

THE CONQUERORS OF PERU

H.M. GILBERT



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THE CONQUERORS
OF PERU



Fr.

He led his men forward

THE CONQUERORS OF PERU

RETOLD FROM
PRESCOTT'S "CONQUEST OF PERU"

BY
HENRY GILBERT

WITH SIXTEEN FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS BY
THOMAS MAYBANK



NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED, EDINBURGH

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3442
655
1913

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Introduction

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT, the writer of *The Conquest of Peru*, of which the present volume is a paraphrase, was an American author who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was chiefly interested in Spanish history, and besides the work above mentioned, he wrote *The Conquest of Mexico*, *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, and an unfinished work on Philip the Second.

The story of the conquest of Peru by the Spaniards is one of the most romantic in human history. It is only rivalled by that of the conquest of Mexico, an event which, earlier in time and hardly less enthralling in interest, formed the example followed in some measure by the conqueror of Peru.

The tale indeed is one almost as incredible as any mediæval legend of Christian knight-errant overthrowing hordes of Paynims single-handed. It tells of a Spanish soldier who, against the jealousies of higher authorities, and in spite of repulses and disasters, of famine, tempests and mutinies, still pushed on with a handful of men and conquered a country, the reigning king of which possessed the unquestioning reverence and obedience of a vast population, from which he could draw an army of many thousands of men.

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The civilization which the Spaniards destroyed in their conquest of the Peruvians was a strangely fascinating one. It was a form of despotic socialism. At the head of the State was the king or Inca, "the descendant of the Sun," regarded as divine and worshipped by his subjects. His rule no one could question, but it was not tyrannical. On the contrary, it was mild, and the country, when the Spaniard entered it, was prosperous. Personal freedom, however, was unknown. Every one who was able-bodied was obliged to work; each man, woman and child was numbered, and none could remove from the place where he was born, or work at any other task than that imposed by authority. Every hundred families formed a unit, with the village officer or headman as the chief over them, who was responsible for their labour on the crops and for the payment of their taxes. Ten such units formed a clan, each controlled by an official; and over every four clans was an imperial overseer who controlled the acts of the clan officials. The people, male and female, were divided into ten classes; children up to eight years were exempt from work, and from eight to sixteen were required to do light employment. Between the ages of fifty and sixty a man was classed as "half old," and was required to do easy tasks only; at sixty he ceased from labour.

Under these conditions no one could be rich, but none could be poor. Everyone lived in frugal comfort; and those that were sick or crippled were supported by the State. The spirit of the people, under generations of this paternal rule, had become gentle and submissive; great crimes were almost unknown, and even petty thefts were rare. "So little desire have these people, both men and women, to commit offences," wrote Leguisamo, the last of the rough soldiers of the Conquest, in the testament

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which he drew up to ease his conscience, "that the Indian who had a hundred thousand pesos of gold and silver in his house left his door open, placing only a light rod or a broom across the threshold, as a sign that the owner was not at home, and seeing that sign, no one would enter."

Mild and submissive as these Peruvians were, they had nevertheless attained a perfection in many arts little if at all inferior to that of the European who brought ruin into the fair fabric of their civilization. Their great roads, stretching from end to end and from side to side of the kingdom, may yet be seen, not indeed with the clear-cut edges and even surface as the Spaniard found them, but broken now and often overgrown with vegetation. Besides these there are remains of temples, palaces and fortresses, mountain-sides terraced into fields, aqueducts, irrigating canals and rest-houses, the ruins of all of which point with reproach to the neglect into which the conquerors have allowed them to fall.

The story of Pizarro's romantic achievement will always be one of peculiar fascination for readers both young and old. Among the company of heroic explorers which stride across the pages of the early history of the Americas—Columbus, de Balboa, de Soto, La Salle, Cortés—the figure of Francisco Pizarro will take high rank. He was a born leader in a generation of men made for desperate enterprises. He would laugh with his soldiers in their good humours, cajole them in their rebellious moods, and in turn, as the occasion required, be their comrade, their protector or their stern commander. Brave and determined, of inflexible constancy of mind and full of resource, he allowed nothing to bend him from his purpose. No scruples stood in his way; the capture of Atahualpa and the terrible carnage which accompanied it, the treacherous

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execution of the Inca when his further captivity became irksome, and the perfidious treatment of Almagro showed the lengths to which he could go.

Other defects of his character were shown when, with a rich and fertile province in his charge, he delivered a race into tyrannical slavery, gave up towns to pillage, destroyed immense flocks, squandered the stores accumulated in the granaries of the Inca, and allowed the system of irrigation founded by the Peruvians, together with fine roads and bridges, to fall into ruin and neglect.

It must be borne in mind, however, that Pizarro had been reared in a hard school. An outcast in his childhood, he had known only the rough schooling and brutal manners of a camp, among a soldiery who knew no law but the sword, and whose minds had no respect for the civilization which they ruined nor sense of pity for the wretched Indians they conquered and oppressed.

The object in retelling Prescott's history has been to make it acceptable to young people who may be discouraged by the solid pages of the original work. For this purpose, therefore, the historical style has been avoided ; a good deal of dialogue has been employed, and, as far as practicable, an endeavour has been made to create an atmosphere of vivid reality and moving adventure. In short, the aim has been to make young readers believe that they are not reading history so much as " a story."

HENRY GILBERT

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CHAPTER I

Rumours of the Land of Gold

IT was in the year 1522 when, one day in late autumn, four men stood talking together on the little wooden wharf at Panama, a young city then, but three years old.

Behind them was a broad open space or plaza, and beyond that the stone-built house of the governor, with the flag of Spain on the top, the church, also of stone, and beside this a fort. Then there were houses of adobe or sun-baked mud, rising here and there among the rank growth of the forest which pressed right up to the doors.

Out at sea, riding at anchor in the roadstead, a little distance from where the men stood, were three caravels, with high poops and carved prows, rising and falling to the waves.

One of the men seemed to hold the attention of the other three. He was more richly dressed, and his air of high breeding distinguished him from at least two of them. He was Don Pascual de Andagoya, who but a week before had returned from a voyage, which he had hardly begun, into the unknown sea which stretched for infinite leagues to the south. He said he had returned

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because he had been all but drowned in the upsetting of a boat, and that the accident had injured his health.

He was not so hardy a soldier as others of the little community which now formed the outpost of Panama. Many smiled behind his back and said that Don Pascual was more fitted for the luxury of a Court than for fierce battling with cannibal Caribs and semi-starvation in the black swamps.

“What learnt you over there, señor?” asked one of the men, who was tall and spare and in the dress of a priest. He was Don Luque, the vicar or head priest of the church at Panama. “Is there in truth a rich kingdom beyond the terrible mountains?”

“Ay,” replied Don Pascual, “there are kingdoms and riches in plenty if one could but win through the tempestuous seas, penetrate the horrible swamps, and scale the icy mountains, covered with dense forests and swarming with fierce beasts.”

“The men who told you these things, noble señor,” went on the priest, “were they worthy of credence?”

“Not from one man alone did I learn them,” replied Don Pascual, “but from many. Some were chiefs and head men, and others were traders who, with their packs of merchandise, travel far through the dense jungles and forests and reach many peoples and distant kingdoms.”

“And what told they of this wondrous land beyond the mountains? How many days’ journey is its capital?”

“Many weeks’ journey, they said,” replied Don Pascual. “And they affirm that the chief king of that land is not to be equalled by any king on the earth for his wealth and his majesty. He has a thousand slaves, and his treasure no man may estimate. The buildings of his chief city are wondrous fair and majestic, the rivers run

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with gold throughout the land, and the common people wear gold as we wear iron or bronze.”

The eyes of his three listeners gleamed. But whereas the priest lowered his looks, as if he did not care that others should see the light of greed in his eyes, the others came still nearer to the speaker, and one of them, a tall man, with pale, stern face and hard eyes, said, in a low voice :

“Did they tell aught of the way one should go to reach this chief city ? To the south-east, beyond the Gulf of St Michael, or to the west ? ”

“I was told that the city of that king lies far up above the clouds at the summit of a high mountain, and it is many leagues from the sea. He who would reach it must risk death from many causes—from the poison of dragons and serpents, the ambush of savages, the claws of fierce beasts, the trembling and cracking of the earth, and the deadly cold upon the mountains, where snow for ever lies.”

“They said there were dragons in the swamps of Dobayba,” said the other, who had not yet spoken, “but I never saw aught but ugly, lurking savages and foul water and moving banks of mud.”

He laughed with a bluff, reckless air. He was short, with a red face, and his look of command was mingled with a bearing of good-nature and rough humour. He was Don Diego de Almagro, famed for his bravery in many an expedition through the swamps and forests of Tierra Ferme, as Central America was then called.

“Ay, there are dragons there,” said Don Pascual. “They told me that a dragon with scales of gold guards a secret place in the mountains whence the king of the land procures his purest gold. The precious metal lies

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in the rock bare to the sun, and one has but to cut it out with a hatchet."

"Truly," laughed Almagro, "a land made for brave Spanish cavaliers to conquer, as Cortés has conquered Mexico and its barbarous king, and brought them and their gold to our good Emperor Charles."

"Further," went on Don Pascual, "they told me that the walls of their temples were made of solid gold, and that their gods and goddesses are figured in pure gold and sit in rows along the walls, and before each is a shrine of pure silver. The riches of that kingdom no man may estimate. Some told me of men who, whether for pride or from the idolatrous nature of their religion, roll themselves in oil and afterwards in heaps of gold dust, and then receive as gods the worship of the ignorant people. Besides, there are great palaces, rich in every kind of luxury, the like of which no one has seen elsewhere, and there are vast herds and great storehouses which are bursting with long-stored wealth."

"By Our Lady," cried Don Diego, "it makes a poor soldier's mouth water to hear such tales. Here are we, frayed and ragged and hopeless after thirty years of battle and toil, with but a few swampy acres and a dozen or two of lazy Indians as all the reward for the hard knocks and the wounds which we have suffered for Spain. By my faith, I would risk something to gain lordship over a land only half so rich as that you speak of."

The stern, dark soldier said nothing for a while, but one could see by the fire in his eyes how the tale of wealth had stirred him. Then he spoke, but it was in restrained tones.

"You say truth, Almagro," he said. "You and I have fought side by side for years, and found how great a

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lottery is this New World that we have conquered for our emperor, whom God exalt. The great prizes are indeed so few that it is heavy odds against us gaining any, hazarding, as we do, our health, our fortune and our lives."

"Give me your hand, Pizarro," said Almagro, and he held out a great brown hand toward his friend. "What do you say? Shall we not swear to go and seek this Land of Gold of which Andagoya brings such news?"

Pizarro grasped the hand of his friend, and his pale face flushed as he spoke.

"I doubt we are fools," he said, "for our fortunes are but meagre. Yet if the governor will aid us with ships, and volunteers will come with us in sufficient force, I will cast in my lot—life and fortune and all—in this one throw of the dice."

The men grasped hands fervently.

"Doubtless, gentlemen," said the gallant Andagoya, with a sneer, "you have a wish to emulate Hernando Cortés, and to seize as mighty a kingdom and riot in its treasures."

"Ay, why not?" demanded Almagro, his face flushing at the sneer. "If courage is wanted—courage that will not falter at a wetting—think you *we* lack it?"

"Courage would, of course, be needed," said the priest, laying a restraining hand on Almagro's arm, "and your fame as a soldier would make you a powerful helper in any further expedition to the south, Don Diego; but—tell me, Don Pascual," he went on, turning to the other, "do you propose to make another journey southward?"

"Nay, I think not," was the reply. "If any of you gentlemen have it in your minds to risk all your resources in such an attempt"—he smiled as he glanced for an

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instant at the frayed garments of the two soldiers—"the way is open for you, so far as I am concerned."

Saying which, Don Pascual bowed and walked from them across the plaza toward the stone house of the governor, over whose flat roof waved the flag of Castile.

Left alone, the three men stood for some time in silence. Don Diego, quick and impatient of mood, looked from one to the other of his companions, as if longing to hear them speak. At length the priest turned to the tall man, who had said little during the talk with Don Pascual.

"You believe the truth of these tales, then, Don Francisco?" he asked.

"I know they are true," answered Pizarro, and now he spoke with fire and gesture, where before he had spoken in low, constrained tones. "When with that brave young captain, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, we fought our way over these interminable mountains and were the first white men whose feet trod this earth, what, think you, was the goal that was before our eyes? Were we blundering like blind kittens in the dark, knowing not whither we went? Nay, young Balboa had an aim in all he did. His object was the Land of Gold away there to the south. One day, in the town of Nombre de Dios, which he founded on the other side of the isthmus, I was with him when he weighed some gold which we had got from an Indian village. An old chief stood with us, and he struck the scales with his fist, scattering the gold about us. 'Is this what you prize, you white men?' he cried. 'Is it for this you are willing to leave your homes across the wide ocean to suffer hunger and thirst and risk your lives? I can tell you of a land where they eat and drink from golden vessels, and where gold to them is as cheap as iron is to you.' By that, and by what the barbarian

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told us, Balboa was guided when he scaled the mountain rampart of the isthmus, and when he pushed his caravel twenty leagues south of the gulf here.”

“Then, if such faith is in you and Almagro here,” went on Don Luque, the priest, “I think we should not despair of getting such aid from the governor and from others as will fit two such leaders as you for a journey to this Land of Gold, and if heaven so wills that it is to be brought under the sway of his most Catholic Majesty for the glory of the Church and the saving of the benighted heathens, I doubt not your success.”

“I would that we could do this without the aid of the governor,” said Pizarro, and his face was dark. “I love him not, for he was jealous of the deeds of my captain, Balboa, and caused him to be executed. Balboa was a man he could not hope to emulate, and he knew it and laid his plots to slay him.”

“I fear that a vessel could not leave the port unless he gave us leave, my son,” said the priest.

“It will be as much as we may hope,” said Almagro, with a gesture of anger, “if we do not have to pay for his consent, while he will not put down a doubloon towards the expenses, mean-hearted that he is.”

“We must needs suffer him, then,” said Pizarro. “But I trust we may never need to ask him for a peso. What say you, Almagro,” he went on; “think you that Balboa’s caravel, that has lain dismantled out there in the harbour these five years, since his brave head fell on the block—think you it could be made sound to take us on our expedition toward the Land of Gold? He made his attempt in it, and I think we shall have good fortune if we too go in the same vessel.”

“With little cost it could be made taut and trim,”

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replied Almagro. "But we should need another. And where shall we find the money? I doubt we two could muster but a few poor thousand castellanos, friend Pizarro?"

"I think you need have no care for that," said the priest. "I have a friend who, I think, would like to have a share in this venture."

"Well, father, he is welcome," said Almagro, with a great laugh, "providing he wishes not to command it. For I doubt not our friend Pizarro will be the best leader, and I will be second in command."

"That will be well," said the priest; "you have conquered side by side up and down these savage lands for many years, and in this also I think you will succeed together to your own good fame and fortune, and the glory of our sovereign the emperor."

Almagro doffed his hat with a hearty laugh. "May your good wishes come true, father," he said cheerily.

Pizarro said nothing. His cold eyes were looking out at sea, and his face was sombre and stern. It seemed as if the tragedy that was to end the friendship of these two men had already thrown its cold shadow upon him that was to be the conqueror of Peru.

CHAPTER II

At "Famine Port"

IT was on a gloomy day in the middle of November, in the year 1524, that Pizarro, having embraced Almagro and his other friends, and taken leave of Pedrarias, the governor, descended the wooden steps of the little wharf at Panama, and was rowed out to the caravel which was straining at its anchor in the harbour.

It had been arranged that Pizarro, with about a hundred men, should set out at once, and Almagro was to follow with another caravel as soon as it could be fitted out. Weary months had been spent in getting money together and enlisting volunteers, for men had been afraid of going into the unknown to a land which, though reported to be full of treasure, would probably only be won through much toil, misery and pain. But at length the combined persuasive powers of Pizarro and Almagro, who had told tales of the great wealth there was to be gained by valiant soldiers, had prevailed over fears, and now the cheers of the folk on shore sounded across the water, as the anchor was heaved up, the sails were stretched to the wind, and the little caravel began to move through the waves on her fateful journey.

The first few days passed uneventfully. Pizarro, having issued from the Gulf of St Michael, steered almost due south for the Port of Pines, a headland beside the river Biru, or Piru. Already the Spaniards had begun to

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apply the name of this stream to the whole of the shadowy kingdom of gold, which, as report said, lay somewhere to the south.

Doubling the headland, Pizarro sailed up the river for some leagues. Rank vegetation clothed the land to the very edge of the water, but at a place where, on the south bank, a space lay among the great trees and giant creepers, the anchor was let down, and Pizarro landed with all his soldiers.

None doubted that at any moment they might come upon some rich town or village, which, filled with treasure, and guarded only by timid natives, might easily fall a prize to a few brave freebooters. They therefore set off with laughter and cheerful talk, cutting their way through the matted undergrowth of the pathless jungle.

But from the first their hopes were doomed, for they found that the land was a noisome swamp, stretching for miles with oozy mud-banks, pools of stagnant water, and drenched woods fringing dismal morasses. Doggedly they persevered, cheered by their leader with tales of the miseries which other of their countrymen had suffered to gain golden prizes which had made them rich for life. At length, emerging from the swamps, they mounted on higher ground ; but so rough and rocky were the hills they had to climb that their feet were cut to the bone, and the weary soldiers, encumbered with heavy headpieces, quilted doublets of cotton or coats of mail, almost sank beneath the toil.

Often when the sun overhead was pouring his heat down upon the bare, rocky soil, men sank with exhaustion, vowing they would not move another step ; or even threw their arms away to rid themselves of a burden.

At the end of some days, finding that the iron land



Peals of thunder made the vessel tremble

At Famine Port

promised nothing but toilsome travel, Pizarro determined to return. The resolve was hailed with delight; the men's spirits rose instantly, and in a few days they were overjoyed at the sight of the river with the caravel lying quietly in midstream.

They dropped down the river, and, turning south, coasted along the shore for two leagues. Then, casting anchor off a clearing in the thick shore woods, Pizarro landed to take in water. Afterwards he directed the pilot to steer the vessel due south into the open sea. But when the boat had got some leagues out at sea, a tempest struck them. For days they struggled against the fierce head-winds which seemed determined to beat them back.

Tempest succeeded tempest; peals of thunder made the vessel tremble as it mounted each great wave and sank sickeningly into the next trough. The men huddled miserably in the cabins below, or lay sick in their bunks; and murmured against their ill luck.

"It is the fiend," they said, "who will not suffer us to enter seas where no white man has ever been before. Our chief cannot hope to prevail; any one of these mountainous waves may swamp and send us to the bottom."

For ten days, however, Pizarro held his dogged way in the teeth of the furious storms, until, one morning, the ship's master came to him and told him that the vessel's seams had opened in several places and she was leaking badly.

The face of Pizarro went dark; he was enraged, for it went hard against his stubborn heart to own defeat. But his clear brain told him that now was no time for recklessness, for at any moment they might be in danger of foundering.

"Then do you and your mates go find the leaks and

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mend them," he said to the shipmaster. "I will see that my men bale the ship; and we will go back to the place where we took in water."

It was done, but only just in time. For days on the return journey their efforts to keep the ship afloat often seemed desperate; and only by incessant baling, day and night, did they keep her from foundering. In all work Pizarro took his part, cheering the men with his grave humour and encouraging talk, now sympathizing with this man's sickness and laughing good-humouredly at another's woeful lamentations.

Then it was found that their food and water were running low; the meat was wholly consumed, and at length each man was allowed but two ears of Indian corn per day.

When at length they reached the place where they had watered, they thought that their sufferings would be over. Eagerly the men landed and sought the firm land and the shelter of the trees, for now, though the tempests had moderated, the rain fell with tropical violence.

But both firm land and shelter were denied them. All about them, as they painfully cut their way through the giant creepers and matted undergrowth, they found swampy land, with oozing mud and stagnant pools. The rain never ceased, and so saturated was the ground, and so strewn with wet leaves, that as men struck with their axes to cut away the trailing vines and binding lianas, their own movements caused them to slip down upon the soil.

Desolation reigned for miles; no birds or beasts could be found, as the famished soldiers slipped and crept through the dense growth beneath the giant trees, where an eternal green twilight reigned. But there were myriads of mosquitoes and other biting insects that made

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life a misery both by day and night. The silence of death seemed to rest upon the forest, and when the soldier ceased his walk and listened, he could hear only the splash of the raindrops on the leaves, the low whirl of insects round his head, or the groans of a comrade.

At length one morning, after a night wretched with pangs of hunger or pain, the men crawled from the rough shelters of leaves which they had made, and stood in muttering groups. Soon a band of more daring spirits approached where Pizarro stood talking to his secretary, the pilot Ruiz, and his lieutenant, Montenegro.

“Captain,” said the foremost soldier, “a pretty pass have you brought us to. Here is no food but the poisonous berries on the trees, and the only things that thrive are the flies that suck our life’s blood from us. Why do we stay here? Take us back to Panama, or in a little while we shall leave but our bones here.”

“You promised us a land of gold,” said another, “but ’twas a fairy tale you told us. Never a glint of gold have we seen, but only black swamps; and the farther we go the worse we suffer.”

“Fate is against us,” said a third. “It seems that we are not meant to break through these green walls of trees and creepers. Better take our chance, while yet we have life, of getting back to Panama; or else we shall all die of hunger.”

“What?” laughed Pizarro; “are you brave lads so moved because you have missed a meal or two? Would you go back like the carpet knight, Andagoya, before you have got upon the road? Have you never heard of the golden hoards of Tubanamà, and how Vasco Nuñez gained them? He and his men, did they not suffer worse than this? They, too, were famished they, too, wallowed in

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swamps, the prey of biting insects, sweltering in the heats, subject to sudden onfall by unseen barbarians, but was there word of retreating? You, Casco; you, de Vega!" he said, pointing to men here and there; "you, too, Gonzalez, Garcia, de Ojeda—you know if I tell the truth, for you were there. And did you not share in the gold hoards of the cacique? I tell you what you already know—what Comagre the chief, and Tumaco told Vasco Nuñez—that the treasure to be found in the kingdom which lies southward beyond these forests are to the treasures which have hitherto been found in Darien as the ocean is to a village pond. What is wanted to gain those treasures? I will tell you. It is courage, the stout heart that will not falter before hunger, toil or pain—the virtues that Spanish soldiers have ever shown they possess. Surely ye have not lost those virtues in so short a time?"

Some were moved by his speech and said they would stand by him in whatever course he desired to take; but others still clamoured to return to Panama. At length Pizarro spoke:

"Look you, lads," he said, "I will have none with me but those who have good hearts for any danger. Those that desire may go back to Panama. I will send back the caravel to the Isle of Pearls, where a fresh stock of provisions may be laid in. The distance is not great; in a few days the vessel will return, and then with greater heart we will be able to go forward in our venture."

This was done. That very day, under the command of Montenegro, the vessel was put about, and, with some forty of the total band, set sail for the Isle of Pearls, which was a few miles south of Panama, where stores could be procured.

Those who were left behind began to count the days

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that passed, and meanwhile, to stay the pangs of hunger, ate the shellfish which they picked up on the shore, or devoured the bitter buds of the palm-tree or unsavoury herbs rooted up in the forest. Some died of poison, while, as the weeks went by, others crept away into corners and starved to death.

Yet always Pizarro strove to keep up the drooping spirits of his men, shared his provisions with them, gave them such rough doctoring as he could, and by his ready sympathy gained the devotion of all that survived.

Then one morning his secretary came to him and said that, wandering with a comrade the previous night in a distant part of the forest, they had seen a light through an opening in the trees. When the men heard the news they forgot their gnawing pangs, each snatched up his weapons and asked to be led to where perhaps was food.

Pizarro eagerly led the way, and after penetrating a belt of dense undergrowth, they found themselves in a clearing, and saw before them the leaf-made roofs of huts. At sight of the strangers, men, women and children dashed with terrified cries into the green deeps behind the huts, and the famished Spaniards, rushing forward, seized the maize and cocoa-nuts which they found and devoured them ravenously.

This was the first of several visits to the Indian village, and soon they were friendly with the natives, from whom the men of Pizarro obtained rough ornaments of gold, besides articles of food. By the aid of the smattering of the Indian tongue which he had learned during his years of service, Pizarro asked the cacique or chief whether a rich land lay to the southward.

“Yes,” replied the Indian; “at the distance of ten days’ march beyond the snowy mountains there lies a rich

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and pleasant land, ruled by a great king whose treasure in gold no man may count. He is called the Child of the Sun, and he has conquered, in dreadful battles, a mighty prince whose kingdom lies among the mountains. Great are their armies, and no people can withstand the great king, who came down from the Sun to reign on earth."

A few days later Montenegro returned with a great store of food. He had been kept back by head-winds and tempestuous seas, and his horror was great to find his comrades so reduced in number and so wasted and haggard from hunger and disease.

