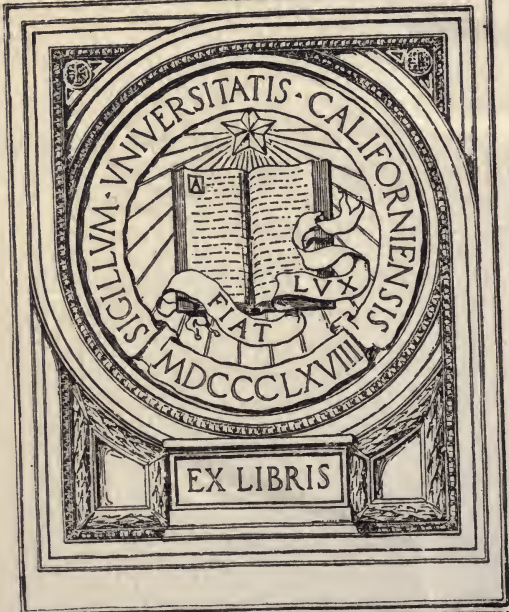


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THE
CONQUEST OF FLORIDA,

BY
HERNANDO DE SOTO.

BY THEODORE IRVING.

Son quattromila, e bene armati e bene
Instrutti, usi al disagio e tolleranti.
Buona è la gente, e non può da più dotta
O da più forte guida esser condotta. —TASSO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.

.....
1835.



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DEDICATION.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING, Esq.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

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

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

I would be pardoned for alluding to other and greater obligations yet nearer to my heart: with

the anxious interest of a parent's eye, you have watched over the most critical period of my life. Amid the excitement and snares of foreign scenes, and in the quiet employments of our home, your counsels have been my guide—your friendship—the circumstances will excuse the term from one so much your junior—your friendship my happiness and pride. The heedlessness of boyhood could not arrest your assiduous care—the wayward habits of youth have not wearied your unceasing solicitude. That I have been thus far led in safety, claims the fervent gratitude of

Your affectionate nephew,

THEODORE IRVING.

NEW-YORK, March, 1835.



PREFACE.

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

At a subsequent day, I was advised to undertake a free translation of it into English, as a literary exercise. While occupied in the task, I had the good fortune to meet with a narrative on the same subject, written by a Portuguese soldier, who was present in the expedition. This led me to further research and closer examination; and, finding that the striking events and perilous adventures in the chronicle of the Inca, were borne out, in the main, by this narrative from another hand, and that various lights had been thrown by modern travellers upon the

line of march said to have been taken by the adventurous band of De Soto, I was convinced, that what I had before regarded almost as a work of fiction, was an authentic, though, perhaps, occasionally exaggerated history.

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

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

It has been the fashion, in later days, to distrust the narrative of the Inca, and to put more faith in that of the Portuguese. This has occasionally been done without due examination into their respective claims to credibility. Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honour. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken down by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the written journals or memorandums of two other soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye witnesses.

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

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

I have been induced, therefore, in the following pages, to draw my facts more freely and copiously than others, in latter days, have seemed inclined to do, from the work of the Inca; still I have scrupulously and diligently collated the two narratives, endeavouring to reconcile them where they disagreed, and to ascertain, with strict impartiality, which was most likely

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

to be correct, where they materially varied, and to throw upon the whole subject the scattered lights furnished by various modern investigators. While I have discarded many incidents which appeared hyperbolic, or which savoured too strongly of the gossip of idle soldiery, I have retained, as much as possible, those every day and familiar anecdotes which give so lively a picture of the characters, habits, persons and manners of the Spanish discoverers of those days, and to my mind, bear so strongly the impress of truth and nature. My great object has been to present a clear, connected, and characteristic narrative of this singular expedition: how far I have succeeded, it is for the public to judge.

CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

First discovery of Florida.

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

Of all the enterprises undertaken in this spirit of

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

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

Those who are conversant with the history of the Spanish discoveries will remember the chimerical cruise of the brave old Governor of Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth. This fabled fountain, according to Indian tradition, existed in one of the Bahama Islands. Ponce de

Leon sought after it in vain, but in the course of his cruisings discovered a country of vast and unknown extent, to which, from the abundance of flowers, and from its being first seen on Palm Sunday, (Pascua Florida) he gave the name of Florida.

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

A few years after his defeat a Captain of a caravel, named Diego Miruelo, was driven to the coast of Florida by stress of weather, where he obtained a small quantity of silver and gold in traffic from the natives. With this he returned well pleased to San Domingo, spreading the fame of the country he had visited. About the same time a company of seven wealthy men of San Domingo, concerned in gold mines, at the head of which was the Licentiate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, auditor and judge of appeals of that island, fitted out two vessels to cruise among the islands and entrap Indians to work in the mines. In the course of this righteous cruise the vessels were driven by stress of weather to a cape on the East coast, to which they gave the

name of St. Helena. The country in the neighbourhood was called Chicorea, and is the same now called South Carolina. Here they anchored at the mouth of a river which they called the Jordan, after the name of the sea captain who discovered it. It is the same now known by its Indian appellation, the Cambahee.* The natives hastened to the shores at sight of the ships, which they mistook for huge sea monsters; but, when they beheld men issue from them, with white complexions and beards, and clad in raiment and shining armour, they fled in terror.

The Spaniards soon dispelled their fears, and a friendly intercourse took place. The poor Indians were kind and hospitable, brought provisions to the ships and made the strangers presents of martin skins, pearls, and a small quantity of gold and silver. The Spaniards gave them trinkets in return, and, having completed their supplies of wood and water and provisions, invited their savage friends on board of the ships. The Indians eagerly accepted the invitation. They thronged the vessels, gazing with

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

wonder at every thing around them ; but when a sufficient number were below the decks, the Spaniards perfidiously closed the hatches upon them, and, weighing anchor, made sail for San Domingo. One of the ships was lost in the course of the voyage, the other arrived safe, but the Indians on board of her remained sullen and gloomy, and refused food, so that most of them perished of famine and melancholy.*

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

Diego Miruelo persuaded him first to steer in quest of the country he had visited, and which he represented as much richer than Chicorea. He accompanied the expedition as pilot, but having, with

* Hist. Florida por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2.

Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6.

a negligence unworthy of a practised mariner, neglected in his first visit to take an observation, he was unable to find the place at which he had formerly landed, and was so much mortified by the ridicule and reproaches of his employers, that he fell into a profound melancholy, lost his senses, and died in the course of a few days.

Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon now prosecuted his voyage to the eastward in search of Chicorea. Arriving in the river Jordan, (or Cambahee) the scene of perfidy in the preceding voyage, his principal ship stranded and was lost. With the remaining two he passed further to the Eastward, and landed on a coast adjoining Chicorea, in a gentle and pleasant region. Here he was so well received that he considered the country already under his dominion, and permitted two hundred of his men to visit the principal village, about three leagues in the interior, while he remained with a small force to guard the ships.

The inhabitants of the village entertained these visitors with feasting and rejoicing for three days, until, having put them completely off their guard, they rose upon them in the night and massacred every soul. They then repaired by daybreak to the harbour, and surprised Vasquez de Ayllon and his handful of guards. The few who survived es-

caped wounded and dismayed to their ships, and making all sail from the fated coast, hastened back to San Domingo. According to some accounts Ayllon remained among the slain on the coast he sought to subjugate, but others assert that he returned wounded to San Domingo, where the humiliation of his defeat and the ruin of his fortunes, conspired with his bodily ills to hurry him broken hearted to the grave. Thus signally did the natives of Chicorea revenge the wrongs of their people who had been so perfidiously kidnapped.*

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2.

Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6. Idem. D. iii. lib. 8. c. 8. Peter Martyr, D. vii. c. 11.

Heylyns Cosmographic. L. 4. p. 100. Lond. Ed. 1669.

CHAPTER II.

The Expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

A CAVALIER of greater note was the next who aspired to subjugate the unknown realms of Florida. This was the brave but ill starred Pamphilo de Narvaez, the same who had attempted to arrest Hernando Cortes in his conquering career against Mexico, in which attempt he was defeated in battle, and lost an eye. Narvaez possessed favour at court and was enabled to fit out a considerable armament for his new enterprise. He was invested by the Emperor Charles V. with the title of Adelantado, or military governor of the country he expected to subdue and occupy, which was that part of Florida extending from its extreme cape to the river of Palms. In this expedition he trusted to wipe off the disgrace of his late defeat, and even to acquire laurels which might vie with those of Cortes.

On the 12th of April, 1528, Narvaez anchored at the mouth of an open bay on the eastern coast of Florida, with a squadron of four barques and a brigantine. Here he landed his forces, consisting of four hundred men and forty five horses ; having lost

many of his men by desertion in the West India islands, and several of his horses in a storm.

Erecting the royal standard, he took possession of the country for the crown of Spain, with no opposition from the natives. After having explored the vicinity, Narvaez determined to penetrate the country in a northward direction, hoping to discover some great empire like that of Mexico or Peru. In the mean time, the ships were to proceed along the coast in quest of some convenient harbour where they were either to await his arrival, or to steer for Havana and return with supplies for the army.*

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

This sound advice was slighted by Narvaez and his adventurous companions, whose imaginations were inflamed with the idea of inland conquest. The squadron, accordingly, set sail to the north-

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

ward ; and Narvaez and his troops set out by land in the same direction, accompanied by the faithful Alvar Nuñez ; who since he could not dissuade his commander from his desperate career, resolved to share his fate.

The force which proceeded by land consisted of three hundred men, forty of whom were mounted on horses. The allowance to each man, consisted of two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon. For the first few days they met with fields of maize, and villages containing provisions. Here, however, they outraged the feelings of the natives by rifling and laying waste their sepulchres, mistaking them for idolatrous temples. They afterwards journeyed many days through desert solitudes without house or inhabitant, suffering greatly from want of food. They crossed rapid rivers on rafts or by swimming, continually exposed to the assaults of hordes of lurking savages : they traversed swamps and forests, making their way with great difficulty through matted thickets and over fallen trees, and suffering every variety of misery and hardship.

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

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

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

Towards Aute, therefore, did they turn their steps, more eager now for food than for gold. The journey was perilous and full of disaster. They had to cross deep lagoons and dismal swamps, with the water often up to their breasts, their passage obstruct-

ed by rotten trees, and beset by hordes of savages. These appeared to the disheartened Spaniards of gigantic height; they had bows of enormous size, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armour at the distance of two hundred yards. At length, after incredible hardships, and with the loss of many men and horses, they arrived at the village of Aute.* The natives abandoned and burnt their houses on the approach of the invaders, but they left behind a quantity of maize with which the Spaniards appeased their hunger.

A day's march beyond the village brought them to a river which gradually expanded into a large road, or arm of the sea. Here they came to a pause in their adventurous career, and held a consultation as to their future movements. Their hopes of wealth and conquest were at an end. Nearly a third of their original number had perished; while of the survivors a great majority were ill, and disease was daily spreading among them. To attempt to retrace their steps, or to proceed along the coast in search of the fleet would be to hazard all their lives. At length it was suggested that they should construct small barques, launch them upon the deep, and keep along the coast until they should find their

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

ships. It was a forlorn hope, but they caught at it like desperate men. They accordingly set to work with great eagerness. One of them constructed a pair of bellows out of deerskins, furnishing it with a wooden pipe. Others made charcoal and a forge. By the aid of these they soon turned their stirrups, spurs, cross-bows and other articles of iron, into nails, saws, and hatchets. The tails and manes of the horses twisted with the fibres of the palm tree served for rigging; their shirts cut open and sewed together furnished sails; the fibrous part of the palm tree also was used as oakum; the resin of the pine trees for tar; the skins of horses were made into vessels to contain fresh water; and a quantity of maize was won by hard fighting from the neighbouring natives. A horse was killed every three days for provisions for the labouring hands and the sick. Having at length by great exertions completed five frail barks, they embarked on the 22d of September, from forty to fifty persons being in each; but so closely crowded were they, that there was scarcely room to move, while the gunwale of the boats was forced down by their weight to the water's edge.

Setting sail from this bay, which they called the Bay of Caballos, they continued on for several days to an island where they secured five canoes that had

been deserted by the Indians. These being attached to their barks enabled them to sail with greater comfort. They passed through the strait between the island and the main land, which they called the Strait of San Miguel, and sailed onward for many days, enduring all the torments of hunger and parching thirst: the skins which contained their fresh water having burst, some, driven to desperation, drank salt water, and died miserably. Their sufferings were aggravated by a fearful storm. At length they approached a more populous and fertile part of the coast, upon which they landed occasionally to procure provisions, and were immediately involved in bloody affrays with the natives. Thus harassed by sea and land, famishing with hunger, their barks shattered and scarcely manageable, these unfortunate wanderers lost all presence of mind, and became wild and desperate. They were again driven out to sea, and scattered during a stormy night. At daybreak three of these tempest-tossed barks rejoined each other. In one, which was the best manned and the best sailer, was Pamphilo de Narvaez. Alvar Nuñez, who had command of another, seeing the Adelantado making for the land, called upon him for aid. Narvaez replied that it was no longer time to help others, but that every one must take care of himself. He then made

for the shore, and abandoned Alvar Nuñez to make the best of his way with the other bark.

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

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

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

CHAPTER III.

Hernando de Soto—his birth—adventures in Peru—fits out an armament for Florida—touches at the Canary Islands—arrival at Cuba.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pizarro soon singled him out from the hardy spirits around him, and appointed him his lieutenant.† Was there a service of especial danger to be performed, De Soto had it in charge ; was there an enterprise requiring sound judgment and fearless daring, De Soto was sure to be called upon. A master at all weapons, and a complete horseman, his prowess and adroitness were the admiration of the Spanish soldiery. They declared that his lance alone was

* Properly written Pedro Arias de Avila.

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

equal to any ten in the army ; and that in the management of this chivalrous weapon, he was second only to Pizarro.

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

He afterwards commanded one of the squadrons of horse that captured this unfortunate Inca and routed his army of warriors.† He led the way with a band of seventy horsemen, to the discovery and subjugation of the great province of Cusco, in which he distinguished himself by the most daring and romantic achievements.‡ We might trace him throughout the whole history of the Peruvian con-

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

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

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

quest by a series of perilous encounters and marvelous escapes, but our purpose is only to state briefly the circumstances which directed his ambition into the career of conquest, and which elevated him to the notice of his sovereign, and of all contemporary cavaliers of enterprising spirit.

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

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

The world was at that time resounding with the recent conquest of Peru. The appearance at court of one of the conquerors, thus brilliantly attended, could not fail to attract attention. The personal qualifications of De Soto corresponded with his fame. He was in the prime of manhood, being about thirty-six years of age, of a commanding height, above the middle size, and a dark, animated, and expressive countenance. With such advantages, of person and reputation, he soon succeeded in gaining the affections and the hand of a lady of distinguished rank and merit, Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro. This marriage, connecting him with a powerful family, had a great effect in strengthening his influence at court.*

De Soto might now have purchased estates, and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 1.

have passed the remainder of his days opulently and honourably in his native land, in the bosom of his connexions, but he was excited by the remembrance of past adventures, and eager for further distinction. Just at this juncture, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain with tidings of the fate of Pamphilo de Narvaez and his followers. His tale, it is true, was one of hardships and disasters, but it turned the thoughts of adventurous men to the vast and unknown interior of Florida. It is said that Alvar Nuñez observed some reserve and mystery in his replies when questioned as to whether they had found any riches in the country they had visited; that he talked of asking permission of the Crown to return there and prosecute the discovery, and that he had even sworn his fellow survivors to secrecy as to what they had seen, lest others should be induced to interfere with his prospects.*

The imagination of De Soto took fire from what he had gathered of the narrative of Alvar Nuñez. He doubted not there existed in the interior of Florida some regions of wealth, equalling, if not exceeding, Mexico and Peru. He had hitherto only followed in the course of conquest; an opportunity now presented of rivalling the fame of Cortez and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 2.

Pizarro ; his reputation, his wealth, his past services, and his marriage connexions—all gave him the means of securing the chance before him. In the magnificent spirit of a Spanish cavalier, he asked permission of the Emperor to undertake the conquest of Florida at his own expense and risk.

His prayer was readily granted. The Emperor conferred on him in advance, the title of Adelantado, which combines military and civil command, and a Marquisite, with an estate thirty leagues in length and fifteen in breadth, in any part of the country he might discover. He, moreover, created him Governor and Captain-General for life, of Florida, as well as of the Island of Cuba. The command of this Island had been annexed at the especial request of De Soto, as he knew it would be important for him to have the complete control of it, for the fitting out and supplying his armaments for the meditated conquest.

No sooner was De Soto thus gratified in his wishes than he provided for his brothers in arms who had accompanied him to Court. Nuño de Tobar he appointed his Lieutenant-General, for which post he was well qualified by his great valour and his popular qualities. Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado he made Camp Master General, and he procured for Juan de Añasco the appointment of Contador, or

royal accountant, whose duty it was to take account of all the treasures gained in the expedition, and to set apart one fifth for the crown.

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

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

It was soon promulgated throughout Spain that

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

Hernando de Soto, one of the conquerors of Peru, was about to set out on the conquest of the great empire of Florida, an unknown country, equal if not superior in wealth and splendour to any of the golden empires of the new world, and that he was to do it at his own expense, with the riches gained in his previous conquests.

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

A striking account is given us of the arrival of a party of these volunteers. As De Soto was one day in the gallery of his house at Seville, he saw a brilliant band of cavaliers enter the court yard, and hastened to the foot of the stairs to receive them. They were Portuguese hidalgos, led by Andres de Vasconcelos ; several of them had served in the wars with the Moors on the African frontiers, and they had come to volunteer their services. De Soto joyfully accepted their offer. He detained them with him to supper, and ordered his steward to provide quarters for them in his neighbourhood. A muster being called of all the troops, the Spaniards appear-

ed in splendid and showy attire, with silken doublets and cassocks pinked and embroidered. The Portuguese, on the contrary, came in soldierlike style, in complete armour. De Soto was vexed at the unseasonable ostentation of his countrymen, and ordered another review in which all should appear armed. Here the Portuguese again came admirably well equipped, while the Spaniards, who had been so gaudy in their silken dresses, made but a sorry show as soldiers, having old rusty coats of mail, battered head pieces, and indifferent lances. The General, it is said, marked his preference of the Portuguese, by placing them near his standard. It must be observed, however, that this account is given by a Portuguese historian, who naturally is disposed to give his countrymen the advantage of the Spaniards. Other accounts speak generally of the excellent equipments of all the forces.

In little more than a year from the time of the first proclamation of this enterprise, nine hundred and fifty Spaniards of all degrees had assembled in the port of San Lucar de Barrameda, to embark in the expedition.* Never had a more gallant and brilliant body of men offered themselves for the new

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

world. Scarcely one among them had grey hairs, all were young and vigorous, and fitted for the toils and hardships and dangers of so adventurous an undertaking.

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

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

There were also enlisted in the enterprise twelve priests, eight clergymen of inferior rank, and four monks ; most of them relatives of the superior offi-

cers : for, in all the Spanish expeditions to the new world, the conversion of the heathen was not lost sight of in the rage for conquest.

This brilliant armament embarked at San Lucar de Barrameda, on the sixth of April, 1538, in seven large and three small vessels. In the largest, called the *San Christoval*, which was of eight hundred tons, embarked the governor, with his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, and all his family and retinue. They set sail in company with a fleet of twenty six sail bound to Mexico,* and with great sound of trumpets and thunder of artillery. The armament of De Soto was so bountifully supplied with naval stores, that each man was allowed double rations. This led to useless waste ; but the governor was of a magnificent spirit, and so elated at finding in his train such noble and gallant cavaliers, that he thought he could not do enough to honour and gratify them.

On the twenty first of April, the fleet arrived at Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. Here they were received with great parade and courtesy by the Governor, who bore the title of Count de Gomera. The Count seems to have been a gay and luxurious cavalier, with somewhat of an amatory complexion, his domestic establishment being graced by several natural daughters. When he came forth to receive his guests he was dressed in

Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

white from head to foot, hat, cloak, doublet, breeches and shoes ; so that, according to the old Portuguese narrative, he looked not unlike a captain of a gang of gipsies. During three days that the fleet remained in the port, he entertained his guests in jovial style, with feastings and rejoicings.

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV.

Rejoicings of the inhabitants of Cuba on the arrival of De Soto. Deposition of Nuño Tobar. Don Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, appointed Lieutenant General of the forces.

THE arrival of a new Governor with so important an armament was an event of great joy throughout the island of Cuba. When De Soto landed, the whole city of Santiago turned out to receive him. He found a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, waiting for him, and likewise a mule for Donna Isabella; which were furnished by a gentleman of the town. He was escorted to his lodgings, by the Burghers on horse and on foot, and all his officers and men were hospitably entertained by them; some being quartered in the town, and others in their country houses.* For several days it was one continued festival. At night there were balls and masquerades; by day, tilting matches, bull fights, contests of skill in horsemanship, running at the ring, and other amusements of a chivalrous nature.

The young cavaliers of the army, vied with each

* Portuguese relation, c. 4.

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

The cavaliers of the army had spared no expense in furnishing themselves with the most superb and generous steeds for their intended expedition. Many individuals possessed three or four, caparisoned in the most costly manner ; and the Governor aided liberally with his purse, such as had not the means of equipping themselves in suitable style.

