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The Spaniard in New Mexico.



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THE SPANIARD

IN

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Spaniard in New Mexico.

Spain took a leading part in the discovery, exploration and settlement of the New World. Although Columbus, the discoverer, was not a native, he was in the service, of Spain when he looked, for the first time, upon the tropical beauties of the Western Hemisphere from the quarterdeck of the *Pinta*.

Spaniards were the first to make a lodgment on the main land; and the world will never tire of reading the almost fabulous conquests by Cortez and Pizarro, as drawn by the pen of Prescott. Another Spaniard, Balboa, born neighbor to Cortez, in Estremadura, was the first to look down, from the mountains of Darien, upon the tranquil Pacific sea, whose waves, as they laved the beach at his feet, sang a welcome to the commerce shortly to whiten its bosom.

In their early explorations, the Spaniards did not

confine themselves to the middle and southern sections of the continent. They early seized territory now a part of our own country; and, at one time, there was danger of Spain becoming the ruling power in North America, if not such already. Ponce de Leon landed in Florida, in 1512, and startled the world by announcing the discovery of the "Fountain of Youth." Vasquez de Ayllon, who discovered South Carolina, in 1520, was appointed governor of that region ninety years before the Cavaliers settled Virginia, and a full century prior to the landing of the English Puritans on the rock-bound coast of New England.

Several subsequent attempts were made by Spain to explore, and colonize, portions of what is now the United States—Narvaez, in 1528; De Soto, in 1537, the first to reach and cross the Mississippi, and in whose turbulent waters his remains were buried; Francisco Vasquez Coronado, in 1541, and Pedro Melendez, in 1565.

Pamfilo de Narvaez, a Spanish cavalier of rank and fortune, whom Charles V appointed governor of Florida, in 1527, landed at Tampa bay, April 12th, 1528, with four hundred men and eighty horses. Among the officers was Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, grandson of Pedro de Vaca, who made the conquest of the Canaries at his own expense; and who is described as having the most beautiful and noble figure of all the conquerors of the New World;

and, in the best days of Spanish chivalry, his valor on the field of battle, his resolution in danger, and his constancy and resignation in hardship, won for him the appellation, "Illustrious Warrior."

It is not my purpose to accompany Narvaez ; it is enough to say he left the coast, the first of May, for the interior. After marching a distance estimated at 280 leagues, fighting several battles and sustaining severe losses, he returned to the Gulf at a point he called the " Bay of Horses," one of the coves of Apalache bay, a location confirmed by Añasco and Herrera.

Their situation was now critical, for the fleet had sailed away, leaving them to their fate. There was but one way of escape, if that were even practicable ; to build boats and coast the Gulf to the settled parts of New Spain. After great labor, and converting the metal of their equipments into tools, nails, etc., the tails and manes of their horses into cordage, and the shirts of officers and men into sails, five boats were completed and equipped, and, on the 22d of September, the 240 survivors embarked upon an unknown sea. They sailed to the west, encountering storms and suffering from the want of water. The last day of October, they discovered and passed the mouths of the Mississippi, two years before De Soto reached that river, and five years prior to the survivors of his expedition sailing down it. On the

4th of November, Vaca's boat, the only one not already wrecked, was cast upon a desert island on the coast of Louisiana, and himself and companions made prisoners by the Indians. They finally reached the main land, where they encountered many vicissitudes, and were subjected to the most barbarous treatment. For the next ten years, Vaca and three companions, the only survivors of the expedition, wandered up and down the central region of the continent, finally reaching the settled parts of New Spain.

While we can only approximate the route of these early explorers, there can be no question they crossed New Mexico, and Arizona, until recently a part of it, and were the first Europeans to tread the soil of that country. Starting inland on a general north-west course, they probably struck the Red river; ascended it some distance; then turned to the west, and traversed the plains to the Canadian fork of the Arkansas, near the Great cañon; continuing, they reached the Pecos river, the next stream, of any magnitude east of the Rio Grande. They encountered many tribes; calling one the "Cow Nation," from the great number of cattle (buffalo), on the banks of the principal river. When Espejo was on the Pecos, in 1583, half a century later, he named that stream the "River of Oxen," for the same reason; and I believe these two rivers to be

identical. Our wanderers crossed the Rio Grande at some undetermined point south of Santa Fé.