Refreshed and satisfied with food, the freebooters in a few days' time begged to be led farther on their way to the south ; and putting to sea, Pizarro and his men left the place where they had suffered so much. In derision, the men had already given it the name of " Famine Port."

After they had gone some leagues south, they landed at an open part of the shore, and fell in with a village, where the inhabitants fled, leaving the Spaniards free to take much food, together with gold ornaments of considerable value. The village was on a hill and well defended by palisades, and it occurred to Pizarro that it might be well to take up his quarters there.

Already it had become clear that his little vessel had suffered considerable strain in the tempestuous seas she had traversed, and that it would be necessary to send her back with a few men to Panama to be repaired and refitted. Meanwhile he would remain behind and explore the country.

But first he despatched Montenegro with half their forces to try to get in touch with the natives. As soon as the lieutenant and his men had become entangled in a defile of the hills, out of the green walls about them came

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a shower of arrows that darkened the air, and blood-curdling war-whoops startled the unsuspecting Spaniards. But, quickly recovering, the white men charged the hordes of painted, naked savages and caused them to flee.

Montenegro commenced to return, leaving three dead upon the field ; but the savages, knowing the shorter ways, reached the village long before him, and poured upon Pizarro and his men a cloud of arrows, many of which found a way through the joints of the soldiers' armour or the quilted mail. Pizarro, skilful in Indian warfare, led his men into the open and fiercely charged the natives, who gave way for a time, but rallying, they pressed Pizarro, whom they wounded in seven places. He fought like a lion, and thus encouraged his men, so that the enemy faltered somewhat.

Just at that moment Montenegro caught them in their rear. The carnage was great, for the Indians fled in disorder ; but the victory was dearly bought by the loss of five Spaniards, besides a long list of wounded.

In this juncture of affairs Pizarro called a council of war.

" I think," said Ruiz the pilot, " you cannot stay here, captain. The Indians have given us but a foretaste, and to our sixty men they could bring six thousand, for the rumour of our invasion will spread far and wide, and that quickly."

" Moreover," said Montenegro, " I doubt whether it will be wise to proceed farther in our ship. It made much water coming from the Isle of Pearls, and I doubt the first tempest would open all her seams."

" He speaks truth," said Ruiz.

Pizarro listened in silence and sat brooding for some time. It went to his proud heart to think that he was returning without having done the task which he had set

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out to do. Certainly, he would not face the governor and his friends, Almagro and Luque, empty-handed : the gold they had obtained was of considerable value. But the magnificent hopes of the adventurers had not been realized. Yet he thought that enough had been done and learned to prove that their dreams of the Land of Gold were not baseless.

Nevertheless when, some weeks later, the little vessel sailed into the Gulf of St Michael, Pizarro decided that he would not meet Governor Pedrarias at once. He therefore landed with the greater part of his men at Chicamá, a village some miles west of Panama, on the mainland. From there he sent the ship with his treasurer, Nicolas de Ribera, in order that the latter might give Pedrarias an account of the expedition and display the gold they had got together.

Some time passed, when one day news came to Pizarro that a vessel was sailing toward the land. Running down to the seashore, Pizarro recognized it as the little caravel which his lieutenant Almagro had remained behind to fit out. In a little while he saw his friend, who wore a bandage round his head, descend the side of the ship into a boat, and as soon as Almagro stepped on shore the two friends embraced and greeted each other.

“ I have but just returned from following in your track,” said Almagro, when they were seated in Pizarro’s hut. “ As was arranged between us, I fitted out the little caravel, but a plaguy task it was to get volunteers to come with me. But at length I got some sixty of the roughest scoundrels in Panama and set out. I found each place where you landed, by the notches on the trees, and at the last place where I found your marks I also found the graves of the men whom doubtless you lost in battle with the Indians. Hardly had we found the wooden crosses on their graves when

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we in our turn were assailed by the savages from the palisaded village on the hill. So enraged was I that I carried the wretched place by assault, and there I received this wound," pointing to his head, "which is like to lose me an eye. But I got much gold in that village, and also at other villages farther south where I touched. I found a river there, with cultivated fields and villages along its borders. My mind was filled with fear for you, my dear Pizarro, and I wondered whether you had foundered. Finally, I resolved to return to Panama in case you had also returned and we had passed each other at night or during a mist. I touched at the Isle of Pearls and heard that you were staying here. And now, comrade, how have you sped? Of a truth, you and these brave fellows about us look haggard and thin, as if you have seen misfortune."

Long sat the two friends recounting their journeys, exploits and escapes. It appeared that the gold collected by Almagro was even greater than that obtained by Pizarro. Moreover, the information Pizarro had gained was also confirmed by his friend, for at several places Almagro had heard from friendly Indians of a great and opulent empire lying many days' journey over the mountains.

"Friend," said Pizarro, at length, "what you have learned and what I have learned confirms me in my confidence that great wealth and fame will be ours if we but persevere in this venture. As for me," he went on, standing up and lifting in his hand the black ivory cross that hung by a silver chain about his neck, "I swear here and now that I will rather die than abandon this enterprise."

"And I also pledge myself to that," said Almagro, rising and seizing Pizarro's hand. "By the cross, I will not cease my efforts until we stand in the midst of that land of Peru and know that we are its conquerors."

CHAPTER III

The Faithful Thirteen

IT was arranged between Pizarro and Almagro that the latter should proceed to the governor and request permission to raise volunteers for a larger expedition, and generally try to gain his good will. But when, a few days after his meeting with Pizarro, Almagro presented himself before Pedrarias the governor, he was received with black looks and scornful laughter. The governor demanded an account of the lives which had been lost by Pizarro in the fights with the Indians, mocked Almagro's tales of the magnificent country of which he had learned particulars, and at length said that he would not consent to any further expedition.

Almagro went away very crestfallen ; and going to Father Luque, he told him all his tale.

“ Be of good cheer, my son,” said the priest, when he had heard all ; “ I will do all in my power to gain his assent, for I have heard all that Pizarro has done, and what you now tell me of your adventures confirms me more strongly than ever in the belief that there is a rich Indian empire to the south, which will repay the trouble of conquering it as Mexico repaid the daring of Hernando Cortés.”

The priest was as good as his word. His wisdom and learning gave him great weight in the councils of the settlement of Panama, and Pedrarias at length gave a reluctant

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consent to the expedition being put forward a second time.

“But,” he said, “I mistrust that fellow Pizarro. He shall not command this venture alone ; Almagro shall be equal in command, so that the other shall not lord it as he wishes.”

Almagro, when this was told him, was pleased at being given equal rank with Pizarro ; but the latter’s proud mind was deeply wounded, not only at the degradation, but by the suspicion which it aroused that Almagro had sought to injure him and had urged the governor to give him equal power.

Though Pizarro and Almagro were outwardly almost as friendly as before, the seeds of distrust were sown in Pizarro’s suspicious mind, to grow and ripen as time went on into tragic results.

Once having obtained the governor’s consent to a second expedition, Pizarro and Almagro set about getting further ships and stores. But most people in Panama thought they were madmen, to venture on such a hazardous and distant journey, full of frightful dangers as it might be, and quite ignorant of the strength of the Indians in the land they hoped to conquer.

Father Luque was very zealous in his endeavours on behalf of the two captains, and obtained from a rich merchant of Panama, named Espinosa, who looked favourably on the venture, the loan of twenty thousand pesos, equivalent to about twelve thousand pounds of English money ; with which sum two large vessels were purchased, and a great quantity of stores was bought.

Then Pizarro and Almagro entered into a binding agreement with Father Luque, to pay him, on behalf of the merchant, a third of all the gold and precious things which

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they might win in their venture. So solemn a thing was this compact thought, that, in the presence of many of the inhabitants, after the signing of the agreement, Father Luque administered the sacrament to the parties to it, dividing the consecrated wafer into three portions, of which he and the two leaders took equal parts.

Those that stood by thought they were looking upon two brave men who were undoubtedly devoting themselves to an insane venture which would end in disaster and death, and many were moved to tears.

“ I tell you,” said one, as the onlookers separated, “ our friends Pizarro and Almagro will be turning on spits before a fire to grace a feast of savage Indians before a year is out.”

“ And as to Father Luque,” returned a friend, “ who aids and abets them in all their madness, he should change his name and be called Fãther Loco ” (madman).

After this ceremony the two leaders rapidly completed their arrangements, and when provisions, ammunition and some horses had been purchased, they made proclamation through the town that they were about to lead an expedition to Peru, and desired volunteers.

But recruits were hard to get. Most people scoffed at the whole thing, as a venture of desperate and ignorant men. Nevertheless, as time went on, volunteers came forward. Most of the survivors of the former cruise enrolled themselves, and other men were found whose fortunes were so desperate that they welcomed any change, or chance of bettering them.

When, therefore, in the summer of 1527, Pizarro and Almagro, each in his vessel, set sail from Panama, the united crews numbered about one hundred and sixty men, a small army indeed with which to conquer a rich and powerful kingdom.

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Pizarro decided not to touch at any of the intervening places on the coast, and therefore directed Ruiz the pilot to steer straightway for the point reached by Almagro. This was the river named by that leader the Rio de San Juan, on the banks of which he had seen many Indian cottages and cultivated fields. So fair was the weather that the vessels reached the mouth of the river only a few days after leaving Panama.

They cast anchor in the river and saw that the banks had many Indian houses standing in the midst of fields. Pizarro landed at the head of a party of men, and, creeping through the trees, surprised a village, out of which they took a large store of gold ornaments, besides several prisoners.

So pleased were the leaders at their success, and the promise which the gold gave of a still richer conquest, that it was arranged between them that Almagro should return to Panama with the treasure, so that, by showing it to the soldiers and relating how easily it had been obtained, a stronger body of volunteers could be got together. Meanwhile, with the other vessel Ruiz the pilot was to sail still farther south along the coast, to view out the land.

Pizarro was to remain on shore with the rest of the men, and form a camp in an open piece of country which, as he was assured by the prisoners, lay a little way back from the river.

Ruiz the pilot, issuing from the mouth of the river in his little vessel, sailed southward along the shore as far as a large bay, which they named St Matthew. At every step of the way the country seemed more densely populated ; the fields were larger and better cultivated, and crowds of natives stood on shore looking at the strange thing moving along the face of the sea.

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A little later the Spaniards were astonished to see in the distance what looked like a caravel of huge size. Believing that they were the first European navigators who had ever entered these seas, some consternation was created by the sight until, as the great vessel came nearer, they made out that it was a large raft, rigged with a great sail, by which the vessel was carried sluggishly over the water.

Several Indians were on board, wearing rich ornaments of silver and gold, and they also carried articles skilfully worked in the same material for the purpose of trading along the coast. The dress of the Indians was made of cloth of a fine texture, dyed in brilliant colours, and embroidered with birds and flowers. There were also on the raft a pair of scales for weighing precious metals.

All these evidences of ingenuity and refinement were so different from anything they had hitherto seen among the native Indians that the Spaniards were astonished at them; and their admiration was increased by what the Indians told them. They gave the Spaniards to understand that they came from a rich town some miles to the south, named Tumbez, that in the neighbourhood of that place there were great flocks of animals from whose hair their robes were spun, and that in the palaces of their king, gold and silver were as common as wood.

Ruiz the pilot half doubted their wonderful talk, and therefore he kept some of the Indians on board, but let the others proceed on their journey. A little while after this the pilot tacked about, and, standing away to the north, regained the river where he had left Pizarro, after an absence of some weeks.

Meanwhile Pizarro and his band had suffered from the privations which they had undergone. When the two ships had left them Pizarro had started out to find the open

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country which had been spoken of by the Indians. But day had followed day on the difficult march, and the forest had seemed to become denser and darker, the trees higher, and the clinging vines and creepers more difficult to cut through.

Moreover, they found themselves lost in a succession of high hills and deep and noisome ravines, where, through the matted trees, the light of the tropical sun hardly penetrated to guide their way. There were brilliant flowers, and birds of lovely plumage ; but there was also the giant boa constrictor, coiling closely round the trees, his folds so like the lights and shadows as to be quite indistinguishable until his deathly grip was about his victim ; and in the pools and rivers which they skirted were alligators lying, the shape and size of tree trunks, to seize the unfortunate man who came unwarily to the water's edge.

Added to these dangers was the perpetual watch of the Indians, who dogged the steps of the adventurers as if they were their shadows, unseen themselves in the sombre twilight of the forest, their presence only known when some unfortunate man, straggling wearily behind the main body, shrieked in his death agony.

Then famine came. They were reduced to searching for the potato, which was to be found sometimes growing wild in the hills, or the berries growing on the bushes, or the cocoa-nut. They made haste to return to the place whence they had started from the river bank, suffering more and more from the pangs of hunger.

Along the seashore they were in worse state, for in the swampy thickets of the mangrove they were tortured by clouds of mosquitoes, which compelled them to bury their bodies up to their very faces in the sand and mud.

So desperate had most of the little band become that

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now, with the exception of Pizarro and a few strong spirits, all desired nothing but to return at once to Panama, to food and comfort.

Then one day rang a wild cry of delight through the dark mangrove swamps. "Ruiz is coming! Ruiz is coming!" some cried, and pointed out to sea, where the caravel rode the waves, with all her sails bellying before the favouring breeze. With what eagerness they shared the stores of food in the ship, and, as strength and hope returned, listened to his tale of brilliant hopes!

A few days later Almagro also sailed into port, with a large store of fresh provisions on board, and a band of eighty adventurers, eager to share in the conquest and plunder of a kingdom.

Strengthened by plentiful food and encouraged by their increase of numbers, Pizarro's adventurers straightway forgot their sufferings and clamoured to be led forthwith towards the Land of Gold.

Accordingly they set sail, keeping near to the shore. But by this time the summer season was past; the tropical sun had given place to grey clouds and storms of rain; a wind blew perpetually against them, and the very currents, setting northwards, seemed to press them back. It was not long before many of the soldiers, suffering from the eternal jostling of the sea, began to wish themselves on shore again; but it was not deemed wise to risk a landing.

As the ships pushed farther south, the country looked more smiling; the impenetrable and savage woods, lined with tortuous mangrove swamps to the very brink of the sea, now gave way to many stretches of open country, which could be seen to be well cultivated with maize, potatoes and cocoa; and instead of wild solitudes, towns

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and villages began to be revealed in greater number with the passing of every headland.

But while the country thus promised wealth and plenty, the natives became more threatening. Crowds of warriors stood on the shore as the ships went past, flourishing their weapons and shouting their war-cries, as if daring the strangers to land.

At length, casting anchor before a large and populous port, which their prisoners said was called Tacamez, Pizarro determined to land and try to arrange for a friendly conference with the natives, who were standing in hundreds on the beach. He therefore went ashore, taking some of the horses which they had brought with them in this expedition.

With the aid of his captives, Pizarro endeavoured to make overtures of peace to the natives, who, however, would not listen, but pressed about the Spaniards with every appearance of hostility. Some of the adventurers resented the fierce bearing of the natives, and blows began to be given on both sides.

For a few moments it looked as if the Spaniards, surrounded by hundreds of fierce warriors, would be wiped out of existence; but a strange accident saved them. During the struggle one of the cavaliers happened to fall from his horse. This so startled the Indians, who had believed that man and beast were one, that, filled with fear, they retreated with cries of terror. The Spanish leader, seizing the opportunity, commanded his men to retreat, and all reached the vessels safely.

Having withdrawn the ships from the shore, Pizarro called a council of war, to decide what should be done: whether they should go farther, or return to Panama to obtain more men.

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“I think 'twere foolish to go farther,” said one; “it is evident that with our small force we could never make head against so fierce and warlike a nation as these Indians. The land seems thickly populated, and we should be overwhelmed in an attempt to conquer it. Better go back, for the enterprise is beyond our strength.”

There were cries of assent to this proposal from many others, men of a faint heart, who loved not dangers and discomforts.

“No, by Our Lady,” burst out Almagro, in a rage; “that is the counsel of a chicken heart. To go home now with nothing done would be ruin, as well as disgrace. Most of us here have left creditors at Panama. Would they welcome us empty-handed? Are they not looking to see us come back to pay them with the golden gains of this conquest? If you go back now, you go back poor. You will have to beg for alms, or be thrown into prison by your enraged creditors. As for me, I would rather roam a freeman here than lie and rot in fetters in the prisons of Panama.”

“What is your counsel, then, Almagro?” said Pizarro.

“I advise this,” replied the other leader: “that you seek out some commodious place where you could remain with a part of the force, while I go back to Panama for recruits.”

“Fine advice, truly,” returned Pizarro, with a scornful laugh. “In spite of your brave boasts, you choose the pleasanter post for yourself. You wish to cruise to and fro in your vessel, never very far from the fleshpots of Panama; while I and others stay behind to await your pleasure, dying in the wilderness from hunger and disease.”

Almagro, enraged at his friend's scornful words, cried: “Then you go to Panama! I am willing to take my

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part in any toil. You shall not charge me with a coward's part."

But Pizarro was not to be appeased. He knew that Almagro's advice was the best ; but he hated to have to give up the expedition. Their words became more and more heated ; eyes flashed ; hands leapt to sword-hilts, and it seemed that a few more moments would have seen them at each other's throats.

Fortunately, cooler heads were by ; and Ribera the treasurer, and the old sea-dog, Ruiz, succeeded in pacifying them.

"Have done, señores," they said. "How fine a story would it be to tell those who have sneered at you in Panama that you, the two leaders of this expedition, ended it by cutting each other's throats ?"

Pizarro and Almagro were reconciled, at least to outward seeming ; and, after some further talk, the latter's plan was decided upon.

When, however, this decision was made known to the men, they broke out in complaints, especially those who were told they were to stay behind with Pizarro, on an island which the leaders had decided upon.

"So," cried one, "this is to be the end of us. After being deceived and cheated into taking part in this expedition, where we were to find gold as easily as stones, we are to be marooned on a desolate island, to starve or die of disease."

"While Almagro and the others go back to Panama," said a second, "to tell more lies and thus entice other fools out to this hare-brained venture."

"Look at our treasures !" sneered a third, holding forth some native bows and arrows. "This is what we have gained of all the wealth that was promised us."

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“And now,” said the first speaker, “we shall leave our bones on a savage island with not so much as a handful of consecrated earth to cover them.”

So bitterly disappointed were they that they decided to write to their friends in Panama, telling them how they had been defrauded and were now kept back by force, to be sacrificed to the mad cupidity of their leaders. These letters they gave into the keeping of some of the soldiers who were going back to Panama.

But Pizarro and Almagro had got wind of the discontent, and when the ship was about to set sail, Almagro ordered all letters to be given up to him. This got to the ears of Pizarro's men and exasperated them beyond measure, for they saw themselves again outwitted, and they cursed Almagro heartily for his high-handed action.

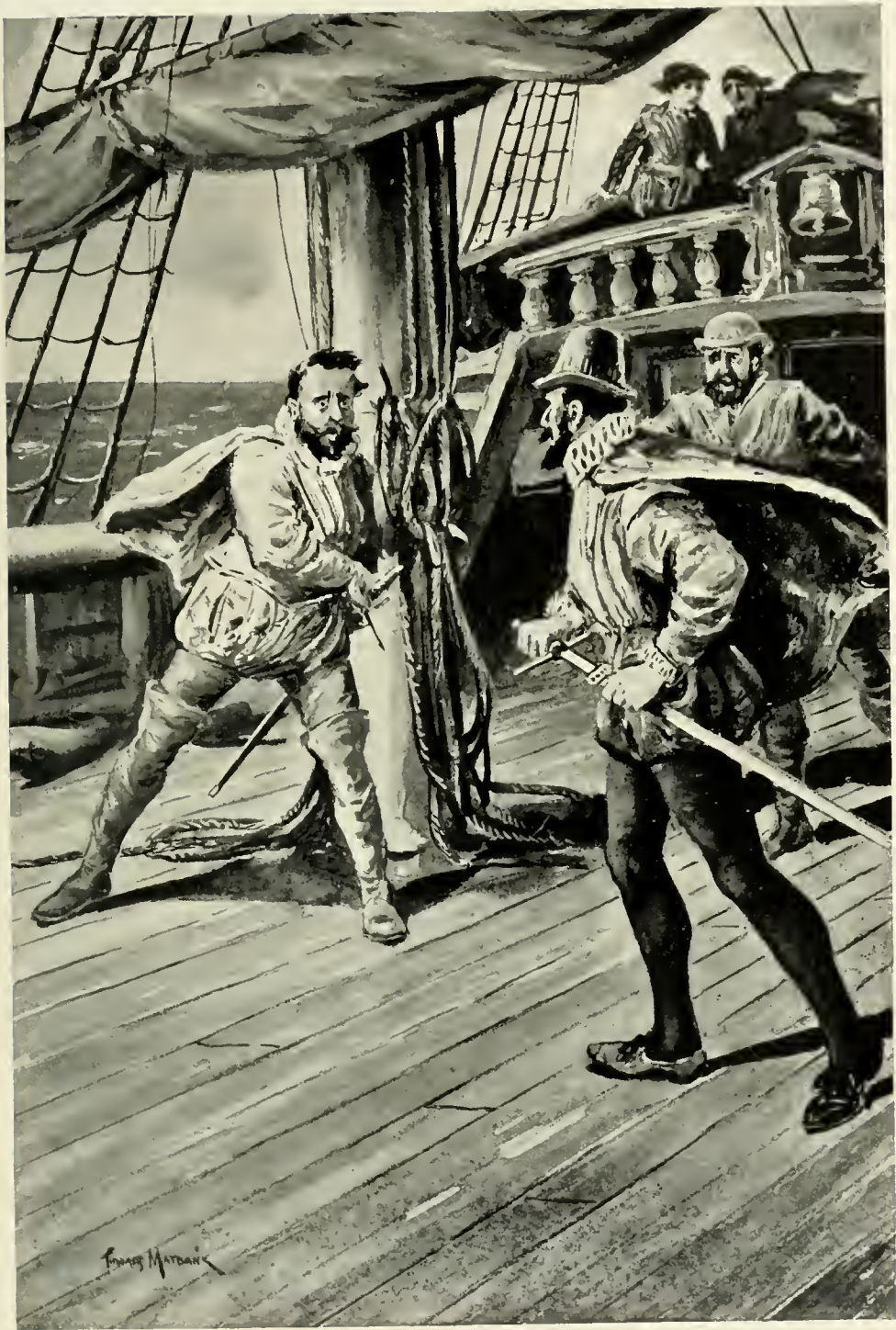
One of their number, however, a man named Juan de Sarabia, suggested that there was still time to remedy the check placed upon them. He hurriedly wrote another letter, got several of the men to sign it, and then, seizing a quantity of native cotton, he wound the threads round and round the letter.

Just when Almagro's vessel was about to heave the anchor, and all except his own men were ordered to leave, Sarabia walked up to Almagro as he stood giving orders on the deck, and, presenting the roll of cotton to him, said :

“Señor Almagro, the lady of the governor would, I am sure, be pleased to see what these poor heathens make their garments of. I therefore suggest that you present this specimen to her.”

“Good,” said Almagro ; “go quickly and place it in my cabin with the other specimens.”

Sarabia did as he was ordered, then gravely left the



Eyes flashed ; hands leapt to sword-hilts

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ship, being the last man to go over the side, after a profound and ironical bow to Almagro.

When the vessel arrived at Panama, Almagro went to the governor, and, having made his report, showed the various items of gold and silver, stuffs and cloths which they had collected from the Indians. These were not very valuable, but Almagro made up for this by the glowing colours with which he painted the wealth and fertility of the regions which they, of all Europeans, had been the first to discover. The governor was impressed, as were others who stood by him; and Almagro went from the interview convinced that he had gained the governor's good will for the further and larger force which Pizarro and he wished to raise.

Almagro and Luque, after a long talk together, were in the highest spirits, being confident now that the wealthy regions of the Land of Gold were almost within their reach.

Next day they went together to the house of the governor, desiring to press their claims while the good impression of Almagro's report was still fresh. As they entered the ante-chamber they marvelled at the looks which were fixed on them by those standing about. Some sneered, others laughed, and there were still others who looked blackly at them.

They were instantly admitted to the governor, and the men in the ante-room crowded behind them into the great chamber.

The governor, a tall man of a military, high-bred air, was walking up and down with impatient steps, and as they entered he turned upon them, his eyes flashing, his face dark with a scowl.

"What is this you have told me?" he cried, looking at

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Almagro. "You come with your romantic tales, you tell me of riches, of fertile lands, of vessels of gold and silver finely wrought, of rich garments and delicately spun stuffs. But what have you to say of the lives of the men you have lost by your mad lust for gold? What have you to tell me of the miseries suffered by those you have left behind—of their slow death by starvation, by poisonous insects and fierce beasts? Tell me the truth, or by our sovereign lord the emperor, you shall rot in jail as a common fraud and cheat."

For a moment Almagro was taken aback by the sudden and unexpected storm of the governor's wrath. Then, recovering, he said :

"I know not what your Highness means, or who has lied to you. It is not I."

