Spaniards under Morales had recently been massacred; and as the Indians were disposed to fight, Nuñez took vengeance upon them for the slaughter of his countrymen, after which he re-embarked and returned to *Isla Rica*.

Nuñez resolved to build his remaining brigantines at this island, and accordingly despatched men to *Acla* to bring the necessary rigging. It was at this time that a rumour reached him of the appointment of a new governor to supersede Pedrarias. His relations with the latter were now so good that he was not a little disturbed by the rumour in question, since it was possible that the new governor might put a stop to the exploring expedition which he contemplated, or might entrust the command of it to some other person. Under these circumstances, he held a consultation with some of his friends as to what had better be done, and the fact that part of this conversation was overheard by a sentry who had taken refuge from the rain in the verandah of Nuñez' house, had an important bearing upon the fate of that cavalier. It was agreed that a trusty person should be sent to *Acla*, seemingly on business. Should he find that there was no foundation for the rumour of the coming of a new governor, he was to explain to Pedrarias the progress of their operations, and to request further assistance. In the opposite event he was to return forthwith to *Isla Rica*; for in that case it had been determined that Nuñez and his party should put to sea at once on their expedition of discovery.

The messenger chosen to go to *Acla* was Garabito, the same who had been sent by Nuñez to *Cuba* for recruits. It is stated that this man was possessed by a secret enmity to Nuñez, on account of having been discovered and rebuked by the latter for his attentions to the daughter of the *Cacique* Careta, who all this time had lived with Nuñez, and to whom he is said to have been much attached. It is even said that Garabito in his jealousy went so far as to send an anonymous letter to Pedrarias, stating that Nuñez had no intention of marrying his daughter, and that he was merely playing a part to gain time. It is certain that Garabito, on his arrival at *Acla*, basely betrayed his confiding friend.

A new governor had indeed been sent out from Spain to supersede Pedrarias; but he had died in the harbour of *Darien*. From Garabito Pedrarias had no difficulty in extracting all the information which he possessed, and, further, all that he conjectured respecting the plans of Nuñez. In fact, the suspicions of the jealous old governor had been thoroughly aroused afresh. The latter had made a lamentable mistake in allowing so long an interval to elapse without sending to his chief a report of the progress of his expedition, and there were not wanting at *Darien* jealous and mischief-making persons still further to irritate the governor's mind against him.

When Garabito was arrested, and when his papers were seized, there was a great commotion at *Darien*, and the friends of Nuñez were anxious to put him on his guard. Foremost amongst these was Arguello, who had embarked most of his fortune in his enterprise, and who now wrote him a letter urging him to put to sea without delay, and stating that he would be protected by the Geronomite Fathers at *San Domingo*, who had been sent out with full powers by Cardinal Ximenes, and who regarded with much approval the exploration of the Southern Sea. It was Nuñez' extreme misfortune that this letter should fall into the hands of Pedrarias, and that the latter should by this means become convinced of the existence of a plot against his authority. Arguello was now arrested; but the governor, being fully convinced of Nuñez' treasonable intentions, thought it necessary to have recourse to stratagem to get the latter within his power. Should he openly summon him to *Darien*, he did not doubt that he would lose no time in putting himself beyond his jurisdiction.

The mind of Pedrarias being thus a prey to fear and suspicion, he wrote an amicable letter to his *Adelantado*, requesting him to repair to *Acla*, to consult with him respecting the expedition; he at the same time ordered Pizarro to muster all the troops he could collect and to arrest Vasco Nuñez. The summons to proceed to *Acla* was instantly obeyed; and, unattended by any armed force, Nuñez, unconscious of having committed any crime, set out to meet his doom. On the road across the Isthmus, his frank and genial manners so gained on the messengers of Pedrarias, that the latter at length felt bound to warn him of his danger. They could not see this gallant cavalier fall into the snare set for him without speaking a warning word by which he might profit to effect his escape. But Nuñez was so unconscious of evil thought towards Pedrarias, that he declined to take advantage of the opportunity offered to him. He was soon afterwards met and arrested by Pizarro.