Thus freshly and magnificently mounted, and arrayed in their new dresses and burnished armour, the young cavaliers made a brilliant display, and carried off many of the prizes of gold, and silver,

and silks, and brocades, which were adjudged to those who distinguished themselves at these chivalrous games.

In these, no one carried off the prize more frequently than Nuño de Tobar, the Lieutenant General. He was, as has been said, a cavalier of high and generous qualities, who had gained laurels in the conquest of Peru. He appeared on these occasions in sumptuous array, mounted on a superb horse, of a silver grey dappled, and was always noted for the gracefulness of his carriage, his noble demeanour, and his admirable address in the management of lance and steed.

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

The consequences of their unfortunate intercourse were soon too apparent to be concealed. De Soto was incensed at what he considered an outrage upon his rights, as a guardian over the lady, and his confidence as a friend. He immediately

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

deposed Nuño Tobar from his station, as Lieutenant General; and, though that really generous spirited cavalier endeavoured to make every reparation in his power, by marrying the lady, De Soto could never afterwards be brought to look upon him with kindness.

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

This magnificent cavalier had come to Santiago with a pompous retinue, to pay his court to the Governor, and witness the festivities and rejoicings. He passed some days in the city, and when he beheld the array of gallant cavaliers and hardy soldiers assembled for the enterprise, the splendour of their equipments, and the martial style with which they acquitted themselves in public, his military spirit again took fire, and forgetting his years, his past

toils and troubles and his present ease and opulence, he volunteered his services to De Soto, to follow him in his anticipated career of conquest.

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

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

The example of this generous and high mettled, though somewhat whimsical old cavalier, had a powerful effect in animating the inhabitants of Cu-

ba to promote the success of the expedition, and in inducing some of them to enrol themselves among the followers of De Soto.*

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

CHAPTER V.

Juan de Añasco twice despatched to Florida. His narrow escape and safe return. Final preparations of the Governor.

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

While thus occupied he twice despatched the Contador Juan de Añasco, in a brigantine manned with picked sailors, to coast the shores of Florida, in quest of some commodious harbour to which the expedition might sail direct, and find secure anchorage, and a good landing place for the troops.

Juan de Añasco, was well fitted for such a service, combining the sailor with the soldier, and possessing some skill in nautical science. He was fond,

too, of hazardous enterprise, never flinching from toils or perils, and was an excellent leader, though somewhat touchy and choleric.

Three months elapsed after his departure on his second voyage, without any tidings of him, and great fears were entertained for his safety, when at length his tempest-tossed bark arrived at Havana.

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

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

All his forces being now assembled in Havana, and the season favourable for sailing being at hand, the Governor made his final arrangements, appointing his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla to govern the island during his absence, with Juan de Roxas, as

lieutenant governor, and Francisco de Guzman as his lieutenant, in the city of Santiago. These two cavaliers had been in command prior to his arrival at the island, and had proved themselves worthy of this great mark of confidence.*

* The Inca, lib. 1, c. 13.

† Portuguese relation, c. vii. Herrera. D. vi. L. 7, c. 9.

CHAPTER VI.

*De Soto meets with an old comrade, Hernan Ponce—
much against the will of the latter.*

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

This ship came from Nombre de Dios, on the Isthmus of Panama, and this was the story of its singular conduct. On board of it was Hernan Ponce, an old comrade of Hernando De Soto. They had sought their fortunes together in Peru, and when De Soto left that country for a time to visit Spain, he entered into articles of partnership, or brotherhood, as it was called, with Hernan Ponce, as was frequently done by the Spanish dis-



coverers and soldiers of fortune in the new world. By these articles they bound themselves, during their lives, to an equal participation of gains and losses, and of all things, whether of honour or profit.

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

Hernan Ponce had no ambition of joining in the conquest ; and he feared that De Soto, having expended all his own wealth upon his outfits, would claim his right of partnership and seek to share the treasures he was carrying home, if not to grasp the whole. Hernan Ponce, therefore, had been anxious to steer clear of the port of Havana and to pursue his voyage, and had made large offers to the mariners to induce them to keep to sea, but tempestuous weather had absolutely driven them into port. No sooner did Hernando De Soto hear of the arrival of his ancient comrade and partner, than he sent persons on board to compliment and congratulate him

upon his arrival, and to invite him on shore to share with him his house, his possessions, and all his honours and commands. The message he followed up in person, repeating all his congratulations and offers.

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

No sooner had the mariners landed the coffers, and conveyed them some distance from the boat, than a party of sentinels rushed out from a thicket,

put them to flight, and seized upon the treasure, which they conveyed in safety to the Governor.

The confusion and distress of Hernan Ponce, at thus losing his beloved treasure by a measure intended for its safety, may easily be imagined. He landed the next day with a sorrowful countenance, and took up his abode with De Soto.

In the course of their private conversation, he soon revealed the misfortune of the preceding night. De Soto had been waiting for the occasion, and now broke forth indignantly, reproaching him with having attempted to conceal his treasures, through want of faith in his justice and friendship. To show how groundless had been his distrust, he now ordered the coffers to be brought in, and requested him to open them and see if any thing were missing.

He furthermore declared that all he had expended in his present undertaking, and all the titles, commands, and privileges he had obtained from the crown, he had considered as for their mutual benefit, according to their terms of co-partnership and fraternity; as he could prove by witnesses then with him, who had been present at the execution of the writings. He now offered, whether he chose to accompany him in his conquest or not, to share with him his titles and commands, or to yield to him such of them as he might prefer.

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

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

The heart of Hernan Ponce, however, rested with his money bags, and delighted not in these

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

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

and adjusted, which she offered immediately to attend to, in the name of her husband.

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

* Hist. of Florida per el Inca. Lib. 1. c. 14, 15.

CHAPTER VII.

The armament sets sail from Cuba. Arrival and landing in Florida. Exploit of Vasco Porcallo. They come upon the first traces of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

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

The prevalence of contrary winds kept the squadron tossing about, for several days, in the Gulf of Mexico. At length, on Whitsunday, the twenty fifth day of May, they arrived at the mouth of a deep bay, to which, in honour of the day, De Soto gave the name of Espiritu Santo, which it still retains.

They had scarce arrived on the coast, when they beheld bale fires blazing along the shores, and columns of smoke rising in different directions. It was evident the natives had taken the alarm, and were summoning their warriors to assemble. De Soto was cautious, therefore, as to debarking his troops, and remained several days on board; sounding the harbour, and seeking a secure landing place. In the mean time a boat was sent on shore to procure grass for the horses. The sailors brought off also, a quantity of green grapes, resembling those of Spain, which had been found growing wild in the woods. They were of a kind different from any that the Spaniards had seen either in Mexico or Peru, and they regarded them with exultation as proofs of a fruitful and pleasant country.

At length, on the last day of the month, a detachment of three hundred soldiers were landed, and took formal possession of the country, in name of Charles V. Not a single Indian was to be seen, and the troops remained all night on shore, in a state of careless security. Towards the dawn of day, however, an immense number of savages broke suddenly upon them with deafening yells; several of the Spaniards were wounded with arrows, many were seized with panic, as new levied troops are apt to be in their first encounter, especially

when in a strange land and assailed by strange foes. They retreated to the edge of the sea in great confusion, crowding together so as to prevent each other from fighting to advantage, and sounding the alarm with drum and trumpet.

The din of the tumult was heard on board the fleet. The late seemingly lifeless hulks were immediately as busy as a hive of bees, when their republic is invaded : armour was buckled on in haste, and a reinforcement quickly landed. The Lieutenant General Vasco Porcallo, with seven horsemen, took the lead, not a little pleased with having so early an opportunity of displaying his prowess. Dashing his spurs into his horse, and brandishing his lance, he charged upon the savages, who made but slight resistance, and fled. He pursued them for some distance, and then returned highly elated with this first snuff of battle.

Scarcely had he reached the camp, however, when his horse staggered under him and fell dead, having been wounded by an arrow in the course of the skirmish. The shaft had been sent with such force as to pass through the saddle and its housings, and to bury itself, one third of its length, between the ribs of the horse. Vasco Porcallo rose triumphant from his fall, vaunting that the first horse that

had fallen in this expedition was his, and his the first lance raised against the infidels.

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

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

In an opposite quarter of the village upon an artificial eminence, near the shore, so constructed as to serve as a fortress, stood the dwelling of the Cacique. Here the governor took up his residence, with his Lieutenant, the veteran Porcallo, and his camp master Luis de Moscoso. The other houses were converted into barracks for the troops, and store-houses for the provisions and ammunition brought on shore from the vessels. The trees and

bushes were cleared away, for the distance of a bow-shot round the village, so as to give room for the cavalry to act and to guard against sudden surprise in the night time. Sentinels also were placed at every point, and parties of horsemen patrolled the neighbourhood.

The governor at length succeeded in capturing a few straggling Indians, natives of the place, from whom he learned the cause of the fierce hostility of their countrymen, and their desertion of the village. Here it was that he first came upon the traces of his predecessor, Pamphilo de Narvaez, and unfortunately they were of a cruel character. Narvaez in his expedition to Florida had been bravely opposed by the Cacique of this village, whose name was Hirihigua.* He succeeded, at length, in winning his friendship, and a treaty was formed between them. Subsequently, however, Narvaez became enraged at the cacique for some unknown reason, and in a

* We give this name according to Garcilaso de la Vega: the Portuguese narrator calls the Cacique Ucita. These two authorities often differ as to Indian names. Sometimes they merely vary in the spelling, as is natural where the names were caught by ear, and did not originally exist in writing. At other times they differ entirely; one narrator having probably heard a village and province called by its proper and permanent name, the other by the name of its cacique. These discrepancies are common and unavoidable, in the narratives of adventurers among savage tribes,

transport of passion had ordered his nose to be cut off, and his mother to be torn to pieces by dogs. These merciless wrongs, as may well be supposed, had filled the heart of Hirrihigua with the bitterest hatred of the white men.

De Soto, having heard this story, endeavoured to appease the cacique and to gain his friendship. For this purpose, he treated his subjects, whom he had captured, in the kindest manner, and sent them, laden with presents, to seek their chieftain in his retreat, and invite him to amicable intercourse. The Cacique was indignant at his subjects for daring to bring him messages from a race who had injured and insulted him so deeply. "I want none of their speeches nor promises," said he, bitterly, "bring me their heads, and I will receive them joyfully."

De Soto was reluctant to leave so powerful a foe between himself and his ships, and endeavoured, by repeated envoys to soften the animosity of the ca-

whose language is unwritten and but little understood. Where irreconcilable differences occur, we are generally inclined to follow the Inca, as he received his facts from three different members of the expedition, one a gentleman of rank, the other two, private soldiers; whereas the Portuguese account has merely the authority of a single witness. The account of the transactions on landing are chiefly taken from the Inca, and occasionally from the Portuguese Narrative.

cique: but every message only provoked a more bitter and scornful reply.

While thus negotiating with this vindictive savage, he received intelligence that there was a Spaniard, a survivor of the followers of Pamphilo de Narvaez, living under the protection of a neighbouring Cacique called Mucozo.* To obtain the services of this Spaniard was now a matter of great moment, for, having lived upwards of ten years in the country, and become acquainted with the language and customs of the natives, he was well fitted to act as guide, interpreter, and negotiator. He accordingly despatched the brave and trusty Baltasar de Gallegos, the chief Alguazil, at the head of sixty lances, and under the guidance of a native Indian, on an embassy to the Cacique Mucozo, to obtain the release of the Spaniard, and to invite the chieftain to the camp, with assurances of great friendship and munificent rewards.

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

* Mocosó. Portuguese Narrative.

CHAPTER VIII.

Story of Juan Ortiz.

SHORTLY after Pamphilo de Narvaez had left the village of Hirrihigua on his disastrous march into the interior, a small vessel of his fleet which was in quest of him, put into the bay of Espiritu Santo. Anchoring before the town, they saw a few Indians on the shore, who made signs for them to land, pointing to a letter in the end of a cleft reed, stuck in the ground. The Spaniards supposed, and probably with justice, that it was a letter of instruction left by Narvaez, giving information of his movements and destination. They made signs for the Indians to bring it to them. The latter, however, refused, but getting into a canoe came on board, where four of them offered to remain as hostages for such Spaniards as chose to go on shore for the letter. Upon this four Spaniards stepped into the canoe and were swiftly conveyed to shore. The moment they landed, a multitude of savages rushed out of the village and surrounded them, and, at the same time, the hostages on board plunged into the sea and

swam on shore. The crew of the vessel, seeing the number of the enemy, and dreading some further mishap, made sail with all haste, abandoning their luckless comrades to their fate.*

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

Juan Ortiz, a youth, scarce eighteen years of age, of a noble family of Seville, was the fourth victim. As they were leading him forth, his extreme youth touched with compassion the hearts of the wife and

* Garcilaso de la Vega. Part 1. L. 2. c. 1.

Portuguese Narrative, c. 9.

Herrera. D. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

daughters of the Cacique, who interceded in his favour.

The Cacique listened to their importunities, and granted for the present the life of Ortiz;—but a wretched life did he lead. From morning until evening he was employed in bringing wood and water, and was allowed but little sleep and scanty food. Not a day passed that he was not beaten. On festivals he was an object of barbarous amusement to the Cacique, who would oblige him to run, from sunrise until sunset, in the public square of the village, where his companions had met their untimely end; Indians being stationed with bows and arrows, to shoot him, should he halt one moment. When the day was spent, the unfortunate youth lay stretched on the hard floor of the hut, more dead than alive. At such times the wife and daughters of the Cacique would come to him privately with food and clothing, and by their kind treatment his life was preserved.

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

The cries and shrieks of the poor youth reached his female protectors, and their entreaties were once

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

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

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

While watching thus one long wearisome night, sleep overpowered him towards morning. He was awakened by the falling lid of one of the chests, and, running to it found it empty. It had contained the body of an infant recently deceased, the child of an Indian of great note.

Ortiz doubted not some animal had dragged it

away, and immediately set out in pursuit. After wandering for some time, he heard, a short distance within the woods, a noise like that of a dog gnawing bones. Warily drawing near to the spot, he dimly perceived an animal among the bushes, and invoking succour from on high, let fly an arrow at it. The thick and tangled underwood prevented his seeing the effect of his shot, but as the animal did not stir he flattered himself that it had been fatal; with this hope he waited until the day dawned, when he beheld his victim, a huge animal of the panther kind,* lying dead, the arrow having passed through his entrails and cleft his heart.

Gathering together the mangled remains of the infant, and replacing them in the coffin, Ortiz dragged his victim in triumph to the village, with the arrow still in his body. The exploit gained him credit with the old hunters, and for some time softened even the ferocity of the Cacique. The resentment of the latter, however, for the wrongs he had suffered from white men, was too bitter to be appeased. Some time after, his eldest daughter came to Ortiz, and warned him that her father had determined to sacrifice him at the next festival, which was just at hand, and that the influence of her mo-

* The Inca calls this animal a Lion, as the Spanish discoverers were prone to call animals of the Tiger or Panther kind.

ther, her sisters and herself would no longer avail him. She wished him, therefore, to take refuge with a neighbouring Cacique named Mucozo, who loved her and sought her in marriage, and who, for her sake, would befriend him. "This very night at midnight" said the kind-hearted maiden, "at the northern extremity of the village you will find a trusty friend who will guide you to a bridge, about two leagues hence; on arriving there, you must send him back, that he may reach home before the morning dawn, to avoid suspicion—for well he knows that this bold act, in daring to assist you, may bring down destruction upon us both. Six leagues further on, you will come to the village of Mucozo—tell him that I have sent you, and expect him to befriend you in your extremity—I know he will do it—go, and may your God protect you!" Ortiz threw himself at the feet of his generous protectress and poured out his acknowledgments for the kindness she had always shown him. The Indian guide was at the place appointed, and they left the village without alarming the warlike savages. When they came to the bridge, Ortiz sent back the guide, in obedience to the injunction of his mistress, and, continuing his flight, found himself, by break of day, on the banks of a small stream near the village of Mucozo.

Looking cautiously round, hé espied two Indians fishing. As he was unacquainted with their language, and could not explain the cause of his coming, he was in dread lest they should take him for an enemy and kill him. He, therefore, ran swiftly to the place where they had deposited their weapons and seized upon them. The savages fled to the village without attending to his assurances of friendly intention. The inhabitants sallied out armed with bows and arrows, and made show as though they would attack him. Ortiz fixed an arrow in his bow and prepared for defence, but cried out at the same moment, that he came not as an enemy but as an ambassador from a female Cacique to their chief. Fortunately one present understood him, and interpreted his words. On this the Indians unbent their bows, and returning with him to their village, presented him to Mucozo. The latter, a youthful chieftain, of a graceful form and handsome countenance, received Ortiz kindly for the sake of her who had sent him ; but, on further acquaintance, became attached to him for his own merits, treating him with the affection of a brother.

Hirrihigua soon heard where the fugitive had taken refuge, and demanded several times that he should be delivered up ; Mucozo as often declined ; considering himself bound by the laws of honour and

hospitality to protect him. Hirrihigua then employed as mediator another Cacique, a brother-in-law of Mucozo, by the name of Urribarracuxi, who went in person to demand Ortiz. The generous Mucozo, however, indignantly refused to deliver up to a cruel enemy, the poor fugitive who had come recommended to his protection, and treated the very request as a stain upon his honour. The two Caciques continued their importunities, but the high minded savage remained faithful to his guest, though in maintaining inviolate the sacred rites of hospitality, he lost the friendship of his brother-in-law, and forfeited the hand of her he tenderly loved, the beautiful daughter of Hirrihigua.

CHAPTER IX.

Baltazar de Gallegos despatched in search of Juan Ortiz. The Cacique Mucozo, and afterwards his mother, visit the Spanish camp.

1539. AT this juncture tidings reached Mucozo of the arrival of De Soto and his troops at the village of Hirrihigua, and that it was their intention to conquer the country. The cacique, alarmed at this intelligence, addressed himself to Ortiz. "You well know," said he, "what I have done for you; that I have sheltered you when friendless, and have chosen rather to fall into disgrace with my relations and neighbours, than deliver you into the hands of your enemies. This I have done without thought or hope of reward, but the time has come when you can repay me for my friendship. Go to the chieftain of this army of white men that has arrived—represent to him the asylum I have extended to you, and which, in like case, I would have afforded to any of your countrymen—entreat him, in return, not to lay waste my small territory, and assure him that I and mine are ready to devote ourselves to his service."

Ortiz gladly departed on the mission, accompa-

nied by fifty chosen warriors. It happened that about the same time Baltazar de Gallegos had been despatched, as has been already mentioned, on his embassy to Mucozo.

As Ortiz and his Indian escort, therefore, were on their way to the village of Hirrihigua, they came in sight of Baltazar, and his band of lancers, glistening at a distance, in the midst of a verdant plain, skirted by a wood.

The Indians would have concealed themselves in the forest, until the Christians could be informed that they were friends; but Ortiz slighted their advice, insisting that his countrymen would at once recognise him: not reflecting that in appearance he was in no wise different from his savage companions, being like them almost naked, his body browned by exposure to the sun, his arms painted, a quiver at his back, a bow and arrow in his hand, and his head adorned with feathers.

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

The Indians seeing their furious approach, fled terrified to the wood. One of their number, however, being bewildered, or possessing more courage

than the rest, loitered behind. He was pursued by a Spaniard, and before he could attain the shelter of the adjacent thicket, was overtaken by the trooper's lance. Juan Ortiz was assaulted by Alvaro Nieto, one of the stoutest and boldest troopers in the army, who charged upon him full tilt with his lance. Ortiz parried the thrust with his bow, running at the same time, and leaping from side to side with great agility to avoid the horse, crying out lustily Xivilla, Xivilla—meaning Seville, Seville; and making the sign of the cross with his arm and bow, to signify that he was a Christian.

Alvaro Nieto hearing him cry out Xivilla, demanded of him whether he was Juan Ortiz. On his replying in the affirmative, he seized him by the arm, lifted him upon the croup of his saddle, and scoured away with him over the plain to present him to Baltazar de Gallegos. The captain received him with great joy, and ordered his troopers to be immediately recalled, for they were beating up the entangled woods, hunting the poor Indians like so many deer.

Ortiz himself went into the forest and called with a loud voice to the Indians, to come out of the thickets and fear nothing. Many of them, however, were panic-struck and fled back to their village, to acquaint Mucozo with what had happened. Others

joined Ortiz in small parties, upbraiding him with his rashness, but when they found one of their people wounded, they were so exasperated, that they would have laid violent hands upon him had not the Spaniards been present.

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

The night was already far advanced when Baltazar de Gallegos and his band reached the camp. When the governor heard the tramp of their horse, he was filled with alarm, suspecting some mischance had befallen them, as he did not look for them before the expiration of three days. His apprehensions, however, were soon turned to rejoicing. He praised Gallegos and his men for the skill and success of their expedition, and received Ortiz as his own son, sympathizing with him in his past sufferings, presenting him with a suit of clothes, arms, and

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

a good horse.* The Indians who accompanied them, he treated with every mark of kindness, and ordered the wounded savage to be carefully attended. He then despatched two of the natives to Mucozo, thanking him for his past kindness to Ortiz, accepting his proffers of friendship, and inviting him to visit the camp. Not an eye was closed this night, but one and all joined in the revelry which welcomed the liberation of poor Ortiz.