"No?" replied Don Pedro, with a laugh. "Then perhaps you have only suppressed a great part of the truth. See here! This letter was found rolled up in a bundle of cotton which you brought for my lady, and in it you and your fellow-madman, Pizarro, are painted in your true colours. You are the drover, sent by the butcher to collect more poor, foolish sheep, to be taken out into that wilderness of swamps and terrible forests to be slaughtered or starved."

"By my head!" cried Almagro, his anger leaping forth at seeing how the malcontents had outwitted him, after he had confiscated their letters, "I will hang that rascal who disobeyed my orders to the highest tree when I lay my hand on him."

"Have a care what you say," said Don Pedro, in a hard voice. "The power of life and death lies with me alone. And on behalf of his Majesty I demand an account of you and of Pizarro, for your high-handed treatment of my

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soldiers, fellow-subjects of his Catholic Majesty. Listen to this."

Whereupon Don Pedro read the letter which Juan de Sarabia had hidden in the roll of cotton. In this were related the miseries which the writers had suffered when left alone with Pizarro on the mainland, and it was stated that it was the cold-blooded greed of Pizarro which now forced them against their wills to stay marooned upon an island, where, unless the governor in the kindness of his heart sent a vessel at once to take them away, they would undoubtedly succumb to their miseries. At the end of the letter Sarabia had written a doggerel verse, which ran as follows :—

“ Look out, Señor Governor,
For the drover while he's near :
Since he goes home to get the sheep,
For the Butcher who stays here.”

“ Now,” asked the governor, “ what is the truth ? Did those men desire to stay with Pizarro, or did they not ? ”

To this Almagro could give but one answer, in spite of his angry denunciations of the malcontents.

“ You are judged from your own mouth,” said Don Pedro. “ I will listen no more to you nor to Don Luque, who, I think, in spite of his usual wisdom, is in this matter more than a little mad. And this is my command.”

He looked around at the men standing near and beckoned one to him.

“ Don Tafur,” he said, “ I bid you to take two vessels, store them with provisions and go quickly to this island of Gallo, mentioned in this letter, and bring back every Spaniard that you find alive when you get there. Go at once, and set about the work.”

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Don Tafur saluted and walked from the room. Almagro and Don Luque, knowing that in his present incensed state of mind the governor would not listen to them, also took their leave, feeling deeply mortified as they saw the sneering faces and heard the bitter laughter of those about them.

Meanwhile Pizarro, on the island of Gallo, had sent back the other vessel to Panama, under the pretext that it required to be repaired. The reason of his doing this was that he feared lest the more mutinous of the men with him might seize the vessel secretly and thus deprive him of all his band. Therefore he forestalled them by putting aboard all the more unruly men, retaining only those whom he knew were either of a like spirit with himself or were not deeply disaffected.

When the vessel had gone, the little band left with him, together with a few Indians whom they had retained, found it hard to provide food for themselves. They had no fear of the natives of the island, for these had fled to the mainland when the Spaniards had taken possession; but the island was very bare of shelter; and, it being in the midst of the rainy season, storms of thunder and lightning, with driving wind and drenching rain, overwhelmed them daily.

Thus exposed to the miseries caused by the elements, and pinched by famine, all except the stoutest-hearted among them pined for the comforts of Panama, and cursed the madness that had made them volunteer for the venture.

At length one day, through the rain that veiled the distant sea, their hearts leaped to see two vessels beating down toward them from the north. In a little while the vessels cast anchor in the lee of the island, and boats put



He traced a line on the sand

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forth and ran ashore, laden with provisions, which the famished men eagerly bore up from the beach. When their hunger was appeased, most of them clamoured to go on board at once and leave the detested island.

But Pizarro, with three of his intimates, stood apart, reading a letter which had been handed to him by Don Tafur, together with an epistle from the governor, ordering him to return at once to Panama. Near by stood Don Tafur, waiting in silence for Pizarro to announce his submission to the governor's commands.

At length Pizarro turned to his three friends, whose names were Bartholomew Ruiz, the brave pilot, Pedro de Candia, a Greek, and Nicolas de Ribera, his treasurer.

"Friends," he said, in a low voice, "I have letters from Almagro and Don Luque. They tell me to stay here, and they engage that in a little while they will furnish me with ships and men to go on with our venture. To return now, they say, would ruin the expedition for ever; to despair now would seal us as cowards."

The three looked at Pizarro: they saw the glow in his eyes, the indefinable stiffening in his carriage, the bold look in his stern face. Then they looked at one another and read their decision in each other's eyes.

By this time the whole of the forty or fifty men who had stayed behind with Pizarro were ranged in a crowd behind the governor's messenger; their questioning looks were directed towards Pizarro, and they waited.

Suddenly Pizarro advanced a few paces and stood before the assembled men. He drew his sword and traced a line on the sand, still wet from the tide. The line ran from east to west.

"Friends and comrades," he said, and lifted his head, and the men wondered at the ringing sound of his voice.

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“On that side,” he said, pointing to the southern side of the line, “are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion and death; on this other side is ease, plenty and pleasure. There lies Peru and its riches, here are Panama and its poverty. Choose, each of you, what best becomes a good Castilian.”

Saying these words, he stepped over the line and faced the south. To his side came instantly the pilot, Ruiz, Pedro de Candia and de Ribera. Then, from the crowd about Don Tafur, ten men stepped and ranged themselves beside the four.

Thus, whilst the others looked on in wonder and dismay, these fourteen brave men, without food and half clothed, vowed themselves to a daring venture against a powerful kingdom, devoting themselves, as their leader had truly said, to labours unspeakable, terrible hunger, nakedness, desertion and death.

“But, señores, this is madness!” burst out Don Tafur, striding forward, “madness and rank disobedience to the commands of his Highness.”

“Nevertheless, it is our will,” said Pizarro quietly, “and we will abide the issue.”

CHAPTER IV

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FOR some time Don Tafur tried all manner of arguments to dissuade Pizarro and his companions from their resolution ; but it was in vain. He angrily refused Pizarro's request that he should leave one of his vessels so that they could continue their voyage, and only with great reluctance did he consent to leave some of his stores with them for their use.

When at length the others had embarked on board the ships, Don Tafur, the last to step into the boat, turned and addressed Pizarro and the men with him.

“ For the last time, señores, will you come with me and leave this mad enterprise ? ”

“ We will not,” said Pizarro, and the others echoed his words.

“ Think you,” went on Don Tafur, with a sneer, “ that you are now doing that which will hand your names down to fame—as the faithful thirteen who would not forsake this expedition of mad visionaries ? ”

“ It may be,” said Pizarro, “ or it may not be. But for myself I know that never could I be happy again in life if at this time I turned back from the course I have proposed to myself. Whatever comes, be it starvation, miseries or death in battle, I keep that which is worth all the pleasures of Panama—the knowledge that I do not despise myself for a coward.”

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“The captain speaks the minds of all of us,” said Pedro de Candia. “We think he has a great destiny, even as he has shown he has a great purpose and a stout heart. We will share his destiny, whatever it bring.”

Silently Don Tafur doffed his hat and bowed, then turned and entered the boat, and in a little while the group on the seashore heard the clank of the rising anchor chains, saw the sails climb bellying upon the masts, heard the shouts of farewell, and looked with intent gaze as the ships heeled before the favouring winds and rushed over the white-flecked seas. Soon they were lost to view, and then the companions in constancy turned their eyes upon their barren island, and began to think in what manner they should spend the waiting time.

Ruiz the pilot had gone back with Don Tafur in order to aid the efforts of Don Luque and Almagro in obtaining further help for the expedition, and as Pizarro knew that some time must elapse before assistance could come to them, he began to set about trying to better their conditions in the inhospitable spot.

It was found, however, that the island was so exposed to wind and storm that it was impossible to make it habitable. Moreover, it was thought that the natives who had forsaken it might get wind of the fact that the number of Spaniards was now but small, and they might therefore return in overwhelming numbers to regain possession.

In these circumstances Pizarro thought of an island, named by the natives Gorgona, which they had touched at, and which lay some twenty-five leagues to the north of them. He remembered that this was more wooded than their present abode, and therefore offered more shelter. He determined to remove thither, and having acquainted

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his companions with his decision, he got them, with the aid of the Indians who still stayed with them, to construct a raft from the few trees which grew on the island. When this was completed the whole of the little company was removed, with their few stores and provisions, to the island of Gorgona.

They found that this stood higher out of the water, and was partially covered with wood, in the undergrowth of which lived pheasants and rabbits. The island was quite uninhabited, and lay about five leagues from the mainland.

There were also numerous streams, and as the Spaniards had crossbows with them with which to shoot the game, they found themselves in much better circumstances than in the island they had left.

To protect themselves from the drenching storms of rain they made rude huts on the edges of the wood ; but though these sheltered them from the elements, they also sheltered hordes of venomous flies and insects which preyed upon the Europeans.

Week succeeded week in a dreary world where there was nothing to occupy men's minds, except the eternal watch which they kept upon the vacant seas to the north, looking and longing for the ship that was to come. But Pizarro, knowing that if he were to keep his men in a sound condition he must give them something higher and better than themselves to think about, made it the practice to omit no service which the Church enjoined upon religious Catholics.

Every morning and evening, therefore, they gathered together, and he said the appropriate prayers ; Fridays and Sundays were strictly observed, and the greater Church festivals were made the occasion of more elaborate prayers, and, if possible, food a little more in quantity was supplied to commemorate the event. Thus was created in the

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simple and rough minds of the soldiers a sense of confidence in the protection of Heaven.

Months passed. Each man got to know every inch of their narrow island prison by reason of the infinite times which they had traversed it from end to end. Looking to the north, the west and the south, only the illimitable fields of tumbling waters met their eye, merging distantly into the sky. If they turned to the east they saw the line of forest-fringed coast, and behind the green masses of trees, the terrors of whose sombre depths they had learned, rose like a giant jagged saw the line of the Andes, their frozen summits glooming to the rainclouds, or flashing pure and white to the splendour of the tropic sun.

The wretchedness of the rainy season passed, giving place to the sweltering heats of summer, when men pined for cool shadow to shelter them from the fierce rays of the vertical sun. But still the tumbling waste of water to the north was unbroken by the sight of a friendly sail.

So keen and constant was their watch that every speck upon the sea was noted, so that often, as one strained his eyes and saw a piece of drifting timber lift above the wave, or a mass of seaweed swing high on a crest of foam, he would cry out : " A ship ! a ship ! " Then when others ran to him, he would point to where he had seen what he thought was a lifting sail, until the truth would at length be forced upon them that again they had been deceived. Successive disappointments such as these, and the tension of long waiting, bore heavily on all. It seemed at times as if they were utterly deserted and forgotten ; as if they would stay there for all the years of their lives, and leave their bones at length upon the sands of their prison island.

When Don Tafur had reached Panama and reported to the governor the inflexible resolution of Pizarro and his

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friends, Don Pedro de los Rios was enraged at what he termed "wilful suicide"; and to the appeals of Don Luque he at first replied that never again would he assist men so obstinately bent upon their own destruction.

Almost daily, however, Don Luque had an interview with the governor, and so tactful was the priest that gradually he made an impression on the stubborn heart of Don Pedro. He showed him that even if Pizarro and his friends were rash, it was ultimately in the service of the emperor and for the glory of Spanish conquest and power. Further, he reminded the governor that, on taking over the government, he had been expressly instructed to aid Pizarro in his enterprise of discovery towards the south. To desert him now would not only be disobeying the orders of the State, but it would ruin the last chance of success and cause the deaths of Pizarro and his faithful adherents.

For many weeks the stubborn mind of the governor would not be moved; but at length he gave a reluctant consent that a vessel might be despatched to the island, but with no more than a sufficiency of hands to work her, and with positive instructions to Pizarro that he should return and report to the governor within six months.

Once having gained this consent, Don Luque and Almagro lost no time in purchasing a small vessel; but still there were weeks of delay while necessary stores and provisions had to be brought over the rough mountains from Nombre de Dios on the other side of the isthmus. It was not, therefore, until six months had passed since Almagro's return that he was ready again to get to sea with succour for his friend.

When the sails of the caravel rose over the waste of waters before the eyes of the watchers on the little island,

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Pizarro and his comrades could hardly believe that after all they had not been forgotten. Swiftly the ship sailed to the land, a boat was put off, and joyful greetings were exchanged.

Pizarro was disappointed to learn from Almagro that he brought no recruits for the expedition ; but nevertheless he determined to go forward. Two of his band were too ill to be moved, and they were left in the care of some of the friendly Indians. Taking the rest of his followers and the remainder of the Indians, he embarked, and weighing anchor, bade farewell to the place which had seen so many months of wretchedness and despair.

Following the directions of the natives with them, Ruiz put the bows of the vessel straight towards the port of Tumbez, where, said the Indians, they would be almost at the heart of the Land of Gold, of which they had so long been in quest.

Narrowly they held on this course, touching at no place on the way. Both the currents and the winds were against them, but the weather was not severe, and though slow, their voyage was not uncomfortable.

After passing the point reached by the old pilot on his voyage of discovery they found that the coast lost its bold and rugged aspect, and now sloped gently down, opening out into sandy plains with well-cultivated fields here and there. The white dwellings of the natives shone in the sunlight, and smoke rose over the distant landscape from hidden towns and villages.

At length, rounding a point of wooded land, a sight of majesty and beauty burst on their view. The ship glided smoothly into the quiet waters of a great gulf. The shore that met the sea was a narrow strip of emerald green, studded with little towns and villages ; and behind them,

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rising sharply from the fertile plain, the great cordilleras lay, their sides clothed here and there with rugged woods, but in places smiling with terraced fields of Indian maize or potatoes.

Still farther beyond rose the titanic flanks of the Andes, lifting far into the blue of the sky, the steep and jagged sides bare with dark rock, or flashing now and then as the sun caught the ice of the glaciers that crept down the sides. Higher still above the ridge of the mountain range rose two great giants—Chimborazo, with its broad, round summit, and Cotopaxi, with its dazzling cone of silvery white.

At length, following the directions of the Indians, the Spaniards came to anchor off an uninhabited island, which lay at the mouth of the bay of Tumbes.

Next morning they sailed across the bay for the city. As they drew near, they beheld a town of large size, with many buildings of stone and plaster. It stood amidst leafy trees, and round about it was meadowland, rich with crops and herbage.

Several large native rafts, filled with men, were sailing out of the harbour ; and the Indians who were with the Spaniards hailed them. They learned that they were warriors who were setting out to attack an island near by. Pizarro, through his interpreters, invited some of the chiefs to come aboard. The Peruvians looked with wonder on everything which met their gaze in the ship ; and especially did they marvel at finding some of their countrymen with the white strangers.

The Spanish leader persuaded the Peruvian chiefs to return to the town and report what they had learned. This they did, and as the Spaniards let go their anchor, and prepared to lie at their moorings, they saw the people

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flocking to the waterside in crowds, as the news of the arrival of the wonderful strangers spread through the town.

In a little while a huge native raft, or *balsa*, set off from the shore and approached the ship. It was laden with bananas, plantains, yucca, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, pineapples, cocoa-nuts and other rich products of the land ; together with game and fish, and several llamas, a strange beast from which the Peruvians procured their fabrics for clothing, and which the Spaniards had heard of but had never before seen.

With these there also came a man in rich clothes, with heavy gold ornaments in his ears, whom the other natives treated with great deference. He was an Inca noble, one of the royal and sacred family of the kings, and Pizarro received him with great distinction. The noble was shown all over the vessel, and his numerous questions concerning the uses of the various things he saw were answered as well as they could be, through the Indian interpreters.

When the Inca chief had gone over the whole of the ship, he asked :

“ Why is it, seeing that the white men are so rich and so abundantly provided with all things for their comfort— why is it that they have come to the land of the Incas ? ”

“ Because,” replied Pizarro, “ my master is a great prince, the greatest and most powerful in all the world, and I have come hither to discover new lands for him, so that he may assert his supremacy over all regions which have hitherto been unknown. Moreover, it is my prince’s desire,” went on Pizarro, “ to bring a knowledge of the true religion to those people who are sunk in heathenism. I will tell them of the true and only God, in whom to believe will save their immortal souls from eternal perdition.”

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The Inca chieftain listened with deep attention, but it is to be doubted whether he understood much of what was said. He bowed and replied nothing. When, after he had eaten dinner with the Spaniards, he took his leave, he invited Pizarro to come on shore and see the town when he chose. The Spanish leader gave him several presents, among them being an iron hatchet, which the Inca chief had greatly admired, for iron was unknown to the Peruvians, their weapons being of bronze.

Next day Pizarro sent one of his comrades ashore, Alonso de Molina, together with a negro, one of the crew. They took with them a present of live swine and poultry for the chief magistrate of the city, whom the Peruvians called a curaca. When, in the evening, Molina returned with more fruit and vegetables, all the Spaniards gathered around him, and his tale was wondrous to hear.

“When I landed,” said the Spanish cavalier, “the Indians crowded about me, all very friendly, but seemingly astonished. They touched my face, felt my beard, and handled my dress. But I think they were still more astonished at Pedro here,” pointing to the negro, whose black face shone with good humour, “for one of them rubbed his face with a hand and looked to see if the black came off. And when the black grinned at them, they jumped about him with merriment. Then suddenly the cock which Pedro had put on the ground in its cage began to crow. All the chatter of the natives suddenly ceased, and some jumped away. Then they clapped their hands with glee and asked what the bird was saying.”

“Yes, yes,” said one of his comrades, “but what saw you of the town, Alonso? Saw you aught of treasure or fine raiment?”

“Wait and I will tell you,” replied Molina. “When

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they had got over their first surprise, the natives conducted me to the dwelling of their chief man or curaca. His house is made of stone ; porters stand at his doors, his floors are covered with rich carpets, and the dishes and cups upon his table are of gold and silver, for when I was taken to him he was at dinner. He asked me to dine with him, and very delicate was the food we had. Afterwards he took me through the city, where I saw many fine houses, and a fortress built very strongly of stone. It was wide and big and of very fine work, and was made by the Incas, who are kings of Cuzco, a golden city far inland, and lords of all Peru. Near by this is a temple, where they took me ; and never saw I so much gold and silver in one place before, nor have I ever dreamed that so much could be in one place. There were figures of pure gold, as of gods, and altars of silver before each ; the walls are of sheets of gold, and a rich cornice runs round the chief chamber, of solid gold, richly worked."

"Of a truth," said one, with a laugh, "you say naught of the wine they make, of which you must have drunk deep to tell us such tales."

"But I speak naught but the truth," said Molina, "of things I saw with my own eyes."

In spite of his assertions most of his fellows doubted his tale, which seemed no more than a dream of extravagant fancies.

Next day, therefore, Pizarro sent Pedro de Candia, the Greek cavalier, to visit the curaca and to see if Molina's tale were true. Candia was dressed in complete mail, and bore his sword by his side and his harquebus on his shoulder. As the sun flashed from his armour and dazzled from the headpiece, the simple Indians looked upon him almost as a god.

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They begged him to "let his arquebus speak," for they had heard wondrous tales of it from their countrymen who had come with the Spaniards, and Candia, setting up a wooden board as a target, fired his musket, splintering the board to pieces. The flash of the powder, the loud report, and the inability to see what had caused the board to break filled the natives with awe. Some fled, others fell to the ground, covering their faces with their hands, while others approached him with humble gestures of awe. Only when the cavalier smiled did the Peruvians recover their spirits.

Then they showed him about the town. The fortress, he found, was protected by triple rows of walls, and was strongly garrisoned. The temple, also, with its interior walls hung with plates of gold and silver, and its idols made of gold, was exactly as Molina had described. He saw also a kind of convent beside the temple, where, he was told, the Virgins of the Sun were lodged. He was not permitted to enter this, but in the gardens of the convent he saw many figures of fruits and vegetables, which were made of gold and silver, beautifully worked.

When Candia returned to the ship and corroborated all that Molina had said, the Spaniards were jubilant. It seemed that now indeed all their dreams were to be realized, and those who had mocked them as visionaries would now be mocked in their turn.

"I give thanks to Heaven," said Pizarro, "that now our constancy and our faith are to be rewarded; but bitterly do I lament the timidity of our enemies who have deprived me of followers sufficient in number to enable us to conquer these lands and their wealth for the glory of our master the emperor."

Pizarro saw that it was idle to attempt anything in the

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way of conquest with the insignificant force at his disposal ; and therefore, having learnt all he could, be prepared to depart. He promised the natives of Tumbez that he would return before long, and then, weighing anchor, he turned his prow towards the south.

Pursuing his way along the coast, he touched at various places, and at each he was received with hospitality by the natives, who seemed milder and more gentle than those of the north, whom the Spaniards had met with in their former expeditions.

At every stopping-place he heard the same accounts of a rich and powerful monarch, lord of all these lands, who lived inland beyond the mountains in a city whose treasures of gold and silver were incalculable ; but in no place did they find such evidences of wealth as in Tumbez.

At length Pizarro reached the mouth of a broad and beautiful stream flowing through a country which was covered with arid sands. Having landed, the Spaniards found that for miles the land was nothing but a great cemetery, where mummies were buried in clefts and holes in the hills, and the soil was covered with the scattered bones of ancient dead.

When they had reached this point his followers besought Pizarro not to go farther into the unknown seas.

“ Surely,” said they, “ we have learned enough and more than enough to prove not only the existence, but to prepare a map of the actual position of this great and wealthy empire. As it is, however, we have no power to profit by our discovery. Would it not be wise, therefore, to return and report the success of our expedition ? ”

After discussion with his chief associates, Pizarro agreed that it was reasonable that they should return, “ seeing that now,” he said, “ we, who departed under a cloud, the

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scorn and mock of every timid fool, can now return in triumph."

Instantly, therefore, the ship put about and stood for the north, after having sailed into a sea which had never before been entered by a European ship. Favouring breezes followed all the way back to Tumbez, where they again cast anchor.

The friendly intercourse with the natives was resumed, and the town wore so comfortable an air, and the inhabitants seemed so kindly that Alonso de Molina, who had landed on the previous visit, went to Pizarro and begged that he might be left behind, to live with the Peruvians.

"I have no wish," he said, "to go back to Panama, where duns and creditors will harass the life out of my body. Let me stay here, captain. The natives are kindly people, and until you return I can learn their language and their ways, and so be of great use to you when you come with force enough to conquer the land."

"Let me also stay with Molina," said another cavalier, a close friend of Molina's. "Together we could do much to prepare your way when you shall return."

"Your lives will be in your own hands, my men," said Pizarro. "If you stay, you must be wary, lest you excite suspicions. Be not over bold or insolent, learn their tongue and their ways, and when we return, you will be useful to us."

In great glee the two men hastily collected their meagre baggage and put off in the boat and were rowed ashore, where they were made hugely welcome by the delighted and simple natives.

By the aid of his own Indians, Pizarro had got the chief or curaca of the place to permit him to take on board two intelligent young natives of Tumbez, on promising to

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bring them back safely. This was done in order that they should see the cities and learn the power of the white men, so as to report on these matters when they returned. One of these natives of Tumbez was a youth whom the Spaniards called Felipillo, or little Philip, who quickly adapted himself to the ways of his European friends, and learned to speak Castilian. The other was named Martinillo, or little Martin, and was almost equally quick.

From Tumbez, Pizarro sailed direct to Panama, only touching at the island of Gorgona, to pick up the survivor of the two men whom he had left there in ill-health. After an absence of eighteen months, the little band of hardy adventurers again saw the familiar plaza of Panama, with the lions of Castile on the silken banner which waved over the governor's quarters; and as soon as loungers on the waterside caught sight of the vessel, the cheer that arose gave Pizarro and his men a foretaste of the triumph they were to enjoy now that they had come home again.

There is little need to describe the wonder, the joy and the admiration of their friends as, leaping ashore, they clasped the hands held out to them and tried to answer the eager questions which came to them. It was with proud satisfaction that the band of ten adventurers walked toward the town, surrounded by friends and by those who, having previously laughed at them, now congratulated them.

“Every tale that we have ever told ye,” said Almagro, hearty and generous as was his wont, “we now repeat to you. We have seen the length of the golden land—our own eyes have looked at the gold and the silver in its temples, and have seen the golden vessels out of which their lords eat. Now, ye doubting Thomases, never mock us again. You thought we dreamed vain dreams, or,

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worse, that we were cheats and cozeners, and when we staked our lives upon our ventures, you called us madmen. This is our hour, my friends—the hour of our slow, hardly earned triumph.”

Next day, full of the conviction that now, after seeing the proofs of the truth of their magnificent discoveries, the governor would give every aid to their further efforts, Pizarro, Almagro and Don Luque craved audience of Don Pedro de los Rios, who instantly received them.