Nuñez once in his power, the spiteful governor lost no time in urging the *alcalde mayor*, Espinosa, to proceed against the *Adelantado* with the utmost rigour of the law. The charge against Nuñez was that of being engaged in a treasonable conspiracy to throw off the king's authority and to assume an independent sway on the borders of the Pacific. The witnesses against him were Garabito and the sentinel who had overheard and misconstrued a portion of the conversation held between Nuñez and his officers at *Isla Rica* on the rainy night when it was resolved to despatch Garabito to *Acla*. Of the charge of treason against the crown Nuñez was entirely innocent. All that could be said against him was that, in case they should learn that Pedrarias had been superseded, he had agreed with his officers that they should sail on the expedition which Pedrarias had sanctioned without waiting for fresh orders from the new governor.

1517.

But it was in vain for Nuñez to be innocent; it was in vain that he indignantly repudiated the charge brought against him, pointing out that had he for a moment entertained the views attributed to him he would never have allowed himself to be entrapped into his present position. The mind of Pedrarias was hopelessly prejudiced against him, and the vindictive old man urged on the unwilling judge from day to day, heaping charge upon charge, until at length a sentence of death was pronounced against the accused. The judge recommended him to mercy on account of his services, or begged that at least he might be allowed to appeal. But these recommendations were lost on Pedrarias, and Nuñez was condemned to die. In the same sentence were included several of his officers as well as Arguello, who had written a letter to put him upon his guard. The informer Garabito was pardoned. In

the public square of *Acla*, at the hands of the common headsman, the discoverer of the Southern Sea, at the early age of forty-two, expiated the crime of having aroused the jealousy of a narrow-minded official superior. The blow which then fell affected not Nuñez alone, but the whole Peruvian nation; for had he been permitted to carry out his proposed expedition, he would certainly have anticipated the discoveries of Pizarro, and, in view of the character of the two men respectively, who can doubt that the conquest of Peru would have had a widely different result?

CHAPTER IV.
LAS CASAS; HIS COLONY ON THE PEARL COAST

1515-1521

The history of the northern coast of South America, from the Gulf of *Paria* to the Isthmus of *Darien*, is intimately connected with the history of slavery during the century which succeeded the date of the discovery of the New World. Modern slavery in Europe (not including the Ottoman dominions) seems to have dated from the war between the Spaniards and the Moors, when such of the latter as were made prisoners were, under Ferdinand, as a matter of course, sold as slaves. It was a period when the Church was all in all as regards the European polity. Whatever the head of the Church chose to say was right, and became therefore right in the eyes of the sons of the Church. The will of the Sovereign Pontiff became law, and was appealed to as an ultimate court of reference throughout Christendom.

The state of public morality then existing amongst Christian nations, in respect to people and races not within the pale of Christianity, was more or less what it had been in the time of the Crusades. There was at the best merely a truce existing at any one time between the Christian and the Moslem powers. Their principles were antagonistic and incompatible. The days had not yet arrived when the Turk was to be called in as an ally by one Christian power fighting against another.

Such being the state of things when new islands and continents were suddenly discovered, no one in Christendom dreamed of questioning the absolute right of the Pope to dispose of them as he might see fit; and in accordance with this view, the line was originally drawn by Pope Alexander VI., fixing the limit of the Spanish and Portuguese territories respectively, first at a hundred leagues to the west of the *Azores*, and subsequently, by the Treaty of Tordesillas, at three hundred and seventy leagues to the west of the Cape *de Verde* Islands. By the Bull of May 2nd, 1493 (the year after the discovery of America), the Spanish sovereigns obtained the same rights, privileges, and indulgences in respect to the newly-discovered regions, as had been granted to the Portuguese with regard to their African discoveries, subject to the same condition of planting and spreading the Catholic faith. It was not for a moment considered in the matter that the natives of the newly-discovered regions possessed any rights whatsoever, saving such as might be granted to them by their Christian invaders, acting under the orders of the Catholic kings whose claims were sanctioned by the head of the Church.

It was but the fulfilment of the promise of Scripture that the heathen should be given to God's people for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession;[8] and thus, according to the opinion of the best ecclesiastical and legal authorities, it was fair and right to enslave such natives of the new countries as might oppose in arms the Christians who came to take possession of their lands, or who, being addicted to cannibalism, were beyond the pale of humanity. It is necessary to bear the above facts in mind in order to judge fairly the conduct of some of the greatest men of the period, including Prince Henry of Portugal and Columbus himself.