On the third day after the envoys had been despatched, the cacique Mucozo arrived, accompanied by his warriors. He kissed the hands of the Governor with great veneration, saluted each one of the officers, and made a slight obeisance to the privates. De Soto received him with affectionate courtesy, and assured him that his people would be ever grateful to him for all his past kindnesses. "What I have done unto Ortiz," said Mucozo, "is but little indeed; he came commended to me, and threw himself upon my protection. There is a law of our tribe, which forbids our betraying a fugitive who asks of us an asylum. But his own virtue and dauntless courage entitled him to all the respect which was shown him. That I have pleased your people, I rejoice exceedingly, and by devoting my-

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

self, henceforth, to their service, I hope to merit their esteem." These words were uttered with so much grace, his bearing was so noble and lofty, and his manner was so full of kindness, that De Soto and his officers were touched, and made him presents for himself and his warriors.

Two days afterwards came the mother of Mucozo, overwhelmed with grief because her son was in the power of the Christians. She never would have consented to his visiting the army, but was absent at the time of his departure. She passionately entreated the governor to deliver up her son, and not serve him as Narvaez had served Hirrihigua. "He is young," said she, "only give him his liberty, and take me, who am a poor old woman, and treat me as you please. I will bear any punishment for both." De Soto endeavoured to reassure her by expressions of gratitude and friendship for her son and herself; but though she remained three days in the camp, and was treated by every one with respect and kindness, she continued anxious and suspicious. She ate at the table of the governor, but would partake of nothing until Ortiz had tasted it; fearing she might be poisoned. "How is this," said a Spaniard to her, "that you have now so great a fear of death, you who offered to die for your son?"

"I have the same love of life as other mortals," re-

plied she, "but most willingly would I lose it to save a son, who is far dearer to me than life itself!"

Even when assured of the perfect liberty of Mucozo, and that he only remained for a time with the Spaniards through choice, because they were young braves like himself, she was but poorly comforted, and departed sorrowing for her home. On parting, she took Juan Ortiz aside, and besought him to liberate Mucozo, inasmuch as he had saved him from the vengeful hands of Hirrihigua.

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

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

CHAPTER X.

The Governor endeavours to gain the friendship of the stern Cacique of Hirrihigua—Gallegos despatched on an expedition to the village of Urribarracaxi—he hears of a region to the westward abounding in gold.

1739. WHILE these things were passing in the camp, the provisions and munitions were landed from the caravels, and stored away in the village of Hirrihigua. The Adelantado, following the example of Cortez and other renowned captains, despatched seven of the largest vessels to the Havana, in order that his followers might lose all hope of leaving the country, retaining only a caravel and two brigantines to keep command of the sea coast and of the bay.* He appointed Pedro Calderon to the command of this important post. He was a hardy veteran, nursed in a rough school, amid camps and battle scenes, and had served in his youth under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova.

* Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

De Soto left no means untried to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua, being aware that the example of this powerful chieftain would have great sway with the neighbouring Caciques. Accordingly, whenever the troopers, in foraging the adjacent country, captured a vassal of this Cacique, he instantly sent him home loaded with presents and kind messages, urging Hirrihigua to accept his proffered amity, and promising every reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon him by Pamphilo de Narvaez. These wrongs, however, were too deep to be easily obliterated from the stern bosom of the savage chieftain. The only reply he deigned to give was, "The memory of my injuries forbid my sending a kind answer, and a harsh one your courtesy will not allow me to return." Still these constant and unwearied exertions of De Soto in some measure mitigated the deadly rancour of the Cacique against the Spaniards.

The Governor made many inquiries of Ortiz respecting the country, and whether there was any region abounding in gold and silver. Ortiz knew of no such place, and could yield but little information. When with Hirrihigua he had been closely watched, and not allowed to wander: and although while dwelling with Mucozo he had perfect liberty, yet he dared not venture far, through fear of being waylaid

by his enemies. He had heard much, however, of a Cacique named Urribarracaxi, whose village was thirty leagues distant, who was the most powerful chieftain of the country. To him Mucozo, Hirrihigua, and all the other Caciques of the coast paid tribute, and his territories were far more fertile and abundant than those nearer the sea.*

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

* Portuguese Relation, c. 9. The name of the Cacique in the Portuguese Narrative is Paracoxi. We follow the Inca.

their amicable intentions, he gladly furnished them with an Indian for the purpose, who had been a fast friend of Juan Ortiz.

In their march thus far into the interior they had been occasionally impeded by morasses, which, however, became less frequent the farther they went from the sea. They observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as Walnut, Oak, Mulberry, Plumb, Pine, and Evergreen Oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

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

* Portuguese Narrative. c. 10.

CHAPTER XI.

The expedition of the veteran Vasco Porcallo in quest of the Cacique Hirrihigua, and how he fared in a swamp.

1539. AFTER the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had despatched Gallegos on his exploring expedition, he received intelligence that the Cacique Hirrihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. He was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by the Lieutenant-General, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploit, and was withal, a little vainglorious. He thought this a fitting opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honour of capturing this fugitive, yet formidable Cacique. The enterprise being granted to him, he prepared for it in his usual style ; for he was fond of parade, and generous in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied forth from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering ar-

mour, vaunting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.*

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence by his spies of the armed force, marching in quest of him. The messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirrihigua, not to proceed any farther, as the Cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, he could not get to him; whereas he and his troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses and tangled forests, which he would have to pass. The Cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude, nor courtesy dictated the message; so he ordered the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced, messenger after messenger encountered him, all repeating the warning to return, and they at length became so frequent as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warn-

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

ed to return, the more obstinately did the stout hearted, and hot headed cavalier persist in advancing ; taking every thing by contrary, and judging of the panic of the Cacique, by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might take to flight, and escape him. He spurred on hotly, therefore, with his troops until they arrived at a vast and dismal morass.

Here his men perceived the truth of the warnings they had received, and began to remonstrate about the difficulty and danger of attempting this morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle in this enterprise, to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering ; but, being an old soldier, he knew the effect in time of difficulty, of setting an example ; so, putting spurs to his horse, he dashed forward, and his men followed him pell mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep miry place, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the Lieutenant-General was imminent ; the horse had fallen upon one of his legs so as to pin him down, while the weight of his armour contributed to sink him in the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation, nor could any one come to their aid : being in a perfect quagmire, where all who entered would be exposed to like peril.

At length, with infinite difficulty, the worthy cavalier extricated himself and his steed from this dismal bog, and landed once more on firm ground, covered with mud and mire. All his vainglory was at an end, he was out of humour with himself, and felt mortified in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous and friendly messages, and his vainglorious enterprise had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

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

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled and bemired,

and totally crest fallen, rode along in crusty and querulous, yet half whimsical humour, muttering his fancies to himself, and ejaculating, in a broken manner, the hard Indian names, with an occasional curse upon them for their ruggedness. "Hurri-harri! Hurri-higa! Burra-coxa! Hurri-harri—the devil take a country where the great men have such infamous names! a fine commencement this! promising omens of future luck! Glorious middles and ends to be augured from such beginnings!—Well, let those work for food and fame who are in need of them. For my part, I have riches and honour enough to last for the rest of my life, and to leave behind me."

In this moody way, the worthy Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire which he had caught from the young sparks of the army, and which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, had been as suddenly extinguished. His only thought now, was, how to get rid of his command of Lieutenant General, and to get safe back to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The Governor granted it with the same promptness and grace, with

which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover furnished him with the galliot *San Anton*, to convoy him to the island.

The worthy veteran now set to work as eagerly to get out of the expedition, as he had done to enter upon it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed; but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vaingloriously, his magnificent spirit broke forth. He made gifts to the right and left, dividing among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so lavishly and ostentatiously provided; and he gave for the use of the army all the ample store of provisions and munitions which he had brought for the use of himself and his retinue. This done, he bade farewell to campaigning, and set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so galliard a spirit should have burnt out so soon.

The only one that remained behind of the train of Vasco Porcallo, was his natural son, named Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, whom he had by an Indian woman, in Cuba, and with whom he left two horses and arms, and other necessaries. This youth throughout this expedition, conducted himself as a

good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude on all occasions.*

* The Inca. P. 1, L. 2, c. 11.

CHAPTER XII.

De Soto leaves Pedro Calderon with a garrison in Hirrihigua and sets out on his march into the interior—the difficulties he encountered—Gonzalo Silvestre sent back with a message to Calderon.

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

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

Satisfied from the relation given by these men that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the Governor issued orders for every one to prepare to march on the fourth day. In the mean time he despatched Gonzalo Silvestre, with twenty horsemen, to notify Baltazar de Gallegos of his intended march to join him.

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

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

Having made all these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet Captain, De Soto set out on the appointed day, with his main force, from the Bay of Espiritu Santo and the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous and difficult task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armour and

with all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to hardships and dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to all which most of them were entirely unaccustomed.

As a leading object with the Governor, also, was to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these are particularly noted three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country when he should settle, having been found the most advantageous stock for the sustenance of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them to the line of march, and guard them in traversing the swamps and rivers.

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

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

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

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

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were

sent forth in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent the runners ahead to explore their route. The latter returned the next day, declaring that they could not proceed farther on account of the many bogs made by streams which ran out of the great morass and inundated the country. Upon this the Governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing, therefore, one hundred horse and as many foot soldiers, he left the rest of the army where they were, with the Camp-Master-General, Luis de Moscoso, and re-crossing the great swamp, he travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners at different distances, to seek for some outlet.

During the three days, the Indians incessantly sallied forth from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharging their arrows at the Spaniards and then retreating to their thickets. Some, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops into difficult passes, and places where the Indians were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose the dogs, who killed four of them. Upon this, an Indian, fearing a similar fate,

offered to guide them surely, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mud, but where they had to proceed for the distance of a league breast high in water, until they came to the mid channel, where, for a hundred yards, it was too deep to be forded. Here the Indians had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two large trees into the water; and, where they did not unite, the space was supplied by logs tied to each other, with poles across them. By this same bridge Pamphilo de Narvaez had passed, ten years before, with his unfortunate army.

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

The two soldiers set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labour, several canoes with Indians darted forth from among the rushes, and galled the workmen by a flight of arrows. The two half-breeds plunged headlong from the bridge, swam under the water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the water, the force of the ar-

rows was broken and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and at a short distance above they discovered a very good pass for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the Governor called to him Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, and the more work you will have in consequence, for we have to assign to you the most difficult tasks that occur. It is important to our lives and the success of our enterprise, that you return this night to the camp, and tell Luis de Moscoso to follow us with all the army; and as for you, that he immediately despatch you to us with provisions, to sustain us until we find food: for our need you well know is great. And that you may return with more safety than you go, tell him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I will wait for you in this same place until to-morrow night, so return without delay. The road may seem long and difficult to you, and the time short, but I know to whom I entrust the undertaking. That you may not go alone, take with you the companion you like best; and be off at once, for you should be at the camp before day breaks;

lest, should the day dawn before you have passed the swamp, the Indians capture and kill you."

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

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

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

CHAPTER XIII.

The perilous journey of Gonzalo Silvestre, and his friend, Juan Lopez.

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

They galloped rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being clear, free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. No sooner, however, had they crossed this open tract, than their dangers and difficulties began; for, being ignorant of the country, they were obliged to trace back step by step, the track they had made three days previous, through bog and brake, brambles and forest, and across a labyrinth of streams meandering from the great morass: guiding themselves by the land marks they had noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome twilight journey, they were aided by the instinct of the horses. These sagacious animals,

as if possessed of understandings, traced the road by which they had come, and like spaniels or setter dogs, thrust their noses along the ground to discover the track. Their riders did not at first understand their intention, and checked them with the reins to raise their heads. Did they at any time lose the track, on finding it again the steeds would puff and snort, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard, by the savages.*

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when he lowered his head to seek the track, gave him his will, without attempting to guide him. Encountering these difficulties and many others more easily to be imagined than

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

Garcilaso de la Vega. P. 1, L. 2, c. 14.

written, these two daring youths travelled all night, without any road, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as for three days they had not been unsaddled, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of huge fires, around which the savages were seen stretched in wild and fantastic groups, some capering and singing, and making the silent forests ring with their hideous yells, and howlings. These were probably celebrating some of their feasts with war dances. The deafening din they raised was the safeguard of the two Spaniards, as it prevented the savages noticing the clamorous barking of their dogs, and hearing the trampling of the horses as they passed.*

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

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

“Dismount then, and sleep if you please,” said Silvestre, “since you had rather run the risk of being butchered than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have come, we must be near the pass of the morass, and cross it we must before dawn; for, if day finds us in this place our death is certain.”

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

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed and Silvestre declared that he found himself suddenly in broad daylight, without having perceived it dawn; it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the day so near, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke, were insufficient, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, “Look what your sleeping has brought upon us: see, the daylight which we dreaded has overtaken us, and we have now no escape from our enemies!”

Juan Lopez, roused at last by this summary pro-

cess, sprang into his saddle, and they set off at a hand gallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that notwithstanding past fatigue, they were yet in spirit. The light revealed the two cavaliers to the Indians, who set up yells and howlings, that seemed to arise from every part of the morass, accompanied by a frightful din, and clangour of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be made, over an expanse of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting forth from among thickets and canebrakes, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after passing so many on land; but, knowing that in courage alone consisted their safety, they dashed boldly into it; seeking to pass it with all speed. Throughout the whole distance, they were beset by the Indians, who discharged clouds of arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armour, and their horses were nearly covered with the water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though the cavaliers declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the water seemed strewed with arrows.

The Indians still continued to pursue them on

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

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

CHAPTER XIV.

Thirty lances sally forth with supplies for the Governor. The haughty speech of the Cacique Acuera.

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

The thirty horse passed the morass without opposition from the Indians, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed they could not arrive at the place at which the Governor had promised to await them, until two hours after night fall, when, to their great chagrin, they found

the late camping ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the General, the little band made arrangements for passing the night in this perilous situation. Being exposed to the attacks of hordes of lurking savages, constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One mounted and armed for action, went the rounds the first third of the night; another band kept watch at the encampment, with their horses at hand, saddled and bridled and ready to be mounted. The third detachment merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, they lightened their toils, and the night passed away without molestation from any enemy.

As soon as the day dawned they sought the track of the General and his troop, and following it came to the second pass of the morass with the Indian bridge. Here, having to advance for a great distance, breast high in water, they thought themselves in imminent peril from the Indians, who might hover about them in their canoes and assail them with flights of arrows: to their great joy, however, they accomplished the whole passage without any assault. This capricious conduct of the savages, one

day attacking with blood-thirsty fury, and the next keeping entirely out of sight, occurred repeatedly throughout the whole of this expedition, and has been sometimes attributed to superstitious notions and observances in their warfare.

Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three and four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the Governor encamped, who received them joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his valuable services. He excused himself for not having waited at the appointed place, by alleging the intolerable hunger of the troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of the Indians.

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

The fertile province in which the army was encamped, was twenty leagues to the north of that of

Urribarracaxi, and was ruled by a Cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to him representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury in war, and confer benefits in peace; their disposition to befriend the natives, and that their only object was, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to his Sovereign the powerful Emperor and King of Castile. He invited the Cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview to arrange a peaceful intercourse.

The Cacique returned a haughty and vaunting reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past poisoned our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder in cold blood the defenceless. No, with such a people I want no peace, no friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all the boon I ask. You boast yourselves valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and this, too, you shall one day prove, for I have sworn to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders. Not openly in the battle field—though

even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, and ambush, and midnight surprisal.”

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the Emperor, he replied: “I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who will submit to the yoke of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we choose death, yes, a hundred deaths, before the loss of our liberty, and the subjugation of our country!”

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

In this province the army remained twenty days, recruiting from the fatigue and privation of the past journey. During this time the Governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, who returned with favourable reports.

The Indians, during this time, were not asleep nor idle. To fulfil the bravadoes of their Cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot down and instantly beheaded; so

that if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

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

Notwithstanding their great vigilance during all this time, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for they were most prudent and wary in their waylayings.*

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 16.

Herrera. D. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

CHAPTER XV.

*The Governor arrives in the Province of Ocali.
Occurrences there.*

1539. FOR twenty days did the army repose in the Province of Acuera, during which time, De Soto permitted no injury to be done either to the hamlets and villages, or the fields of grain : they then broke up their encampment, and set out in search of another province, about twenty leagues to the north eastward, called Ocali,* the same of which Gallegos had heard, at the village of Urribarracaxi. Their way lay across a desert tract, about twelve leagues broad, interspersed with open forests of pine and other trees, free from underwood, through which the horsemen could ride at ease. They then traversed seven leagues of inhabited country, where dwellings were scattered about the fields and forests. At length they arrived at the principal village, called after the Cacique Ocali, which contained six hundred houses. The inhabitants, however,

* This name is spelt Cale by the Portuguese Narrator.

had abandoned it, and had fled with their effects to the forests.

This province, being further from the sea coast, was less cut up, and intersected by deep creeks and bays, which in other parts penetrated an immense distance into this low and level country, causing vast swamps and bogs, difficult and sometimes impossible to be passed. In some of the morasses they had traversed, the surface would appear like firm and dry land, yet on stepping upon it, it would tremble for twenty or thirty paces around, and on being trodden by horses would give way and plunge steed and rider into a suffocating quagmire.

Beside being more free from morasses, the province of Ocali was more populous and fruitful than the others; and this the Spaniards found to be the case, throughout this country, in proportion as the provinces were remote from the sea. What they chiefly suffered from throughout this whole expedition, was the great scarcity of animal food, as the natives did not raise domestic cattle; and, although deer and other game were abundant, the Indians only killed sufficient to supply their immediate wants.

The Spaniards took up their quarters in the village of Ocali, where they found vast quantities of maize, vegetables and various kinds of fruits. The

Governor sent three or four Indian messengers daily, to the Cacique Ocali, endeavouring, but in vain, to draw that chieftain from his retreat, with proffers of peace and friendship. With one of these messengers, there came to the camp four young Indian warriors, gaily decorated with many plumes, who manifested an eager curiosity to see the Spaniards, their dress, their arms, and above all, their horses. The Governor entertained them kindly, gave them presents, and ordered that a collation should be set before them.

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

A grey hound of uncommon sagacity, however, happened to be near; hearing the cry of the Indians, and seeing them run, he pursued them. Passing by the first whom he overtook, and likewise the second, and third, he sprang upon the shoulders of the foremost and pulled him to the ground; in the mean time the Indian who was nearest, passed on; but the dog leaving the one he held down, sprang upon the other, and secured him in the same way. In like manner he served the third and fourth; and

then kept running from one to the other pulling them down as fast as they rose, and barking so furiously, that the Indians were terrified and confounded, and the Spaniards were enabled to overtake and capture them. They were taken back to the camp and examined separately, for as they were armed, the Spaniards apprehended some treachery ; but, it appeared that their sudden flight was only by way of exploit to show their address and fleetness.

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

CHAPTER XVI.

The fate of the Greyhound.

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

Hard by the village ran a wide and deep river, with most precipitous banks. Notwithstanding it was the summer season, this river was too full of water to be fordable ; it was necessary, therefore, to construct a wooden bridge, over which the army might pass. De Soto having treated with the Cacique for a number of his subjects to aid in its construction ; they went forth one day to decide upon the spot where it should be erected. As they were walking along the bank, conferring on the subject, more than five hundred Indians suddenly started up from among the bushes and thickets, on the opposite bank of the river, crying out fiercely, " you want a bridge, do you ? merciless robbers ! but you will never see it built by our hands !" Thus shout-

ing, they let fly a volley of arrows towards the place where the Cacique and Governor were standing.

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

It happened that the greyhound already mentioned, was at hand, held in a leash by the governor's page. No sooner did he hear the yells and see the menacing actions of the Indians, than he was furious to get at them. In his struggles he drew the page along, threw him on the ground, and then breaking loose, plunged into the stream. The Spaniards called him back in vain. The Indians, knowing his valour and exploits, and the harm he had done to their countrymen, were glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves. They showered their arrows about him as he swam, and with such dexterous aim, that more than fifty struck him about the head and shoulders, which were above the water. Still the courageous animal kept on, and reached the land, but had scarcely left the water when he fell dead. His death was lamented by the Governor

and the army, as if it had been that of a brave warrior: for, he had been of signal service throughout the expedition, a vigilant guardian of the camp by night, and a fierce champion by day. He was one of a rare and renowned race of dogs, several of which were noted for their feats in the course of the Spanish discoveries and conquests.

CHAPTER XVII.

*The Spaniards enter the vast province of Vitachuco.
Their reception there.*

1539. DE SOTO saw that the chieftain Ocali, was but lightly esteemed by his subjects, who disobeyed his commands with impunity; and, thinking that the neighbouring Caciques might suppose that he was detained against his will, he gave him permission to go to his people and re-visit the camp whenever it pleased him. The Cacique gladly availed himself of this offer, but declared he only went in order to bring his subjects into more perfect submission to the governor, which accomplished, he would joyfully rejoin the Spaniards. With these and many similar professions, he departed; but never again showed his face in the camp.