Pizarro gave an account of their voyage, and in proof of what he related, he produced gold and silver ornaments which he had bartered from the natives, and brought forward the llamas, or native Peruvian sheep, from whose hairy covering the Indians of Peru manufactured their beautiful and delicate garments. He also showed the governor the Indians whom he had brought with him from Tumbez, and related all that they had told him of the riches of the king who dwelt at an inland city of Peru and was called the “Child of the Sun.”

When Pizarro had finished, Don Luque began an appeal for the governor’s patronage and assistance in carrying on a venture which was too great a one for their own unaided resources.

“I make this appeal to your Excellency,” said the priest, “with every confidence that you will grant us the favour of your protection and grace. The reality and vastness of the riches, both in treasure and territory, which we have in view to gain for the glory of Spain, have been proved to your Highness. May we hope, señor, that you will make it publicly known that in our endeavours to enlist aid and to enrol volunteers, we have your favour?”

The governor had listened throughout with a cold face, and now, with a gloomy brow, he replied :

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“ I see no reason why I should give you what you desire. You must do what you may without me. Do you think I have any desire to build up other states by the depopulation of my own ? Why should I be so great a fool ? Furthermore, I will not allow you to throw away any more lives. More than enough have already been sacrificed to gain this cheap display of gold and silver, and to capture a few Indian sheep ! ”

Saying these words, the governor rose and left the chamber, thus cutting short all attempts at further appeal.

The three associates looked at each other in consternation. Then Almagro, with a bitter oath, turned and strode from the apartment, followed by Pizarro and Don Luque. They went to the latter's lodging, and as soon as their anger, perplexity and astonishment could allow them, they began to consider what they could do, by their own unaided efforts, to make up an expedition.

“ Ah, the jealous, petty soul ! ” cried Almagro. “ It was spite that made him speak so. To find that those he had branded as madmen or cheats had made their words good—to find that they who had been penniless had returned with a key to treasures of gold that he could never touch—that it was which made his mean heart turn against us ! ”

“ It is idle to rail, Almagro, ” said Pizarro, his pale face more pallid still, his eyes hard and full of gloom. “ What we must do now is to think out a way to circumvent him, to use him against his will, work upon his love of power or of gold in some way. ”

“ Not I, ” said Almagro ; “ never more will I make part in begging of that womanish soul. ”

“ But it must be done, ” returned Pizarro. “ In no other way can we get the loan of a peso, enlist a volunteer or

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move a ship. We are at the very grasp of all we ever hoped to find ; to stop now would be to abandon, for someone else's gain, the rich land of treasure which our own constancy and perseverance have discovered. Would you leave open to others the wealth which is yours ? ”

“ But, man, what's to be done ? ” cried Almagro, indignant and perplexed. “ Must we spend weary months trying to persuade the governor ? ”

“ Listen, my children,” interrupted the priest, who, walking moodily up and down the room, had said nothing hitherto ; “ there is but one authority which will favour us—which must favour us. It is the Crown itself. It is for our emperor that the discovery has been made, and for him again and his glory will you conquer what you have discovered. We must go, one of us, to Spain, and lay this matter before his Gracious Majesty, the Emperor Charles ! ”

“ By my faith, but the priest hits it ! ” cried Almagro, and struck the table with a great blow of his fist. “ And who do you suggest should go ? ” he demanded. “ 'Tis a delicate matter, yet one that needs a man.”

“ The Licentiate Corral, a prudent and wise lawyer, is about to go to Spain,” said Luque. “ In his hands——”

“ A lawyer ! ” cried Almagro in disgust. “ No ; a thousand times no. He has not the matter at his heart. There is the man to go—Francisco Pizarro. He has been through all that he will have to tell, he is cool and cautious, prudent yet bold. Pizarro, you are the man to do this. Your head will not be turned by the splendours of Court, nor your heart moved by the crooked words of courtiers and other functionaries. You must go, lad, or we are all lost. ”

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The pale face of Pizarro flushed faintly and his dark eyes glowed.

“ I will go,” he said, “ if that is the wish of you both. But, by the Virgin, I would rather face the miseries of the wilderness ! ”

“ You must go,” reiterated Almagro. “ No one could do our business so well.”

“ What do you say, father ? ” asked Pizarro of the priest.

“ God grant, my children,” said the priest, “ that one of you does not cheat the other of his benefits. I should be more at ease if you went together.”

“ Not I ! ” cried Almagro. “ I should be like a boar in a hen-roost. And Pizarro will be true to us all, I doubt not.”

“ I think,” said Pizarro coldly, “ that as I have never tried to cheat either of you hitherto, I shall not defraud you in this.”

It was settled, therefore, that Pizarro should go to Spain to beseech the favour and assistance of the Court itself.

When all preparations were ready, he bade adieu to Panama, and, accompanied by Pedro de Candia, the Greek cavalier, took the road over the mountains to Nombre de Dios, where he would take ship to Spain. With him, also, as proofs of the wonderful story he had to tell, he took some of the Peruvian natives, two or three llamas, various delicate fabrics of cloth, and many ornaments and vases of gold and silver.

CHAPTER V

At the Door of the Land of Gold

THE news that Pizarro, the man who had discovered another kingdom, richer even than the land of the Aztecs, was coming to Spain had preceded the adventurer by vessels that had sailed from Nombre de Dios before he set out. The soldier felt certain that he would be welcomed for the sake of his news, and that the aid which he and his associates desired would be granted by the government.

It was, therefore, with some emotion that, as the vessel sailed into the harbour of Seville, he looked again upon the land which he had not seen for twenty years, when he left the country a poor, obscure soldier.

As he stepped upon the quay, where many had gathered at the news of his approach, his mind glowed with warm feelings for his country. Suddenly a man in official garb stepped forth from the crowd, and stood before Pizarro.

“Are you Francisco Pizarro?” he asked.

“I am,” replied the soldier.

“Then I arrest you in the name of the law,” was the reply, and at a gesture from the stranger two armed men placed themselves beside Pizarro.

The soldier’s face went pale. This, then, was the opening of those brilliant fortunes for which he had had such hopes from his native land.

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“At whose command and for what reason am I arrested?” asked Pizarro.

“You are a citizen of Panama,” was the reply. “The Bachelor Enciso has a claim against that city for money advanced, and you are to be held in durance until his claim is paid.”

At the injustice of this proceeding some of the citizens assembled there began to murmur.

“You may be right in law, Master Sheriff,” said one man, a richly dressed merchant; “but this Señor Pizarro comes hither on a great mission, and I doubt but your master, Enciso, will smart for this high-handed proceeding.”

“Señor,” said the officer haughtily, “my master does but what the law allows, and desires no countenance from you!”

Depression and despair settled upon Pizarro when, a few hours later, he found himself caged between the four dark walls of a prison cell. He had no hope that anyone would move in his behalf, seeing that he knew no person in authority, and that it was to nobody's interest that he should be released.

Nevertheless, his comrade, Candia, was not idle, and stirred up the indignation of the citizens of Seville, which was already aroused. The result was that some of the chief men sent word of Pizarro's imprisonment to the Court at Toledo. No sooner did the high officials there learn of Pizarro's mission than orders went out at once for the release of the soldier, together with the command that he should proceed to the emperor at once.

A few days, therefore, found Pizarro in the brilliant surroundings of the Court of that great monarch, Charles the Fifth, conqueror of France, Emperor of Germany, the



Depression and despair settled upon Pizarro

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man in whose hands rested at that time the destinies of every European kingdom except Great Britain.

Far from being embarrassed by the magnificence he saw around him, Pizarro kept his usual self-possession, and showed a dignity which was native to the Castilian with good blood in his veins. The emperor received him among his chief statesmen, and examined with great interest the things which Pizarro had brought, asking many questions as he did so.

When Pizarro began, at the emperor's command, the narration of his adventures by sea and land, in peril by storm, by Indians and by starvation, all who heard him were moved by his earnestness and eloquence. All realized that this man had really gone through the toil and suffering he described; and finally, when he described his lonely condition on Gorgona, abandoned by the government at Panama, deserted by all save a small band of faithful men, watching the sea every hour for the aid they almost despaired of, the emperor, a man who was rarely moved, was affected to tears.

"Truly," said the emperor, when the tale was told, "you have shown the unconquerable spirit which is only whetted the more by the difficulties which oppose it. You deserve well of me, and I will commend you and your affairs, so that all you desire shall be granted to you."

Notwithstanding the emperor's recommendation, Pizarro found that his affairs made but slow progress. It was not until a year later, indeed, that the document which granted him certain powers and privileges in the country which he was to conquer was granted to him. By this instrument he was to receive the titles and rank of Governor and Captain-General, Adelantado and Alguacil Mayor of the

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province, and to have a salary of seven hundred and twenty-five thousand maravedis.

By the same document Almagro was declared to be commander of the fortress of Tumbez, with the rank of hidalgo, and an annual salary of three hundred thousand maravedis. Ruiz, the pilot, was created Grand Pilot of the Southern Ocean; Candia was named Chief of Artillery, and Don Luque was named Bishop of Tumbez. The survivors of the companions on the desolate island were also granted certain titles.

These, however, were all empty honours until the land had been conquered, and the government, while claiming a fifth of all treasures and revenues of the Land of Gold, contributed nothing toward the costs of the expedition, except a little money towards the purchase of artillery and military stores.

Pizarro went to his native town of Truxillo in Estremadura, where his boyhood and youth had been spent, and endeavoured to get volunteers for his venture. But the response was meagre. Four of his brothers, however, volunteered, all of them poor, and all proud; but all were eager to share Pizarro's fortunes now that there was prospect of gain.

With the aid of Hernando Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, and others interested in the venture, Pizarro got together three ships and some soldiers, and with his brothers sailed from Spain in January 1530, having spent nearly two years on his mission.

News of the success of his efforts had preceded him, and when he cast anchor in the harbour of Nombre de Dios, Don Luque and Almagro were on shore to meet him. When Almagro heard from his confederate how all the highest ranks and titles had been given to Pizarro, he was

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filled with anger, for he had asked his friend to procure for him the office of Adelantado. Almagro reproached him with his perfidy, seeing that Pizarro had promised to provide for his comrade's interests as faithfully as for his own. Pizarro excused himself by saying that, in spite of his efforts, the authorities had refused to give the title of Adelantado to another person, because civil war had lately occurred in a colony owing to the rivalries of officers of nearly equal rank.

It looked almost as if a final rupture would take place between Pizarro and Almagro ; but their friends patched up the quarrel, and, returning to Panama, the two leaders set about preparing for their expedition to the south.

The number of Pizarro's force did not exceed a hundred and eighty men, with twenty-seven horses for the cavalry. Five priests also accompanied the little band, and after a solemn service held in the church of Panama, the men went on board three vessels which had been obtained, and early in January 1531 the squadron set sail for the conquest of Peru. Almagro, however, was to remain behind for the present, to order to beat up reinforcements with which he was to follow later.

Pizarro intended to steer direct for Tumbez, which he considered to be the door to the empire of the Incas. But head-winds and contrary currents opposed him, so that after a run of thirteen days Pizarro came to anchor at a point about one degree north, and here determined to land and to make his way along the coast to Tumbez, while the vessels held a course parallel with the land.

After some miles of an exhausting march through forests soaked with the winter rains, and over streams swollen to torrents, they at length came upon a large Indian village, which they rushed, the natives flying before them into

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the forest, too terrified to attempt to hide any of their valuables.

The Spaniards in their hungry condition made it their first business to seek for food, of which they found an abundance ; and then they searched for gold, and found a rich treasure in the huts. There was a large quantity of gold and silver worked into clumsy ornaments, besides a quantity of precious stones, especially emeralds.

The wealth thus rifled from the houses of the natives was brought to a heap, from which a fifth was deducted for the Crown, and Pizarro then distributed the remainder in due proportion among the officers and men who were with him.

This was the method used throughout the conquest. Every man brought whatever he had obtained and placed it in a common heap, to be divided by the leader according to the rank and services of the men taking part in the expedition. If anyone were found hiding treasure of any sort, so as to obtain more than his due share, he was condemned and slain. Rarely was it necessary to have recourse to this penalty.

“Now, my lads,” said Pizarro, after their gains had been shared, “the treasure we have found here is only a foretaste of what we shall obtain. But we must have more men to aid us in our task, and therefore I shall send back by the ships the share of the Crown and the shares of any of you who desire to place them in security. When so much treasure is shown in Panama, I doubt not that it will settle the doubts of the waverers, and decide many to come out and join our banner.”

The suggestion was voted a good one, and, thereupon, a move was made to the seashore. A trumpet call brought the vessels inshore, and gold was transferred to them to

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the value of twenty thousand castellanos. The captains were then instructed by Pizarro to make all haste back to Panama, and to enlist as many more recruits as could be induced to volunteer.

Having rested and refreshed themselves that night in the huts of the Indian village, the band of conquerors set off next morning southwards on their way to Tumbez.

They now traversed land which was covered with wastes of sand, which, driven about by the wind, blinded the soldiers; and so shifting was the ground that men and beasts often fell. Added to this, the soldiers found that their thick quilted doublets of cotton, or their cuirasses of iron mail, were sources of great pain, for as the men struggled on mile after mile in the sultry sun, they almost swooned in suffocation. Moreover, the glare of the sun on their eyes was unbearable.

Then a strange plague broke out amongst them. It came in the form of great ulcers or warts, which almost covered the body. If by chance one were broken, the man died from loss of blood, and several men were lost in this way and were buried by the wayside. They came upon one or two poor villages, where they found that the plague had arrived before them, for the huts were filled with sick or dying natives, who looked upon the strange iron-clad warriors with lack-lustre eyes.

The natives of other villages fled without attempting to make any resistance, leaving their homes to be rifled by the freebooters. These, finding little or no gold in any of them, began to grumble; and many, worn out by their travels and weakened by disease, cursed themselves and their leaders, bewailing their foolishness in ever having left their pleasant quarters in Panama, and the luxuries of civilization.

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They had now reached a spot where the sea had made a kind of harbour, where afterwards a town was reared, named Puerto Viejo. Here they rested several days, and one morning their eyes were gladdened by the sight of a caravel which, on anchoring inshore, landed some thirty men under the command of a captain named Belalcazar.

Here many of Pizarro's followers, weary of marching and of their sickness, desired that their leader should found a colony; but as yet the chief had no ideas of aught but conquest. To their proposals he returned a decided negative.

"Nay," said he; "it would be madness to stay upon our road now. The key to the treasures of the inland kingdom lies at Tumbez. Let us first get possession of that town, and the whole empire of Peru will lie at our feet."

They continued their march, therefore, along the shores of what is now called the Gulf of Guayaquil, until they came opposite an island which the Tumbez natives with them said was called Puna, and lay at a little distance from the town of Tumbez itself. To this island Pizarro decided to transport his men, thinking that it would be the most convenient camping-place from which to descend upon the Indian city.

Hardly had he come to this resolution, when some of the broad, raft-like balsas were seen coming from the island toward them. They were filled with natives, who, with their chief or cacique at their head, welcomed the Spaniards, bringing with them fresh provisions for the use of the white men.

Pizarro informed them, through his interpreters, that he desired to make his camp on their island, and asked whether they would transfer himself and his men in their craft; to which the Peruvians agreed with every look of

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friendliness, and instantly began to prepare their balsas for ferrying across the men and horses of the Spaniards.

While the latter also made their preparations, Felipillo, one of the natives of Tumbez whom Pizarro had taken with him to Spain in order to learn Castilian, that they might act as interpreters and spies on the expedition, came to him and said :

“ Señor, there is treachery in the hearts of the Puna men. Ever have they been known as false dogs by the braves of Tumbez. They conspire to destroy you and your men, by cutting the ropes which bind the planks of the balsas, so that you with your horses and men will be drowned in the sea.”

Instantly Pizarro ordered the chiefs of the Puna men to come to him, and charged them with this treacherous scheme. But they indignantly denied that any deceit was in their hearts.

“ What should we gain from such a deed,” they asked, “ when your wealth would be sunk in the deep sea beyond our reach ? And well we know that even if we caused the deaths of all of you, there would soon be others coming from your land to avenge you and stamp us and our people out.”

It seemed to Pizarro that they spoke the truth, and that they had not meditated any evil against him. He questioned Felipillo and the other men of Tumbez narrowly, and learned that the Puna men had always been their enemies. Long and sanguinary wars had been waged between them ; the Puna men had withstood the power of the men of the mainland for a long time, and even when they had at last been subdued, they bore their subjection with a restless mien and broke into rebellion at the least excuse.

The suspicion of the Tumbez men, therefore, seemed to

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be explained by the enmity which they bore to the Punas, and Pizarro decided to trust himself to the balsas. Nor was his confidence in the brave islanders misplaced, for they transported him and his men across to the island without the loss of a single article.

The Spaniards were shown to comfortable quarters on the island, and so pleasant was the place and friendly the natives that Pizarro decided to occupy it until the rainy season, which was drawing to a close, was ended. Moreover, by that time he expected Almagro would have arrived with sufficient reinforcements of men and horses to justify his marching into the lands of the Incas with every hope of success.

No sooner did the people of Tumbez hear of the return of the Spaniards than, trusting to the friendly relations which had existed between them on the former occasion, many of them came across in their balsas to the island of Puna, to welcome Pizarro and his men. There were others in the town of Tumbez, however, who, having heard from fleeing natives of the ravages committed by the Spaniards on the march along the coast, advised that no approaches should be made to the foreigners ; but these cautious folk were, for the time, overborne.

The Puna men bitterly resented the presence of the Tumbez men on their island, and disliked to see how they fawned on the Spaniards. Black looks were therefore exchanged between the rival tribes. When some time had elapsed, the presence of so large a body of Spaniards became burdensome to the Puna people, as their supplies of food were too quickly exhausted ; moreover, the Spanish soldiers were often overbearing and exacting to the natives. In a little while, though the Puna men still seemed friendly on the whole, there happened a few incidents which showed

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that their feelings to the Spaniards were becoming changed. At length Pizarro's two chief interpreters came to him and told him that the Puna men were conspiring to fall upon him and slay all his people. He bade the Tumbez men watch the others and let him know what took place.

A few days later Felipillo came to Pizarro in the hut, and said :

“ Señor, even now the traitor chiefs are gathered together to plot your slaying this night.”

Pizarro questioned the boy, and then, rising, he ordered thirty picked soldiers to assemble quietly together, fully armed. With these, and led by Felipillo, he marched to a clearing in the wood near by, where ten or twelve chiefs were assembled, and, having stealthily surrounded them, he made them prisoners.

By this time numbers of the people of Tumbez had gathered around, gloating over the discomfiture of their hated enemies.

Sternly Pizarro charged the captured chiefs with conspiring to slay him and his soldiers treacherously. The Puna men looked at him with fury in their eyes ; and to his repeated questions they returned nothing but silence and glances of baffled rage. They neither excused themselves nor confessed their guilt.

Pizarro hesitated but a moment. Already men from the Puna village were gathering, and he foresaw that it might be difficult to retire to his main force if he delayed longer. It was evident to him that the chiefs had meditated rising against him ; and, experienced by twenty years of Indian fighting, he knew that to let them go unpunished would result disastrously to himself and his little band.

Meanwhile the warriors of Tumbez, their eyes gleaming

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with the lust of revenge, clamoured about him. They demanded to be allowed to be his executioners.

A few short words of command, and the Spanish soldiers had formed ready for marching. The Tumbez men, straining like fierce hounds in leash, saw their enemies an easy prey, and waited for a look, a gesture, from the Spanish leader. The Puna natives, gathering thicker and thicker, already formed an obstacle to his return to quarters.

Pizarro raised his hand and thrust it down towards the captive Puna men. Instantly the Tumbez warriors hurled themselves upon the chiefs of their enemies, and, with yells of exultation, massacred the whole of them. Meanwhile, Pizarro had given an order, and in close marching order his men had quickly pushed through the enraged Puna natives and soon reached their quarters.

Not long had the Spaniards to wait for the result of the slaying of the chieftains. They heard from the direction of the Puna village the sound of men in fury, lashing themselves into rage. Soon a party of the Tumbez men who had joined in the massacre of the chieftains dashed up, and reported that they had had to fight their way through the Punas, leaving half their number dead behind them.

Next moment, out of the wood which separated the Spanish quarters from the town of the Punas, poured an excited crowd of warriors, yelling their war-cries, and flourishing their spears or long knives. Madly they hurled themselves upon the mail-clad Spaniards, who coolly received them on their long pikes, or mowed them down by the volleys of their musketry.

The half-naked bodies of the Indians had no protection against the weapons of the Spaniards, and time after time their devoted attacks were checked or repelled by the



Out of the wood poured an excited crowd of warriors

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pitiless rain of bullets or the keen strokes of the long swords.

Suddenly, from the midst of the lines of the Spaniards dashed a band of steel-clad horsemen, with Pizarro's brother, Hernando, at their head. These, each in flashing cuirass and headpiece, charged boldly into the thickest mass of the Indians, and so sudden was their onslaught, so stern their pursuit, that, panic-stricken, the natives turned and scattered, rushing back into the forest, pursued by the soldiery.

Hundreds of Indians were slain in this battle, whereas only three or four of the Spaniards were killed, though many were wounded, among them being Hernando Pizarro, who was thrust through the leg by a javelin.

But as the days passed it was found that the war had assumed another form. No Spaniard could go any distance from his quarters without running a risk of being cut off, and every night brought a sudden burst of fiendish yells and an attack in some part of the camp. Under such circumstances it was difficult to keep the party supplied with provisions; and the Spaniards lived in a perpetual state of anxiety and alarm.

After some weeks of this harassing existence, one day a soldier, looking toward the open sea, descried two caravels. Instantly the camp was in joyful commotion, trumpets were sounded as a signal to the ships, which quickly replied. In a little while the vessels lay anchored off the island and boats were passing to and fro, disembarking a hundred recruits from Panama, who were welcomed boisterously into the camp.

At the head of this accession to his forces was a famous captain, Don Hernando de Soto, whom Pizarro gravely but cordially welcomed when he landed. De Soto was well

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known to him, for both had fought together during years of Indian warfare. De Soto was not to owe his greatest fame to Peru, but in later years he was to wander far to the north amid the wild places and wilder people of North America, and to be the first European whose eyes gazed upon the majestic waters of the Mississippi, in whose depths he was to find his burial-place.

“With the reinforcements you have brought me,” said Pizarro, after each had told his news, “I will now pass over to the mainland, for I learn that the country is torn between two opposing rivals for the throne, and the time is ripe for us to strike.”

CHAPTER VI

A Desperate Venture

WHEN the soldiers knew that they were to advance to the conquest of the mainland, they set about their preparations with great good will. Numbering only about three hundred, they were to attempt to conquer a rich and populous country, ruled, as some had heard, by a powerful and warlike monarch ; but the immense odds did not terrify them. Had not Cortés conquered the kingdom of the Aztecs with a mere handful of the daring fighters of Castile ? Had not every kingdom in the Indies over which now waved the flag of the emperor been wrested from the fierce savages by small bands of hardy cavaliers ? Therefore Pizarro and his men went forward confident in the power of their arms, believing also, as all of them did most earnestly, that God and His saints fought for them, to the end that the land of the benighted heathen should come under the rule of Christendom.

Pizarro determined to transport his army to Tumbez, which was but a few miles distant, and therefore the soldiers were embarked on the caravels, and the baggage and stores were loaded on Indian balsas.

Slowly the little fleet crossed the sea and approached on easy landing-place on the mainland, not far from the city of Tumbez. The men in the ships prepared to disembark, and no great watch was being kept, because, as

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the natives of Tumbez had always been friendly, the Spaniards supposed that their feelings had not lately changed.

Suddenly cries of terror and anger arose, and, looking forth, men saw that one of the balsas which had touched the shore was being attacked by Peruvians. There were three soldiers on the raft, and these were overpowered, dragged off the raft and butchered before the eyes of their comrades.

Leaving the corpses of the Spanish soldiers, the Indians then ran to another balsa, and boarded it. There, however, they met with a stout resistance ; but it would have gone ill with the Spaniards if their cries had not been heard by Hernando Pizarro, who, at the head of some cavalry, had landed near the place.

Spurring their horses through the soft mud of the fore-shore, the cavaliers were quickly near the balsa ; but at sight of them the Indians hurriedly ceased their attack and scattered into the forests, which were at this point impenetrable to horsemen.

Pizarro and his men were considerably surprised at this hostile reception on the very borders of the town of Tumbez, which had hitherto been so friendly. Quickly landing his men, he led them along the shore, resolved to demand some satisfaction for the unprovoked attack.

The soldiers were in high glee, especially the raw recruits. These had heard the tales of the wondrous treasures seen at Tumbez, and they promised themselves wealth which had only to be taken from the walls of the temple or demanded from simple natives.

The men, therefore, marched along, laughing and jesting, while every eager face turned at each bend of the shore,

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expecting to see the houses of the wonderful city of gold before them.