Circumstances point their general whereabouts. They saw the mesquit tree, of whose berries the Indians made flour and baked it into bread, and they ate of the piñon, a small and palatable nut, both common to New Mexico. They met people wearing emeralds and turquoises, still worn as ornaments by the Indians of that country. Some of the tribes practiced the present sport of the Pueblo Indians, that of killing rabbits with clubs, and others washed their garments with the soapy, fibrous root of a species of palm now called amolé, and not found out of New Mexico. The people of fixed habitations, among whom they traveled for 300 leagues, were none other than Pueblo Indians, for they alone, of all the inhabitants of that region, had permanent dwellings.

The earliest information the Spaniards of Southern Mexico had of New Mexico, then known as "The Country of the Seven Cities," or Cibola, a word accepted as the Spanish for buffalo, was about 1530. An Indian in the employ of Nuño de Guzman, the President of New Spain, and said to be a native of Tejos, represented that he had traversed the country, and had visited the Seven Cities, extensive and beautiful, where entire streets were occupied by workers in the precious metals. What a charming delusion to the Spaniard!

When Hernando Cortez said to an Indian governor, soon after landing in Mexico, "the Spaniards are troubled with a disease of the heart, for which gold is a specific remedy," he epitomized the moving cause of all Spanish exploration in America. The relation of the Tejos Indian aggravated this disease in New Spain, and an attempt was made to explore the country, but without success. About this time Cabeza de Vaca arrived at Culiacan, and confirmed what had been heard. He said he had been told of great cities with houses four stories high; the country was populous, and abounded in cattle that roamed in great herds; the people were cultivated, and lived on maize, pumpkins and other vegetables; and he had seen many towns of fixed habitations, whose inhabitants dressed in cotton and tanned deer skins.

The viceroy immediately sent Friar Marcos de Niza to explore the country, accompanied by a small escort, and one of Vaca's companions. They set out the 9th of March, 1539, and made a long journey to the northwest. On the friar's return he gave the most exaggerated account of what he had seen, and been told by the Indians, more than confirming previous reports. He said he had found the country of the Seven Cities that Guzman had searched for in vain, and had discovered islands in the South sea filled with untold wealth. What could be more seductive to the adventurous, and gold-loving Spaniards? Even

the viceroy lent a willing ear to the friar's stories, and shortly every pulpit resounded with his remarkable discoveries. It was new fuel to the flames already consuming them. They could not resist the allurements of the unknown with its golden lining.

The conquest of the Seven Cities was undertaken in earnest. The viceroy organized an army of 1,500 Spaniards and Indians, with 1,000 horses, and placed it under the command of Don Francisco Vasquez Coronado, governor of New Galecia. He is represented as "a good gentleman, and a wise, prudent and able man;" and the chronicler of the expedition says: "I doubt whether there has ever been collected, in the Indies, so brilliant a troop, particularly for the small number of 400 men." The army marched from Compostella, in January, 1541, amid the acclamations of the inhabitants.

The Spaniards marched almost parallel with the Gulf of California to the latitude of the Gila, when they changed direction to the north-northeast. Crossing that stream near Casas Grandes, otherwise Chichiltic, meaning Red House, Coronado entered upon a barren, broken country, and, in fifteen days, reached the "country of the Seven Cities." The chief town was taken by assault, when the province submitted. Instead of seven great cities, the province of Cibola contained but that many villages, with houses built of mud and stones, and entered

by outside ladders; whose inhabitants dressed in skins and cotton stuffs, and the women were well treated. They had priests, who preached from the highest point in the villages every morning; and the cross was recognized as an emblem of peace.

The location of this initial point, in Coronado's campaign, is highly important. After careful investigation, assisted by several years residence in that country, I believe the chief town, the Spaniards took by assault, to have been the present Indian pueblo of Zuñi, in the western part of New Mexico, near Rio Colorado Chiquito. The approaches, the surroundings, and location, all sustain it. This is confirmed by the journal of Cruzate, which states that Zuñi was known as the "Buffalo Province," at the time Philip II. ascended the throne, twenty-five years after Niza's explorations.