Upon the departure of the Cacique, the Spaniards commenced constructing a bridge over the river. The work was superintended by one Francisco, a Genoese, the only shipwright in the army. He was likewise skilled in every kind of carpentering work, and by his art rendered incalculable services to the Spaniards throughout this expedition. Large planks

were thrown upon the water, and these tied together with strong cords, which they had brought with them for such emergencies ; crossing and fastening the planks with immense poles laid on top. It was of sufficient strength for the passage of both men and horses. Having captured thirty Indians to serve as guides, the Spaniards crossed the bridge and set forward on their march.

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

It was scarce daybreak on the first day, when the Governor and his advanced corps arrived at the village of Ochile. It contained fifty large and strong dwellings, being a frontier post, fortified

against the adjacent provinces, with which it appeared this country was embroiled in warfare.

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

The Cacique had with him a guard of his principal warriors, and many others had hastened to his defence. He would have sallied forth and made battle, but the Spaniards had possession of the doors, and threatened to fire the house. At length, by sun rise, he was persuaded through the mediation of Indian prisoners and interpreters, to yield to the superior power of the Spaniards, and accept their proffered friendship. The Governor received him kindly, but kept him with him, while at the same time he set at liberty all the other prisoners, ordering his soldiers to treat them in the most friendly manner.

The Governor, however, did not feel himself secure. The neighbourhood was populous; the Indians seeing the small number of his band, might ga-

ther together, and attempt a rescue of their Cacique. Taking that chieftain with him, therefore, and a number of his savage warriors, who adhered to his fortunes, the Governor marched his band out of the village, and returned in quest of the main body of his troops; these he found encamped at three leagues distance, full of anxiety on account of his absence.

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

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

The elder brother, however, who was much the most powerful of the three, made no reply to the message, but detained the envoys by whom it was sent. The two brothers, by the persuasion of De

Soto, sent again other messengers with still more urgent counsel and entreaties. They represented the invincible power of the Spaniards, who were children of the sun and moon, their gods—that they had come from the remote region, where the sun rises, and withal, that they had with them animals called Horses, so fleet, courageous, and powerful, that it was impossible to escape them by flight, or resist them by force.

The answer of Vitachuco is given at length by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; though he quotes it from memory, after a lapse of years; and declares that he cannot vouch for its being arranged exactly in the order in which it was declared, or that it was the whole of what was said; but, he pledges his word that, as far as it goes, it is truly the message of the Cacique. He declares that if the whole could be written, as recounted by the envoys, none of the knights that the divine Ariosto or his predecessor, the illustrious and enamoured Count Matheo Maria Boyardo, have introduced in their works, could equal in haughty spirit and extravagant bravado, this savage chieftain. Without claiming for it all the praise here, so liberally awarded by this ancient author, still it shows the fiery spirit of this wild warrior, whose gallant efforts were, alas! of but little avail against the resistless might of the Spanish invader.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Haughty message of the Cacique Vitachuco.

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

land plundering and destroying; taking the wives and daughters of others instead of bringing their own with them; and, like mere vagabonds, maintaining themselves by the laborious toil and sweating brow of others? Were they virtuous, as you represent, they never would have left their own country, since there they might have practised their virtues, planting and cultivating the earth, maintaining themselves without prejudice to others or injury to themselves; instead of roving about the world committing robberies and murders, having neither the shame of men nor the fear of God before them.

Warn them not to enter into my dominions, for I vow that, as valiant as they may be, if they dare to put foot upon my soil, they shall never go out of my land alive—the whole race will I exterminate!"*

This was the first reply of the fierce Vitachuco; but he sent many others, insomuch that every day there arrived two or three Indians, sounding always a trumpet, and bringing greater bravadoes and menaces than the last. The Cacique Vitachuco thought to terrify them by the various and hideous supernatural deaths, with which he menaced them. At one time he threatened, that the moment they entered his province, the earth should open and

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

swallow them ; that the hills by which the Spaniards would have to travel, should join together and bury them alive. Again, the trees of the forest through which they had to pass, were to be blown down and crush them ; flights of birds were to hover over and pounce upon them, with corroding poison in their beaks. And again, that he would have the waters, herbs, trees, and even the air poisoned, in such a manner that neither horse nor rider, man nor beast, could escape with life ; making an example of them to all who should henceforth dare to invade his territory.

These extravagancies provoked the laughter of the Spaniards, who considered them the empty bravadoes of a vapouring spirit ; but the deeds of the Cacique afterwards showed that they were the furious wishes and conceptions of a proud warrior ; who, it is probable, was promised all these miracles in his favour by some Indian prophet.

These and many other messages arrived during eight days that were spent by the Governor in travelling about the domains of the two brothers, who did every thing in their power to gratify the Spaniards. At length the two brothers themselves departed on a mission to Vitachuco. The fierce chieftain pretended to be at length won by their persuasions, and agreed to enter into friendly inter-

course with the strangers ; but he wished first to know how many days they would be in his domains, what quantity of provisions they would require when they departed, and what other things would be necessary for their journey.

The two brothers sent an envoy to De Soto with this message, who replied, that they would not sojourn in the territory of Vitachuco longer than he desired them to remain, nor did they wish any more provisions than he saw fit to give them, neither had they need of any thing besides his friendship.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Cacique Vitachuco dissembles—his plot to destroy the Spaniards.

1539. THE chieftain, Vitachuco, pretended to be well contented with the reply of the Governor, a day was appointed for their meeting, and the Cacique ordered an abundant supply of provisions for the troops and horses to be brought from all parts of his domains, and deposited in the chief village.

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

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

Vitachuco was about thirty-five years of age, of very good stature, and strongly formed, as the Indians of Florida generally were, and evinced in his countenance the bravery of his spirit.

The ensuing day the Spaniards entered in order of battle, into the principal village, bearing the same name as the Cacique. It consisted of two hundred houses, large and strong, besides many others of smaller size which were in the suburbs. The Governor and his body guards and servants, together with the three brother Caciques, lodged in the house of Vitachuco, as it was of ample size to accommodate them all.

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

After their departure, Vitachuco redoubled his courtesy and kindness to the Spaniards, and seemed as if he thought he could not do enough to serve and gratify them. Five days only had elapsed, however, when Juan Ortiz came to the Governor and informed him of a perfidious plot devised by the Cacique, and which had been revealed to him by four of the Indian interpreters. He had selected several

thousand of his bravest warriors, and had ordered them to conceal their weapons in a thicket near to the village, and to appear at all times unarmed, so as to throw the Spaniards off their guard. On an appointed day he was to invite the Governor to go forth and see a general muster of his subjects, drawn up in battle array, though without weapons, that he might know what a number of Indian allies he had at his command for his future conquests.

Trusting that the Governor, from the amity existing between them, would go forth carelessly and alone, a dozen of the fiercest and most powerful Indians were suddenly to seize him and bear him into the midst of their warriors; who, seizing their arms, were to attack the Spaniards in their camp. In this way, between the surprise of the sudden assault, and the dismay at the capture of their General, he trusted to have an easy conquest: in which case, he intended to make good his extravagant menaces, and inflict on his prisoners all kinds of strange, cruel, and tormenting deaths.

The Adelantado having learnt the perfidy of the Cacique, and having consulted with his Captains, it was determined that the best and most justifiable plan would be, to take Vitachuco in the same way that he intended to take the Governor; so that he

would thus fall into his own snare. For that purpose, twelve of the stoutest soldiers were selected, to be near the Governor at the time he should go forth to view the Indian army, and at a certain signal, were to seize upon the Cacique. These things being concerted in secret, the Spaniards watched Vitachuco's movements, but at the same time, maintained an air of careless unconcern.

The day so much desired having arrived, Vitachuco came to the Governor early in the morning, and with much humility and seeming veneration, begged him to confer a great favour on himself and all his subjects, by going out of the camp to behold them arranged in order of battle, that he might know the number that were at his service, and might see whether the Indians of this country knew how to form their squadrons as well as other nations who he had heard were skilled in the art of war.

The Governor replied, with an unsuspecting air, that he would rejoice greatly to see them; and that, to make the display more striking, and furnish the Indians likewise with a sight, he would order his horse and foot soldiers to go out and place themselves in squadrons; and have a mock fight for each other's entertainment.

The Cacique did not much relish this proposition,

but being blinded by his vengeful passions, he agreed to the arrangement; trusting to the number and valour of his vassals to overthrow the Spaniards, be they ever so well prepared.

CHAPTER XX.

Battle with Vitachuco.

1539. ALL things being arranged, the Spaniards marched forth, horse and foot, in battle array, with glittering arms and fluttering banners. As to the Governor, he remained behind, to accompany the Cacique on foot, the better to appear unsuspecting of the latent treason. He went, however, secretly armed; and he ordered two of his finest horses to be led forth caparisoned for service. One of these, is especially mentioned as a beautiful and noble spirited animal. He was named Aceytuño, after Mateo de Aceytuño, a brave cavalier who had made him a present to the Governor.

Near the village was a large plain. It had on one side a lofty and dense forest, on the other, two lakes: the one about a league in circumference, clear of trees, but so deep, that three or four feet from the bank no footing could be found. The second, which was at greater distance from the village, was more than half a league in width, and appeared like a vast river, extending as far as the eye

could reach. Between the forest and these two lakes, the Indians formed their squadrons, having the lakes on their right flank, and the forest on the left. Their bows and arrows were concealed in the grass, in order that they might appear to be totally unarmed. Their force might be about ten thousand, chosen warriors, decorated with lofty plumes, which increased their apparent height; and, being drawn out with somewhat of military order, they made a beautiful display.

The Cacique and Hernando de Soto came forth on foot, each accompanied by twelve of his people, and each burning with the same spirit and determination against the other. The Spanish troops were to the right of the Governor; the infantry drawn up near to the forest, and the cavalry advanced into the plain.

It was between nine and ten of the morning, when De Soto and Vitachuco arrived at the spot, which the latter had fixed upon for the seizure of the Governor. Before the Cacique, however, could make his preconcerted signal, a Spanish trumpet gave a warning blast.* In an instant the twelve Spaniards rushed upon the Cacique. His attendant Indians threw themselves before him, and endea-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

voured to repel the assailants, but in vain. He was borne off captive.

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

In the mean time, the Spanish troops at the trumpet signal, had assailed the Indian squadrons, and now came pressing up at this critical moment, to the aid of their general. One of his pages named Vio-ta, a youth of noble birth, sprang from his horse and aided De Soto to mount him. The Governor once more on horseback, put himself at the head of his cavalry, and spurred among the Indians. The lat-

* Herrera. Decad. 6. L. 7, c. 11.

Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2. c. 23.

Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

ter had no lances to defend themselves ; and, being assailed by three hundred horse, broke and fled in every direction. A great number of those who were in the rear, took refuge among the entangled thickets of the forest ; others, threw themselves into the large lake and escaped, while others again scattered themselves wildly over the plain, where more than three hundred were killed, and a few taken.

The worse fate attended the vanguard, composed of the bravest warriors ; who are always doomed to fare the worst in battle. After receiving the first impetuous charge of the cavalry, they fled ; but, being unable to reach either the forest, or the large lake, more than nine hundred threw themselves into the smaller one. Here they were surrounded by the Spaniards, who endeavoured by threats and promises, and occasional shots from their cross bows, and arquebusses, to induce them to surrender. The Indians replied only by flights of arrows. As the lake was too deep to give them footing, three or four would cling together, and support each other by swimming, while one would mount upon their backs, and ply his bow and arrows. In this way an incessant skirmishing was kept up all day long ; numbers of the Indians were slain, all their arms were exhausted, yet no one gave signs of surrendering.

When night came, the Spaniards posted themselves round the lake, the horse by two and two, the foot in parties of six, near to each other, lest the Indians should escape in the dark. Some of the latter endeavoured to save themselves, by covering their heads with the leaves of water lilies, and swimming noiselessly to the shore ; but, the watchful troopers perceiving the turmoil and bubbling in the water, would spur their horses to the bank, and drive the Indians again into the channel,* in hopes of tiring them out, and thus forcing them to capitulate ; for, while the Spaniards threatened them with death, if they did not yield, they offered them peace and friendship if they would surrender.

So obstinate were they, however, that midnight arrived before one of them had submitted, although they had passed fourteen hours in the water. At length, however, the intercessions of Juan Ortiz, and the four Indian interpreters, began to have effect. The most weary would render themselves, one and two at a time, but so slowly, that by the dawn of day not more than fifty had surrendered. The residue seeing that these were kindly treated, and being admonished by them, now gave themselves up in greater numbers, but still slowly and reluctantly. Some when near the bank would return to the mid-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

dle of the lake, until the love of life compelled them to yield. At length, at ten o'clock, two hundred came to shore at the same time, and surrendered themselves, after having been swimming four and twenty hours. They were in wretched condition, swollen with the water they had swallowed, and overcome with fatigue, hunger, and the want of sleep. There still remained seven Indians in the lake, men of such unconquerable spirit that neither the prayers of the interpreters, the promises of the Governor, nor the example of their comrades, who had surrendered, had any effect upon them.* They treated all promises with scorn, and defied both menaces and death. In this way they remained until three in the afternoon, and would have remained there until they died. The Governor, however, was struck with admiration of their courage and magnanimity, and thought it would be inhuman to allow such brave men to perish. He ordered twelve Spaniards therefore, expert swimmers, to go into the lake with their swords in their mouths, and draw these warriors forth. The Indians were too much exhausted to resist; the Spaniards seized them by the legs, the arms, and hair, drew them to land, and threw them upon the bank, where they lay extended upon

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

the sanc., more dead than alive;* having according to the Spanish narrator, been for thirty hours in the water, apparently without putting foot to the ground or receiving any other relief: an exploit, adds the Inca historian, almost incredible, and which I would not dare to write, if it were not for the authority of so many cavaliers and nobles, who, in the Indies, and in Spain, assured me of the truth of it, besides the authority of him who related this history to me, and who, in all things, is worthy of belief.

The reader, however, without questioning the veracity of the cavaliers, will be prone to surmise that the Indians were enabled, from time to time, to snatch a few moments of repose, on shallows near the banks of the lake.

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

The next morning, the Governor summoned them before him, and pretending to be angry, demanded

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

the reason of their desperate resistance, and why they had not surrendered themselves as their companions had done.

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

The Governor listened with admiration to the heroic words of these savage warriors; and when they had finished, he turned to their three companions, who had remained silent. These were young men not more than eighteen years of age, sons and heirs to Caciques of the adjacent provinces. The

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

Governor demanded of them their reason for persisting so desperately in their defence, as they were not leaders, nor bound by the same obligations, as their companions.

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

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

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

As to the four captive leaders, they were retained as prisoners, and on the following day were summoned before the Governor, with their Cacique Vitachuco. De Soto reproached them all with the treacherous and murderous plot they had devised against him and his soldiers, at a time when they were professing the kindest amity. Such treason, he observed, merited death: yet, he wished to give the natives an evidence of his clemency: he pardoned them, therefore, and restored them to his friendship; warning them, however, to beware how they again deceived him, or trespassed against the safety and welfare of Spaniards, lest they should bring down upon themselves dire and terrible revenge.

The Indians who had come out of the lake and

surrendered themselves, were distributed among the Spaniards to serve them as menials, during their sojourn in the province. This was partly as a punishment to them for their participation in the late treason, and partly as an example to warn the neighbouring Indians from like aggressions.

CHAPTER XXI.

Death of Vitachuco and his warriors.

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

Scarcely had Vitachuco conceived this rash scheme, than he hastened to put it into operation. He had four young Indians to attend him as pages. These he sent to the principal prisoners revealing

his plan, with orders that they should pass it secretly and adroitly from one to another, and hold themselves in readiness, at the appointed time, to carry it into effect. The dinner hour of the third day was the time fixed upon for striking the blow. Vitachuco would be dining with the Governor, and the Indians in general attending upon their respective masters. The Cacique was to watch his opportunity, spring upon the Governor and kill him ; giving, at the moment of assault, a war-whoop that should resound throughout the village. The war-whoop was to be the signal for every Indian in the place to grapple with his master, or with any other Spaniard that might be at hand, and despatch him on the spot.

Many of the poor Indians saw the perfect madness of this second project ; but, accustomed to yield implicit obedience to their chiefs, they nevertheless promised to carry it through or perish in the attempt.

On the day appointed, Vitachuco dined as usual at the table of the Governor, who sought to win his friendship by the kindest attentions. When the repast was concluded, he straightened himself upon the bench upon which he was seated, and twisting his body from side to side, he stretched first one arm, then the other, to the full extent, with clinched fists, then drew them up so that his fists rested on

his shoulders, then jerked them out two or three times, until every joint cracked like a snapped reed. In this way the Indians of Florida used to rally their strength when about to undertake any extraordinary feat.

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

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

The war-whoop of the Cacique had been heard and obeyed by his subjects throughout the village. At hearing the fated signal, the Indians, who were

attending upon their masters, assailed them with whatever weapon or missile they could command : some seized upon pikes and swords, and wielded them with great skill ; others snatched up the pots in which meat was stewing at the fire, and, beating the Spaniards about the head, bruised and scalded them at the same time ; some caught up plates, pitchers, jars, and the pestles wherewith they pounded the maize ; others the bones remaining from the repast ; and others seized upon stools, benches, and tables, striking with impotent fury when their weapons had not the power to harm. The greater number, however, snatched up burning firebrands, which seemed to have been provided for the purpose, and rushed like very devils into the affray.

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

Another was assailed with blows, his teeth knocked out, and he was on the point of falling a sacrifice, when some Spaniards came to his assistance. The savage assailant fled and mounted a hand ladder into a granary opening upon a court yard, tak-

ing with him a lance which he found leaning against the wall. The Spaniards attempted to ascend after him, but he planted himself in the door way, and defended the entrance so bravely with the lance, that no one dared to approach him.* At length, Diego de Soto, a relative of the Governor, arrived in the court yard, armed with a cross-bow. He presented it and took aim. The Indian never attempted to draw back or screen himself; his object was, not to save his life, but to sell it as dearly as possible. At the instant that De Soto drew the bow he threw the lance. The steeled point grazed the right shoulder of the Spaniard and the shaft knocked him down upon his knees, passing half a length beyond, and remaining quivering in the ground. The aim of De Soto was more certain. His shaft pierced the Indian through the breast and killed him on the spot.

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

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

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

Among the cavaliers who thus brought their captive slaves to be executed, was one of a small and delicate form, named Francisco de Saldaña. He entered the square, leading after him a powerful Indian, by a cord tied round his neck. No sooner, however, did the savage perceive what was passing, and the fate that awaited him, than, driven to desperation, he closed upon Saldaña as he walked before him, seized him with one hand by the neck and with the other by the thigh, raised him like a child, turned him topsy turvy with his head downwards, and dashed him to the ground with a violence that stunned him. Jumping then upon his body he would have despatched him in an instant had not a number of Spaniards rushed with drawn swords to his rescue. The Indian seized Saldaña's sword, and re-

ceived them so bravely, that though there were more than fifty, he kept them all at bay. Grasping the sword with both hands, he threw himself into the midst of them, whirling himself round like a wheel, and dealing about blows so rapidly and madly that no one dare oppose him, and they were obliged to shoot him down with their firearms.*

These, and many similar scenes of desperate valour, occurred in this wild affray. That the interpreters and the Indian allies who had accompanied the army from the other provinces might be embroiled with the natives of the neighbourhood, so that they would not dare thenceforward to abandon the Spaniards, they were compelled to aid in the destruction of the prisoners, many of whom were tied to stakes in the public square, and shot down with their arrows.†

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

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11. † Idem.

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

CHAPTER XXII.

The Army pass through the province of Osachile. Come to a vast morass. Severe skirmishing with the Savages. Preparations to cross the great morass.

1539. THE blow which the Governor, Hernando De Soto, had received from Vitachuco, had been so violent that it was half an hour before he received his senses. His whole face was bruised and disfigured, and several of his teeth were broken, so that for twenty days he could partake of no solid food. It was necessary to remain four days in the village, before he and his wounded soldiers were sufficiently recovered, to bear a journey: On the fifth day, he resumed his march, departing in search of another province, called Osachile.*

The first day they journeyed four leagues, and encamped on the bank of a large and deep river, which divides the two provinces, and over which it was necessary to throw a bridge. They had scarcely begun their preparations, however, when

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

they beheld the Indians on the opposite side, in hostile array. Abandoning their construction of the bridge, they hastily formed six rafts, on which a hundred men passed over, cross-bow men and arquebusiers, and fifty horsemen, carrying with them the saddles for their horses.

As soon as these reached the land, their horses were driven into the water, and made to swim across. Their owners received them on the shore, saddled and mounted them immediately, and galloped out into the plain. At sight of them, the Indians took to flight; and the Spaniards worked without molestation at the bridge, which was finished in a day and a half.

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

carry the baggage, pound the maize, and fulfil other servile employments.*

The Spaniards arrived at Osachile, a village about ten leagues from that of Vitachuco. It contained two hundred houses which were deserted, the Cacique and his people having fled to the woods, terrified by the rumours of the sanguinary massacre of Vitachuco.† The Governor sent proffers of peace and friendship to him by the Indian prisoners. He made no reply, however, neither did any of the envoys return.