Presently they came to the open beach before the town, and then a strange sight met their eyes. The shore, which had been busy when last they saw it with natives in many-coloured robes, and the waters lively with balsas and canoes, was now utterly deserted ; and looking farther, to where the town had stood, they saw ruined walls, roofless huts, and roads choked with rubbish.

Everywhere was silence and desolation. The Spaniards stood still, open-mouthed with wonder and consternation. Then, in a body, they ran among the ruins, searching for anything of value. But nothing was to be found. Pizarro rode through the town and found that, with the exception of four or five of the more substantial private buildings, the great temple and the fortress, all of which were stripped of their interior decorations, nothing was left of the town but ruins, and nothing remained of its former splendour.

The Spanish soldiers left their vain searching and gathered together again in the wide space before the town. They gazed at the scene of desolation before them, and dismay and consternation filled their minds. Here, at the very beginning of their venture, they had expected to put their hands on a rich prize, which should be only the beginning of a conquest of incalculable wealth. But, instead, ruin and destruction met their eyes ; the gold they had thought within their grasp had vanished even as they attempted to touch it.

As they gazed gloomily about the place, suddenly, from a piece of forest near one end of the town, came two or three natives, running. They recognized them as some of their own Indians who had been with Pizarro to Spain.

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Headed by the lad Felipillo, these came breathlessly to Pizarro and said :

“ Señor, we guessed that our people could not be far off. Do you send some of your riders quickly through the forest, and catch them before they all escape.”

At once Pizarro bade his brother Hernando take a body of cavalry and follow the friendly Indians. The Spaniards rode away swiftly, while Pizarro ordered that a camp should be made amidst the ruins of the town.

Toward evening the horsemen were seen returning through the trees, with several Indian captives among them. These were brought before Pizarro, who questioned them as to their reasons for destroying the town and running away.

One of the captives stepped forward, whom Candia instantly recognized as the chief magistrate or curaca whom he had seen on his previous visit.

“ It is not we, great lord,” said the man, “ who have destroyed our town, but the men of Puna, who have long waged war with us and, just before you came, succeeded in rushing the place and driving us into the forest.”

Pizarro knew that this was not the truth ; but that the Peruvians had dismantled the town and hidden all their treasure so as to save them from falling into the hands of the invaders. The Spanish leader, however, did not show his disbelief, but went on to demand why his men were attacked when they attempted to land.

“ I gave no orders for any evil dealing,” said the curaca, “ and those that slew your men were lawless and wild men who dwelt not in the town but in the forests. I have nothing but friendly thoughts for you, my white brothers,” went on the wily Peruvian, “ and I will give orders that

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those men be sought out and captured, and delivered over to you for punishment.”

“Do that,” said Pizarro, “and swear to me that henceforth you and your people will aid and assist us in all we do, and I will take no further notice of the attack upon me.”

“I swear to be obedient to you, my lord, in all your desires and commands,” replied the curaca, “and my people will likewise obey you.”

After this, the people of the town gradually came back from their hiding-places in the forest and the mountains, and began to rebuild their houses and to enter the camp of the Spaniards in all friendliness.

It was clear to Pizarro that, if he would succeed in his conquest, he must rely more on stratagem than on the force of his arms. He must gain the good will of the people, seeing that the odds against him in numbers and power were tremendous. He felt that he had done wrong in allowing his men to commit robbery and act high-handedly in the march along the coast ; and that such conduct had shaken the confidence of the Tumbez people and incited them to demolish their town and to attack him when he attempted to land.

One day the Greek cavalier Candia asked the curaca, through Felipillo, what had become of Molina and the other Spaniard, his friend, who had been left at Tumbez on the last voyage.

Both, replied the curaca, had died a few months before of a strange disorder, which had also killed others at the same time.

A little later Felipillo came to Candia, where he stood talking with other Spaniards, and said :

“Señor, I think the curaca told not the truth concerning

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the two Spanish gentlemen who stayed behind. I have asked others, and all tell different tales. Some say the Puna warriors slew them in battle, and others that they attempted to take some gold and were slain, after slaying many Indians."

"I thought so," said Candia, with a laugh. "The wily old curaca spoke the truth in a way, only the disorder which slew them and others at the same time was not so strange, after all."

The news of the death of the two Spaniards got abroad among the soldiers, and it moved them to gloomy thoughts. Their comrades had trusted themselves among these strange Indians in this fertile and beautiful land, but they had soon met death. Would they themselves fare any better, surrounded by hordes of Indians, treacherous, probably, in spite of their appearance of friendliness?

One day an Indian came to Pizarro, and, producing a piece of paper from his robe, handed it to the commander. Pizarro took it and found on it a few Spanish words written in a rough hand, as follows:—"Know, whoever you be that may chance to set foot in this country, that it contains more gold and silver than there is iron in Biscay."

"Where got you this?" asked Pizarro of the Indian.

"Señor, I got it of my master, one of the Spaniards who lived here," was the reply. "He gave it to me one day, and said that he doubted if he should live to see his friends' return. But if they did return I was to give this paper to their leader and he would reward me."

Pizarro gave the man a present and dismissed him. The story of the piece of writing got about the Spanish camp; but the soldiers grimly ridiculed the tale.

"Our general is a wily man," said they. "He knows we have a big task before us, and that some of us fear for

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our skins already, and he played that trick by the aid of some Indian to give us heart."

But Felipillo and the other interpreters began to tell them tales of the wealthy city where the king held his Court leagues away in the mountains; and spoke of the gold to be found in the temples and in the houses of the rich.

"And there is a lake among the mountains," they went on, "so deep that none has ever plumbed it. And at the bottom thereof dwells the god of that country. Every year he claims the sacrifice of a man, and the victim must leap or be thrown into the lake, so that he sinks down to the god, who devours him. Each victim is first rolled in thick oil, and then he is rolled in gold dust, so that it lies upon his body to the thickness of a thumb. And then, with many prayers and songs, the man ascends a high place over the lake, and when the priest gives the word the victim is thrust over. He is called the Golden Man, and in that country gold can be picked from the rivers like pebbles and from the rocks like stones."

Many of the Spaniards pretended to disbelieve the tales told by the Indians, and affected to think that they were all parts of a trick which Pizarro was working in order to keep up their spirit and to encourage them to go forward. Nevertheless, many believed the tales, especially the one of the Golden Man, or El Dorado, as the Spaniards translated it, and hoped that they might find that land with its almost incredible wealth of gold.

The gloom and despondency among the men had not been unobserved by Pizarro and his chief men, his brother Hernando and de Soto.

The three men sat one night in the hut set apart for Pizarro, and each was sunk in his own thoughts. On the

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table between them was a Peruvian lamp made of clay, filled with oil from which a lighted reed projected, the meagre flame just making the faces of the three men visible to each other, while at their back the darkness was impenetrable.

From the camp outside came the voices of men, some gambling by the light of similar lamps or of torches, others sleeping or preparing food at the fires.

“Marquis,” said de Soto, addressing Pizarro by the title conferred upon him by the Emperor Charles, “you spoke yesterday of making a settlement in a commodious place near the coast. Do you not think this should be soon put in hand? For the men seem tired of inaction.”

“I know it,” said Pizarro, “and I know, too, that unless they have change or are set to do something, some of those who are for ever croaking of disaster will wish to seize the ships and scuttle back to Panama.”

“A tree and a rope for the worst of such croakers would discourage the others,” said Hernando Pizarro, with a cruel laugh.

He was plain of face, almost ugly; and the pitilessness and arrogance which formed the main part of his character were discernible in the cold, hard eyes, the scornful lip and the brutal jaw.

Pizarro ignored his brother's remark, and said gravely:

“It is necessary that I learn more of the real position of affairs in this country before I decide when and where I make my advance. To-morrow, therefore, we will go southward along the coast to find some suitable place to form a base, whence we can send to Panama, and whence we may make expeditions into the country. You, de Soto, shall go with a small party of cavalry farther eastward, and explore the country along the skirts of the

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Sierras. Take an interpreter with you and glean all the news you can."

Next day, therefore, Pizarro, leaving at Tumbez a few of his men who were sickly, set out with the rest along the coast. A small detachment under de Soto was sent off as he had decided.

On this expedition Pizarro's policy in his treatment of the natives was quite different from that which he had pursued earlier. He commanded his men, under pain of penalties, to offer no violence or discourtesy to any of the Peruvians. When the inhabitants of a village offered resistance he quickly reduced them, and when they begged for peace, he granted their appeal with all friendliness. As he went farther into the land, the fame of his mildness preceded him, and the natives received him and his men with open arms, providing good quarters and loading them with fresh provisions. They found the country thickly occupied by prosperous hamlets, and the land cultivated to a high degree.

When he entered a village, Pizarro caused the head-man to be brought before him, and through the mouth of Felipillo he made the following proclamation:—

"Know ye that I, Francisco de Pizarro, Governor and Captain-General of this Province of New Castile, Adelantado and Alguacil Mayor, have come hither in the name of the Holy Vicar of God, Pope Clement the Seventh, and by the command of my most excellent, high and puissant master, Emperor Charles the Fifth of Spain, in order that ye may be drawn into the knowledge of our holy Catholic faith; and therefore I require you in peace and amity to obey the Church and apostle of Rome, and in things temporal to yield obedience to his Majesty the emperor and to the kings his successors in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon."

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Meanwhile, the notary or lawyer who accompanied the Spaniards had drawn out parchment and inkhorn, and, resting these on the bent back of one of the soldiers, gravely entered the name of the village on the scroll, with a note of the proclamation having been made.

Then, when, as always happened, the simple Indians, understanding not a word of what had been said, made no objection, the commander would say solemnly :

“ I receive your homage and allegiance as vassals of his Majesty. See that ye keep the laws and fulfil your dues and obligations as befits obedient subjects.”

The notary would thereupon record in his parchment the fact that another hamlet was added to his Majesty's dominions and its inhabitants had rendered their homage.

Some three or four weeks after leaving Tumbez the Spaniards came to a rich valley called Tangarala, where a navigable stream flowed into the ocean. Here Pizarro resolved to make a town, and the men at Tumbez were ordered to bring the vessels round to the mouth of the river. When they arrived the barren land quickly assumed the appearance of a busy hive. Timber was cut, stones were quarried, and gradually houses and public buildings arose.

Among these were a church, a magazine for public stores, a hall of justice and a fortress. The adjacent land was parcelled out among the soldiers, and each colonist was given a certain number of Indians to work for him on his land. The town was named by the Spaniards, San Miguel.

One of the chief duties of Pizarro's secretary was to gain information, through the interpreters, of the condition of affairs among the Peruvians, and during their march from Tumbez, the secretary had questioned all the chiefs of

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villages with whom he could get in touch, and had written down what he had been told.

In the leisure which was obtainable while the town was being built, Pizarro called his secretary to him from time to time and bade him read all that he had been able to learn.

First of all the Spanish leader bade his secretary tell him what he had learned concerning the army of the King of Peru.

“Every Peruvian who has reached the age of eighteen,” said the secretary, referring to his scroll of parchment, “is required to take part in the drills which are held in every town and hamlet two or three times a month. I have been told that the king can bring into the field an army of two hundred thousand men.”

“That is a marvellous great number,” said Pizarro. “Have you learned whether such an army has ever been called together at one time?”

“Of a truth I was told that in the recent civil war between two rivals for the throne,” replied the secretary, “quite that number of soldiers was in the field on one or other side. You must know, Marquis, that the present king of this land is not the king by right of descent. Seven years ago there reigned in this land an Inca, or king, called Huayna Capac, who had two sons. The elder of these, named Huascar, was, according to the custom of the land, the rightful heir to the throne. But the Inca preferred Huascar’s half-brother, named Atahualpa, a young man of a bold and reckless spirit, Huascar being mild and gentle. When the king died, he divided his kingdom. To Atahualpa he gave Quito, the northern part, and to Huascar he gave Cuzco, the southern part, bidding them live in peace and brotherliness together.

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For five years, indeed, they lived in peace ; but the daring and ambition of Atahualpa at length created discord between them. The king of the north invaded the land of his half-brother at the head of a vast army. Several battles and great carnage took place, the king of the south fighting bravely. But in a day-long battle in the south, at a place where now, I am told, one may still see the bones of the dead bleaching in heaps over the wide battlefield, Atahualpa defeated his brother and took him prisoner. This, your Highness, hath but lately happened, as I understand from those who told me these things, and I think but a few months can separate us from the time when the present king of this country assumed the crown, and took possession of the treasures which he has thus gained by conquest at the cost of several sanguinary battles and the loss of many thousands of brave warriors."

For some time Pizarro remained silent, his cold, grave eyes looking straight before him. Then he said :

" You tell me things, Señor Secretary, which are not for the ears of everyone. Have you said aught of this to any man ? "

" Nay, Marquis," was the reply. " You warned me while we sailed hither, and I have told naught."

" Continue, then, to keep silent," said Pizarro, " for some might lose heart, hearing of the great power, opulence and military strength of these heathens. As for me, I know that God and His saints fight for us, and therefore I go forward with a light heart, confident that He hath made us His instrument to bring this nation to a knowledge of the holy Catholic faith."

" Amen," said the secretary, and withdrew.

A braver man than Pizarro might feel staggered at the tremendous odds against him. He had with him less

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than three hundred men ; and arrayed against him was a monarch powerful in the possession of an army flushed with the success of a great conquest ! But the old Spanish soldiers of that time, however reckless and cruel they were, had a steadfastness of faith that amounted to a fanaticism almost equal to that of the Moors, whose blood ran in the veins of many of them ; and they sincerely believed that in conquering the heathen, subjugating his land, and preaching to him the Catholic faith, they were doing the will of God, and received therefore divine assistance in every way.

Sometimes they believed that, amid their ranks as they fought, they saw cavaliers whose faces shone with a divine light, and whose swords dealt death without showing wounds. These were saints who, taking on the semblance of men, fought for the true sons of the Church. Again, they thought they saw a ghostly host above them in the sky, from whose hands leapt unseen death among their foes, who were certain to be vanquished, however stubborn was the battle. And at other times, evil or weak counsel was placed in the minds of their enemies by the saintly helpers, so that they should easily fall before the divinely aided warriors of Spain.

Nevertheless, even the iron heart of Pizarro seems to have faltered when he thought over the gigantic task he had set before himself. Certainly, he had an example of what daring, subtlety and stratagem could achieve in the exploits of Cortés ; but, with every belief in himself and the justice of his mission, as men thought in those days, the attempt at conquering so powerful a monarch as the Inca was one fraught with risks of great disaster.

For a few weeks after the building of the town had been completed, Pizarro waited in case Almagro, who had been

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left at Panama, might come with more reinforcements. But week followed week and no sail broke the line of sea and sky to the north.

The Spanish leader knew that if he kept his men in idleness much longer they would lose their adventurous ardour, and that their strength and energy would be sapped by the conditions of the tropical climate.

He therefore decided to march into the interior at the head of the larger portion of his forces, leaving only a few score to guard the town.

When all was ready, and the little army, consisting of a hundred and seventy-seven men and three priests, stood in the plaza of the town, Pizarro, from his horse, addressed those who were to be left behind.

“I leave you,” he said, “to guard this place in the name of our Gracious Majesty. You are a little bright spot of Christendom in a land dark with heathenism. I charge you to bear yourselves like Christian men. Treat your Indian vassals with justice and mercy; and the caciques and head-men of the tribes about you, bear yourselves to them with all friendliness and good will. Not only should you do this because you are Christians, but your own existence, the safety of myself, the army, and the success of our venture depend upon your keeping the good friendship of the Peruvians.”

Then, saying farewell to the officers of the Crown left in command of the town, Pizarro put himself at the head of his little band, and departed, amid the shouts of those left behind.

The course taken by the Spanish leader would lead directly into the heart of the country, where he had learned that the town of the Inca lay. As they pressed farther inland over the level country which lay between the sea-

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coast and the Cordilleras, they found that everywhere the surface was broken up into little sequestered valleys of surpassing loveliness, the bottoms and sides of which were clothed with orchards and fields of yellow grain. Rivers ran everywhere, or, where they were wanting, canals and aqueducts were seen crossing the country in all directions, spreading fertility broadcast.

Here, indeed, remembering the savage forests and gloomy mangrove swamps of the north, the Spaniards thought that at length they had reached the land whose richness and fertility had formed the subject of romantic rumours the truth of which they had never quite believed.

Everywhere, too, the people seemed as pleasant and as kindly as their surroundings. They welcomed the Spaniards with simple hospitality, and gave them all that they desired. Pizarro had impressed upon his men the necessity of treating the natives with every courtesy and good will, and the Peruvians answered in the like spirit.

In every hamlet of any size the Spaniards found a fortress, or a large hall which was built for the use of the Inca in his royal progress from time to time through his dominions. In these the Spaniards were housed, so that the invaders were given quarters along their line of conquest at the expense of that very king whom they had come to dispossess.

One afternoon, five days after leaving San Miguel, Pizarro halted in a lovely place in one of the valleys previously described, and bade his men make a camp for the night. The men marvelled at their leader's command, for usually he halted in an Indian village, and then only toward the end of the day.

But Pizarro, foreseeing the tremendous difficulties and

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dangers of the venture he had set before himself, had decided on a drastic measure which would ensure that only those men should advance farther with him who were willing to lay down their lives with dauntless courage and unflinching obedience.

CHAPTER VII

The Cowards are Weeded Out

THE night passed in quiet. Roused by bugle call in the morning, the men set about their meal. Afterwards, word was received that the marquis was about to inspect them, and the men began to furbish their clothes and to clean their armour and weapons. Then, at another call on the bugle, the little band formed on parade, and soon Pizarro rode up, and with his brother Hernando, de Soto and the three priests, passed slowly down the line of men, his keen eye marking each man narrowly. Quickly he noted the high, bold looks of this one, but as closely he saw where some gloomed as his eye rested on them, and their mouths were sullen with discontent.

In front of his little army were ranged the three harquebusiers which he possessed, and beside them stood seventeen crossbowmen. Behind these were the infantry, each with long pike and sword. Of these men there were ninety. In the third line were the cavalry, numbering sixty-seven men. Thus, the total of his fighting force was one hundred and seventy-seven, with which he proposed to attempt the conquest of a country which could muster two hundred thousand fighting men!

At length Pizarro reined up his horse in front of his men, and in grave yet persuasive tones addressed them.

“Comrades,” he said, “we have arrived at a crisis in

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our affairs, and it behoves every man therefore to summon up all his courage to meet that crisis. In this expedition which we have set out upon, no man should take part unless he can do it with his whole heart and with no misgiving as to its success. I have none myself, and I want all who go with me to feel as I do—that we are going to carry this venture through and crown it with success. But if any there be of you who think otherwise, it is not too late to turn back. I would not be sorry to know that San Miguel, which I have had to leave but poorly garrisoned, will have a few more to strengthen its defences. Those who choose may return, and to them shall be assigned a due portion of lands and Indian labourers. With those who choose to remain with me, be they few or many, I will pursue this high adventure to the end.”

It required a brave and strong man to speak thus to his handful of men. Pizarro had seen, from hints here and there, that there was disaffection and half-heartedness in the ranks; but he was totally unaware to what extent these feelings had spread. Nevertheless, he resolved that he must have only willing hearts with him, and he knew that if he did not in some way weed out the discontented ones, they would sap the confidence of all his men and bring ruin, disaster and death upon them all.

His bravery and daring consisted in this: that, when those who were unwilling should accept his offer, he did not know how wretchedly few the remnant of brave and willing men might be.

When he had finished speaking he looked gravely up and down the ranks of the men before him. The eyes of many of the men were angry as they looked at their leader's face. Why did he doubt them like this? Were they not all true and valiant cavaliers of Spain? What other sons

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of the Holy Church had done, weak and few against hordes of savage pagans up and down the western lands, were they not also willing to do ?

Men looked at each other with puzzled, half-angry looks ; some hung down their heads, others looked braggart and impudent. For some moments there was a heavy silence ; then, from the line of infantry, a high-pitched, stiff voice rose :

“ I think, captain, I will return. I think the odds are too great.”

“ And I ! ” said another, with an awkward laugh. “ There’s like to be more split skulls than full purses from this venture.”

Seven others said the same, in varying words, and in varying ways of half-shamefacedness or uncouth humour, amid the laughter and banter of their comrades.

Pizarro bade them stand aside together, and waited, his grave face still bent upon the main body.

Suddenly there rose from the men who remained a shout or two, which quickly spread until from the one hundred and sixty-eight came a volley of hurrahs. Breaking rank, they surged round Pizarro and the two other chiefs, shouting : “ Lead us forward ! Advance ! Advance ! ”

The pale face of Pizarro flushed faintly as he looked on the eager faces of those who thus devoted themselves to him.

Raising his hand, he commanded silence, and then said :

“ I thank you, lads. Never shall I doubt you again. And now we will go forward.”

A few commands to those who had elected to return to San Miguel, and then, all being ready, the main body went forward, leaving the nine to depart in gloomy silence together, half despising themselves and each other.

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By this bold yet subtle stroke of leadership, Pizarro had lost, in men, four of the infantry and five of the cavalry. But in the hearts of those who remained with him he had gained what compensated for that loss. Henceforth the hundred and sixty-eight were knitted to him as their leader with bonds of strictest trust and confidence, and in them Pizarro knew that he had men whom he could lead through any dangers, any risks, and none would ever question him.

Two days later, Pizarro and his men found themselves among the mountains. Every village they had passed since they left San Miguel seemed to be populated by old men, women and children. Asking the reason of this, they had been told that the Inca had drained them of their men to swell the army which he had led against his half-brother Huascar. When they stopped one day at a village to get their midday meal, Felipillo, the chief of their interpreters, learned that there was a Peruvian garrison stationed at a town called Caxas, lying among the hills at no great distance.

When Pizarro heard this, he called Hernando de Soto to him and said :

“ Take ten men with you, de Soto, and one of our Indian interpreters, and a guide, and advance to the place they speak of. Reconnoitre the ground, learn if possible whether the garrison have any designs upon us, and come and report to me at the next large town, Zaran, where I will stay until your return. Already we have been longer upon our journey to the camp of the Inca than we expected, and I wish to know more of the route before we advance farther.”

Day followed day in great suspense, while Pizarro awaited the return of de Soto at Zaran. A week passed,



“Lead us forward! Advance! Advance!”

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and the Spanish leader was becoming seriously alarmed. On the eighth morning, however, an Indian runner brought news that the Spanish captain was returning, and soon after de Soto entered the quarters of the white men, bringing with him a richly dressed man on foot, who was followed by five followers of apparently inferior rank, and several Indians bearing burdens.

De Soto approached Pizarro, and said :

“They received me well at Caxas and bade me await this envoy, who, they heard, was coming to meet us. He is of high rank, and a kinsman of the king.”

The Spanish soldiers looked with great interest on this man. He was of medium height, clothed in robes of a deep yellow, with a rich red sash about his waist, indicating his rank. In his ears were large ornaments of pure gold, which hung down to his shoulders, and round his forehead, when he uncovered, was a fillet. His feet were in sandals.

The lighter colour of his skin, the milder and rounder form of his features instantly struck the Spaniards ; and they realized that some great racial difference separated the royal family or tribe from the mass of the copper-skinned, sharp-featured Indians over which they ruled.

Speaking in a sonorous and pleasant tone, the nobleman addressed Pizarro, and was interpreted by Felipillo.

“My master,” he said, “the Child of the Sun, king of this land, and lord of its treasure, sends you greeting. He welcomes you to his country, learning as he has that you come in all peacefulness, and he invites you to press forward without fear, and to visit him at his camp beyond the mountains.”

Pizarro guessed that this messenger was sent less on an errand of courtesy than to find out the character of the

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Spaniards, their strength and the purpose of their visit. Nevertheless, he replied courteously, saying that he looked forward to seeing the Inca king, and would press on with all speed to his camp beyond the mountains. Then Pizarro caused the Inca messenger to be entertained in the best manner the camp could afford.

The Inca nobleman stayed in the camp all that day, and the whole time was taken up in conversations between him and Pizarro, through the medium of one of the interpreters. He was full of curiosity concerning the strange beings about him, and all that they used and possessed; his questions were endless, but Pizarro satisfied them all.

When the Inca noble departed, the Spanish leader presented him with a cap of crimson cloth, some showy ornaments made of beads, and other toys brought for this purpose from Castile.

“Tell your master,” said Pizarro, “that we come from a powerful and munificent prince who dwells far away beyond the Great Waters. We have heard much of the fame of Atahualpa, your king, and of his great and splendid conquest, and we have come to pay our respects to him, and to offer him our services in aiding him against his enemies. Tell him, also, that we will hasten upon our road, nor will we delay before presenting ourselves before him.”

When the Inca chief had departed with his suite, de Soto gave Pizarro a full account of his expedition.

“At first,” he said, “when we approached the town of Caxas, the army there was put in hostile array, as if to contest our advance. But I sent Pedrillo (an Indian interpreter) forward with a peaceful message, and persuaded them that I came with no intent of war. They quickly laid aside their menacing attitude and received

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us with all kindness, giving us good quarters and fresh food in abundance.