Prince Henry and Columbus were the two great originators of the geographical discoveries of the age. Either of the two was profoundly religious, and in the mind of each the ardour for propagating the true faith existed equally with the ardour for discovery. It is a strange and sad reflection that each one of those two great men—in some respects the greatest men of their age—was the originator of a new form of slavery. To Prince Henry is to be traced the origin of the enslavement of African negroes; to Columbus that of the system of *encomiendas* or partitions of Indians amongst Spanish

[8] Psalm ii. 8.

settlers. Either system was productive of untold misery to large classes of the human race, and in one case the evil is not even yet extinct, as witness *Brazil* and *Cuba*. And yet the motives of Prince Henry in originating and sanctioning African slavery, were, without doubt, not only wholly unselfish, but were dictated solely by a desire for the spiritual enlightenment and civilization of the heathen. The motives of Columbus were perhaps more open to question. It is true that he himself, when on his last visit to *Hispaniola* he had seen the miserable results of the system which he had originated, declared to his sovereign that in sending home Indian captives to be sold as slaves he had been actuated solely by a desire for their spiritual welfare, and by the hope that they would return to spread civilization amongst their countrymen; but it is to be remembered that the motives of the great Genoese were not wholly pure, and that he himself repeatedly requested permission to send home Indians to be sold as slaves in order to diminish the expense to the crown in connection with the colony. He was rightfully rebuked by the pure-minded Isabella, who indignantly ordered such Indians to be returned to their country, and instructed the admiral that their conversion was to be brought about by the ordinary means, and not by their being enslaved.

It is only fair to the early Spanish settlers in America, the account of whose proceedings in respect to the Indians cannot fail to rouse feelings of horror and disgust, that we should duly consider and weigh the feelings of the age in which they lived on the part of Christendom towards all who were beyond its pale. They were in fact the feelings of the chosen people towards the surrounding heathen, who were only deserving of being spared on condition of their becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is true that in the case of a number of Spanish leaders, including Columbus himself and his brother *Don* Bartholomew, the Indians were to be spared and protected on the condition of their accepting the yoke imposed upon them and fulfilling the tasks assigned to them by their invaders; but upon the slightest resistance or evasion of their duties, all their natural rights were at once abrogated, and they became as so many beasts of burden, to be employed at the pleasure of their drivers. Amongst rulers and governors Queen Isabella stands out alone to protest against such a construction of the duties of one race towards another, even although the one were Christian and the other heathen.

But yet, seeking to make every allowance that can be urged in excuse or palliation, there is but one verdict that can possibly be given as to the general conduct of the Spaniards towards the natives of America, namely, that it surpassed in remorseless, and often stupid and short-sighted, cruelty the conduct of any one conquering or so-called “superior” race towards another conquered or “inferior” race of which history contains any record. In this respect we cannot but think that the Spaniards as a race have been too leniently judged by modern writers—not Spanish, but foreign. Much, for instance, as Washington Irving is to be admired for his clear judgment and his mastery of his subject, we cannot help thinking that he is scarcely justified in assigning the undoubted excesses committed by Spaniards in the New World merely to a set of ruthless adventurers, the scum of their race, rather than to Spaniards in general. It would of course be in the highest degree unjust to make an entire people responsible for the wholesale atrocities of two unlettered adventurers such as Pizarro and Almagro; but the accusation of scandalous and intolerable rapacity and cruelty is unfortunately not confined to the class to which such men belong; it applies equally to all ranks and grades of the invaders, with here and there a notable exception—generally, but not always, on the part of one or more churchmen —most of all in Las Casas.

The conduct of Ovando towards the natives of *Hispaniola*, and more particularly to those of *Xaragua*, is one of the many instances in question of the inhuman treatment of Indians by a Spaniard of the highest rank. It will be remembered that on one occasion some eighty *caciques* were treacherously seized, and upon mere unfounded suspicion, bound to posts and committed to the flames. It was estimated that at the time of the advent of the Spaniards the unfortunate island of *Hayti* contained about a million or twelve hundred thousand inhabitants—some writers place the population at a much larger amount,—yet in an incredibly short period, under the government of Ovando, it was reduced to twelve thousand, so reduced, indeed, that labourers had to be brought from other islands.