The village of Osachile‡ resembled most of the Indian villages of Florida. The natives always endeavoured to build upon high ground, or at least to erect the houses of the Cacique or Chief, upon an eminence. As the country was very level, and high places seldom to be found, they constructed artificial mounds of earth, the top of each being capable of containing from ten to twenty houses. Here resided the Cacique, his family, and attendants. At the foot of this hill was a square, according to the size of the village, around which were the houses of the leaders, and most distinguished inhabitants. The

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12. † Idem.

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

rest of the people erected their wigwams, as near to the dwelling of their chief as possible.

An ascent in a straight line from fifteen to twenty feet wide, led to the top of the hillock, and was flanked on each side by trunks of trees, joined one to another, and thrust deep into the earth; other trunks of trees formed a kind of stairway. All the other sides of the mound were steep and inaccessible.

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

The Spaniards were three days traversing an uninhabited desert, twelve leagues in extent, which lay between the two provinces, and about noon on the

fourth day, arrived at a great morass.* It was bordered by forests of huge and lofty trees, with a dense underwood of thorns and brambles, and clambering vines so interwoven and matted together as to form a perfect barrier. Through this, the Indians had made a narrow path, scarce wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. In the centre of the morass was a sheet of water half a league in width, and as far as the eye could reach in extent.

De Soto encamped at an early hour on a fine plain on the skirts of the forest, and ordered out a hundred foot, consisting of cross-bow men, archers, and pike men, with thirty horse, and twelve expert swimmers, to explore the passage of the morass,

* This is supposed by some to have been the great swamp of Okefenokee, lying in lat. 31° North, on the frontiers of Georgia and Florida. Mr. M'Culloch in his *Researches*, imagines it to be the Ohahichee swamp, and his opinion is entitled to great credit, as he has investigated the subject more thoroughly than most writers. It must, however, remain a matter of conjecture and uncertainty; for, it is almost impossible to trace out the route of De Soto and his followers, at the commencement and close of their expedition, as the distances given by both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, are often exaggerated and sometimes contradictory.

Vide Kerr's *Voyages and Travels*, V. 5, p. 456.

M'Culloch's *Researches*, p. 524.

Darby's *Florida*, p. 19, 20.

ascertain the depth of the water, and search for a ford, against the following day.

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

Finding it impossible, under such heavy fire, to examine the depth of the water, the Spaniards sent word to the Governor, who came to their aid, with the best soldiers of the army. The enemy likewise received a reinforcement, and the battle became still more fierce and bloody. Both fought to their waists in the water, stumbling about among thorns and brambles, and twisted roots, and the sunken trunks of fallen trees. The Spaniards were aware, however, that it would not do to return without dis-



covering the pass; they continued, therefore, to charge the enemy with great impetuosity, and succeeded in driving them out of the water. They found that the narrow pass through the forest continued through the water, being cleared of thorns and roots, and sunken trees, so that the Indians could wade up to their middles, excepting over about forty paces of the mid channel, where it was too deep to be forded. This they passed by a bridge of two trees fastened together. The opposite side of the morass was bordered by the same kind of impervious forest as the other, and, like it, traversed by a narrow Indian path. The distance through the two forests, and across the morass, was about a league and a half.

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

It was arranged that two hundred picked men should be thrown in the advance to secure the pass, and prepare the way for the passage of the main body. One hundred of these were to be horsemen, and one hundred foot soldiers. The former being better armed than the infantry, and protected by bucklers, always received less injury from the ar-

rows of the enemy ; they were, therefore, to take the lead, on foot, as horses would only be an embarrassment in such a narrow pass. In this way they would, as it were, form a shield to the hundred foot soldiers, consisting of arquebusiers and archers.

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

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

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the perilous passage of the great morass.

1539. ALL the requisite preparations being made, two hundred picked men sallied out of the encampment, each soldier carrying with him in his bosom his day's allowance, consisting of a little boiled or toasted maize. Two hours before the dawn of day they entered the defile of the forest, which they traversed as silently as possible until they reached the water. They soon found the ford where the stones, and roots, and sunken logs had been cleared away; keeping along this they came to the bridge made of fallen trees and logs, across the deepest part of the channel. This they passed without molestation from the Indians, who had left the whole pass unguarded, not imagining that the Spaniards would dare to penetrate the dense forest, or ford the deep and perilous passage of the morass by night.

When they perceived at daybreak, however, that they had passed the bridge, they rushed with great fury and loud cries and howls to dispute the passage of the morass yet to be traversed, which was about

a quarter of a league. The Spaniards received their attack manfully: both parties fought up to the middle in water. The Indians were soon repulsed and driven into the defile of the opposite forest, into which they could only enter one at a time. This defile being so narrow, and walled in by an imperious forest, it was easy to blockade the passage and keep the enemy from sallying forth. Forty men were ordered to do so, while the remaining hundred and fifty went to work to cut down trees and clear a place for the army to encamp.

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

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

By night they were all encamped on the cleared ground, where, however, they enjoyed but little

sleep, in consequence of the yells and attacks of the enemy.

At break of day they pressed forward through the defile of the second forest, driving the Indians slowly before them, who retreated step by step, plying their bows incessantly, so that every inch of the way had to be won at the edge of the sword.

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

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

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

As soon, therefore, as the Spaniards entered this more open woodland, they found themselves assailed by showers of arrows from every side. The Indians were scattered about among the thickets, they sallied forth, rushed among the troops, plied their bows with intense rapidity, and plunged again into the forest. The horses were of no avail; the arquebusiers and archers seemed no longer a terror; for in the time a Spaniard could make one discharge and reload his musket, or place another bolt in his cross-bow, an Indian would launch six or seven arrows; scarce had one arrow taken flight before another was in the bow.

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

For two long leagues did the Spaniards toil and fight their way forward through this forest; irritated and mortified by these galling attacks, vexatious taunts, and by the impossibility of retaliating; at length they emerged into an open and level country. Here, overjoyed at being freed from this forest pri-

son, they gave reins to their horses and free vent to their smothered rage, and scoured the plain, lancing and cutting down every Indian they encountered, out of revenge of their own annoyances, and of the past defeat of Narvaez. But few of the enemy were taken prisoners; many were put to the sword; and thus did they suffer severely for the presumptuous confidence inspired by their former triumph over Spaniards.*

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

Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. 7. c. 12.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Indians make a desperate stand at a deep stream.

The Spaniards gain the pass and arrive at the Indian village of Anhayea, in the province of Apalachee.

1539. THE Spaniards had now arrived at the commencement of a fertile region covered with those villages and fields of grain for which the province of Apalachee was famous throughout the country. Wearied with their toilsome march and incessant fighting, they encamped for the night in the open plain, near a small village. Still, with all their weariness, they were deprived the repose so necessary to them. All night long they were disturbed by the yells and howlings of the Indians, by their repeated assaults, and the flights of arrows that were discharged into the camp.

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

The inhabitants justified their ferocious and warlike reputation, for they kept up incessant attacks, sallying forth from their dwellings, or starting up from their corn fields where they had lain in ambush; and though the Spaniards wreaked upon them a bloody revenge, slaughtering them without mercy, yet nothing could check the fury of the survivors.

After contending for two leagues through the fields of corn, the Spaniards came to a deep stream bordered by deep forests;* where the Indians had erected palisades and barriers, to impede the passing of the horse, as well as to protect themselves. As this was one of the strongest and most important passes, and in a manner their last hope, they had prepared themselves to defend it vigorously.

Having reconnoitered the pass, the Spaniards made arrangements accordingly. The best armed horsemen alighted, and buckling on their shields, advanced with swords and hatchets in hand, gained the pass, and broke down the palisades and barriers. The Indians fought desperately to defend them; several Spaniards were killed and many wounded, but they succeeded in forcing their way with less difficulty than they had apprehended.

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

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

Even the Indians who were captured evinced the implacable and unconquerable spirit for which the Apalachian tribe was famous. Though in the power of their enemies, they continued to carry an air of haughtiness and defiance; boasting of their origin, vaunting the valour of their nation, and telling the Spaniards that they would soon arrive at the village of their Cacique, where he and a host of warriors were waiting to destroy them. The name of this Cacique was Capafi; the first they had heard of, whose name differed from that of his village. Learning that this formidable village was actually but about two leagues distant, Hernando de Soto, on the following morning, which was the fifth since crossing the morass, put himself in the advance,

with two hundred horse and a hundred foot. On their way they put all the Indians they met with to the sword.

On reaching the village they found it recently deserted by the Cacique and his men. They pursued them for some distance, killed some of the Indians, captured others, but the Cacique made his escape. They then took up their quarters in the village, which was named Anhayea,* and contained two hundred and fifty large and commodious houses: the Adelantado took possession of the dwelling of the Cacique, which stood at one end of the village, and was superior to the rest.

In addition to this principal village, they understood that there were many others in the province, containing from fifty to a hundred houses more or less, besides a multitude of dwellings scattered about the country. The province throughout was reputed to be pleasant, the soil fertile, producing maize, cucumbers, beans, and wild plums; the rivers abounding in fish, which the natives caught in vast quantities throughout the year, and dried for use.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega. P. 2. L. 2. c. 4. Portuguese Narrative c. 12.

CHAPTER XXV.

*Juan de Añasco sets out in search of the Ocean—
the adventures he met with by the way.*

1539. THE army remained quiet in the village of Anhayea for several days, recruiting from its past toils, although the enemy did not fail to continue their attacks by night and day. The Governor now sent out bands of horse and foot to explore the surrounding country for fifteen or twenty leagues. Two captains, the one named Arias Tinoco, the other, Andreas de Vasconcelos, were sent in different directions to the northward. They returned, the one in eight, and the other in nine days, having met with no adventures worthy of relation. Both reported that they had found many populous villages, and that the country was fertile and free from morasses or extensive forests. A third captain had been sent about the same time to the southward: this was Juan de Añasco, the Contador of the army. He was one whom De Soto often chose for undertakings that required a stout heart and active spirit, though he was sometimes prone to be a little

hasty in temper and positive in command. He had under his command forty horse and fifty foot, and was accompanied by Gonzalo Silvestre and Gomez Arias. The latter was a relation of the Governor's wife, and a hardy soldier, seasoned in all kinds of perils and vicissitudes by land and water, as most Spanish adventurers were in those days. He had seen rough times in Moorish warfare; had been a slave in Barbary; and, to his adventurous valour, added sage experience in council.

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

For two days they travelled over an excellent road, wide and level, passing two small rivers which were easily forded. Here they came to the village of Aute, which was abandoned by the inhabitants, but well stocked with provisions. Taking with them a supply for four days, they continued on by the same commodious road. At length the Indian diverged from it, and led the way into dense and thorny forests without any path. The ground was in many places rough and broken, and covered with fallen trees. In other places were deep bogs cover-

ed with grass, that presented the appearance of firm land, but into which horse and foot sunk and floundered and were almost smothered.

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

They now determined to return to Aute, get a fresh supply of provisions, and renew their search. Their return was the more toilsome, as they had to retrace their footsteps through fear of losing the road, and the mire of the bogs was so much trampled that they sunk deeper in it than before. Four days did they keep on in this painful way, and their absurd suspicions of their Indian guide revived. They grew peevish in their conduct towards him; quarrels ensued between him and the soldiers; he was beaten, and would have been slain on the spot, had not Añasco interfered. Exasperated to re-

venge, he watched an opportunity at night while the soldiers slept, and snatching a brand from the fire, struck those who had maltreated him. This only brought on him severer punishment. A chain was then put round his neck and the other end given to a soldier, to keep close watch over him.

The next morning, in the course of their rugged march, the guide, as he followed the soldier who had him in charge, sprang suddenly upon him, threw him to the ground, and began to trample upon him.

Upon this the Spaniards fell upon the Indian with sword and pike: even Juan de Añasco, losing all temper, raised himself in his stirrups, and with both hands, dealt him a terrible thrust with his lance; after which, as he lay for dead, a hound was turned loose to tear him to pieces.

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

place where Pamphilo de Narvaez had built his vessels and embarked.

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

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

CHAPTER XXVI.

Juan de Añasco arrives at the bay, where he finds traces of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

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

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

been fed; and not far off lay the bones of the horses that had been killed.

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

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

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

CHAPTER XXVII.

The expedition of Juan de Añasco and his band of thirty troopers.

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

As De Soto saw no use in keeping up a garrison at Hirrihigua, in the bay of Espiritu Santo, he determined to send orders to Pedro Calderon to break up his encampment there, despatch the vessels that lay in the harbour, and march with the forces under his command to rejoin the army in their winter quarters. How to get these orders to Pedro Calderon was now the question ; for whoever bore the

message would have to retrace the wilderness through which the army had marched, to re-cross the deep and rapid rivers, thread the gloomy forests and miry swamps, and, as it were, to run the gauntlet through tribes of warlike and cruel savages, smarting from their late conflicts, and thirsting for revenge.

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

No sooner had he proposed the daring errand than there was a competition among the hardy young cavaliers of the army to be sent upon it; for the very danger of the service excited their ardour. De Soto chose from among them thirty prime lances, and appointed as their leader, the stout hearted and well tried Juan De Añasco. Along with him went the shrewd and hardy Gomez Arias, who had been his comrade in his late expedition to the bay of Aute.

Among the lances was one Pedro Moron, a mestizo, or half-blood, between Spaniard and mulatto, native of the Island of Cuba. This soldier, beside being an admirable swimmer, was gifted with a scent almost equal to that of a dog; so that he had often, in the Island of Cuba, winded and traced a fugitive Indian into the thickets and caves in which

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

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

Long before the day dawned the gallant troopers were on the road.‡ Pressing forward, they scoured along at full speed, when practicable, fearing lest the rumour of their coming might precede them, and give the Indians time to assemble and dispute the passes. Overtaking two of the natives, they put them to death, to prevent their giving the alarm to their comrades who were scattered about the fields.

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

† Portuguese Relation.

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

They rapidly traversed the extensive morass and vast forests of Apalachee, without opposition, and halted in an open plain on its skirts; ten of their number keeping watch while the remainder slept.

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

At daybreak they resumed their journey, putting their horses to their speed, as numbers of the natives were scattered about the fields, and might give the alarm. Thus, they went five leagues on a scamper to the river Osachile, at the risk of their horses; but these were, luckily, so high mettled that they suffered but little.

On approaching the river, Gonzalo Silvestre, who

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

They were soon again on horse, and at a moderate pace, approached the village of Vitachuco. Thinking to have found the place as they had left it, they looked forward to some severe fighting with the inhabitants, and expected to pass through it at the point of the sword. A consultation was held, and it was resolved, that none should stop to fight, but at full gallop cut their way through the enemy; for the death of one of their number, or of a horse, would be a serious loss, and increase the perils of the expedition. Thus determined, they spurred on, and were soon relieved from their apprehensions. They found the village a scene of utter desolation; the houses burnt, the walls thrown to the ground, and the bodies of the Indians who had fal-

len on the day of battle, heaped up into a mound, and left unsepulchred. The Spaniards afterwards learnt, that the natives had destroyed and deserted this village, from an idea that it had been built on an evil and ill-fated site ; and they had left the corpses of their people unburied, food for carrion birds and wild beasts, because, according to their superstitious belief, the unfortunate, and defeated in battle, were infamous and accursed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Continuation of the bold and perilous expedition of Juan de Añasco, and his thirty lances.

1539. THE Spaniards checked their steeds, and wound slowly through the ruins of the village, wondering at the desolation around them. They had left it but a short distance behind them, when they encountered two Indian warriors, who were out on a hunting expedition. The moment the Indians perceived the horse advancing, they took refuge under a large walnut tree which was at hand. One of them, however, doubting the shelter the tree could afford, fled, and made an attempt to reach the woods on the opposite side of the road, but two horsemen dashed after him, and before he attained this asylum, they transfixed him with their lances.

The other Indian was a more courageous spirit, and, with undaunted front, kept his station under the tree; and, as fortune usually favours the daring, he met with a better fate. Fixing an arrow in his bow, he fearlessly faced the Spaniards, who came

galloping one behind the other, and threatened to shoot, should they approach him. Some of the cavaliers, irritated at his daring insolence, or moved by jealousy of his undaunted courage, would fain have dismounted and attacked him lance in hand.

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

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

A little past midnight they roused themselves from their slumbers, and when the sun rose, they had already travelled five leagues, and arrived at the river Ochali, where, on a former occasion, the Indians had killed the greyhound with their arrows. They had hoped to find the river with less water than when they had crossed it, but, on the contrary, it had overflowed its banks, and was now a deep, turbid, furious stream, boiling and foaming with whirlpools, fearful even to look upon, and dangerous to traverse.

The Spaniards held an earnest consultation for a few moments: the first object was to secure the opposite bank before the Indians should arrive

there. It was determined, therefore, that twelve of the best swimmers, stripping themselves of every thing except their casques and coats of mail, and disencumbering their horses of saddles and saddlebags, and taking only their lances in their hands, should swim their steeds to the opposite bank, and take post there, to protect the crossing of their companions with the baggage. At the same time, fourteen were, with all speed, to construct a raft of drift wood, to transport the baggage, and such of the party as could not swim ; while four were to mount guard at their present post, until all should be effected.

All this was no sooner agreed upon than it was put into execution. The twelve swimmers threw off all superfluous clothes, and taking lance in hand, urged their horses into the raging stream. Eleven of them landed in safety at a large opening on the opposite bank : the twelfth swimmer was Juan Lopez Cacho, page to the Governor, and the same youth who once accompanied Gonzalo Silvestre on his perilous errand to the camp. In attempting to cross, he drifted with his horse somewhat below the opening. Finding he could not stem the current up to the place where his companions landed, he let his horse swim lower down the river and sought some other landing place. He attempted several

times to scramble up the bank, but it was like a wall, and there was no foothold for the horse. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the opposite shore, but before he reached it his horse began to falter through fatigue. He called out for succour to his companions who were felling the wood for the raft. Four of them threw themselves into the water and dragged him and his horse to shore. By the time they reached it, the poor youth was so thoroughly chilled, and exhausted by struggling so long in the cold water, that he was more like a corpse than a living being.

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

CHAPTER XXIX.

De Soto's enterprise against the Cacique of Capafi.

1539. HAVING despatched Juan de Añasco and his thirty lances on their expedition, the next thought of De Soto was for the security and comfort of his army. Ever since he had been quartered in the village of Anhayea, the Indians had not ceased to keep up a series of galling and harassing attacks and alarms, by day and night. The whole neighbourhood, also, was beset by them, lurking about in ambush, and watching every movement of the Spaniards, so that a soldier could not stray a bow-shot from the camp without being waylaid and assaulted.

Knowing the devotion of the Indians to their chieftains, it occurred to De Soto, that if he could once get Capafi, the Cacique of Apalachee, in his power, his subjects would cease from their harassing stratagems and attacks. It was a long time, however, before he could get upon the traces of the Cacique, or discover where he had concealed himself, for he did not take the field with his warriors

like the other chieftains. In fact, the Cacique, though redoubtable from his sovereign power, was so enormously fat and unwieldy, that he could not walk, nor even stand. When he went about in his dwelling, he had to do so on his hands and knees, and when he moved from place to place, he was borne in a litter on the shoulders of his subjects.

At length De Soto received intelligence that the Cacique, being too fat to travel far, had posted himself in the midst of a dense and extensive forest, about eight leagues from the camp; the road to which lay through tangled thickets, and treacherous morasses, which rendered the place almost inaccessible. It was, moreover, fortified in their strongest manner, and garrisoned by a band of the choicest Apalachian warriors, so as to be deemed by them perfectly impregnable.

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

In the heart of this close and impervious forest, the Indians had cleared a piece of ground, and fortified it strongly, for the residence of the Cacique

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

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

Here was the hottest of the battle. The Indians, driven to desperation by the imminent peril of their Cacique, threw themselves upon the swords and spears of the Spaniards. The latter were animated by the sight of their wished-for prey, and excited to

furious zeal by the example and voice of De Soto, who not only fought as usual, in the thickest of the affray, but called on his men by name, and cheered them on to action.

This obstinate conflict lasted a long time, with many feats of prowess on both sides. The Indians, however, for want of defensive armour, fought on unequal terms, and were most of them cut down. The Cacique called out to the survivors to surrender. The latter, having done all that good soldiers could do, and seeing all their warlike efforts in vain, threw themselves on their knees before the Governor, and offered up their own lives, but entreated him to spare the life of their Cacique.

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

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

CHAPTER XXX.

Singular escape of the Cacique Capafi.

1539. DE SOTO returned well pleased to the village of Anhayea, flattering himself that the molestation from the savages would now be at an end, since he held their Cacique a captive. His hopes, however, were vain, for the Indians, freed from the charge of protecting their chieftain, now devoted themselves to molesting the Christians. The General considered this a base instance of ingratitude, seeing that he had refrained from ravaging the country, and he threatened Capafi to commence a war of extermination against his people.