“ A high official of the king was in the town, who was collecting the royal tribute. I had many conversations with him, and he told me that Atahualpa, the king, is staying with a great army at a camp on the other side of these mountains, near a large town called Caxamalca. There he is taking the warm baths which burst from the ground there. Many things also have I learned of the government of these people, and of the marvellous order of the state, which I will tell you more fully afterwards.

“ From Caxas we passed to a town near by named Guancabamba, and that is excellently well built. It is much larger, more populous and richer than Caxas. The houses are not made, as are most of those we have seen, of clay baked in the sun, but of solid stone, each piece of an exceeding bigness, and so smoothly wrought and so delicately put together that one cannot see where the join lies between them. A river passes through the town, and over it is a bridge as fine as any you could find in Spain. On our way to this city we came upon a road that is a marvel to see, and is most like those great roads of the mighty Romans which still remain to us in many parts of Spain.

“ It is raised over boggy places like a causeway, is paved with heavy stone flags and bordered by trees, while in channels beside the way are streams of water at which travellers may drink. Here and there, at distances of a day's journey, are rest-houses where wayfarers may stay at night. We were told that such roads as these extend from the north to the south of this land, and from the east to the west ; so that hardly Spain itself has such roads and such convenience for travelling.

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“ In one place we came upon a great building, and on inquiring its use, we were told that it held many sacks of grain and much cloth, for the supply of the army ; and it was said that such stores or magazines are scattered everywhere over the country.

“ At the entrance to the city of Guancabamba we came upon a stone house at the gate, and in it was an officer of the Inca, and his duty was to collect the tolls or duties on the various commodities brought into the place. Such tolls are paid not in coin, of which this country possesses none, but by part of the goods. And this custom I was told is very ancient.

“ But the most marvellous thing of all of which we were told was concerning a vast palace which we saw in Guancabamba, in the midst of which was a great plaza or square. No one lived in that palace : we were told it had been shut up for four generations, and it contained gold and many treasures, and fine cloth, and furniture, and apparel. This was the palace of one of their long-dead kings, and such deserted palaces, filled with their treasures, are to be found here and there all over the land. When a king dies, all his palaces are shut up, together with his treasure, except such as is buried with him. For they believe that in time to come, the soul will return again to earth, and it will reanimate the body, and live again in the places it knew.”

Many other things did de Soto tell of what he had learned. All his accounts showed the power and civilization of the Incas, and Pizarro and those who heard de Soto's account were filled with wonder. Yet their hearts were not shaken ; but they felt confident that, in some way, they would be able to overcome the great might of this heathen kingdom.

Having learned the best route to take to reach Caxa-

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malca—now called Caxamarca—where the Inca king was staying, Pizarro continued his advance. After some days they reached a broad and deep river, with a rapid current, which it was necessary they should cross.

Pizarro feared that the natives of a village they saw on the opposite bank might contest their passage, and therefore he ordered his brother Hernando, with a detachment of cavalry, to swim their horses across and secure a safe landing for the rest of the troops. This was done at night, and the cavaliers landed safely and encamped where the main body would probably land on the morrow.

Next day Pizarro and his men made preparations for their own crossing. They hewed down trees in the forest near by and made a huge raft, Pizarro himself working as hard as any, being ever ready with a cheerful word in the midst of the unusual toil. All day they worked, the task being long and severe; but before nightfall the whole army was safely transported to the other side, the horses swimming, their bridles being held by the cavaliers on the raft.

Reaching the camp of his brother Hernando, Pizarro received disquieting news.

“When we went to the village this morning,” the elder man reported, “instead of being received with courtesy, as has been the case hitherto, the people seemed to look upon us as things of terror, and, with cries of fear, fled from their houses. One, however, we caught, but he would tell us nothing until we put him to the torture. Then he said that Atahualpa, the Inca monarch, is encamped with all his army on the plains of Caxamalca; that he knows the smallness of our number, and is decoying us into his power, so as completely to destroy us.”

Pizarro hid his anxiety from his men, but next day gave

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no orders to advance. He bade the friendly Indians with him go into the forest whither the villagers had fled and tell them how peaceable were the intentions of the white men. The result was that soon a good many of the natives came into the camp, and among them the head-man, or curaca, of the village presented himself.

On being questioned as to where the Inca king was stationed, he replied :

“ His Majesty is lying at the strong town of Guama-chucho, some twenty leagues south of Caxamalca, with an army of some fifty thousand men. I have seen their white tents with my own eyes, and their number is almost as the stars by night.”

Perplexed by these contradictory statements, Pizarro proposed to one of the friendly Indians who had attached himself to the Spaniards, that he should go to the camp of Atahualpa.

“ I will go for the white lord,” said the Indian, “ not as a spy, but as his messenger to the king.”

“ Be it so,” said Pizarro ; “ assure the Inca that I am advancing with all possible speed to meet him. Tell him with what friendliness and courtesy we have ever been received by his subjects, and assure him that we rely on the same friendliness and kindness from him.”

“ This I will do,” said the Indian, “ and will faithfully carry the señor’s words to the king.”

“ But further,” went on Pizarro, “ as you go on your way keep your eyes clear, and observe if the strong passes on the road are defended, or if in any way your master or his servants prepare to make war upon us. Take three runners with you, and send them back to me with any news of these things.”

“ All this will I do,” said the Indian ; and choosing three

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of his countrymen, the four red men, with their meagre provisions in wallets at their waists, set off in a quiet trot toward the mountains which, with their tops swathed in purple mist, could be seen towering into the skies toward the east.

Then Pizarro gave orders to advance upon their road. For three days they marched through rising land, until at length they saw before them the stupendous flanks of the great Andes, which they must now cross.

The hearts of the soldiers almost failed at the thought that they must scale those awful walls of rock, and as they marched they scanned gloomily the towering limbs of the mountains. At the foot were deep, dense forests, which climbed the declivities, broken here and there by patches of open land where the Peruvians, patient and wise, had carved the rocky soil into terraces where maize and potatoes grew, the cottages of the laborious farmers being perched like swallows' nests beneath the eaves of frowning cliff and hanging shelves of rock.

Above this belt of forest and field came dizzy slopes of stunted trees, and higher still was the barren rock, where nothing seemed to grow. Then, when the eyes of the soldiers rose still farther, and noted where the sheets of snow lay glistening in the sunlight, with here and there the flash of ice from a glacier, their hearts sank, and they thought that the labour and the toil required of them was too much.

They spoke of it among themselves as they marched.

"We shall never gain the other side," said some despondently. "Torrents will sweep us from our feet into terrible chasms, the snow will engulf us or the icy cold will freeze the blood in our veins, and we shall sleep and die."

"More likely," growled others in their beards, "we

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shall be cooped up in some narrow pass, and the javelins and rocks of the Peruvians will slay us to a man."

"Our bones will bleach to the sun after the carrion birds have picked them clean," said others, "and that is all we shall get for all these months of toil and dangers."

"Croakers, all of ye!" cried men of brisker heart. "Tell our brave captain all your fears, and he will send you back to hoe onions at San Miguel. He only wants men at his back."

Then suddenly the little army saw, stretching away to right and left of them, a broad, smooth highway, flagged and channelled, with great trees along its sides shading it from the glare and heat of the tropical sun.

The men all tramped on to the hard surface and stopped, looking this way and that along the green avenue, which seemed to invite them to leave their daring and toilsome attempt to cross the mountains, and to lure them along its smooth surface away to more pleasant and easier places.

"Let us go this way!" cried some. "It will save our strength and we shall find more treasure in the towns along its sides than in the mountains."

Pizarro, with his officers and the cavalry, had already passed across the road into the broken land dividing it from the mountains; but he turned back his horse at the cries and rode to where the men were talking. They told him what they desired, and why.

"Nay, lads," he said, with a frank laugh. "The road has a pleasanter look, I grant you; but our way lies not along it. The road runs to Cuzco. Certainly we shall get there anon; but now, hark ye, we have everywhere proclaimed that we intend to visit the Inca in his camp. The Inca himself has our message to that purport, and

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the meanest Indian bearer knows it. What will they say if now we turn aside ? That we are cowards ! Why, the very porters and scullions will scorn us, and the terror of our name and of our arms will be naught against the contempt of the whole nation. Nay, lads," he said, seeing that already some had stepped out to join the foremost troops, while others still seemed to waver, "you know in your hearts there is no other course for brave men but to scale these sierras and visit the Inca, and thus show him we fear him not nor his fifty thousand warriors."

The last man who had hesitated now hastened to cross the road and join his fellows, and, turning to all his army, Pizarro cried in ringing tones :

"Let every one of you take good heart, do as men expect of you, and bravely, as good Spaniards are wont to do. Have no fear of the smallness of your numbers nor of the multitude of the heathens. Think ye, that however great is the power of the enemy, the power of God is much greater ; and He is wont to aid his children in their need, so that the pride of the heathen is put down."

The splendid sincerity in Pizarro's untutored words awoke an answering thrill in every soldier. All felt that in him spoke a heart that understood them, felt with their sorrows, disappointments and weariness of toil ; but also they knew that his simple words had shown them their plain duty.

A great shout arose from them and echoed and re-echoed in the clefts of the mountains beside them.

"Lead on !" they cried. "We will go where you lead us with a good will ! For God and the king, lead on !"

Instantly Pizarro rode to the head of his army, and, led by one of the friendly Indians, in a little while they were threading the first narrow pass through the mountains.

CHAPTER VIII

A Meeting with the Inca

THAT night the band of Spaniards camped in an open place on the side of the mountain. There Pizarro, before they retired to rest, held a council of his chief officers, and it was decided that he should lead the advance, and, with forty horse and sixty foot, should reconnoitre the road. The rest of the company, under the command of his brother Hernando, was to remain where it was until Pizarro sent further instructions.

At break of day Pizarro and his men started, and now the difficulties of the ascent began to show themselves. They could not but confess that the path had been wisely engineered ; but so toilsome was it in many places that even those of the soldiers who hailed from the mountainous provinces of Spain alleged that never had they known such steep ascents or perilous corners.

Often the path would wind on a ledge around the mighty flank of a mountain, and so narrow was the way that the horseman would have to dismount and, pressing closely to the face of the rock, lead his horse by the bridle, the cavalier praying to all the saints for sure foothold of man and beast. The rugged path was often scarcely wide enough for a naked Indian ; and the soldiers, encumbered by their coats of mail or quilted cotton jerkins, had the fear of a dreadful death constantly before their eyes. Every step was made with care in these narrow places, for



The horseman would have to lead his horse

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a slipping foothold would have precipitated the unwary man hundreds of feet down the dreadful abyss that yawned beside the way, at the bottom of which roared a torrent, strangled in a narrow fissure in the rocks.

When, as was frequently the case, they passed thus toilsomely around a bend, they could see the narrow ledge climbing ever upward far before them, until it disappeared into a defile in the rocks. Then every heart beat the more quickly as each step brought them nearer to the dark mouth of the hollow way.

Every moment they expected to see a cloud of javelins or arrows burst from the gloomy cleft, and to see one or other of their comrades fall from the narrow path, and turn and turn with spread limbs as he fell down into the sickening deeps below.

A dozen warriors, stationed at any one of such places, could have held the Spaniards at their mercy—could have picked them off one by one as they pressed against the wall of rock. The Spaniards knew this well, and breathed more easily, and wondered greatly as each such perilous point was reached and left behind.

Suddenly, as the line of men was winding its way up a steep and gloomy gorge among the rocks, those in the rear heard whispers from their comrades before them, and the long file of men and horses checked for a moment.

“What is it?” was the question which ran from mouth to mouth.

Soon came the whispered words along the line :

“At the head of the gorge is a fortress. The marquis bids us close up and go warily, with arms ready.”

The pass opened a little at the top into a large space between the rocky cliffs, and there, as the Spaniards crowded up together, they saw strong walls of great dark

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stones, the narrow track passing immediately beneath the gloomy and silent window-like apertures in the masonry.

As they watched, they expected every moment to see the tops of the walls suddenly bristle with dusky figures, and to see a cloud of javelins fly toward them. But the moments passed ; the line of sunlight moved a little way along the rocky wall far up above the pass ; and silence reigned.

“ Advance with weapons ready and bueklers before you,” said Pizarro.

At the word of command the men formed in two lines and advanced to the walls of the fortress. A great door yawned at the side where the track ran, and, looking into the dark interior, Pizarro and those beside him saw that the place was empty.

Entering it, they found it consisted of one big room, with sleeping-places in cavities formed in the walls ; and in one corner a flight of stone steps led up to the top of the fortress. Search was made narrowly, but not a living creature was discovered, and it seemed long since it had been occupied.

The Spaniards had advanced in gloomy silence ; but now, as the men ran through the echoing place, laughter and jests rang out among them.

“ It seems,” said one, “ that the heathen king really means well by us.”

“ Ay,” said another grimly, “ his gods have made him mad, I think, or he would not have missed this chance of scotching us before we bite him.”

Others sneered at the last speaker for a croaker, and commended the Inca king’s fair dealing.

“ ’Twould have been easy for a handful of his men to

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have held us back at fifty places on the road, to say nothing of this place," said another. "But it seems that he intends not to act the traitor to us."

This was the conviction of the Spaniards generally, and their spirits rose in consequence.

Pizarro then ordered two of the friendly Indians to return to the main body under Hernando and tell them to follow him at once. When his men had partaken of their midday meal, Pizarro continued his toilsome climbing until, as a deeper twilight began to sink into the gorges of the mountains, they reached an outstanding eminence, on which was found another forsaken fortress.

This was larger and stronger than the first; its lower part was hewn from the living rock, the upper walls being made of huge blocks of stone so cleverly joined that the junction could scarcely be discovered.

So well was this built that the officers, after examining it thoroughly, confessed that the best engineers of Spain could not have done better.

In this Pizarro and his men took up their quarters for the night; and the gloomy walls knew the warmth and light of fires again, and the cheerful voices of men. It was bitterly cold, and the horses, which had already begun to show signs of suffering from the changed climate during the day, were brought in and tethered in one of the large chambers of the fortress.

Next morning, without waiting for the rearguard, Pizarro determined to push still farther on his way.

As they climbed still higher they found that vegetation became scantier. The forests that clothed the lower slopes with tropical magnificence had long since been left behind, and they had now entered a region where they met with no terraces such as they had seen below, carved

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from the rock by the patient labour of the Indians, who covered them with earth brought toilsomely from the more fertile lower slopes.

As they pushed on, climbing mile after mile toward the sky, the sombre forests of pine were left behind, and in their place were stunted Alpine plants that rose but a little way above the starved and rocky soil. Soon these gave place to hungry moss and lichen, which clung to but did not entirely cover the black surface.

The dreary solitudes seemed utterly devoid of life, both human and brute. Occasionally, however, they saw on some inaccessible pinnacle in the distance a creature like a goat, the vicuña ; and instead of the multitudinous life of birds in glorious plumage which they were accustomed to see flitting like living lights in the dark forests of the plains, they saw now only the giant condor sailing high in the blue above them on motionless pinions. From time to time the great bird gave a doleful cry, and seemed to follow them, as if already it scented the carnage that soon would lie in the track of the conquerors.

At length they reached the topmost summit of the pass, and emerged upon a bare bleak plateau, not so high as the snow-level, which they saw lying on still higher peaks towering into the frosty air, but yet sufficiently elevated to be the meeting-place of every bitter wind that blew from the fields of eternal snow.

In this place their feet struck the living rock of the mountain unmasked by any vegetation, except a short, stunted yellow grass which, as they could see, encircled the base of the snow-covered peaks near by, looking, where it lay lit up by the rays of the ardent sun, like a setting of gold round pinnacles of dazzling white.

It was in the afternoon when they reached this point,

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and setting up their cotton tents, they lit fires before the openings and tried to warm themselves and to sleep. The night was so severe that all averred that never was such cold to be felt in the mountains of Spain even in winter.

While men thus tried to sleep, the sharp challenge of a sentry was heard, and an Indian was seen approaching the camp from the east. He was quickly recognized as one of the runners who had gone with the Indian emissary to Atahualpa. He was led before Pizarro and gave his report.

“Señor,” he said, “the passes are clear to the foot of the mountains, and the roads also even to the camp of the Child of the Sun. As I came hither I passed an embassy which the Inca sends, with his words of greeting unto you.”

Pizarro instantly gave order that two of the Indians should go back to his brother Hernando, bidding him and the main body to hasten, so as to receive the Inca's embassy; for Pizarro did not wish the king's messenger to find him with so few followers.

The rest of the army was not far behind, and very soon reached the encampment.

Soon afterward the embassy from the Inca was seen approaching, and when the party met Pizarro standing before his men, who all stood with their arms displayed, the astonishment of the Inca nobleman at the sight of the European soldiers was evident.

By means of the interpreter Pedrillo, the Peruvian noble delivered his message. His master, he said, wished to know when the Spaniards would arrive at Caxamalca, so that he might provide a fitting welcome and refreshment for them. Pizarro replied, saying he would make all speed, and would probably arrive in eight days.

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Pizarro and the Inca noble had a long conversation, in the course of which Pizarro learnt where the Inca was now encamped, and also obtained much information concerning the late wars.

The Inca noble began to vaunt the military prowess and exploits of his master, saying how many cities he had sacked, what enemies he had slain, and recounting the battles he had won. He also spoke boastingly of the power of the Inca, the treasure he possessed, the army he commanded, and the famous generals who led his legions for him.

Pizarro thought it wise to show that the recital of the Inca noble had no power to overawe him.

“Doubtless,” he replied, “your master is a wise and brave chieftain, and his prowess has raised him high among the names of Indian chiefs whom we have met. But,” he continued, “compared to the monarch who rules over the land whence I come, he is as inferior as the pettiest curaca is to your Inca. My king is so potent in arms, and his warriors are so wise in warcraft, that a few hundreds of them have conquered many kingdoms throughout this great continent. I have heard of the fame of your king, and it has led me to come hither to offer my services to him against his enemies.”

The Inca lord seemed impressed by the high claims made by Pizarro on behalf of his monarch, and said no more concerning the Inca king.

Next day the Spaniards continued their advance, spending two days in travelling across the plateau. When they were about to begin the descent of the mountains on the eastern side, another embassy met them, whom they recognized as the man who had seen them at Zaran, on the western side. He came in greater state than before,

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dressed in richer clothes and accompanied by a more numerous retinue, and as he approached the camp of the Spaniards he quaffed the wine of the country from goblets of pure gold, which flashed in the sun, and at which the eyes of the freebooters gleamed eagerly.

While he was speaking to Pizarro, the friendly Indian whom Pizarro had sent as an embassy to the Inca came into camp ; and as he looked at the ceremonious reception granted to the Peruvian noble his fierce eyes flashed and his face was twisted with rage. He dashed toward the noble as if he would drive the axe in his hand into the brain of the Inca's messenger. But some of the soldiers checked and held him.

“ Why, my white lords,” he cried, “ do you receive this Peruvian dog with such courtesy, when I, who was your embassy to the Inca, have nearly lost my life on my mission ? ”

They asked him what had happened, and when he was a little recovered he reported the result of his journey.

“ When I reached the camp of the Inca,” he said, “ I was refused permission to approach him, for they said he was keeping a fast and would see no strangers. I told them I came as a special messenger from the white men, but they cared not for that, and hardly would I have escaped with my life if I had not said that if they slew me, their own messengers would be slain by you. I doubt not,” he went on, “ that Atahualpa has treachery in his mind toward you, my white friends. He has fifty thousand troops about him.”

“ What say you to this ? ” asked Pizarro of the Inca noble.

The aristocrat looked scornfully at the enraged Indian, and said :

“ This fool speaks according to his folly. Did he think

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the guards of the Inca would take the mere assertion of any base Indian slave that he was the envoy of the white men, if he bore no sign from them to show the truth of his words? As to the fast which my master is observing, that is true; but if he had known there was a messenger from the white men he might have seen him. As to the warriors about him, my master has hardly completed a heavy war. Is it not the merest wisdom that he should still keep a large army in readiness for any outbreak of his enemies?"

Pizarro did not wholly believe the words of the Inca nobleman, and was not convinced of the honesty of Atahualpa's intention; but he wished to keep on friendly terms with him, and therefore he made a pretence of believing this explanation.

"Return to your master," he said, "and convey to him my assurances that with every possible speed I will present myself before him to offer my personal greetings and services."

Next day Pizarro and his men began the descent of the Andes on the eastern side. The way was not so steep, but the difficulties were little less on the whole than those met with in the ascent, and it occupied them seven days to reach the lower slopes.

Then suddenly, one morning, as they turned a bend of the pass, an immensity of lovely country burst upon their sight. A wide, long valley, filled with green fields and orchards lay below them, with gleaming rivers running through the fertile land.

Villages nestled here and there, white houses peeped between trees, and every rood of ground seemed carefully cultivated between hedges in which lovely flowers bloomed.

Over all was the radiant sunlight of the tropical day.

Immediately below them in the valley lay the little city

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of Caxamalca, the white walls of its fortress and temple rising proudly from among the lines of smaller houses forming its streets. Here and there amidst the dwellings were large open spaces, the courtyards of the houses of the Inca noblemen.

Across the valley into which they looked, from between a collection of walls, rose great columns of vapour continually billowing and disappearing into the sunlit air. This, the Spaniards knew, marked the place of the natural hot baths, where, as the envoys had told them, the Inca king was staying.

Beyond the baths was a sight at which the faces of the Spaniards became grave, for along the slope of the hills rose a white cloud of tents, gleaming like snowflakes in the sun, for the space, as it seemed, of some miles.

“Never have we seen Indians with so proud an array as that!” said Hernando de Soto, in a low voice, to Pizarro, whose face, however, revealed nothing of what he thought.

“So many tents in such order were never seen before in the Indies,” said one of the older cavaliers.

Men looked from one to the other with swift glances. All felt that something akin to fear had been created in the hearts of each man at the knowledge of the overwhelming force arrayed against them.

For that very reason, however, and simply because things looked so hopeless, the Spaniards put on a brave face. They knew that if now they showed hesitation or doubt in themselves, the very Indians who were marching with them, and who, in common with all the natives who had seen or heard of them, looked upon the white men as creatures of godlike power—these would lose all fear of them and would turn upon them.

Quietly Pizarro gave his orders, and the little band of

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about one hundred and seventy men descended the short intervening slope of the sierras and emerged into the valley. At a leisurely pace the Spaniards marched toward the city, the outskirts of which they reached when the afternoon was already half spent.

As the soldiery tramped through the place, no faces appeared at the doors, and no one walked the streets. The town was utterly deserted. It was of large size, with numerous well-built houses, containing accommodation for ten thousand inhabitants. They passed through the principal square, on one side of which was reared an imposing building with strange carvings on the great stones forming its front. This, their interpreters told them, was a convent in which lived the Virgins of the Sun.

Pizarro ordered a halt as soon as they arrived at the outskirts of the town nearest the Inca camp. Here they found a great triangular courtyard surrounded by low buildings, which seemed designed for use as a barracks. Checking his men in the parade ground, he called Hernando de Soto to him and said :

“ I am anxious to learn what is the disposition of the Inca toward us. Go, choose fifteen of the best horsemen, and with Felipillo, ride forward to the camp. Acquaint the king with my arrival and invite him to visit me here in the morning, when I design to offer my services to him. Above all, treat the Inca and his men with courtesy and dignity.”

De Soto saluted, chose fifteen of the horsemen, and the party trotted out of the courtyard. Those who remained dismounted, and with the foot soldiers began to prepare their quarters. The weather, which had been fair throughout the day, now threatened a storm ; it became bitterly cold, and rain and hail began to fall.

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Pizarro remained seated on his horse for some minutes after de Soto and his troop had gone. Suddenly he summoned his brother Hernando to his side.

“Choose twenty troopers,” he said. “I think the fifteen with de Soto are too few, in case the Indians prove hostile. Quick and follow him.”

Instantly, at Hernando’s call, twenty cavaliers drew out their horses, and, vaulting on their backs, the troop followed after de Soto, whom they caught up in a few minutes.

They found that a well-built causeway connected the city with the camp of the king. Along this the cavalry galloped at a rapid pace, and after going some three miles, they found themselves nearing the camp of the Peruvians on the slope of the hills. They saw the lances of the Indian warriors stuck in the ground before the openings of the tents, while the men themselves came together in large masses and watched the strange sight of the European warriors in coats of armour, approaching them on strange animals which went as swiftly as the wind, while, at the same time, the blast of a trumpet and the clang of their arms announced their approach.

Just before the camp of the Inca was a wide, shallow stream, across which a wooden bridge was built. Distrusting its strength, the two leaders preferred to take to the water, and rode swiftly across, tossing up the water as they passed through.

Reaching the bank, the Spaniards saw before them a battalion of Indian warriors, drawn up under arms. They stood motionless, and gave no sign of opposition as the white men advanced. An officer stood before the ranks, and Hernando Pizarro bade Felipillo ask him the way to the quarters of the Inca.

