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The Discoverers of the Mississippi.

Who first discovered the mighty Mississippi? This is a question which has never been satisfactorily answered, though many are the volumes which have been written on this interesting subject.

Cabeza de Vaca and a few others, who in 1528 accompanied Pamphilus de Narvaez to Florida, are said to be the first Europeans who set their eyes on the turbid waters of the Mississippi. While endeavoring in a small boat to reach Tampico, they were thrown on an island on the coast of the present State of Mississippi. After four years' slavery, they made their escape and arrived on the shores of the Gulf of California, traversing the bison-plains and the adobe-towns of the half civilized natives of New Mexico, perched on their rocky heights. De Vaca is the first known to have traversed our territory from sea to sea. In this long wandering, he must have reached and crossed the Mississippi, but we in vain examine his narrative for something to distinguish it from any other large river that he met. The remains then in history in a distant twilight as the first European known to have stood on the banks of the Mississippi, and to have launched his boat upon its waters; but his "shipwrecks" shed no new light on its history.

Then comes Fernando de Soto, one of the Pizarro's companions in the conquest of Peru. He anchored on the 25th May, 1539 in the bay of Spiritee Santo, now known as Tampa Bay, Florida. For nearly three years he rambled over a large extent of country, now included in the Southern portions of the United States.

It was in the Spring of 1541 that he reached the Mississippi, which was then called Espirilee Santo, or River of the Holy Ghost. He was attacked with a malignant fever and died on the banks of the Mississippi, June 5th, 1542. "His soldiers, says Bancroft, pronounced his eulogy by grieving for their loss; the priests chanted over his body the first requiems that were ever heard on the waters of the Mississippi. To conceal his death, his body was wrapped in a mantle, and, in the stillness of midnight, was silently sunk in the middle of the stream. The wanderer had crossed a large part of the continent in search of gold, and found nothing so remarkable as his burial place."

Judge Martin, in his History of Louisiana, gives the following version of the death and burial of De Soto.

"At last the army reached the mouth of Red River. There the chief was seized with a fever, the moral character of which became manifest in a few days. It was not long before he became conscious of his situation, and he contemplated approaching dissolution with composure. He appointed Luis Muscoso de Alvarado his successor, calmly conversed with his officers on the most proper movements of the army, had almost all the individuals in it brought to his bed side, received their oaths of fidelity to the future chief, recommended to the men obedience to him, and affection to each other, discipline, unanimity and perseverance. Then, giving his remaining moments to the rites of the church of Rome, expired about the 30th of June, 1542,

His remains were inclosed in a strong coffin, which was filled with bullets and sunk in the Mississippi, opposite to the mouth of Red River,

to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Indians.

De Soto was born at Xeres de los Caballeros, in Estremadura, in 1500. He descended from a noble but reduced family, and had received a good education, having spent several years at one of the universities, probably that of Saragossa.

The successor of De Soto, as we have already said, was Luis Muscoso de Alvarado. He tried to reach Mexico by land, but after long and fruitless marches, returned to the Mississippi at a village called Aminoya, which Mr. McCulloch supposes to have been situated in the neighborhood of the present town of Helena, about thirty miles above the Arkansas. There seven brigantines were built. On the 2nd day of July, 1543, the little squadron sailed, with not quite three hundred and fifty men. The sun was setting, says Theodore Irving in his conquest of Florida as they got under way, and the gloom of evening seemed an emblem of their darkening fortunes. They were attacked by the natives of the country; who pursued them for many days, and did considerable harm to the little fleet. "At last, however, on the 18th day, they entered the Gulf of Mexico, after having sailed, as they computed, two hundred and fifty leagues down the river. They are probably the first who sailed 'Down the great river to the opening gulf.'"

—After steering westward along the coast for fifty-three days, they entered the Panuco, a river of Mexico. On the banks of this stream, twelve leagues above, stood a city of the same name.

[CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE QUESTION.

The slaveholders in this country, having waged a desperate war against the constitutional government of the people for the sole purpose of perpetuating slavery, and having come to grief, it is now proposed by some excellent jesters that the victorious people of the United States shall agree to perpetuate slavery. Having seen a social and political system plunge us by its necessary development into war—having seen the war destroy the system, and the country emerge from the field victorious, these witty persons propose that we give the enemy all that they have been fighting for, and consent to re-establish slavery.