The Cacique expressed much grief at their conduct, and informed De Soto that the most eminent of them were concealed in a thick forest, five or six leagues from the camp. He offered to go there, guarded by a body of Spaniards, and persuade them to submit, adding, that no messages would avail, as they would not be convinced that he was not a prisoner in irons, and badly treated. De Soto, accordingly, ordered a company of horse and foot to

escort him, charging them to watch him closely, and not allow him to escape. They left the village before morning, and, directing their march in a southerly direction, reached the forest about sunset.

Here the Cacique sent some Indians of his train to his warriors, who were concealed in the forest, with orders for them to assemble before him on the following morning. Trusting that the order of Capafi would be punctually obeyed, the Spaniards betook themselves to rest for the night, having first placed sentinels at the out-posts, and a strong guard around the Cacique; whose unwieldy bulk, in fact, seemed a sufficient guarantee for his safety. Partly through negligence, however, and partly through weariness from three days' journey, sentinels and all fell asleep. Upon this, the wily Cacique, watching his opportunity, crawled on all fours through the drowsy camp, and soon fell in with a prowling party of his subjects, who raised him on their shoulders, and bore him off to the forest.

When morning came, and the Spaniards awoke from sleep, the Cacique was not to be seen. They beat up the surrounding forest, but without success. Each one wondered, and questioned the other, how so unwieldy a man had escaped without being seen or heard. The sentinels all swore that they had been exceedingly vigilant on their parts; it was unani-

mously agreed, therefore, that the Indians must have conjured up some demon to carry him off through the air. They set off on their return, deeply mortified; followed by the Indians at a distance, taunting and jeering them, but offering no other molestation. They arrived in the camp much crestfallen, and invented a thousand fables to account to the Governor and his officers for the escape of the prisoner. They all certified that they had witnessed strange sights that night, and insisted that the Cacique could not have escaped unless he had been spirited away by devils, so vigilant had been their watchfulness.

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

CHAPTER XXXI.

Continuation of the expedition of Juan de Añasco and his thirty lances, and what further befell them.

1539. WE must now return to the thirty cavaliers whom we left preparing to cross the river Ocali. Those who were employed in felling the timber, in a short time had finished the raft; for they were provided for such emergencies with hatchets and cords; they fastened two large ropes to it under the water, by which it was to be drawn, backwards and forwards, from bank to bank.

Two good swimmers carried one of the ropes to the opposite shore. They had but just accomplished this, when the Indians of Ocali rushed down to the river to assail them. The eleven cavaliers who had crossed to the opposite bank, closed with them, killed some and put the rest to flight, and remained masters of the field, excepting that flights of arrows were discharged at them from a distance.

The combat ceased, they called out lustily for their cloaks to be sent over on the first raft, as a north wind had risen, and being dripping wet, with no

other covering but shirts and coats of mail, they were suffering from the cold.

The rafts made several voyages to and fro, before all the baggage, and such of the Spaniards as could not swim, were ferried across. As fast as they landed they hastened to join their comrades, who were keeping the thickening host of savages at bay: two only remained to unload the raft.

The four horsemen who had been posted as a rear-guard, to protect the men as they embarked, had succeeded in covering them from assault. Two of them, Hernando Athanasio and Gonzalo Silvestre, remained for the last crossing of the raft; which, as there would be no one left behind to keep back the savages, would be the most perilous. When the raft was laden and ready for the traverse, Athanasio sprang upon it, leading his horse into the water to swim along side. Silvestre then charged upon the savages, drove them to a distance from the shore, returned at full speed, leaped from his horse, urged him into the water, cast loose the fastening of the raft, and, springing upon it, gave signal for it to be hauled over to the opposite bank.

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

In all this crossing, the horses performed their part to admiration. They required no spur nor scourge, and scarce any leading; they never flinched nor hesitated, but seemed to comprehend their real danger—that an enemy was hovering near, and that their safety depended upon their docility and their perfect obedience to their masters.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when they had all crossed the river, neither man nor horse having received a wound. They made for the village, where they purposed resting, as Juan Lopez Cacho had been so long in the cold water that he was completely chilled, and appeared like a statue, without the power of moving hand or foot.

The Indians opposed them on their approach to the village, until their wives and children had time to fly to the woods; when they thought them in safety they abandoned the place. The Spaniards entered and halted in the middle of the public square, fearing to quarter in the dwellings, lest, being separated, the Indians might surround and make them prisoners.

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

They remained in the village the rest of the day, in a state of anxiety. The situation of Juan Lopez rendered it impossible for him to travel this night, yet they feared the delay might give the natives time to spread the alarm, and, gathering in numbers, to barricade the road. They generously resolved, however, that come what might, they would place the health of their companion before any other consideration. Accordingly, they tethered one half the horses, and fed them with maize, while the remainder walked the rounds. Some occupied themselves in drying their saddles and the clothes which had been soaked in the water, and others in replenishing the saddlebags with maize; for, notwithstanding there was an abundance of dried grapes and plums, and various other fruits, they took nothing but Indian corn, which answered as food both for themselves and horses.

As night closed in, mounted sentinels patrolled round the village and its vicinity, to give warning in case of the approach of an enemy. About the mid watch, two of the horsemen, while going the rounds, heard a low murmuring noise, as of men approaching. One started off to put his comrades on their guard, while the other remained to reconnoitre and ascertain the meaning of the sound. In the brightness of the starlight he descried a large

and obscure cloud of savages moving towards the village, and hastened to give the alarm. The Spaniards, finding that Juan Lopez was somewhat recovered, threw the cloaks of his companions over him, and seating him on a horse, fastened him in the saddle, while one of his comrades led his horse by the reins. In this manner they left the village in deep silence, before the enemy arrived, and so expeditiously did they travel, that at daybreak they were six leagues from Ocali.

With the same expedition they continued their journey, running post haste through the populous country, that the rumour of their approach might not precede them, and killing all the Indians they encountered near the road, lest they should give the alarm. Through the uninhabited tracts they slackened their pace, that the horses might rest and breathe, to be ready to run when it should be necessary. Thus passed this day, which was the sixth of their wayfaring, having journeyed almost twenty leagues, a part of the distance through the province of Acuera, a country peopled with very warlike savages.

The seventh day after they had left the village. Pedro de Atienza complained of being suddenly ill. They made light of his complaint, and, not to lose time on the road, urged him forward. He continu-

ed from time to time to complain, but without being attended to, until having ridden in this way for several hours, he fell dead beside his horse. His comrades were shocked at his sudden fate, and at their own want of sympathy in his sufferings. There was no time to be lost, however, in ceremonials. They silently dug a grave on the spot with their hatchets, buried him by the way side, and then rode on, ruminating on the loss of a brave soldier and a well tried comrade.

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

CHAPTER XXXII.

Passage of the great morass. The troopers suffer from extreme cold. The vexation of Gomez Arias.

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

Some of the troop fled from the neighborhood of the corpse, crying that the plague had broken out among them and caused these sudden deaths. The old soldier, Gomez Arias, was vexed at their panic and their clamour. "Plague enough have you," said he, "in your journey, from which you cannot fly, do what you may. If you fly from us, whither will you go? You are not on the river banks of Seville, nor in its olive groves." Upon this, the fugitives returned and joined in the prayers for the dead, but would not aid in interring the body, insisting that he had died of the dreaded pestilence.

When the day dawned, they prepared to pass the morass. Eight of the Spaniards, who could not

swim, made for the bridge over the deepest part of the morass, and having replaced its railing, they carried over the saddles of the horses and the clothes of their companions. The remainder, perfectly naked, vaulted upon their horses, and endeavoured to force them into the water ; but it was so very cold that they shrunk back. They then attached ropes to the halters, and four or five of them swam to the middle of the current to drag the horses after them, while others struck them behind with long poles. The horses, however, planted their feet firmly in the ground, and could not be moved.

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

Notwithstanding two horses had thus led the way, none other could be prevailed upon, either by coaxing

or cudgelling, to follow. Gomez Arias, the hardy and weather beaten soldier, was chief of the nineteen companions who, entirely naked, were labouring up to their waists in water, to compel the horses to cross; and Arias had toiled more than all the rest. They had now been in the water for more than four hours, exposed to the keen north wind, and so thoroughly chilled that their naked bodies were almost black. They were wearied in flesh, and vexed in spirit; and seeing all their exertions useless, were almost driven to despair.

At this juncture, Juan de Añasco, having saddled and mounted his horse, as has been stated, advanced on the opposite side, as far as he could ford, until he reached the edge of the deep channel. He was enraged that no more horses had been made to cross over; and, without inquiring the reason, or regarding the comfortless plight of Gomez Arias and his comrades, attributed it to a want of respect and obedience to him as leader. In great dudgeon at the idea, he cried out in a loud and choleric voice, "Gomez Arias, bad luck to you! why do you not pass those horses over?"

The spleen of honest Gomez, who was a rough soldier, was already sufficiently roused by the toils, and sufferings, and vexations he had endured, and this speech of his commander nettled him to the

quick. Casting a grim and surly glance at Añasco, "Bad luck to *you*," cried he, "and to the drab of a cur that bore you. There you sit on your horse, comfortably clad and wrapped up in your cloak, and never think that we have been here for more than four hours, in the water, half frozen with cold, and doing all in our power. Dismount—with a curse to you! and come here, and we shall see how much better you can do than we have done."

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

Juan de Añasco often drew upon himself like rebuffs in this and other expeditions, by the hastiness of his tongue and temper; for there is nothing of which a partisan commander, in these rough adventurous scouting parties, ought to be more observant, than to treat his comrades with kindness and civility. When any toils and hardships are to be encountered, he should excite them by words; and when it becomes necessary to use the latter, they should be kind and temperate, as they do not cost more than harsh ones, and are infinitely more effectual.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

They capture some of the natives. Perplexed with fears for the safety of the garrison at Hirrihigua. Their arrival there.

1539. WHEN the discord was appeased the Spaniards renewed their efforts, and the noontide sun having somewhat tempered the coldness of the water, the horses were slowly forced across, so that by three in the afternoon all had passed over.

They were, indeed, in a wretched plight, drenched with water, worn out with excessive toil, benumbed with cold, exhausted with hunger, and what was worse, they had but scanty provisions wherewith to recruit their strength and spirits. They uttered no complaint or repinings, however, but rejoiced to have crossed this much dreaded pass, and that no enemy had opposed them; for, had but fifty of the savages hemmed them in, where would have been these brave cavaliers? The neglect of the Indians in attacking them was, most probably, owing to the distance of the morass from

any hamlet or village, and it was now the winter season, during which time the natives, as they went naked, seldom left their houses.

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

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

A little past midnight they were again in the saddle. They had not gone far before Pedro Moron, the half-blood, so noted for the quickness of his scent, suddenly cried out "take heed! I smell fire at no great distance." They looked about them

but could see nothing of the kind, nor could they perceive the smell of fire.

After proceeding about a league further, Moron again came to a halt. "I am certain," said he, "that there is a fire somewhere, close at hand." They now proceeded warily, keeping a sharp look-out, and after a little while discovered a fire in a forest hard by. Drawing silently near, they perceived a number of Indians, with their wives and children, seated round it, cooking and eating fish. Though they supposed them to be subjects to the friendly Cacique Mucozo, they resolved to capture as many as they could, and ascertain whether this chieftain continued at peace with Pedro Calderon. In case he did not, they would be able to retain them prisoners of war and send them as slaves to Havana. They accordingly dashed forward to surround them. The savages started up on hearing the sudden tramp of the horses, and made for the woods. Many eluded pursuit in the darkness of the night, and many escaped in the thickets. They took prisoner about twenty persons, women and children; who continually called out the name of Ortiz, desiring to remind the Spaniards of the past kindness of their Cacique. But these availed nothing; they were detained prisoners.

The half starved Spaniards, without dismounting,

made a greedy meal on the fish, not waiting to cleanse them from the sand with which the trampling of the Indians and the horses had covered them.

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

Finding it impossible to get the horse on, although within six leagues of the end of his journey, they left him in a verdant meadow where there was abundance of pasturage, and hung his saddle and bridle in a tree, so that any Indian who should use him, might have him with his furniture. They greatly feared, however, that as soon as the Indians found him they would kill him. After travelling for nearly five leagues, they arrived within a league of the village of Hirrihigua, where they expected to find Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eighty foot. They examined the ground narrowly as they rode along, hoping to find some tracks of

the horses ; for as the village was so near, and the country free from wood, it seemed to them natural that their countrymen should have rode out as far as this, and even further. Discovering, however, no traces of the kind, they were filled with dismal forebodings, fearing that Calderon and his men had been massacred by the natives, or had left the country in the caravels. In either case, what were they to do ? Isolated as it were, surrounded by enemies, with no barque in which to leave the country, and without the means of building one ! To return to the Governor, appeared to them impossible, after what they had suffered in coming. As they had discussed their forlorn situation, they unanimously agreed, that if they did not find their companions in Hirrihigua, they would retire into some of the secret fastnesses of the adjacent forests, where there was abundance of grass for the horses. The superfluous horse they would kill, and dry his flesh for food for the journey ; and when the other horses had sufficiently recruited, they would attempt to return to the Governor. Should they be killed by the road, they would die like true and faithful soldiers ; if they arrived safe, they would have accomplished their commander's orders.

With this heroic resolve they pushed on ; the further they advanced, however, the more were they

confirmed in their fears and suspicions; for they discovered no trace of their comrades. At length, they came to a small lake, which was less than half a league from the village. Here they found fresh tracks of horses, and near the water, marks of their countrymen having made lye and washed their clothes there.

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

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

friends, they anxiously demanded whether there was any gold in the country !

Añasco, without delay, inquired of Calderon whether the natives of this province, and the vassals of Mucozo, had continued peaceable and friendly ; and learning that they had, he directed that the prisoners recently taken should be immediately liberated, and sent home to their country loaded with presents. By them he sent an invitation to Mucozo to make him a visit with a train of attendants, to convey to their homes the sea stores and other articles which, on their departure, they intended leaving behind : at the same time he recommended to his care the horse which had been left in his territory.

The Indians went away, delighted with this kind treatment, and on the third day, came the good Mucozo, followed by his warriors and a train of attendants ; two of whom led the horse, while the others carried the saddle and bridle, as they knew not how to use them. Mucozo embraced Añasco and his comrades, inquired particularly after the Governor and the army, and made him relate the particulars of their going and coming, their battles and skirmishes, and the toils, the hunger, and the privations they had suffered. After hearing the whole detail, he observed that he would rejoice much if he could

impress his spirit and will upon the other Caciques throughout the land, that all might serve the Governor and his people as they merited and he desired.

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

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Añasco sails in quest of the Bay of Aute. Gomez Arias embarks for the Havana; and Calderon prepares to march to join the army.

1539. JUAN de AÑASCO now set to work to discharge the duties of his mission. He was to embark in the two brigantines, and to coast to the westward until he should arrive at the Bay of Aute, which he had discovered with so much toil, as has been already related. He brought orders, also, from the Governor to Captain Pedro Calderon, to rejoin him with his troops, by land: and the worthy cavalier Gomez Arias, was to sail for Havana in the caravel, to carry news to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla of the events of the expedition.

The whole harbour, therefore, was in a bustle. The brigantines and caravel were careened and repaired; the sea stores, sails, rigging and equipments carried on board, and the crews mustered and embarked. Equal stir was made for the march by land; preparing the furniture for the horses, furbish-

ing up armour and weapons, and culling out every article that was necessary for the service.

After every thing had been selected that was required either for sea or land, there remained an abundance of all kinds of articles, which they could not take with them ; such as cassava bread, clothing, cuirasses, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, beside sea stores, and quantities of steel and iron, which the generous spirited Governor had provided in such profusion for his expedition. All these superfluous articles they gave to Mucozo, in reward of his constant friendship. The Cacique found himself suddenly overwhelmed with riches. During four days that he remained at the harbour, and for the residue of the term that the Spaniards sojourned there, his subjects were incessantly busy, going to and fro like ants, bearing off these inestimable presents to his village. Every preparation being made, the crews being embarked, beside thirty soldiers who were distributed in the brigantines and caravel, and twenty Indian women for Doña Isabel,* the different commanders took leave of each other, and of their various comrades. Juan de Añasco made sail in the brigantines in quest of the Bay of Aute ; Gomez Arias in the caravel for Ha-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

vana, and Pedro Calderon prepared to march, as soon as he should have seen them fairly under way.* With this cavalier and his little army we shall keep for the present, hoping to meet with the stout Juan de Añasco at some future day.

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

CHAPTER XXXV.

Breaking up of the garrison at Hirrihigua. Pedro Calderon sets out to rejoin the Governor. Desperate conflict with the natives in crossing the Great Swamp.

1539. No sooner had Añasco and Arias set sail, than Calderon with a force of seventy horse and fifty foot, sallied out of Hirrihigua, leaving the gardens and the fields they had planted in full and fresh vegetation. They reached the village of the kind Mucozo on the evening of the second day. He came out to welcome them, and hospitably quartered them for that night; and the next day he escorted them to the frontier of his dominions, where he took leave of them with many expressions of regret.

Pedro Calderon with his forces continued his march until evening, when they encamped in a plain skirted by a forest. The night darkened apace, when of a sudden a party of savages rushed into the encampment; the Spaniards attacked them

sword in hand, and dispersed and pursued them to the entrance of the woods. No sooner, however, had they returned to the camp than the savages were on their track, and in this manner annoyed them all the night long. During these skirmishes, one of the horsemen pursued an Indian; who, finding that the horse gained upon him, and that he would soon be overtaken, turned suddenly round with an arrow fixed in his bow, and drew at the same moment that the horseman threw his lance. The savage fell dead, but not unrevenged; for, his arrow pierced the horse's breast with a mortal wound, and brought him down upon the spot, so that Indian, Christian, and horse rolled together upon the ground.

This Indian must have been one of their chief warriors; for, upon his fall, they all immediately fled into the forest and were not again seen.

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

The next evening, the Spaniards slept on the

margin of the grand morass, and the following morning they traversed it without opposition from the enemy. They pushed on with forced marches, the horsemen dismounting by turns, and relieving the foot soldiers. Thus they travelled for several days, without a single brush with the natives, finding refreshment and food in the villages. These were all abandoned, and the whole country was as silent as if uninhabited, until they arrived at the war-like province of Apalachee.

Having encamped for a night upon the skirts of the thick forest bordering the morass, they entered on the following morning the narrow defile, half a league in length, through the close woods, and reaching the water, the foot soldiers passed over the Indian bridge of logs, while the horse swam the deepest part of the channel. Calderon, finding that they had passed over the deepest and most perilous part of the morass, wished to hasten over the residue. He therefore, ordered ten horsemen to take behind them five arquebusiers, and five cross bowmen, and seize upon the narrow pass through the forest which was on the opposite bank. They set off at full speed through the water, when shrill cries and yells arose from different quarters, and Indians rushed forth from behind bushes, brakes and the trunks of huge trees, and discharged showers of arrows at them.

In the very first discharge, the horse of Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, was killed, and five others wounded. The horses, panic-struck with the sudden attack and clamour, turned and fled ; their masters could not restrain them. Plunging and rearing in the water, which was up to their breasts, they threw off the foot soldiers, who were all wounded, as the wheeling of the horse exposed their shoulders to the fire of the enemy. The Indians perceiving their fall, rushed forward to despatch them, giving their war-whoop and shout of victory, to encourage their companions.

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

The Indians, on the contrary, encouraged by the success of their first efforts, attacked the fallen archers with greater fury. The nearest Spaniards rushed across the bridge to their rescue. On their left advanced a formidable band of savages ; about twenty paces before them stalked an Indian, perfectly naked, fearless and bold in his bearing, with a large plume of feathers upon his head. His ob-

ject evidently was to gain the shelter of a huge tree, which lay between him and the Spaniards, from behind which he might annoy them, and even prevent their passing. Gonzalo Silvestre, who happened to be near the tree, perceived his intention and shouted out to Anton Galvon. Galvon was one of those who had been dismounted and wounded, but like a true soldier, he had kept hold of his cross-bow. He followed behind Silvestre, who shielded him with a quilted garment, which he had found floating in the water; advising him to shoot at none but the leading Indian, who was evidently the Chief. In this manner they gained the tree, but the movement did not escape the observation of the savage; he bent his bow and in the twinkling of an eye sped three arrows. They were sent with unerring aim, but Silvestre received them upon the garment which he used as a shield, which being wet, proved an effectual defence.

Anton Galvon who had reserved his fire until the Indian should draw near, now fixed a bolt in his cross-bow, and sent it with such good aim, that it pierced the savage through the breast; the latter staggered a few paces, crying out to his followers, "These traitors have slain me." They rushed up to his aid, received him in their arms with dismal

murmurs, and passing him from one to the other, conveyed him from the field of battle.

The combat was not less cruel and bloody in other parts of the morass. A large body of the Indians advanced on the right. A valiant soldier, Andres de Meneses, with ten or twelve others, stood to receive them; Andres received four arrows in his thighs and fell into the water; luckily his large shield covered him, and the enemy leaving him fired upon his companions, five of whom were grievously wounded.

The Indians, elated by their successes, considered the victory as already theirs, and redoubled their efforts. The Spaniards were evidently losing ground, for only fifty of their number could be brought into the engagement, and the horse could neither render assistance, nor molest the enemy. They fought, however, desperately,—they were struggling for life; for, with them, it was either victory or death. At this critical moment, the news spread among the Indians that their chief was mortally wounded. It gave an immediate check to their ardour; they soon began slowly to retreat, though keeping up a constant discharge of arrows.