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The Inca officer courteously pointed out the direction, and the Spaniards went forward.

They soon found themselves in front of an imposing body of some hundreds of richly dressed courtiers, who were standing motionless about a man seated on a low stool or cushion. This was the Inca, of whose ability and keenness of mind the Spaniards had heard so much. His face was handsome, except for his eyes, which were bloodshot, and his head was larger than usual.

His dress was simpler than that of any of those standing about him ; but on his head was the sign of sovereignty in the shape of a crimson fringe, which encircled the head and hung down as low as the eyebrows. He had worn this sign of supreme power only since his defeat of his half-brother, Huascar, a few months before.

The Spanish leaders ordered their followers to fall back, and, choosing only two of them and the interpreter, Felipillo, went forward, still on horseback, until they reined up immediately in front of the Inca. They gazed on the face of this man who, in the fierce battles of which they had heard, had conquered the land from his own kinsman, and in his features they tried to read what were his thoughts concerning themselves. But on the Inca's face was a look of apathy, mingled with an expression of authority and command as befitted his great power.

Without dismounting, Hernando Pizarro made respectful obeisance to the Inca, and then said :

“ I come, your Majesty, as the ambassador of my brother, Francisco Pizarro, the commander of the white men, to tell you of our arrival in the city of Caxamalca. We are the subjects of a great prince who dwells in vast kingdoms across the ocean ; we have been drawn hither by the reports which we have heard of your prowess and your

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victories, and we would offer you our services and would instruct you in the doctrines of the true faith. Lastly, I bring to you an invitation from the general that you visit him, if it is your pleasure, in our present quarters in the town."

Sentence by sentence the words were translated in a clear, ringing voice by the young man, Felipillo, while some hundreds of curious eyes were directed upon every inch of the bodies of the cavaliers and their champing and restive war-horses. Wonder and even terror at the sight of these strange visitors were depicted on every face, for never had the Peruvians been prepared, by anything they had ever heard, for the existence of such wonderful men, riding on fierce animals and clothed in shining iron garments.

But the Inca seemed unmoved. He remained silent, his eyes bent to the ground, and did not show even by a gesture or the flicking of an eyelid that he had heard a word of the Spaniard's address.

The moments passed slowly in a heavy silence, while the eyes of the Spaniards were fixed keenly on the Inca's impassive face.

At length the Inca noble standing nearest to the king said :

"It is well."

The brows of the Spanish leaders darkened momentarily, and they bit their lips. If this was all the answer the Inca was intending to give them, they were as far from knowing his intentions—whether evil or good—toward them as if the stupendous mountains still lay between them.

Very courteously Hernando Pizarro again addressed the Inca.

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“Will you not speak to us yourself, your Majesty, and tell us what is your pleasure?”

The Inca raised his head, and his inscrutable face was lit with a shadowy smile. Then the apathetic look again returned as he replied :

“Tell your captain that I am keeping a fast, which will end to-morrow morning, when I will come with some of my chieftains to see him. Meanwhile let him occupy those houses on the plaza, and go into no other until I come, when I will order what shall be done.”

When Atahualpa finished speaking he fixed his eyes on the charger which de Soto rode. The horse was of the purest breed, and of a high mettle, and stood impatiently champing the bit, pawing the ground and tossing its handsome head.

“The king perhaps would like to see the movements of my horse,” said de Soto, and reining back the animal he dashed into the open plain before the Inca, wheeling round and round, displaying all the beautiful movements of the steed, as well as his own superb horsemanship.

Then, putting the horse at full speed, he rode furiously straight towards the Inca, but checked the animal in full career, bringing it almost on its haunches, so near the person of the Inca that some of the foam from the horse’s muzzle was thrown on the garments of the king.

But Atahualpa maintained the same marble indifference, and no flicker of interest gleamed in his eyes or stirred his cheek, even when the animal seemed about to leap upon him. Some of the Indians who stood by, however, were not so stoical, and drew back in manifest terror. For this evidence of fear before the strangers they were the same evening put to death by order of the Inca.

Wine was brought by some of the women of the Court,



Atahualpa maintained the same marble indifference

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and offered to the two Spanish leaders in golden goblets of great size. These they quaffed, and then respectfully took their leave.

In gloomy silence the horsemen rode back to their comrades at Caxamalca. Their thoughts were filled with wonder at the magnificence and richness of the Court of the Inca, the strength of his army, and the order and discipline in their ranks. All these things seemed to speak of a power, a solidity and a strength such as they had never dreamed of in the earlier part of the expedition.

As they compared this power of the Peruvians with their own small number, sunk as they were deep in the hostile country and far from succour, they were filled with dreadful forebodings of disaster and death.

When they reached the camp Hernando Pizarro and de Soto went into the chamber where their general was lodged, and gave him a full report of all that had happened. Meanwhile the rank and file gathered eagerly round those who had visited the Inca camp, and learnt all that they had seen and all they feared.

Despondency in a little while took possession of the whole camp. Men sat about the fires, either looking in blank silence into the leaping flames, or else murmuring to each other in low, querulous monotonous tones, discussing the dark future, or cursing themselves for having ventured on so mad a quest.

When night fell, men issued from the rooms opening on the plaza, and went where the sentinels were set, and stood watching the fires of the Indian camp on the slopes of the hills across the valley.

“Look at the multitude of them,” said one; “as thick as the stars in heaven on a summer’s night, and round each must be a dozen men.”

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“What of that?” came a clear voice behind the speaker. “What if for every Spanish cavalier there are a thousand Indians?”

Instantly the men turned, for all knew the voice to be that of Pizarro. They saw his pale face in the half light, and that its usual gravity was lit up with a smile.

“Well, general,” said one cavalier, “no man can but deny that we are outnumbered almost to the degree you say.”

“Yes; and what has that to do with you, who are all brave men?” came the reply.

“We may be brave as lions, but we are but men,” returned the man.

“And though,” said another, “it would seem that the natives here reckon us almost as demigods, and stand in great fear of what they deem are our wonderful powers, yet, general, were the Inca king but to take it into his head to rush us, we should be stamped out.”

“Lads,” said Pizarro, and there was almost a careless laugh in his voice, “you are all as full of fears as children frightened of the dark. Now, I beseech you,” he went on, and his voice became earnest, “not to show each other a faint heart. I do not hide from you that we are at a crisis in our fortunes. But we have been coming to this for these past several months—we are now facing the foe whom we have been seeking ever since, at Tumbez, our feet touched this soil. We have gone through many dangers unharmed, and we will pass through this likewise. But you must rely on yourselves—on your own brave hearts, and on the aid of that providence which has carried us through so many fearful trials. It will not desert us now, for we are fighting the fight of the true faith. If numbers, however great, are on the side of the heathen,

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does that matter at all while the arm of Heaven is on ours ? ”

Pizarro's words rang with sincerity and confidence, and found instant echo in the hearts of the soldiers about him, whose numbers had increased when word had gone through the camp that he was speaking, until now nearly all the band were listening.

A shout arose from them. “ The general speaks truly,” men cried. “ Heaven and its saints will fight for us, as they have fought for us till now, and we shall prevail.”

Quickly the report of Pizarro's heartening words went through the whole camp ; men's faces brightened as they sought their fires again, or prepared their sleeping-places ; rough jests passed in place of gloomy forebodings, and many expressed their admiration for their leader and their reliance upon him.

CHAPTER IX

A Deed of Carnage

MEANWHILE, Pizarro had summoned a council of his chief officers to determine what was to be done. Each of them entered the room where Pizarro was lodged, with looks of gravity or even of gloom. Their number comprised men who bore some of the oldest names in Spain, men of tried prowess in battle, wise in war and subtle in counsel.

Among them were Hernando and Gonzalo, brothers of Pizarro ; Hernando de Soto, polished courtier and famous warrior ; Garcilasso de la Vega, a man of noble rank, who numbered English families among his kinsfolk by marriage ; Mancio Serra de Leguisamo, Antonio Altimorono, Spanish gentlemen who made up for the poverty which had driven them to this venture by the length of their pedigrees ; and, lastly, Fray Vicente de Valverde, a Dominican friar, who was Pizarro's chaplain, and charged with the ecclesiastical duties of the expedition. There was also Pizarro's secretary, a gentleman named Pedro Sancho, who has left a history of the conquest.

“Gentlemen,” said Pizarro, “I have summoned you so that we may take counsel together as to what is best to be done. Let each say what is in his mind.”

There was silence. Men looked at each other, found no eagerness, no fire, in any of the eyes which met theirs, and dropped their gaze upon the ground. Pizarro's grave

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glance swept about them, and then, as no one seemed wishful to speak, he said :

“ I will put the position before you. We are one hundred and seventy men ; a league beyond these walls are perhaps one hundred thousand Indians. We have toiled for many months—I, indeed, have toiled many years—to get here, to face the foe who now lies so near us, and to conquer his land for the glory of our emperor, and our Holy Faith, and the enrichment of ourselves. We are now where we desired to be, but—our position is desperate. Whichever way we turn, we are menaced by appalling dangers—nay, death seems certain.

“ To fly now is too late. Whither could we go ? At the first sign of retreat the whole army of the Inca, whose spies are doubtless beneath our very walls, would rise and rush upon us. If we reached the sierras, and strove to retreat the way we came, our enemies, who know every track upon those desolate mountains, would hem us in where they chose, and mete out to us such a death as should satisfy their savage instincts.

“ To stay where we are—inactive, neither advancing nor retreating,” went on Pizarro, in the same quiet voice, “ is that the better course ? Do we know that the Inca bears friendly feelings toward us ? Gentlemen, you all know the coldness of his reception of my embassy to him not three hours ago. Even supposing that his coldness was assumed, and that he has friendly feelings for us, could we rely upon his continuing in amity ?

“ The heathens think that we have supernatural powers, but if we remain inactive among them, will not habit and custom soon cause them to know that we are but men as they are ? Will they not get to despise us for our fewness of numbers ? And when they thought thus, would

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not our arms, our horses and our accoutrements constantly excite the Inca to fall upon us and possess the things we have ?

“ From all that I have learned of him, the Inca is a crafty and unscrupulous prince. You think, perhaps, that his messages to us asking us to hasten to him were meant kindly ? Gentleman, on the contrary, I knew that always they were only intended to decoy us across the mountains. He did not oppose us in the sierras, where, at fifty places, he could have checked and slain us. No, he did not ; he wished to see us closely, to learn who we are, what manner of men we are, and when he cares, he hopes to stretch out his hand, crush us utterly and take what we possess for his own barbaric adornment.”

They were all brave men who, seated round the fire in the centre of the room, listened to Pizarro's words ; but the brutal plainness with which he described their apparently hopeless plight caused the heart of more than one to contract with a chill fear. They could only hope that their general, who seldom told them all that was in his mind, was by thus showing them all that was against them, only leading up to some way out of their desperate condition. But their hopes of any solution were small.

“ What shall we do, then ? ” went on Pizarro, his grave eyes bent on the burning billets of wood before him, the flames from which ruddied his cheek, which no rays of the tropic sun had power to tan. “ Shall we try our forces against those of the Inca ? Shall we try a sudden assault, take them by surprise at some opportune moment ? Or shall we wait until reinforcements reach us, and with larger numbers essay a pitched battle ? I think not. We may have a hundred and fifty or two hundred more cavaliers who may reach us under Almagro, within the next few

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weeks. But before then, the victorious legions of the Inca will have returned from the north, from their conquests which have brought the whole of this rich land in fealty to Atahualpa. What would four or five hundred Spanish cavaliers, unsurpassed as they may be man to man—what could these do against a hundred and fifty thousand ?

“ I lay these things before you thus clearly,” he went on, “ because I wish to convince you that being, as we are, in desperate straits, only a desperate remedy can release us. I have a plan, gentlemen. It is a desperate one, but it is one which, I think, will achieve success. It is one which will turn the Inca’s treacherous arts against himself, to take him, if possible, in his own snare, to repay his treachery, or strategy, with strategy as subtle and as bold.

“ The Inca himself has suggested this plan to me. He has promised to visit us here to-morrow. Gentlemen, we must lay an ambush for the Inca, and though in face of his whole army, we must take him prisoner ! ”

Men looked at him with astonishment. The daring, the desperation of the plan struck them dumb for the moment. Then cried de la Vega :

“ By the blessed Virgin, ’tis a master-stroke ! General, I congratulate you on your project. ’Tis our only hope, and I see no reason why it should not succeed.”

Others gave expression to their admiration of the boldness of the plan, and all began discussing how it should be carried into execution. When this had been finally settled, the priest, Valverde, said :

“ Truly, Heaven hath given our leader the wisdom which shall fight for us and confound our enemies, and his name shall go down to posterity as a brilliant and worthy son of

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the Holy Church with that other noble ornament who gave Mexico to the true faith, Hernando Cortés. And now, my children, I go, and with my two brother priests I will spend the night in prayers for your success, giving ourselves to tears and flagellation.”

The council separated, not one voice having been raised in timid objection or fear. All clearly saw that if the sacred person of the Inca were once secured, his followers, astounded by so great a catastrophe, would be struck powerless with consternation. If, later, they recovered and attempted to attack the Spaniards, Pizarro could threaten to slay the Inca before their very eyes. Thus, with the Inca in his power, he would have the best guarantee for the safety of the Spaniards.

Pizarro went round the camp, giving orders for its due security during the night. There was a low tower at the end of the plaza, toward the Inca camp, and on the summit thereof Pizarro placed sentinels, so that they could watch the camp of the Inca and give warning of any menacing movements.

Then all retired to their quarters to sleep. But few slept. Their brains were too busy with thoughts of the morrow, which was to be the crisis of their fate—to see them whelmed in carnage and ruin, or to see them masters of the Land of Gold !

When day broke, the loud call of the trumpet awoke the Spanish soldiers, who quickly set about preparing the morning meal. The sun was shining in glory through the valley, and though many cast anxious looks to where the Indian tents arose, most of them felt, in the freshness of the morning, that somehow an escape from the desperate state of their affairs would soon be found.

After the morning meal, the soldiers were gathered

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together, and very briefly Pizarro told them what he had resolved to do. Then he set about making the necessary dispositions.

As already mentioned, the plaza was surrounded on three sides by low ranges of buildings, with wide halls opening into the square. In these, on opposite sides, Pizarro placed the cavalry, under the command of his brother Hernando and of de Soto. In the fortress, which closed the narrow end of the plaza, Pedro de Candia, the Greek artillery officer, was stationed with a few soldiers, and the two small pieces of cannon which had been brought with the expedition.

Mass was performed with great solemnity by the priests, prayers were offered, and the soldiers were enjoined to enter bravely into the conflict which was almost upon them, since they were fighting to extend the empire of the Cross, and to bring heathens into the fold of the Church. Afterwards, all joined with enthusiasm in the chant, "*Exsurge Domine, et judica causam tuam.*" The solemn hymn, sung by a hundred and seventy deep voices, rose and fell through the sunlit air, and heartened every soldier, filling him with the glow of enthusiasm, so that he felt that in all that he proposed to do, whatever deed of carnage he was to perpetrate, he was a true soldier of the Cross, and all he did was done in the name of Holy Church.

Late in the morning an Inca noble, with several attendants, was seen coming across the causeway, and, on being brought to Pizarro, he delivered a message, saying that his master was preparing to set forth on his promised visit, and that he would come with all his warriors fully armed, "even as the white warriors had come into his camp the evening before."

The general replied straightway: "Say to your master

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that, come when and how he chooses, he shall be welcome."

An hour passed and then, when the sun stood high overhead, a watcher from the tower descended, and told the general that the Indian procession had started from the Inca's camp, and was already on the causeway. Pizarro mounted to the tower, and saw that the retinue of the Inca stretched for a long distance along the road.

In front came a large body of attendants, who, with long, soft brooms, swept the path free of all dust and rubbish. Behind them, pacing slowly, came, rank upon rank, a dense body of men in uniforms of various colours, and behind these, raised high above the throng, was an open litter in which sat the Inca himself. Behind him and beside him marched other officers and servants.

As they moved in the bright rays of the sunshine, the light flashed from the rich ornaments on their persons, and so dazzling was the sight that, as one of the men who stood beside Pizarro exclaimed, "they blazed like the sun."

But the most disturbing sight to the Spaniards, watching with grim faces and the slow breathing of suspense, was the enormous multitude of soldiers, some of whom lined the road in single file, while others moved slowly in solid ranks over the green fields on either side.

Suddenly, when the head of the procession had arrived at the distance of half-a-mile from the gateway beside the fortress, and Pizarro was about to descend the tower, the Inca's bodyguard stopped, and to the surprise of the Spaniards they saw white tents were being brought out and pitched upon the meadows beside the causeway. The Inca was going to encamp just outside the ambush prepared for him!

Then another Inca noble, with attendants, was seen

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approaching the city, and Pizarro, having descended to receive him, was informed that the Inca would occupy his present station for the night, and make his visit to the Spaniards in the morning.

This information was very disturbing to Pizarro. For many hours since daylight the Spaniards had been under arms, the cavalry mounted in the great halls beside the plaza, and the foot soldiers ranked in their lines. The heat of the tropical sun had beaten down all day in the glaring plaza, and no sound was in the deserted city except the call, every now and then, from the summit of the tower, where the Spanish watcher announced from time to time the movements of the Inca's army.

Nothing would be so trying, so nerve-racking, as prolonged suspense in a critical position like the present, and Pizarro feared lest the ardour of his soldiers might weaken if they were kept longer in suspense.

"Tell your master," he said to the messenger, "that I hope he will come immediately, as he at first proposed, for I have waited for him all day, and am anxious to see him."

When the envoy reached the Inca, the Spanish watchers saw with gladness that the Inca's tents were folded up again, and that the procession continued its progress toward the town, with the exception of the Indian soldiers who were now left behind.

At the same time a band of officers of the Court came, and a message was delivered to the Spaniards, saying that Atahualpa intended to pass the night in the town, and that they were come to prepare lodgings for himself and his retinue.

A little before sunset the head of the procession entered the gate of the plaza. First came some hundred or more menials, clearing the road from rubbish, and singing songs

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of praise to the Inca. Then followed, marching in ranks, officers dressed in various liveries. Some wore clothes with patterns in squares of red and white, like a chess-board, while others were dressed in pure white, and bore on their shoulders maces of silver or copper.

The guards immediately about the king were distinguished above all others by the deep blue of their livery, by the rich ornaments about their necks, and by the heavy pendants of gold which hung at their ears, which marked them out as being of the royal race of the Incas.

High above his vassals came the Inca, seated on a throne of pure gold which rested on an open litter, the poles of which were borne on the shoulders of eighty of the Inca nobles. The litter, or palanquin, shone in the sunlight with shining plates of gold and silver, and from the person of the Inca seated within, the light dazzled and glittered.

Round his neck was a collar of emeralds of unusual size and brilliancy. His short hair was covered with ornaments of gold, and the Peruvian crown, or borla, made of red fringe, encircled his forehead.

As the leading ranks of the procession entered the square, they opened, and allowed the bearers of the Inca to pass through. There was no sign of the Spaniards, and in silence and slow order the bodyguard of the Inca bore him to the other end of the vast plaza. Behind them came a multitude of the retinue to the number of five thousand, so that the great space was almost filled.

Then, commanding his bearers to halt, Atahualpa stood up and looked back.

“Where are they?” he demanded, referring to the Spaniards, not a sign of whom was to be seen.

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“ I think, lord,” said one of the Inca chiefs, “ that they hide for fear of thee.”

At that moment, from one of the halls opening on the plaza, the priest Valverde came, accompanied by a soldier named Aldana, and by Martinillo, one of the Indian interpreters. In one hand the priest bore a Bible, and in the other a crucifix, and, approaching the Inca, he said :

“ I come by order of my general to expound to you the doctrines of the true faith, for which purpose we have come many thousand leagues.”

Thereupon the priest began to explain shortly the whole Christian doctrine : how man was created, fell into sin, was redeemed by Jesus Christ, who was crucified ; how, ascending into heaven, Jesus had left Peter to be his vicegerent upon earth, and how the power of the Son of God had been handed down to the popes, the successors of Peter, who had thereby authority over all the kings and principalities of the world.

“ The successor of that great Apostle,” went on the friar, every sentence of whose discourse was interpreted as he went on by the Indian beside him, “ who now sits in his place at Rome, hath given authority to our master, the Emperor Charles, one of the most magnificent monarchs whom the world hath ever seen, to conquer and convert the natives of this western continent. The general, my master, hath his Majesty’s commands to execute this important work in thy country.

“ Therefore,” went on the friar, “ I do beseech thee to receive the envoy of his Majesty in all kindness, to renounce the errors of thine own idolatrous and heathen religion, and to embrace the truths of that faith which I bring to thee, the only true faith in the world, and the only one whereby thou mayst receive eternal life.

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“If ye do these things, and acknowledge thyself a vassal of his most excellent Majesty the Emperor Charles, thou shalt be received into the family of kings and princes who sit in peace under the shadow of his power, and thou shalt receive all aid and protection from thy great overlord.”

The Inca had listened patiently, only half understanding the first part of the discourse, but at the latter part, which he well understood, his face flushed and his eyes glittered.

“I will be no man’s vassal !” he cried. “I am greater than any prince on earth. Your emperor is also a great prince—he must be so, seeing that he hath sent you so far across the world. I will hold him as a brother, but no more than that. As for the great priest you speak of, he must be mad to talk of giving away kingdoms he does not possess. And the god that I worship hath never died, hath never been slain by those who should have worshipped him. My god,” he said, pointing to the west, where the sun lay low in the skies, throwing a red glory across the world and tingeing the upraised faces of the multitude of Indians in the square as if already they were bathed in blood, “my god still lives in the heavens and looks down on his children !”

Turning to the friar, he said, “By what authority do you say these things ?”

The friar pointed to the Bible which he held in his hand, and the Inca held out his hand for it. The priest gave it to him, and Atahualpa turned it this way and that. He did not know how to open the clumsy book, and with a gesture of impatience he threw it down to the ground, saying in a loud voice :

“Tell your people that they shall give me an account of their evil doings in my land. They are all robbers, and

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they shall be slain. I will have satisfaction for all they have done ! ”

When these words had been swiftly interpreted by the young Indian beside him, the priest, with angry eyes and flushed face, picked up the volume and hastened, almost running, back to the place where Pizarro was waiting. Coming to the general, who stood with de Soto, he cried in a passionate voice :

“ Do you not see what is happening ? While we waste our breath talking with this dog, full of pride as he is, the square is filling with Indians ? Set on at once. I absolve you ! ”

The pale face of Pizarro did not move a muscle. He stepped to the door of the hall and waved a white scarf. Instantly from the fortress roared a cannon, ploughing a shot through the dense mass of Indians. Cries of terror arose among them, and they rushed this way and that. Again came the crash of cannon, and a volley of musketry scattered death and horror among them.

Then the sharp note of a trumpet rose clear and strong. Every Spanish soldier, hiding in the dark halls, sprang to arms, and from the wide doors poured the horsemen. The old battle cry of “ St Jago and at them ! ” rang out in the square, and was answered from every side as horse and foot poured out and dashed into the midst of the Indians.

Terrified by the noise and smoke of the guns, horrified to see their fellows struck down beside them by some mysterious force, the Indians were taken entirely by surprise. The echoes of the guns reverberated from the empty halls beside them, and the sulphurous fumes of the powder rolled in volumes among the natives. They thought that horrible and powerful demons were let loose among them, and in a deathly panic flew this way

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and that, seeking escape. But their own numbers impeded them, and in the narrow space thousands jammed together.

At the first fierce charge of the Spanish cavalry as many were slain by the crowd, by being trampled, as by the swords of the freebooters. Nobles and commoners were mingled in the heaps of slain that now, like ghastly mounds, rose up along the square amid the crowds of panic-stricken creatures who dashed this way and that, pursued by the relentless cavaliers of Spain.

This was an added terror—to see man and horse, like some new creature of terror, springing mercilessly among them; and the flashing sword in the hand of the warrior dealt death unsparingly to all.

The Indians made no resistance. Panic possessed them, and, besides, they had no weapons. Their only thought was to escape, but every avenue was closed to them. The entrance of the square was closed by a mass of bodies of those who had been crushed in the first mad rush to escape. A piece of thick wall beside the gate was thrown down by the terrible pressure of the crowd now remaining in the square, and those behind, scrambling over the ruin and the bodies of their agonized fellows, streamed in flying bands into the country beyond, pursued by the horsemen who hung on their rear, cutting down all they could reach.

At the other end of the square, where the band of Inca nobles still supported the litter of their king, the massacre was more fierce. It was the aim of Pizarro to seize the person of the Inca unharmed, but the brave nobles, weaponless as they were, could yet with their bodies resist the ironclad warriors of Spain and offer a living barrier to the hoofs of the horses.