Starting from Zuñi, as one of the Seven Cities, the subsequent march of Coronado may be intelligently traced. If any other location be given it, the student of his campaign will find himself at sea without compass or chart. From this point several explorations were projected. One party went westward into the province of Tuscayan, the present Moqui pueblos, on the tableaux between the rivers San Juan and Colorado Chiquito. Thence they explored the country to the river Tizon, the present Great Colorado, and, from its rocky banks, peered down at the

silvery stream 2,000 feet below. In Shea's translation of "The Expedition of Don Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa," the river Tizon is said to be the same as the present Gila, an error that cannot stand criticism. In the expedition of Sáldivar, 1618, in going west he struck the Tizon after passing the last of the "Moq" towns, the present Moqui pueblos, and marched two days up that stream "northward." As the course of the Gila is from east to west, and that of the Colorado from north to south, Saldivar could not have marched up the Gila "northward."

Going eastward, the Spaniards visited Acuco, identical with the present Acoma, a strong town on a rock, and Cicuyé, a large and strongly fortified village in a narrow valley, watered by the present Jemez or Guadalupe river, and of which province the pueblos of Santa Ana and Silla are probably remains. Coronado, in person, visited the provinces of Tutahaco, of eight towns, in the valley of the Gallo, of which Laguna only remains; Tignex, of twelve towns, on the bank of a river, probably the Puerco, now an inconsiderable stream; Hemes, the Jemez of to-day, fifty miles west of Santa Fé, and Quirix, likewise of seven villages, whose inhabitants were hostile.

Coronada received flattering accounts of provinces still further to the east. A native of one of them said a river two leagues broad ran through it, in

which were fish as large as a horse ; that the canoes, capable of carrying twenty rowers, were propelled by sails and fitted up in great magnificence ; that a large golden eagle was fixed in the prow, and the master reclined in the stern under a beautiful canopy ; that the sovereign took his siesta in the shade of a great tree, charmed to sleep by the music of little golden bells suspended from the branches, which sounded when the wind blew ; and that the most common vessels were made of massive wrought silver, and the plates and porringers were of gold. Is it surprising such marvelous stories captured the Spaniards of the first half of the sixteenth century? They would almost move the average American at this day from his moorings.

The Spaniards now resume their march to the northeast, over the Jemez mountains, crossing the Rio Grande, probably between the present pueblos of Cochiti and San Yldefonso, and a little to the north of Santa Fé ; through the spurs and foot hills of the Rockies, and reached the great plains, northeast of Fort Union. After marching a considerable distance upon the plains, encountering wandering Indians called Querechos, and others, who spoke of having seen Vaca and his companions ; meeting with great herds of buffaloes, and hearing of a river to the east that might be followed down for ninety days without leaving an inhabited country, the army returned to the west of the Rio Grande.

Coronado separated himself from the army, and, with an escort of thirty horsemen, set off in search of the town of Quivira, of which he had heard fabulous accounts from his guides. It was represented as large and populous, but when reached, after a long journey, it was found to be a small village resembling those of New Spain. There is nothing in the Spanish text to fix the location of Quivira, and we are left almost wholly to conjecture. Shea, on the authority of Friar Freytas, the chronicler of Peñalosa's expedition, of 1662, locates it out on the plains, northeast of Santa Fé, and probably east of the Missouri river. We think this an error. No ruin, great or small, bearing the name, has ever been discovered in all that section. We should look for it in another direction. In the county of Valencia, New Mexico, about one hundred and fifty miles south of Santa Fé, is a ruin known as the "Grand Quivira." Thirty-five years ago it covered an area of 950 by 450 feet, and the remains include the ruins of a stone church and monastery, and no doubt belonged to a Spanish mission. The name was probably handed down from an Indian town that stood on or near the spot. All the surroundings indicate great age; large cedar trees are growing upon an old road-bed; there is no trace of cultivation, and the nearest water is fifteen miles away. Whether this is the Quivira of Peñalosa and Coronado, must be determined by future investigation.

While the expedition of Coronado dissipated the romantic stories of the greatness and richness of the Seven Cities, it developed the fact, that New Mexico had a numerous population, living in fixed habitations grouped in villages, with the elements of a rude, but interesting, civilization.

Two further attempts were made by the Spaniards to explore New Mexico, in the next forty years; by Augustine Ruiz and two Franciscan friars, in 1581, who were killed twenty miles south of Santa Fé; and by Antonio de Espejo, who led a small party thither the following year. They gave such a flattering account of the country, and of the mines of precious metals, the viceroy of New Spain determined to take possession and colonize it.