The Spaniards perceiving these signs of faltering among their adversaries, now rallied, charged upon them, and drove them out of the morass, pursued

them to the narrow defile of the forest, and took possession of the cleared field in which De Soto had formerly encamped.

This the savages had strongly fortified, but had abandoned it to go to the assistance of their chief. Here the Spaniards halted for the night, as the place was strong and only accessible through the narrow defile. Scarcely a man among them escaped without a wound; and the least injured bound up and dressed the wounds of their comrades. Not an eye was closed this night, every man maintained an anxious vigil, and the savages who hovered around them, kept up a dread and dismal howling until break of day.

The lucky shot of Anton Galvon was the salvation of the Spaniards this day; for the proud Indian who was laid low by his bolt, proved to be the Chief, whose fall changed the tide of battle in their favour. But for this, every one of them would probably have been massacred.

When morning came, they resumed their march, driving the enemy before them through the defile of the forest. At length they issued out into the open woods, where the enemy availed themselves of the same barriers and palisades which had stood there when De Soto passed. From behind these they would sally out, discharge a shower of arrows, and

then retreat ; wounding in this way above twenty Spaniards. Every inch of ground was disputed, until at the end of two leagues, they came to an open plain, where the enemy left them through fear of the cavalry. They now marched on for five leagues, and halted in an open country, that the wounded might have some repose ; but as soon as night set in, the Indians again beset the camp with dreadful yells and howlings, and bitter and taunting speeches. The little army of Spaniards was worn out by repeated assaults ; the horsemen would spring into their saddles and pursue the enemy helter skelter. The Indians would launch their arrows and then fly in every direction ; but only to repeat the same annoyances the moment the troopers returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Fierce struggle with the natives at the passage of a stream. Arrival at the village of Apalachee.

1539. WITH the day, the Spaniards continued their march, and came to a forest skirting a deep stream, which the Indians had obstructed with palisades, and strong barriers placed here and there. Some of the Spaniards, having formerly passed through this, were enabled to counsel the mode of attack. It was ordered that those on horses should dismount, being better armed than the rest, and that thirty of them, with shields, swords, and hatchets, should go in the vanguard to destroy the barricades. Those lightly armed were to mount the horses, as they were of no use in this pass, and to go with the baggage and serving men in the centre. The other twenty, who were well armed, were to form a rear guard. In this order they entered the forest.

The Indians, seeing that the Spaniards were few in number, and that they could not use their horses, charged with great impetuosity, confident of an easy

conquest. The Spaniards forced their way to the palisades, where the battle became obstinate, the one struggling to cut a road, and the others to defend it. While some of the soldiers kept the enemy at bay with their swords, others hacked with their hatchets at the fastenings of wild vines by which the barriers were fastened as with cords. In this way they demolished them one by one, but at the expense of many grievous wounds. Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese, also, lost another horse, which was transfixed with arrows.

At length, the Spaniards fought their way across this perilous pass, and then travelled with less trouble over the plains, where the enemy avoided them, through fear of the horses. But whenever there were any woods near the road, the Indians were sure to be in ambush, whence they would make their attacks, shouting, and repeating frequently these words, "Where are you going, robbers? we have already killed your chief and all his warriors."

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

As they drew nigh the village, they became ex-

ceedingly anxious, for they descried neither man nor horse, nor any sign of life. They felt sure that the yells of the savages must have reached the village, and as their comrades came not out to their assistance, they dreaded lest the boasts of the natives that they had despatched De Soto and all his army, should prove true.

They wound slowly into the village, but their anxiety was soon relieved by the sight of the Governor, who received them like an affectionate father. They were hailed, too, by their comrades, with shouts of joy, as men risen from the dead; for the Indians, to grieve and alarm De Soto, had assured him that they were all slain by the road:—a fate he thought too probable, when he considered that this little band of a hundred and twenty men had to cut their way through a wilderness in arms, which he, with a force of eight hundred men, had found such difficulty in passing.

Among the first to greet Pedro Calderon on his arrival at Apalachee, was Juan de Añasco. This cavalier had made his voyage in the two brigantines, without any adverse accident, and arrived safely in the Bay of Aute on the 29th of December.* The Governor had calculated the probable time it would take for Añasco to make his journey and his

* Portuguese Relation, c. 12.

voyage, and had taken precautions accordingly. For twelve days before his arrival companies of horse and foot marched, and counter-marched, between the camp and the bay, so that while one body was advancing towards the fort, the other was returning. In this way they kept the road clear of the enemy, and, when at the bay, placed their standards in the highest trees, that they might be readily descried from the sea.

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

It was a great gratification for Añasco and Calderon to meet each other, and to be once more united to the Governor and their other brother officers and soldiers. Companionship in toils and dangers, had attached them strongly to each other, and the proofs they had of each other's fortitude and valour, made them ready, when together, to brave the greatest perils and hardships. Thus happily united, a little fraternity in arms, in the midst of a hostile wilderness, this band of adventurous Spaniards passed their winter cheerily together in the village of Apalachee.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The exploring expedition of Diego Maldonado.

1539. A FEW days after the arrival of Juan de Añasco, the Governor called to him the hardy and trusty Diego Maldonado, and, advising him to leave his own band of followers under the command of his comrade, Juan de Guzman, ordered him to speed to the Bay of Aute, set sail with the brigantines, and explore the coast to the westward, taking note of all its rivers, bays, and harbours.

Maldonado set sail as directed, and coasted along to the west for seventy leagues, when he discovered a very beautiful harbour, called Achusi.* It was land-locked and completely sheltered from all winds, ample enough for a fleet to ride in, and its

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

shores so bold, that a vessel might anchor near the land.

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

De Soto was rejoiced at the accounts given of the Bay of Achusi. It was the kind of seaport required for his projected empire ; and where he might receive the reinforcements and supplies from Havana, necessary to the prosecution of his grand scheme of conquest and colonization. It was now the latter part of February ; he despatched Maldo-

nado in the brigantines to Havana, to proclaim his success, and to return with those vessels, the caravel of Gomez Arias, and any other shipping he could purchase, well freighted with clothing, weapons and ammunition of all kinds. Gomez Arias was likewise to return with him, as De Soto had a great opinion of his prudence and sagacity in council, and his hardihood, perseverance, and intrepidity in warfare. They were to rendezvous in the bay of Achusi in the following month of October, at which time De Soto proposed to meet them there, having, in the interim, made a circuit through the interior of the country, to explore the surrounding provinces.*

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



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Strange adventures that befell the Spaniards while wintering in Apalachee.

1539. THE natives of Apalachee were a race large of stature, of amazing vigour of arm and intrepidity of spirit, and seemed to delight in war. During the whole winter they kept up alarms by day and night, never ceasing from stratagems and assaults; but the vigilance and promptness of the Governor, and his great skill in Indian warfare, foiled every attempt of consequence. They never pretended to oppose any body of soldiers drawn up in squadron, but roved in bands about the forest to surprise foraging parties, or lurked about among thickets to cut off any stragglers from the camp.

If a small party repaired to the forest to cut wood, the sound of their axes would sometimes attract a host of foes, who, coming upon them by stealth, would surround and massacre them, break the chains of the Indian prisoners who had been brought to carry away the wood, and bear off the scalps of the slain as trophies wherewith to deco-

rate their bows. In this way they picked off more than twenty soldiers, and rendered the vicinity of the village so dangerous, that the Spaniards rarely ventured to any distance unless well armed and in strong parties. One day, however, Juan de Añasco and six other cavaliers, while riding about the village chatting familiarly, extended their ride into the adjacent fields. Not intending to venture far, and being in a negligent mood, they wore no defensive armour, nor any weapons but their swords, excepting one of their number named Estevan Pegado, who had a helmet and lance.

Thus sauntering along conversing, they spied in a glade of the woods hard by, a male and female Indian, and spurred forward to make them prisoners. The female was so terrified at sight of the horses, that she stood like one petrified. The husband seized her in his arms, ran with her to the woods, and thrust her among the bushes; then, seeming to scorn flight, he returned to where he had left his bow and arrows, and seizing them up, made face against the enemy.

The Spaniards were pleased with his spirit, and determined to take him alive. Rushing upon him, therefore, before he had time to discharge an arrow, they threw him down, and crowded upon him to prevent his rising, while Estevan Pegado with his

lance kept him to the ground. The harder he was pressed, the more furious he became. He writhed and struggled under the horses' feet, and wounded them in the flanks and belly with thrusts of his bow. At length, with a desperate effort, he sprang on his feet, seized his bow in both hands, and dealt Estevan Pegado such a blow across the forehead that the blood streamed down his face. "Plague on it," cried Pegado, "if we treat this savage thus daintily, he will kill us all seven." So saying, he rose in his stirrups, thrust his lance through the breast of the Indian, and pinned him dead to the earth.

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

At another time, a party of twenty horse and fifty foot sallied out on a foraging expedition to gather maize. After they had collected an ample supply, they placed themselves in ambush in a hamlet about a league from their quarters, in hopes of entrapping some Indians. In the highest part of what appeared to be a temple, they placed a sentry, who after some time descried an Indian moving stealthily across the

public square ; casting around furtive glances, as if he dreaded a concealed foe.

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

The Indian, seeing them approach, trusted for safety to that fleetness of foot for which his countrymen were remarkable. Finding, however, that the horse gained upon him, he took refuge under a tree, as the natives were accustomed to do, when they had no lances to defend them from the horses. Here, fixing an arrow in his bow, he awaited the approach of the enemy. Diego de Soto came galloping up to the tree, but, not being able to ride under it, wheeled close alongside and made a thrust with his lance over his left arm at the Indian as he dashed by. The latter evaded the blow, and, drawing his arrow to the head, let fly at the moment that the horse was abreast of him. The shaft buried itself just between the girth and the stirrup-leather ; the horse went stumbling forward fifteen or twenty paces and fell dead without further motion.

Diego Velasquez spurred up to the relief of his

comrade, and, brushing by the tree, made a lunge with his lance in the same manner. His luck was the same ;—the Indian dodged the lance, shot another arrow just behind the stirrup-leather, and sent the horse tumbling forward to take his place beside his companion. The two cavaliers sprang upon their feet, and rushed upon the Indian lance in hand. The savage, however, contented himself with his good fortune, and made off for the woods, just keeping an even pace ahead of them, scoffing and making grimaces, and crying out, “Let us all fight on foot, and we shall then see who is the best.” With this taunt he took refuge among the thickets, leaving the cavaliers to mourn over the loss of their gallant steeds.

Some few days after the misfortune of these two horsemen, Simon Rodriguez and Roque de Yelves, set out on horesback to gather fruit that grew in the woods skirting the village. Not satisfied with plucking it from the lower branches, seated in their saddles, they climbed the tree to gather it from the topmost boughs, fancying it of better flavour. While thus busied, Roque de Yelves gave the alarm of Indians at hand, and throwing himself from the tree, ran to recover his horse ; but an arrow, with a barb of flint, entered between his shoulders and came out of his breast ; he plunged forward and

lay stretched upon the ground. Rodriguez was too much terrified to descend. They shot at him like a wild beast, and he fell dead, pierced by three arrows. Scarce had he touched the ground when they scalped him and bore off the trophy in triumph. The arrival of some Spaniards to the rescue saved the scalp of poor Roque de Yelves. He related in a few words the event, and, making confession, immediately expired. The horses of the slain Spaniards fled towards the camp, at the tumult and attack of the Indians. Upon the thigh of one of them was perceived a drop of blood. He was taken to a farrier, who, seeing that the wound was no greater than that of a lancet, said that there was nothing to cure. On the morning of the ensuing day the horse died. The Spaniards, suspecting that he had been struck by an arrow, opened the body at the wound, and, following the trace of it, found an arrow which had passed through the thigh and the entrails and lodged in the hollow of the breast. They were perfectly amazed at the result of the examination, for an arquebuse could scarce have sent a ball so far.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Tidings of a gold region. The Spaniards break up their winter cantonment. A fatal encounter.

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

During this time, De Soto endeavoured to collect information respecting the country in the interior, that he might regulate his march in the spring. In the course of the winter two Indian lads of about sixteen years of age were brought to him, who were natives of distant provinces, and had travelled with Indian traders. They offered to guide him to those provinces; and one in particular spoke of a remote province towards the east, called Cofachiqui, go-

verned by a female Cacique, whose town was of great size, and who received tribute from all her neighbours. The Spaniards showed him jewels of gold, pieces of silver, and rings set with pearls and precious stones; and endeavoured to ascertain if any of those articles were to be found in Cofachiqui. He gave them no doubt a vague and blundering reply, which they interpreted according to their wishes. They understood him that the chief traffic in that province, was in those yellow and white metals,* and that pearls were to be found there in abundance. It was determined, therefore, to march in search of Cofachiqui.

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

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

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

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

Scarce had they advanced two hundred paces,

* Portuguese Narrative, c 13.

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

As they bore him back to the encampment, they inquired as to the numbers of the enemy, and he declared there were more than fifty, which he said was the reason why his party had been so suddenly defeated. One day being nearly recovered from his wounds, his comrades began to jeer in a rough

soldierlike style, asking him whether he had counted the blows he had received, and if they had hurt much. "I counted not the number of the blows," replied Aguilar somewhat crustily, "but you will, one day or other, receive the like, and then you will learn whether they hurt or not." Being further bantered on the subject, he broke forth in testimony of the valour and generosity of the Indian warriors. "You must know," said he, "that a band of more than fifty savages sprang out of the thickets to attack us; the moment, however, they saw that we were but seven, and without our horses, seven warriors stepped forth and the rest retired to some distance. They began the attack, and as we had neither arquebuss nor cross-bow, we were entirely at their mercy. Being more agile and fleet of foot than our men, they leaped around us like so many devils, with horrid laughter, shooting us down like wild beasts, without our being able to close with them. My poor comrades fell one after the other, and the savages seeing me alone, all seven rushed upon me, and with their bows battered me as you witnessed. I concealed all this before, through a sense of shame; but so it really happened, and may it serve as a warning to you all, never to disobey orders and sally forth in like careless manner."

The story of honest Aguilar had probably receiv-

ed from him a romantic colouring ; yet, such instances of magnanimity, or rather bravado, are said to have been common among the warriors of Apalachee. They had great confidence in their own courage, strength, and dexterity, considering themselves equal if not superior to the Spaniards, when equally armed, and when the latter were not mounted on their horses : at such times they would often disdain to avail themselves of superior numbers.

CHAPTER XL.

Reception of the Spaniards by the natives of Atapaha. Their arrival at the province of Cofa, and what happened there.

1540. LEAVING this village, the army in two days crossed the frontier of Apalachee, and entered the province of Atapaha.* It was the custom of the Governor on entering a new province, to lead the way himself, and see every thing with his own eyes, rather than trust to the accounts of others. He accordingly chose forty horse, and seventy foot, well armed, with shields, arquebusses and cross-bows, and penetrated the country in advance of his army. On the morning of the third day, they came in sight of the village of Achese. The Indians had fled to the forests, carrying with them their wives, children, and effects. The horsemen dashing into the village, made six prisoners, two of whom were warriors that had remained behind to remove the infirm.

The two warriors came into the presence of the

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

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

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

On the eleventh day they crossed the boundaries

* Supposed to be the Flint River.

of Altapaha, and entered the province of Cofa,* having, according to custom, sent messengers in advance with proffers of peace to the Cacique. This chieftain in reply, sent a deputation of two thousand Indians to De Soto, with a present of rabbits, partridges, maize, and a great number of dogs. The latter were held in high esteem by the Spaniards; for, next to their want of salt, the greatest cause of suffering was the scarcity of meat. Game was abundant, and amply furnished the natives with food, for they were very skilful in the use of the bow and arrow, and very expert at making all kinds of traps. The Spaniards, however, being constantly on the march, had no time for hunting; and moreover, dared not to leave their ranks for fear of falling into some ambush of the enemy.

The Cacique of Cofa received the Spaniards with a generous welcome, giving up his own mansion to the Governor, and providing quarters for the army. The province over which he ruled was very fertile, plentiful, and populous. The natives were

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

peaceful and domestic in their habits, and extremely affable. They treated these strangers with much kindness, and detained them five days with their hospitality.

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

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

On the sixth day, the army resumed their march in quest of the adjoining province of Cofaqui, whose Cacique was an elder brother of Cofa's, and was much more opulent and powerful. Cofa and his warriors escorted the army during one day's march, and would have continued unto the frontier, but the Governor would not give his assent. The Cacique, having taken an affectionate leave of the

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

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

CHAPTER XLI.

Reception of the army by the Cacique. Preparations for penetrating to the province of Cofa-chiqui.

1540. THE moment the Cacique Cofaqui received the message of his brother, he despatched four chieftains, with a train of Indians, to welcome the Spaniards to his dominions.

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

Early the next morning the Cacique came to visit De Soto. He freely imparted every information respecting his own territory, and spoke of a plentiful and populous province, called Cosa, which lay to the north-west.* As to the province of Cofachiqui, he said that it lay contiguous to his dominions, but that a vast wilderness of seven days' journey intervened.† Should the Governor, however, persist in seeking it, he offered to send a band of his warriors to accompany him, and promised to furnish him with all necessary supplies for the journey. De Soto had fixed his mind too intently on Cofachiqui to be diverted from his course, and signified his intention of continuing on. Scouts were accordingly sent out in every direction, to assemble the Indians, and in four days the village was thronged with them. Four thousand warriors were to escort and guide the Spaniards, and four thousand retainers to carry their supplies and clothing. The chief articles of provisions, were maize, dried plums, grapes, walnuts, and acorns; for the Indians had no domestic animals, and depended for flesh upon the produce of the chase.

The Spaniards, seeing themselves surrounded by such a multitude of Indians, although they were as-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 14.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 4.

sembled for their service, kept a vigilant and unremitting watch by day and by night, lest, under the guise of friendship, they should attempt their destruction. But it soon appeared that these troops were destined for warfare in another quarter.

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

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

CHAPTER XLII.

Some account of the Chieftain Patofa. The Indian boy Pedro has a marvellous visitation.

1540. THE Indian leader, whose name was Patofa, was of a graceful form and striking features. His expression was haughty and noble, promising dauntless courage for war, and gentleness and kindness in peace. His whole demeanour showed that the Cacique had not unwisely bestowed his trust. He arose, and throwing aside his mantle of skin, seized a broadsword, made of palmwood, which a servant carried behind him, as a badge of his rank. He cut and thrust with it, as skilfully as a master of fence, much to the admiration of the Spaniards. After going through many singular evolutions, he stopped suddenly before the Cacique and made a profound reverence. "I pledge my word," said he, "to fulfil your commands as far as in my power; and I promise, by the favour of the strangers, to revenge the insults, the deaths, and the losses, our fathers have sustained from the natives of Cofachiqui. My vengeance shall be such, that the memory of

past evils shall be wiped away for ever. My daring to reappear in your presence, will be a token that your commands have been executed. For, should the fates deny my hopes, never again shall you behold me, never again shall the sun shine upon me ! If the enemy deny me death, my own hand will find the road ! I will inflict upon myself the punishment my cowardice or evil fortune will merit !”

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

A singular event happened the night before the departure of the army. One of the two boys taken prisoner in the province of Apalachee, had guided them thus far. The other, whom they named Pedro, was to conduct them from thence to the dominions

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

of Cofachiqui, where they expected to find gold, silver, and precious stones. About the mid watch, this youth woke the soldiery with his screams of murder, and calls for help. The alarm spread throughout the encampment; they dreaded some treachery of the Indians; the trumpets sounded to arms; all was tumult; they buckled on their armour, seized their weapons, and prepared for action. When it was discovered that no enemy was at hand, an inquiry was made whence the alarm had proceeded. They found the Indian boy Pedro, half dead, trembling with fear and terror, and foaming at the mouth like a maniac. When they asked him why he had called for help with such strange outcries, he said, that a demon with a huge visage, accompanied by frightful imps, had appeared to him, and forbidden him, under pain of death, to guide the Spaniards to the land he had promised; at the same time they had dragged him out of his hut and beat him, until he was so bruised and weakened that he could not move. He added, that the demon seeing the Christians approach, had vanished with all his imps—he knew from this, that the devils feared the Christians, and he begged they would baptize him immediately, lest the demon should return and kill him.

The Spaniards were preplexed by this story,

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

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

CHAPTER XLIII.

The desertion of an Indian, and how he was punished. The army lost in a trackless wilderness.

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

By night, likewise, they lodged separately, and as soon as the Indians who carried the supplies had delivered up the provisions to the Spaniards, they went away and slept with their companions. Both armies posted their sentinels, and they watched each other, as though they were enemies. The Spaniards were particularly vigilant; for, seeing the order and regularity observed by the Infidels, they mistrusted them. The latter, however, were entirely free from any evil designs, and rather manifested a desire to please the strangers in every thing. The stationing of sentinels and

other camp forms observed by them, were more to prove themselves men accustomed to war, than through any doubts of the Spaniards. These precautions they observed the whole time they were together. The second night of their march, they slept at the commencement of an extensive uninhabited tract lying between the provinces of Cofaqui and Cofachiqui.