And yet Ovando had been specially selected for his "prudence," in order that he might redress the wrongs to which the Indians were said to be subjected under the government of Columbus and his brother, and the Indians were specially commended to his care by Queen Isabella.

It may be said that the conduct of one tyrannical governor should not be charged to the discredit of a people. This would be a fair argument had Ovando been promptly recalled when the news of his atrocities at *Xaragua* reached Spain, as was in our own day Governor Eyre, when the news of his high-handed proceedings in *Jamaica* reached England. Ovando's proceedings were indeed so repugnant to the humane heart of Isabella that with her dying breath she exacted a promise from Ferdinand that he should be recalled from his government. He was, later on, recalled, but only after the lapse of four years, and when *Don* Diego Columbus had been declared by the courts of justice to be entitled to the government of *Hispaniola*. The long period which elapsed between the fate of Anacoana and the recall of Ovando showed that neither his king nor the public feeling of Spain in general was much shocked by the proceedings which have left an indelible stain upon his name.

But it cannot be imagined that the wholesale depopulation of *Hayti* is chargeable merely to one or more governors. It is to be attributed indiscriminately to the colonists in general, and amongst them were many cavaliers who had gone to seek their fortune in the New World in the train of Ovando. If we turn in other directions we see merely a repetition of the same facts. Cortez and many of his compeers were men of noble family; but in the history of their deeds we find at least equal cruelty, as regards the natives, with that which attended the proceedings of such low-born adventurers as Pizarro and Almagro. Whilst excellent laws and regulations for the well-being and proper treatment of the natives of America were constantly being enacted in Spain, we nowhere read of wholesome examples being made of the wrong-doers who treated these laws as a dead letter. Even the laws and regulations, good and well meant as they were, were not the result of the reaction of public opinion against the ill-treatment of the Indians, but were brought about by a few humane ecclesiastics who had been helpless eye-witnesses of the atrocities committed by their countrymen, and who returned to Spain with the hope of rousing the conscience of the sovereign and his advisers to a sense of the enormities which were being daily committed in his name. This brings us to the historical part played by Las Casas on the continent of South America; but before describing it, it may be well to give a brief statement of what had already been done by other ecclesiastics in the same cause.

The Dominican monks of *Hispaniola*, grieved at the barbarities practised towards the natives of that unfortunate island, had entered an indignant protest against the treatment which was meted out to the vassals of Queen Isabella. These monks were about twelve or fifteen in number, and they soon gathered for themselves an idea of the cruelties which were being practised around them. As they determined that their protest should be a collective one, they agreed that a discourse should be preached before the inhabitants of *San Domingo*, to which they should all attach their names. The preacher, taking for his text "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," declared to his audience with piercing words that they were living; in mortal sin by reason of their tyranny to the Indians, and he demanded what authority there was for the imposition of this servitude, and what ground for these wars? The sermon was heard to the end, but on reflection the principal persons amongst the audience went to the monastery to make a fierce remonstrance.

They insisted on seeing the preacher, and required that he should make a retractation on the following Sunday. Next Sunday came, and the place of worship was crowded by a congregation brought together to hear the expected apology. The same preacher again ascended the pulpit; but Father Antonio only repeated his former statements and insisted upon their conclusions. He moreover added that the Dominicans would not confess any man who should have made incursions amongst the Indians. The congregation again listened to the discourse; but they determined to send a complaint to the king, and afterwards to despatch a Franciscan monk to argue their case at court. Thus were two orders of the Church arrayed against each other; the one urged on by motives of Christianity and humanity, the other by religious rivalry.

The Dominicans likewise resolved to send their advocate, and amongst the colonists some pious persons were found to defray the expenses of his voyage. The advocate selected was Father Antonio. When the letters from the authorities of *San Domingo* had reached the king, his majesty had sent for the head of their order in Spain, and had complained to him of the scandal occasioned in the colony by this preaching. Soon after this the envoys arrived, Father Alonso, the Franciscan, being well received by the authorities, and having free access to the king, whilst the doors of the presence-chamber were closed against the Dominican. Father Antonio, however, watching his time, obtained the desired audience. King Ferdinand was inexpressibly shocked at his statement, and gave orders that the matter should be diligently looked into forthwith. He was true to his word, and summoned a *junta*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.