This work was entrusted to Don Juan de Oñate, who entered the country, in 1591, with 400 armed men, 130 families as settlers, and a corps of Franciscan friars to convert the Indians. The natives received them as friends; the new settlers began to build and plant, and peace and plenty smiled on every hand, until that disturber of the age, Spanish thirst for gold, stepped in to destroy the sweet harmony that prevailed. A keen hunt for gold and silver was now set on foot, and as mines were opened and worked the cultivation of the soil was neglected. The sacred aphorism, "the love of money is the root of all evil," was never more forcibly demonstrated than in the settlement of Spanish America.

In a few years the Spaniards assumed the prerogative of masters, and harmony between the races vanished. The Indians were forced to work in the mines ; to assume a form of worship they neither understood nor sympathized with ; and to support priests in every village. Their favorite dance, the Cachina, one of their religious rites, was interdicted ; their altars removed ; their estufas closed. No people, civilized or savage, can be touched in a tenderer spot.

At length the Indians looked upon the Spaniards as intruders and tyrants ; their yoke galled and they longed to throw it off. Several attempts were made at armed rebellion, prior to 1670, but failed ; in each instance being betrayed by one of their own number, or overpowered immediately they took up arms. But failure did not dampen their ardor.

Spanish oppression reached its high water mark in 1680, and the Indians determined to bear it no longer. In that year, Popé, a distinguished San Juan Indian, who exercised a controlling influence over his brethren, combined the pueblos against their oppressors. He had active and zealous co-laborers. Among these were Catite, a half-breed Queres Indian ; Tacu, of San Juan ; Jaca, of Taos, and Francisco, of San Yldefonso. Popé traversed the country like another Peter the Hermit, and, with an eloquent tongue, pictured their wrongs to the Indians, and

aroused them to resistance. He told them the Great Father, and Chief of all the pueblos, He, who had been their Father since the flood, had commissioned him to order his countrymen to rebel against the Spaniards; that he had conversed with three departed Indian spirits in the estufa of Taos, Caidit, Tiliin and Tlesime, who directed him to make a rope of the palm leaf, and tie in it knots to represent the number of days before the uprising would take place, one of the oldest methods known of recording events; that he must send this rope to all the pueblos in the kingdom, and that each one should signify approval by untying a knot.

Popé sent the palm-leaf rope, from pueblo to pueblo, as directed, by the fleetest young men, inviting all to join in the rebellion, and threatening with death those who refused. Absolute secrecy was enjoined, and a constant watch kept upon those likely to divulge the plot; and not a woman was let into the confidence of the conspirators. Popé put to death his own son-in-law, Nicholas Bua, governor of the pueblo of San Juan, who fell under his suspicion. The time fixed for the rising was the 10th of August, and the Indians looked forward to it as their day of deliverance. They had newly bent their bows, and tipped afresh their arrows to draw Spanish blood, and awaited the day with impatience.

But in spite of all their precaution, treachery

lurked in their own ranks, and, two days before the time, a couple of Tesuque Indians divulged the conspiracy to the Spanish governor. The Indians took up arms at once. That night the pueblos nearest Santa Fé, the capital, began an indiscriminate slaughter of all Spaniards who fell into their hands, sparing neither priests, women nor children, except a few of the handsomest maidens the warriors reserved for wives.

The rebellion burst upon the Spanish authorities before they were prepared to meet it. The settlers were called in for refuge, but many were overtaken and massacred; and the capital was put in the best possible state of defence. An infuriated body of Indians, from the north and south, marched against Santa Fé and surrounded it. Every effort was made to induce them to return home, but they would listen to no proposition that did not embrace the immediate evacuation of the country by the Spaniards. After a siege of ten days, and a desperate sortie by the Spaniards, the garrison and citizens withdrew from the town in the night, and marched down the river to El Paso.

The Indians took possession of Santa Fé and commenced the work of destruction. They danced, in wild delight, around the burning churches and convent, crying, "God the Father, and Mary the Mother, of the Spaniards are dead," and that their

god alone lived. They re-established their heathen rites, with the four cardinal points of the compass as their visible church, and made offering of flour, feathers, the seed of the meguey plant, corn and tobacco to propitiate their deity. They then bathed in the little stream that flows by the town to cleanse themselves of Christian baptism, and ordered all baptismal names to be dropped.