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

On the fourth day an Indian deserted, and made off in the direction of his home. Patofa immediately sent four young warriors in pursuit of him, with orders to bring him back manacled. They set off with the swiftness of deer, and soon returned, bringing him prisoner. Patofa ordered him to be led to the banks of a small stream that flowed through the encampment. Here he was stripped and commanded to throw himself upon the ground and drink the streamlet dry. The poor culprit drank until he could no more, but the moment he raised his head from the stream, five Indians who were posted over him, with clubs in their hands, belaboured him cruelly until he resumed his task. Some of his comrades hastened to the Governor, and implored him to intercede with Patofa, or the

poor wretch would be compelled to drink until he died. The intercessions of the Governor were effectual; the prisoner was released, but was half dead with the quantity of water he had been forced to swallow.

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

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

Their Indian allies were here quite as much at loss, not one of them being able to point out the proper path. De Soto then ordered Patofa into his presence. "Why," said he to him, "have you under the mask of friendship led us into this wilderness, from whence we can discover no way of extricating ourselves? I will never believe, that among

eight thousand Indians, there is not one to be found capable of showing us the way to Cofachiqui. It is not at all likely that you, who have maintained perpetual war with that tribe, should know nothing of the public road and secret paths leading from one village to another.”

Patofa replied to this by assurances that neither he nor any of his followers had ever been in this place before. “The wars,” said he, “which have been waged between these two provinces, have not been carried on by pitched battles, nor invasions of either party; but by skirmishes between small bands, who resort to the streams and rivers we have crossed, to fish; and also by combats between hunting parties; as the wilderness we have traversed, is the common hunting ground of both nations. The natives of Cofachiqui are more powerful and have always worsted us in fight; our people, therefore, were dispirited and dared not to pass over their own frontiers. Do you suspect that I have led your army into these deserts to perish? If so, take what hostages you please. If my head will suffice, take it—if not, you may behead every Indian, as they will obey my mandate even to the death.”*

The frank and feeling manner in which these

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

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

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

CHAPTER XLIV.

Parties despatched in different directions to seek some outlet to this wilderness. Sufferings of the army for want of food. Success of Juan de Añasco's expedition.

1540. THE Governor left the army encamped in a grove of pine trees, and, taking a guide and a detachment of horse and foot, struck into the depths of the forest. He returned late in the evening, greatly perplexed and troubled, having penetrated five or six leagues into the wilderness without discovering any signs that the country was inhabited.

Early the following morning he called a council of his officers, to consider the critical situation of the army, and decide whether they should turn in another direction or retrace their steps. Their supplies of maize were exhausted ; both horse and rider were way-worn, dispirited, and enfeebled, for the want of food, and it was extremely doubtful whether they would be able to reach a place of refreshment ; moreover, the Indians taking advan-

tage of their weakened condition, might assail them, so that their return would probably be in the face of both war and famine. It was resolved, therefore, not to move their encampment, until some road or outlet from this wilderness should be discovered. The Governor then despatched parties of troopers in every direction, to seek for some habitation. These returned at night-fall, some leading their wearied horses by the bridle, others driving them before them, having discovered neither road nor human dwelling.* De Soto then ordered four bands of horse and two of foot, to start, two up the course of the river, and two down it; one party keeping along the bank, and the other a league inland, in hopes that one or the other would find a road or an inhabited place. He directed each of the Captains to return in five days.

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

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

The Governor remained on the bank of the river waiting their return, where he and his people suffered great distress for want of food ; having little to eat excepting the tendrils of wild vines, which they found in the woods. The four thousand Indians who remained with him sallied out every morning and returned at night, some with herbs and roots that were eatable, others with fish, and others again with birds and small animals they had killed with their bows and arrows. All of these they brought to the army, and although they were exhausted and almost famished themselves, yet such was their fidelity and respect, that they tasted nothing until they had first presented what they had to the Spaniards. The hardy soldiers were touched by this generosity of spirit, and gave the Indians the greater part of the food they brought. These supplies, however, were by no means sufficient for the subsistence of such a multitude.

During three days the army suffered extreme privations. The Governor finding they could no longer endure this excess of hunger, ordered some of the hogs which they had brought with them for the breed to be killed, and half a pound of meat was portioned out to each Spaniard ; which, however, rather served to augment than to allay the hunger of half famished men. But notwithstanding

their pressing wants, they generously divided their pittance with the poor savages, whose necessities were equally great.

De Soto fared equally with his men in every respect; and though troubled and anxious for the fate of his great expedition, he wore a sunny countenance to cheer up his followers. These chivalrous spirits appreciated his care and kindness, and to solace him, they concealed their sufferings, assumed an air of contentedness, and appeared as happy as though they were revelling in abundance.

In the mean time, the four Captains who went in search of a road, suffered no less from hunger than the Governor and his army. Juan de Añasco having travelled three days along the river, came to a small village seated on its banks.* Here he found few natives, but a great supply of food; in one house alone were deposited five hundred measures of meal, formed from toasted maize, beside much more in grain. The joy of both Indians and Spaniards can easily be imagined. After having searched the houses, they ascended into the highest, from which they could see that further on, the country was studded with villages and hamlets,

* The Portuguese Narrator says the Indians called this hamlet Aymay; and the Spaniards gave it the name of the "Village of Good Relief."

with extensive corn-fields on every side. They here quelled the cravings of hunger. After midnight they despatched four horsemen to the Governor with tidings of their success. They took with them many ears of corn, and several horns of the buffalo or bison. The sight of the latter perplexed the Spaniards, who conjectured them to be the horns of tame cattle. Several times in the course of their expedition, they had found fresh beef, and had importuned the Indians to tell them where they kept their herds. They could never get any satisfactory information from them on the subject, and supposed that they purposely concealed the truth.

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

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

CHAPTER XLV.

The half famished army revived by the tidings of Añasco's discovery of an abundant region. The ravages committed by Patofa and his warriors. De Soto's reception by the beautiful Princess of Cofachiqui.

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

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

The idea of plenty of food revived the half famished troops: they clapped spurs to their steeds, and rode helter skelter through the forest, each one striving to pass the other; so that before noon on the following day they were all within the village. Here the Governor concluded to halt for some days, that his men might recruit, after their late privations and fatigue, and likewise to await the arrival of the three other Captains, who had been sent in quest of a road.

These three Captains had the good fortune to find the letter of their comrades, and with their different detachments rejoined the main body in the course of four days, almost famished; having, during these eight days absence, had nothing to eat but a scant supply of roots and herbs.

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

When De Soto heard of this cruel ravage, he made all haste to get rid of his bloody allies. Send

ing for Patofa, he thanked him for his friendly conduct and valuable escort; and giving him presents of knives, trinkets, and clothing, for himself and his Cacique, dismissed him and his followers.

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

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

On the afternoon of the third day, the army halted in a verdant region, covered with mulberry and other fruit trees, laden with fruit. The Governor was unwilling to advance until he learnt what province he was in. He ordered Juan de Añasco, therefore, with thirty foot soldiers, to pursue the road they had thus far followed, and endeavour to capture some Indians, from whom they might obtain information, and who might serve as guides. To encourage the doughty Añasco, he told him he sent him in preference to any other, because he was always successful.

Añasco and his thirty comrades left the camp on foot, before night-fall. They marched along in profound silence, with the noiseless pace and watchful eye of a marauding party. As they advanced the road grew wider. They had proceeded nearly two leagues without seeing a living thing, when on the still night breeze, was borne a low, murmuring sound, like the near hum of a village. As they moved breathlessly forward, the sounds grew more distinct; at length they emerged from the thickets which had obstructed their view, and saw lights and heard the barking of dogs, the cries of children, and the voices of men and women. Certain that a village was near at hand, they rushed forward to seize some Indians secretly in the suburbs, each striving to be first, to have the honour of being the most diligent. They were, however, deceived in their hopes, for the river which they had followed flowed between them and the village. They halted a long while on the opposite bank, at what appeared to be a landing place for canoes, and having supped, and reposed until two o'clock at night, they set off for the camp, where they arrived a little before daybreak, and related to the Governor what they had seen and heard.

When the day dawned De Soto set out with a hundred infantry, and a hundred horse to recon-

noitre the village. Arrived on the opposite bank, Juan Ortiz and Pedro, the Indian boy, shouted out to the natives to come over, and receive a message for their Cacique.

The Indians, terrified at the strange sight of the Spaniards and their horses, ran back to the village to spread the news. In a little while a large canoe was launched, and came directly across the river, managed by several rowers. Six Indians, of noble appearance, all about forty or fifty years of age, landed from it.

The Governor, perceiving they were persons of consequence, received them with much ceremony, seated in a kind of chair of state, which he always carried with him for occasions of the kind. As they advanced they made three profound reverences, one to the sun, with their faces to the eastward, the second to the moon, turning to the west, the third to the Governor. They then made him the usual demand, "whether he came for peace or war?" He replied. Peace; and a free passage through their lands. He moreover requested provisions for his people, and assistance with canoes or rafts in passing the river.

The Indians replied that their supplies were small, the country having been ravaged by pestilence in the preceding year, so that most of the people had

abandoned their houses and villages, and taken refuge in the woods, neglecting to sow their corn. They added that they were governed by a young female, just of marriageable age, who had recently inherited the sway. They would return and repeat to her the circumstances of their interview, and made no doubt, from her discreet and generous nature, she would do every thing in her power to serve the strangers. With these words they departed.

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

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

The young princess stepped on shore, and as she approached the Spaniards, they were struck with her appearance. She was finely formed, with great beauty of countenance, and native grace and dignity. Having made her obeisance to the Governor, she took her seat on a kind of stool placed by her attendants, and entered into conversation with him, all her subjects preserving a most respectful silence.

Her conversation confirmed what had been said by the ambassadors. The province had been ravaged by pestilence, during the preceding year, and provisions were very scanty. She offered, however, to share with the strangers a quantity of maize which had been collected for the relief of her village, and to put them in the way of getting similar supplies from the other villages. She proffered, likewise, her own house for the accomodation of the Governor, and half of the village for that of his officers and principal soldiers ; and promised that wigwams of bark and branches should be put up for the rest. She added, that rafts and canoes should be provided for the army to cross the river on the following day. De Soto was overpowered by the generosity of the princess, and endeavoured in the best manner, to express his sense of her kind and hospitable offers, assuring her of the constant friendship of his sovereign and himself. The cava-

liers, too, listened with admiring attention to her discourse, and to the answers she gave to various enquiries concerning her province ; leaving them as much charmed with her intelligence and judgment as they had been with her beauty, and wondering to find such dignity and grace, and true politeness in a savage brought up in a wilderness.

While the princess of Cofachiqui was conversing with the Governor, she was slowly disengaging a string of large pearls, which passed three times round her neck, and descended to her waist. The conference ended, she told Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, to present the necklace to the general. Ortiz replied, that the gift would be more valuable if presented with her own hand ; but she scrupled to do it, through a dread of infringing the propriety which females should always maintain. When De Soto was apprised of her scruples, he directed Ortiz to tell her, that he would more highly prize the favour of receiving the gift from her own hand, than he would value the jewel itself, and that she would commit no breach of decorum, as they were persons unknown to each other, treating of peace and amity.

This being interpreted to her, she arose, and placed the string of pearls about the neck of De So-

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

to ;* he likewise stood up ; and, taking from his finger a ring of gold, set with a ruby, presented it to her, as a token of peace and friendship. She received it very respectfully and placed it on one of her fingers. This ceremony ended, she returned to her village, leaving the Spaniards much struck with her native talent, and personal beauty.*

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

CHAPTER XLVI.

The army quartered in the village of the young princess. Añasco despatched after a certain rich widow. Some account of the young warrior by whom he was guided.

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

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

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

They had their wars, however, with their neighbours, and had many captives among them, whom they employed in cultivating the fields and other servile labour. To prevent their escape and return to their own tribes, they were maimed by having the nerves of the leg cut above the heel or the instep.

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

On making known his wishes to the princess, she immediately despatched twelve of her principal subjects to her mother, to entreat her to come and behold these wonderful people, and the strange animals they had brought with them.

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

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

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

He shewed indeed, in countenance and bearing, his generous blood. He was about twenty one years of age ; with handsome features, and a vigorous and graceful form. His head was decorated with lofty plumes of different coloured feathers, he wore a mantle of dressed deer skin ; in his hand he bore a beautiful bow, so highly varnished as to appear as if finely enamelled ; and at his shoulder hung a quiver full of arrows. With a light and elastic step, and an animated and gallant air ; his whole appearance was that of an ambassador, worthy of the young and beautiful princess whom he served.

CHAPTER XLVII.

*The melancholy fate of the young Indian guide.
Añasco makes another attempt to capture the old
princess.*

1540. JUAN DE AÑASCO and his comrades having proceeded nearly three leagues, stopped to make their midday meal and take their repose beneath the shade of some wide spreading trees, as the heat was oppressive. The Indian guide had proved a cheerful and joyous companion, entertaining them all the way with accounts of the surrounding country and the adjacent provinces. On a sudden, after they had halted, he became moody and thoughtful, and, leaning his cheek upon his hand, fell into a reverie, uttering repeated and deep drawn sighs. The Spaniards noticed his dejection, but, fearing to increase it, forbore to demand the cause.

After a time, he quietly took off his quiver, and placing it before him, drew out the arrows slowly, one by one. They were admirable for the skill and elegance with which they were formed. Their shafts were reeds. Some were tipped with buck's

horn, wrought with four corners like a diamond ; some were pointed with the bones of fishes, curiously fashioned ; others, with barbs of the palm and other hard woods ; and some were three pronged. They were feathered in a triangular manner, to render their flight of greater accuracy.

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

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

The Indians broke into loud lamentations over the corpse ; for the youth was tenderly beloved by them, and they knew the grief his untimely fate would cause to both of their princesses. They could only account for his self destruction by sup-

posing him perplexed and afflicted about his embassy. He knew that his errand would be disagreeable to the mother, and apprehended that the plan of the Spaniards was to carry her off. He alone knew the place of her concealment, and it appeared to his generous mind an unworthy return for her love and confidence thus to betray her to strangers. On the other hand he was aware that, should he disobey the mandates of his young mistress, he should lose her favour and fall into disgrace. Either of these alternatives would be worse than death; he had chosen death, therefore, as the lesser evil, and as leaving a proof to his mistresses of his loyalty and devotion.

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

They now, however, found themselves at a loss about the road. None of the Indians knew in what part of the country the widow was concealed, the young guide who had killed himself being alone master of the secret. For the rest of that day and until the following noon, they made a fruitless search, taking prisoner some of the natives; who all professed utter ignorance on the subject. The stout Juan de Añasco being a fleshy man and

somewhat choleric, was almost in a fever with the vexation of his spirit, the weight of his armour, and the heat of the day ; he was obliged, however, to give up the quest after the widow, and to return to the camp much mortified at having for once failed in an enterprize.

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

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Disappointment of the Spaniards with respect to gold. The treasure they find. They discover some European relics.

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

The princess cheerfully complied, and in a little while several Indians appeared, laden with the supposed treasure. To the great disappointment of the Spaniards, however, the yellow metal proved to be a species of copper of a yellowish tint much

resembling gold ; and the white metal, though a shining substance somewhat of the appearance of silver, was extremely light, and crumbled in the hand like dry earth. Some have supposed it was a species of quartz, but it is probable that it was mica. Thus vanished of a sudden the golden treasures of Cofachiqui.

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

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

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

As soon as Añasco returned, the Governor visited the mausoleum, accompanied by the officers of the royal revenue, and a number of his principal officers and soldiers. These edifices were of great magnitude, that at Talomeco, being a hundred paces in length, and forty in breadth, with lofty roofs of reed. At the entrance to this latter temple or mausoleum, were gigantic statues of wood carved with considerable skill, the largest being twelve feet in height. They were armed with various weapons and stood in threatening attitudes, with ferocious looks. The interior of the temple was likewise decorated with statues of various shapes and sizes; and great profusion of conchs, and different kinds of sea and river shells.

Around the sepulchre were benches on which were wooden chests, skilfully wrought, but without locks or hinges. In these were the bodies of the departed Caciques and chieftains of Cofachiqui, left to their natural decay; for these edifices were merely used as charnel houses. Beside these chests

there were smaller ones, and baskets wrought of cane, which were filled with valuable furs and Indian robes of dressed skins, and mantles made of the inner rind and bark of trees, and others of a species of grass which when beaten was not unlike flax. There were others formed with feathers of various colours which the natives wore during the winter. But above all, they contained pearls of every size, and in incredible quantities, together with the figures of children and birds made of pearl. The Portuguese narrator says, they obtained fourteen bushels of pearls, and that the female Cacique assured them, that, if they searched the neighbouring villages, they might find enough to load all the horses of the army. Nor is the Inca less extravagant in his account. All this, however, must be taken with a large deduction for the exaggeration with which the riches of the new world were always described by the discoverers, when beyond the power of proof.

The Intendants of the revenue would have made general spoil of these precious articles had not De Soto interfered. He represented that they were at present merely discovering the country, not dividing it, and having to make their way through a vast wilderness, it would not do to burthen themselves with treasure. They should, therefore, only take

specimens of these riches to send to Havana, and leave every thing in the temples in their present state, until they came to colonize and make a settlement, when all should be properly divided, and the fifth of the amount be set apart for the crown. He distributed, however, handfuls of large pearls among his officers, exhorting them to make rosaries of them; and permitted the officers of the crown to retain a large quantity which they had already weighed out.

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

While ransacking these depositories of arms, the Spaniards to their astonishment found a dagger and several coats of mail. Nothing could equal their surprise at meeting with these European reliques in the heart of this unknown wilderness. They questioned the Indians eagerly on the subject. The latter informed them that many years before a number of white men like themselves had landed at a sea port, about two days journey from thence. That the commander of the party died soon after landing, whereupon great factions and brawls took place

among his followers for the command, in which several were slain; the rest had reassembled on board of their vessel and put to sea.*

The Spaniards pondered over these facts and determined that the white men in question, must have been the unfortunate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, and his ill fated followers, and those who were experienced in maritime affairs gave it as their opinion, that, from the course of the river which passed by Cofachiqui, it must be the same which, on the sea coast was called the St. Helena.†

Elated with the riches they had found, they urged the Governor to stop here and create a colony. The

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

Portuguese Relation, c. 14.—Lond. 1686.

† El rio caudaloso, que pasava por Cofachiqui, decian los hombres Marineros, que entre estos Espanoles iban, que era el que en la costa, llamavan de Santa Elena, no porque lo supiesen de cierto, sino que, segun su viage, les paracia que era el.

Garcilaso de la Vega Lib. 3, c. 18.

country was fertile, they might establish a lucrative pearl fishery, and carry on a trade with Spain from the seaport at the mouth of the river.

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

After a long sojourn, therefore, in this fertile and opulent province, De Soto prepared for his departure. During the time of his sojourn several broils had taken place between his people and the natives. These had originated in the ill conduct of some of the low and base minded of the soldiery ; probably in their rapacious eagerness for gain. They had produced a general ill will among the Indians toward their guests, and a change in the feelings of the young and high minded princess ; who, instead of evincing her usual kindness and hospitality, grew cold and indifferent in her conduct, and appeared to eye the Spaniards with great distrust. De Soto remarked this change, and received private intelligence, that the princess was about to take to flight,

and leave him without guides for his march; or porters for the baggage of the army. As his route would lie through various tracts of country under the dominion of the princess, any hostility on her part or on that of her subjects, could not but prove extremely embarrassing. He determined, therefore, to adopt a precaution, which he had more than once practised in the course of his expedition, and which the Spaniards had found so efficacious in their Mexican and Peruvian conquests; and that was, to secure the person of the Sovereign, by way of ensuring the peaceful conduct of the people. Accordingly, he placed a guard round the person of the female Cacique, and signified to her, that she was to accompany him in his march; but while he thus, detained her as a hostage, he took care that she should be attended with the respect and ceremony due to her rank. The policy of this measure was apparent in the cessation of all brawls between the Spaniards and the natives; and in the good treatment which the army experienced during its subsequent march through the territories of the princess.

NOTE.

In detailing the march of the Spaniards, in search of Cofachiqui, we have as usual, availed ourselves both of the Spanish and Portuguese narrations, reconciling them as far as possible,

and exerting our judgment where they vary from each other. Nothing is more perplexing than to make out the route in conformity to modern landmarks. The discovery of the coats of mail and dagger, the reliques of the unfortunate Ayllon and his comrades, throws an unexpected light upon one part of their route, and shows that the province of Cofachiqui was at no very great distance from the sea coast of Georgia, or South Carolina; though it could not have been within two days journey, as the Portuguese narrator intimates. The armour and weapons of Ayllon and his followers, had probably been divided among the Savages, and carried as trophies into the interior. The river which passed by Cofachiqui, and which the Spaniards supposed to be the St. Helena, has been variously conjectured to be the Ocone, the Ogeeghee and the Savannah. As to the vast quantities of pearls found in the Temples, and said to abound in the villages, they pass our belief; yet, both Spanish and Portuguese narrators are very positive and circumstantial in their account of them.

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