But for what purpose? Why should we do it? That the slaveholders may make no more trouble. But did they not have slavery before, and did they not make trouble? Oh yes, but they were afraid it would be meddled with. And will they be any the less afraid hereafter? And if before they rebelled and showed their true colors, slavery was so meddled with that they tried to destroy us, now that we have seen exactly what slavery is and have repulsed their efforts, are we likely to hold our tongues?

It is not a question of wishing to marry negroes, or having negroes for Presidents and Governors, or liking negroes in the abstract. The question is simply whether the loyal people of this country, after the experience and revelations of this war, and the long, bitter disgrace of our latter subservience to the insolent dictation of slaveholders for keeping the peace, are inclined to submit to that subservience and dictation again, after they have subjugated the Dictator. Subservience to slavery could not prevent the war. That is clear. Is subservience to it likely to keep the peace hereafter?

That is the question which offers itself for "settlement." And the jesting gentlemen ought to remember that the people have evidently made up their minds that the war is no jesting matter. They have already answered the question. The Government, which is the Constitutional expression of the popular will, has already emancipated most of the slaves. By the act of the United States those people become not our sons-in-law, nor our bosom friends, nor our rivals in labor, but they become citizens of the United States. What State law, then, can enslave them?

[Harper's Weekly.]

GENERAL GRANT.

A friend in St. Louis writes: "Grant is a working man. Years ago he married in St. Louis, resigned his situation in the army, turned farmer, and drove his own steam into St. Louis with wood. In his recent march (in May) he was three days on foot, with his rations and baggage, leading his men, not being willing to delay until his horses should come up. Such a man must succeed."

ODE TO FREEDOM AND UNITY.

[Written for the "Union."]

Our Father's God,—to Thee,—
Pillar of Liberty
Unto this hour,—
We lift our longing eyes;
Great Ruler of the skies,
Scatter our enemies
By Thy great power!

Our Father's Guardian, Thou,—
Before Thy throne we bow,
Thine aid implore;—
Thou who hast kept till now—
And registered each vow,
O be our Guardian now,
Hence, evermore!

Where mad ambition Reigns,
And desolates our plains,
With Treason's harms,—
Do Thou thyself attend;
Let War's dread carnage end,
Our liberties defend;—
God speed our arms!

Eternal Spirit, deign,
O'er all our hearts to reign,
Our country bless:
Bind fast our Union's chain,
O'er island land and main.
Let glorious Freedom reign—
And Righteousness!

Angel of peace, descend!
To us thy succor lend
In peril's hour:
Come, with thine Angel-band,
Breathe love through all the land,
Firm may we even stand
In Love's own power!

Angel of heavenly grace,
Bid all our jarrings cease,
This nation save!
Break the bondman's chain!
Unite us once again!
Let Truth and Justice reign!
Aid thou the brave!

Thou who hast guided us,
Till sin divided us—
And war arose;
God of immortal power,
Be thou our guide this hour;
Vouchsafe a gracious shower—
Rebuke our foes!

We own Thy dreadful hand
Brings evil on our land
In this sad hour:—
O God! in mercy, now,
That penitence bestow
Which soothes the bondman's woe,
And aids the poor.

Our sins have caused us shame,
We have blasphemed Thy name—
Incur'd Thine ire:—
We've spread oppression's reign,—
Mocked at our brother's pain,
Borne Freedom's shield in vain—
And holy fire!

ALEPH,

Skip Island, Miss., July 13, 1863.

Navigation on the Mississippi.

Cairo, July 22—The following notice, has just been received by Capt. Pennock, and made public. It bears no date:

Steamers destined for New Orleans with merchandise, shipped and permitted according to law, will be convoyed through to Vicksburg, from every Monday morning to give protection to the convoy. No vessel will be permitted to go down the river without a convoy for the present, and steamers will be obliged to lie over a week, if they do not arrive on or before the day of the week on which the convoys start. Armed vessels, however, going between times, will also give convoy, but no regularity must be expected from them, or great dispatch. They may have to stop on the way. This arrangement will commence on the 10th of August next, 1863.

(Signed) DAVID D. PORTER,
Rear Admiral Con'g Miss Squadron.

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