Popé made a tour of the country, being received with almost regal honors, promising health and good crops to all who complied with his demands. He everywhere ordered the churches and convents burned, and the articles used in Christian worship destroyed. He entered the pueblo of Cia riding on a black mule, and dressed in full costume, with a bull's horn fastened on his head. After making a speech to the Indians, and sprinkling them with corn meal as an emblem of happiness, he and his lieutenants sat down to a sumptuous repast, drinking wine from the sacred vessels.

The heaviest vengeance fell upon the poor priests, who were generally put to death by their own flocks. The priest at Jemez was first paraded around the church on the back of a hog, and beaten with sticks; then made to get down on all fours, when his cruel persecutors got on his back and lashed and spurred him until he fell dead. The priests of Acoma were stripped, tied together by a hair rope, driven through

the streets, then killed with clubs and stones, and their bodies thrown into a cave. The priests at Zuñi were dragged from their cells, stoned and then shot ; while those at the distant Moqui villages, after suffering many indignities, were stoned to death. The only silver lining to this rebellion is the conduct of the Franciscan friars. They were faithful to the last, and in no instance is their flight, from danger and death, recorded. Such devotion to duty deserves a place in History.

After the revolutionary chiefs had finished their journey, they returned to their respective pueblos, and set at work to consolidate their newly-obtained power. If the old Spanish MSS. are to be believed, some of the leaders did not long retain this power, for it is recorded that both Catite and Louis Cupavo burst asunder with a report like a gun, and were carried off by the devil.

The Indians retained possession of the country for almost a quarter of a century, in spite of several attempts to reconquer it, and Spanish rule was not re-established until 1703.

The origin of the people the Spaniards found in New Mexico 350 years ago, and what of them to-day, are pertinent inquiries. There are two theories as to their origin ; one, Aztec, the other, Toltec. By tradition, when the Aztecs settled Mexico they came from the north or northwest, and reached their new

homes in the Valley of Anahuac after a period of 150 years; that they traveled by stages; halting, building villages, and cultivating the earth. Casteñada believed they were of this migratory party, and that some of them remained in New Mexico, when the main body moved on.

The Pueblo Indians themselves believe they are the people of Montezuma, and he is strangely mixed up in their social and religious life. The inhabitants of Pecos, until their extinction, believed Montezuma would return to deliver them from the Spaniards; and every morning, at sunrise, one of their number ascended to the house top, and looked to the east for their expected saviour and king. Many years ago, I was shown, at the pueblo of Laguna, a strange contrivance they worshiped as Montezuma, and which the governor told me was both God and the brother of God. A Jemez Indian told Lieutenant Simpson that God and the sun were one.

On the other side we have conflicting testimony. Albert Gallatin, who investigated the subject with great care, and whose judgment is entitled to great consideration, believed the people the Spaniards found in New Mexico to be of Toltec origin. Humboldt says the Aztec language differs, essentially, from that spoken by the Pueblo Indians; while Casteñada said the latter were unknown to the inhabitants of Mexico, prior to the exploration of Vaca and his companions.

That the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico are the same people the Spaniards encountered in their search for the "Seven Cities," there is no question. They live in the same quaint villages, half fortification, half dwelling, standing where they then stood, and many of them bear the same names; they have the same manners and customs, are governed by the same laws, enforced by officers of the same title. They eat the same food, dress, substantially, the same, practice the same heathen rites in the secrecy of the estufa, and believe in witchcraft, as probably did their ancestors a thousand years ago. But they are not the same powerful people. In number they have been reduced to about 10,000, living in twenty-six villages, mostly in the Valley of the Rio Grande. In the days of their strength they formed four distinct nationalities, speaking as many languages, Peros, Teguas, Queres, and Tagnos or Tanos. The languages of the first three remain, but the Tagnos has become extinct. The villages are not grouped, according to nationalities, but widely separated, some that speak the same language being 300 miles apart. The cause of this dispersion is buried deep with other mysteries that surround this interesting people. In the days of their greatest strength, the Queres was the most powerful of all the Pueblo nations, and, in their conflicts with the Spaniards, they sent the ablest warriors into the field, and furnished the most cunning statesmen to the council chamber.

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