Charge after charge was resisted; the nobles clung to

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the horses and strove to wrest the cavalier from his saddle or to wrench the sword from his hand, and as one fell dead from such an encounter, another, equally as brave and devoted to his king, leaped into his place.

The litter, with the Inca clutching its sides, swayed to and fro as the band of heroic nobles was thrust to and fro. He could do nothing to avert the doom which was inevitable, and, powerless, could do naught but look and note how the living raft on which he was tossed was being torn away, piece by piece, by the waves of fierce warriors who surrounded him.

At length, weary with their vain efforts to take the Inca alive, and afraid, now that the twilight was descending, that he might escape them, some of the Spaniards made attempts to reach the Inca to slay him. But Pizarro, who was nearest to him, called out with angry voice :

“ Let no one hurt the Inca under pain of death ! ”

Stretching out his arm to shield him, Pizarro received the only wound that any Spaniard suffered in that massacre, one of his own men having wounded him on the hand with his poniard.

At length, so bitter was the struggle about the Inca that the palanquin reeled more than once, and several of the nobles who supported it having been slain, it was overturned, and the Inca would have been thrown with violence to the ground had he not been caught in the arms of Pizarro and some of the cavaliers.

Closely guarded, he was removed to one of the chambers in the square, and the remnant of Inca nobles now turned and thought only of flight. The report of the disaster spread with the speed of terror over the neighbouring fields to the camp of the Inca—the divine person of their king

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was in the hands of the strangers, thousands of his subjects, including the flower of the royal clan, lay in dreadful carnage in the square of Caxamalca. The end of the world seemed to be upon those that still lived, and the soldiers, numbering some thousands, were seized with abject terror, and, leaving their weapons, fled in the gathering gloom in all directions away from the vicinity of the dreadful stranger warriors.

Then the clear note of a trumpet rose in the evening air. It was the rallying call of the Spaniards, and the scattered conquerors heard it from far away over the fertile fields. Each checked his horse and turned, sated with bloodshed, and made his way toward the town again, while the terrified fugitives, almost spent with their fierce running, noted with relief that they were no longer pursued, and throwing themselves down on the grass, wondered what next disaster would happen, and wept to think of the ruin which had crushed upon their world.

From the time when the cannon thundered its signal for the dreadful slaughter until the moment when Atahualpa was thrown into the hands of the captors, no more than half-an-hour had passed ; but in that time an ancient kingdom had fallen into the hands of its invaders, and a line of kings, whose persons were held to be sacred and of divine origin, had come to an end.

That night the Inca supped with his captor Pizarro, and the chief Spanish officers. The destruction which had befallen him did not seem greatly to have affected his spirits, which was probably due to the fact that he had succeeded to the throne by a very recent conquest, and had not behind him the sense of a long and undisturbed reign.

Felipillo stood behind Pizarro, and by his aid conversa-



The litter swayed to and fro

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tion was carried on between the Inca and his captors as they continued the meal.

Closely seen, the Inca was found to be a man of about thirty years of age, of a well-made frame, with a physique more robust than was usual with his countrymen. His head was large, and his face would have been called handsome but for the bloodshot eyes, which gave a fierce look to the face.

He was deliberate in speech, and grave, almost stern, in manner, but he could be affable.

“ I regret,” said Pizarro, “ that the resources of our rough camp do not yield the delicacies which are your due. But this can be remedied to-morrow, for I have every desire to treat you with the courtesy and the deference which are your due.”

“ I do not complain,” said the Inca. “ It is the fortune of war that one shall conquer and another be conquered.”

“ Your words,” said de Soto, “ prove to be true what we have already heard of you, that you are a brave man.”

“ I have ever loved war,” replied the Inca, “ but such strategy as yours is more than I have ever known. You have entrapped me—you with your fewness of numbers, in the midst of ten thousand of my people.”

He spoke without bitterness, and seemed really to admire the adroit manner with which the Spaniards had succeeded in their plan to seize him, in spite of the tremendous odds against them.

“ You thought we were a weaker enemy than we are ? ” asked Pizarro.

“ I had heard that you numbered but two hundred, and though your weapons were marvellous, and the animals which you ride were terrifying—for such creatures we

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have never seen before—I thought you could easily be overcome when I chose to fall upon you.”

“You see now that you did wrong to let us come so far into your land,” said de Soto.

“I had knowledge of all you did,” replied the Inca, “from the moment when you first landed, for news of all the actions of the ‘bearded men,’ as you were called, reached me from the chieftains of the villages near which you passed.”

“Why did you not fall upon us in the mountains?” asked Pizarro. “Almost hourly, until we found your forts there solitary and deserted, we expected to be overwhelmed by some ambush.”

“I wished to see you with my own eyes,” replied Atahualpa, with a grave smile, “to see what manner of men you were, and what weapons you carried. For scarcely could I believe the tales which were told me, and I thought my people lied.”

“What would you have done to us had you overcome us?” asked de la Vega.

“Such of you as I thought might be useful to me to describe to me your people and your country, to satisfy my curiosity, I should have kept alive for a little while,” replied the Inca. “The rest I should have executed, and taken their horses and arms for myself and my own bodyguard.”

As the evening passed, and the talk went on between the captured Inca and his conquerors, it could be seen that for all his brave air of calmness, gloomy thoughts were in his mind. It could hardly be otherwise.

Pizarro, however, endeavoured to cheer him.

“Be not cast down by your reverses,” he said. “Yours has been the fate of every Indian king on this continent

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who has endeavoured to fight against the Soldiers of the Cross. We fight for the only true religion in the world, and our mission is to bring the knowledge of the one true God to all the heathen.”

It is to be feared that the Inca got little comfort from Pizarro's words, and perhaps something of his dreadful fate was vaguely foreseen by the captured king.

CHAPTER X

The Inca's Ransom

NEXT morning Pizarro paraded his men, and finding that there were many prisoners in the camp, he ordered that these should remove the dead bodies of their countrymen that still lay in heaps about the plaza, and give them decent burial. With what heavy hearts must this task have been undertaken by the captives, who, with the horror of the terrible massacre still in their minds, had to carry the crushed or hacked bodies of their own kinsmen and inter them in a hastily dug grave !

Then Pizarro detached de Soto, with some thirty cavaliers, and bade him ride to the camp of the Inca at the baths, disperse the remnant of the Peruvian forces which might still hang about there, and seize possession of the spoil.

Before noon de Soto rode into the plaza, followed by a large body of Peruvians, men and women, and an enormous quantity of spoil, all guarded by his thirty horsemen.

“ We met with no resistance, general,” de Soto reported, “ though a large number of the warriors, superior in number to ourselves, was still there. I have brought many of them with me, and these, as you see, are young men. I learn that the veterans of the army are in the north of the country, with the two chief generals of the Inca. I have seized all the weapons I could find in the camp.”

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Pizarro looked at the numbers of young, able-bodied men who, each in a good uniform, and robust in body, stood in dejected silence, gazing in awe at their conquerors.

“Strange,” said the Spanish general, “that these men do not try to make head against us, seeing how great is their number.”

“They have no heart in them, general,” replied de Soto. “They are like sheep without a bell-wether. Felipillo tells me that now that their king is captive it is to them as if the sun has fallen out of the sky, and they expect nothing less than the end of the world. They can think of no other leader than their lord, whom they call the Child of the Sun.”

Some of the rougher and more brutal of the Spaniards gazed with fear on the number of their captives.

“They are ten times our number,” said they among themselves. “If they chose to rise upon us while we slept they could slay us all.”

Some even went to Pizarro and made their complaints to him, and suggested that they should kill all the young warriors, “or at least,” said some, “cut off their right hands.”

Pizarro smiled gravely at the speakers.

“If you do that,” he said, “you would arm the very women and children against you, and for every man you slew, or whose hand you cut off, you would have an enemy who would strike at you when you were most off your guard. No, lads, you are too fearful. We have done well at our first effort, and now our best policy is to treat the people with humanity.”

Then, through the medium of the interpreters, he told the captive warriors to go to their homes, telling them that

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the Spaniards would injure no one who did not take up arms against them. When, according to this command, the young warriors had left the town, a large number of Indians still remained who had been employed about the Court of the Inca in various menial offices. These were retained to wait on the conquerors, and so well supplied were the Spaniards with servants by this means, that the roughest and poorest soldier had as many menials to do him services as would have befitted a rich and noble hidalgo of Spain.

The booty brought back by de Soto from the Inca's camp at the baths consisted mainly of plate for the royal table. It was in silver and gold, and the weight and richness of design astonished the Spaniards. There were also some very fine emeralds discovered among the spoil, and these, together with the rich ornaments found on the bodies of the nobles slain in the plaza, were placed in safe custody with the plate, to be shared among the conquerors at some future time.

Among the buildings in the deserted city, which the soldiers now overran, were found great magazines stored with goods, both cotton and woollen, of so fine a texture that the men declared they had never seen such work even in Spain. Every soldier took what he wanted from this store, yet afterwards there remained several shiploads.

Meanwhile Pizarro sent a messenger back to San Miguel to report his success and to learn whether any reinforcements had yet arrived from Panama. He desired to push on to Cuzco, the capital of the country, but he did not care to do this with his present small forces. He would have to keep a strong guard about the Inca, and thus reduce his numbers should the natives seek to do battle with him on his march.

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In the meantime he employed the soldiers in making Caxamalca a more fitting place of residence for himself and his men. He took up his own quarters in a palace of the Incas which was situated in the town, and there also, in his own suite of apartments, Atahualpa was kept imprisoned under a strong guard. Nevertheless, he was allowed to have all his wives with him, and many of the officers of his Court waited upon him, and he received visits from various Inca chieftains daily.

Many were the conversations which, as the days passed, the Spanish leaders had with the captive Inca. He had learned of the booty they had seized at his pleasure palace in the camp by the baths, and one day he smilingly told Pizarro that he had seized treasure which, in comparison with that which was stored at his capital, was almost insignificant.

Afterwards the Spaniards got him to describe the wonders of the rich city of Cuzco, and often, when the monk Valverde came to speak to him of the Spaniards' religion, his talk ended in questions on the same subject, in which the others joined.

Very soon, therefore, the Inca realized that for all their zeal to convert him and his subjects to the Christian faith, they had a hunger for gold more powerful than either religion or conquest.

This knowledge gave him the thought that he might use their lust for gold for the purpose of gaining his own freedom. There was one great reason for which he desired his freedom, and that quickly. It was this. A few months only separated him from the great battle in which he had overcome the forces of his half-brother, Huascar, and taken him prisoner. Ever since his defeat, Huascar had been kept a close prisoner in a town at no great distance

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from Caxamalca. Atahualpa feared, with good reason, as it appeared, that Huascar would find it easy to corrupt his guards, make his escape, and put himself at the head of the empire with no one to deny him.

His resolution was quickly taken, and the next time Pizarro visited him with some of the Spanish officers, Atahualpa interrupted the conversation and said :

“ Set me free, chieftain ! If you will do that, I will cover the floor of this room with gold ! ”

The Spaniards listened to Felipillo’s translation of these words with incredulous smiles, and gazed at the Inca half in mockery.

Some looked around the chamber and roughly measured its dimensions. It was about seventeen feet broad, by twenty-two feet long and some ten or eleven feet high.

The Inca, somewhat annoyed at the mockery in the faces of the Spaniards, stamped his foot and said :

“ You smile as if you think I lied. But I tell you that not only will I cover the floor with gold, but, if you give me my liberty, I will fill this room with gold as high as I can reach—look, as high as this.”

Striding to one side of the chamber, he reached up on tiptoe, and with his finger made a mark high up the wall.

All stared with astonishment at the Inca’s evident earnestness, and marvelled at the thought that perhaps he might be speaking truth.

“ Is he mad, señores,” said Hernando Pizarro, “ or is he trying to deceive us ? ”

Some said he had lost his wits, others that there might be some truth in what he spoke.

“ Señores,” said Pizarro, “ there is no harm in taking him at his word. We have heard many tales of the abundant treasure in this land. Moreover, if we let the Inca

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give orders for its collection, we shall obtain all there is, whereas if we tried to get it ourselves, the Indians would of a surety conceal or steal it."

"Tell the Inca," said Pizarro, turning to Felipillo, "that I agree. Let him fill this room to the height at which he points with gold. Get me some red paint and I will mark the line."

The Inca's eyes shone with joy when he heard that the Spaniards would agree to his terms, and paint having been brought, Pizarro caused one of the Indians to draw a red line on the walls of the room at the height of about nine feet from the floor.

"Call Don Zerez, the notary," commanded Pizarro, "and we will have this compact put on record."

When the man of inkhorn and parchment had entered and arranged his writing materials, Pizarro said :

"Write me down this, that the King Atahualpa agrees, for the price of his liberty, to fill this room with gold from the floor even up to the red mark which is drawn upon the walls. Say, Inca," he went on, speaking to his prisoner, "shall this gold be melted down before it is brought here ?"

"I think you wish not to make my task so hard," replied the Inca. "Great will be the treasure, greater than ye have ever seen in one room ; but it will be in goblets, plates, salvers, and in sheets from the temple walls."

"Go on," said Pizarro to the notary. "The gold shall be brought here in the forms into which it is made, so that the Inca may have the benefit of the spaces between."

"I will also cause silver to be brought here," said the Inca, who now that a definite task seemed to be set forth as the price of his liberty, was moved quite beyond himself.

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He walked up and down, his eyes glowing with satisfaction, a smile on his hitherto grave face.

“My subjects can bring silver as well as gold—so much indeed,” he went on, “that I will fill the robing chamber which is beside this one twice full with nuggets and articles of silver.”

“Write it down, notary,” said Pizarro, whose eyes, together with those of his officers, gleamed at hearing the possibility of such vast wealth coming within their reach.

“And within what time will all this be done?” asked the notary.

The Inca hesitated a moment when this question was put to him. The fevered light in his eye gloomed for a little as he thought of the time that must elapse before he could perform his task, regain his liberty, and thus make sure of preventing his rival Huascar from escaping and laying claim to the throne. But he would cause his servants to work night and day to carry out his orders to bring the gold and silver for his ransom. Two months was the least time in which it might be done, though that would mean incessant labour. Yet it must be done.

“In two months from now,” he replied, “shall this room be filled with gold and the lesser room shall be twice filled with silver.”

“Put it down,” said Pizarro to the notary; “and then read it to us.”

The notary did so, and when each sentence had been translated to the Inca he said it was all as he had agreed.

When this had been done the Inca called several of his Indian servants and officers and bade them instantly depart to Cuzco and other chief cities, with orders to bring from the

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royal palaces, temples and other buildings the treasures of gold and silver to be found there, and send them by rapid carriers to Caxamalca.

One day, a little after this, word was brought to Pizarro that a messenger from Huascar, the half-brother of Atahualpa, desired to speak to him. On being brought before him the Inca chieftain said :

“ Lord, I come from my master, the rightful heir to this kingdom, Huascar, son of the great king, Huayna Capac. By the word of my mouth my master sends thee greeting and this message. That he hath heard of the ransom which Atahualpa hath offered to thee for his liberty, but he, Huascar, says that he will give thee a much greater ransom if thou wilt cause him to be released. Moreover, it is only he, Huascar, who knows where all the wealth of his great father, Huayna Capac, is kept. Atahualpa the usurper knoweth it not. He hath never lived at Cuzco, where is the chief palace of my master's father, and knoweth not the secret places of the treasures. If, therefore, thou wilt release Huascar and aid him to regain the throne of his fathers which Atahualpa hath wickedly usurped, Huascar will give thee double the treasure which the usurper hath promised thee, and will be thy friend and protector always.”

Pizarro listened eagerly to the message, though his grave face showed nothing of the emotions in his brain. He saw at once the importance of playing off the rivals one against the other. The advantages to be gained were obvious. By aiding with his own force the king whom he preferred, he would make sure of that king's success ; and ever afterwards the party who held the sovereignty of Peru would be a ready servant to him. But it would not be wise to show which he preferred at once, since, by keeping them

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in suspense, he could see better which might serve his purpose best.

“Tell your master,” he said, “that I will consider his message, but I must first learn the truth of the claims which each of the rivals has to the throne of this country. When I have learned that, I will make judgment and say which of them has the best title to the sceptre of the Incas.”

The messenger withdrew, and as secretly as possible made his way back to Huascar, and reported the result of his embassy. But there was treachery somewhere, and someone, hoping to gain the favour of Atahualpa, went to him and reported the message which had been sent to the Spanish general on behalf of Huascar, and the result.

Atahualpa was full of rage when he heard that his half-brother and rival had craved the help of Pizarro, and considered what course he should now take. While he reflected, Pizarro and some of the Spanish officers came to him and began to ask questions of him concerning the war which had been fought between himself and Huascar.

The Inca answered warily, and then by various questions tried to learn what was Pizarro's resolve concerning Huascar's proposal. But the Spanish general was not to be drawn. Rising, Pizarro terminated the interview, and with his final words gave the Inca even more than he wished to know.

“I think,” said the Spaniard, “that this matter of dispute between you and your half-brother is one which must be justly settled. I intend therefore to have Huascar brought here, and when I have heard both your cases, I will determine which has the truer claim to the throne.”

When the Inca was left alone he paced his apartment with hasty strides, his hands clenched, his bloodshot eyes looking fiercer than usual. At length, ceasing his walk,

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he bade one of his women in the room call a certain chieftain from those who waited in an outer chamber.

The officer, an Inca noble, entered the presence of the Inca, with bare feet, and bowed with a burden on his back, as was the custom, in token of extreme humility. Having come to the foot of the low throne on which the Inca sat, the noble kneeled, and waited for the king to speak. Atahualpa leaned forward and said a few words in a low tone close to the ear of the chief. When he had finished speaking the noble bowed still lower, then, rising, he shouldered his burden again and retreated from the chamber backward.

Two days later, in the dawn of morning, young Huascar, the rightful king of Peru, who had endeared himself to his people by his gentle manners and kindly words, was awakened early from his sleep. A guard of six armed men entered his prison, and the leader of them bade him rise and come with them.

They surrounded him and led him forth. To his repeated inquiries what was their purpose with him they made no reply. At length they came to the river which ran by his prison and he was bidden to get into a boat alone. He resisted, and they forced him into it.

He knew then what was their intention, and silently permitted them to bind him to the boat. He preserved a calm dignity when, having seated themselves in two other boats, they drew him out into the middle of the broad stream. Arrived there, they began to pull apart some of the ropes that held the timbers of his boat together. Water began to flow in and to swamp the little craft.

“I see ye will drown me,” he said, in a quiet voice. “This is my brother's will, but tell ye him that even as I die a violent death, so too shall he, and that ere long. And the white men will avenge my murder.”

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Already he was sinking in the waters, and as his last words were uttered the waves closed over him and his calm, pale face sank downwards into the dark depths. The murderers waited over the spot until the bubbles ceased to rise and the agitation of the water had wholly vanished, and then rowed slowly back to land.

A few days later Pizarro received a message saying that the Inca desired to speak to him. Entering the chamber of Atahualpa, he found him pacing the room as if in great distress of mind.

“Señor,” said the Inca, “a great calamity has fallen upon my brother Huascar. His guards suspected that a plot was on foot to try a rescue, and fearing he would escape, they have slain him. My poor brother! I cannot tell you how deep is my sorrow for his untimely death.”

For a moment Pizarro stared at the Inca with a stern face, and in silence; then he cried:

“I’ll not believe it! Why should his guards slay him without command?”

“I know not, señor,” was the reply. “They shall be slain in their turn for their crime upon my poor brother.”

“I tell you,” replied Pizarro, “that if he indeed be dead, you shall answer for his life.”

Saying which the Spanish general strode in anger from the room. He sent trusty messengers to learn the truth as to the death of Huascar; and the news was confirmed—namely, that, fearful lest Huascar might escape, his guards had taken it upon themselves to put an end to his life.

Pizarro said no more on the subject, but felt sure that the Inca, fearing the effect of Pizarro’s inquiry into the justice of the quarrel between the brothers, had given secret orders to have Huascar slain.

As the weeks passed and the Indian carriers slowly

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brought in the pieces of gold and silver from the many distant towns whence the Inca had commanded that treasure was to be brought, a rumour began to spread among the Spaniards that Atahualpa was communicating with his subjects all over the kingdom in order to plan a universal rising, so that the small Spanish force could be overwhelmed at one blow.

These suspicions were related to Pizarro, and even the name of the city which rumour said was appointed to be the rendezvous for the armies of the Indians was mentioned. It was Guamachucho, a city lying a few miles distant from Caxamalca.

Pizarro immediately went to the Inca and bluntly told him of the rumours. Atahualpa hardly heard his first words before he broke out in repudiation of the charge.

“It is false !” he cried. “None of my subjects would dare to appear in arms or to raise his finger, without my orders.”

“Nevertheless,” said Pizarro sternly, “some of your subjects seem to have raised their hands against your brother without your orders.”

For a moment the Inca was nonplussed, but recovering himself quickly, he said :

“I have given orders that those who slew him shall be slain ; and as to the suspicions you have against me, I am in your power. Is not my life at your disposal ? What better security can you have for my fidelity ?”

Pizarro was not convinced, and left the Inca without further parley. He then went to his brother Hernando, and ordered him to take twenty horsemen and a small body of infantry and go to the town of Guamachucho to see whether there were any signs of preparation for a rising among the people.

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Hernando immediately set out, and reaching the town in a forced march he found everything quiet, and was received with kindness by the natives. Before leaving the place a messenger arrived from Pizarro, ordering him to continue his march and to visit the town of Pachacamac, situated on the coast, at least a hundred leagues distant from Caxamalca. There he was to seize the treasure of the temple, which was said to be of incalculable value, as it had accumulated for centuries.

It was an arduous journey that the conquerors had now to take. For a time their route lay on fairly level ground, but then the road ascended to the Cordilleras, along the tableland of which they travelled. The journey would have been much more difficult or painful, but soon they struck the highroad from Pachacamac to Cuzco, which past generations of kings had cut through the rocky soil of the mountains.

As they tramped along this road the admiration of Hernando Pizarro was excited for the work of men whom the rougher Spaniards looked upon as inferior creatures.

“By my faith,” he said, and has left his words in his history of these events, “nothing in Christendom equals this road across the sierra.”

It was indeed a magnificent work, worthy, in the evidence which it gave of power and civilization, to rank with the great roads which the Romans built, and which can still be seen, grass grown and neglected, driving their arrow-like way across many a wide landscape in England.

For many miles the road over the mountains was levelled from the living rock, in places which, for the most part of the year, were covered with snow, while in other parts the way was tunnelled out of the granite peaks which reared up as if to stop the daring work of adze and hammer.

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It was laid with heavy flags of freestone, and in some places covered with a cement, so that it was always level and easy to march upon.

Here and there were cliffs which could not be pierced, but with infinite labour they were cut into steps, protected on their sides by parapets or balustrades of heavy stones. These stairways were often so precipitous that the horses had to be pulled up them by main force.

Whatever obstacle lay before it, the Spaniards found that it had been surmounted, and that generally the road kept its even width of twenty feet throughout its length. Where a chasm yawned, as if by some titanic force the mountain had been split asunder, the ravine was filled with solid masonry, and the road was carried over the bridge thus formed, while an abyss of hideous depth lay on either hand of the travellers. In places, the torrent at the bottom of these chasms had worn its way through the base of the masonry, and, gradually eating away the stones, left the upper part spanning the valley like an arch.

Frequently the Spaniards heard the thunder of water before them, and soon they would come to where a wide torrent or a swift and powerful stream ploughed and drove through the mountains. Some of these were crossed by wooden bridges, but where the chasm was too wide for this, the Spaniards found great swinging bridges made of rope-like osiers.

When they came upon the first bridge of this kind, the horsemen especially hesitated, looking upon the attempt to pass themselves and their animals across the structure as certain to end in death.

Examining the formation of the bridge, they found it was composed of osiers woven into cables of the thick-

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ness of a man's body. Several of these were bound together side by side, and on the top planks were tied across, their sides protected by a low railing of osier-ropes.

The ends of the cables, which rested on the brink of the abyss, were run through rings or holes which had been cut in immense buttresses of stone, and then secured to heavy pieces of timber. A gate was placed across the entrance to the bridge, and beside it was a small house, in which resided an Indian, whose duty it was to take toll of travellers.

Having examined all this, Hernando Pizarro turned to his men and said :

“ This bridge is as marvellous as the road by which we have come, and as safe.”

He commanded the Indian tollkeeper to open the gate, and this being done he led his horse forward on to the bridge, followed by his men, who could not well show lack of confidence in their leader by refusing to proceed.

As they approached the middle of the bridge, where it dipped deeply down toward the torrent roaring beneath, it began to sway with the movements of the men and horses. Some of the Spaniards cast terrified glances at the dark abyss of waters which could be seen through the openings between the planks, foaming and coiling far below. Others pushed up close towards Hernando, as if they wished to rush in a panic madly across the tottering and trembling structure ; but they dared not pass their leader, who did not hurry his step, but walked as quietly and calmly as if he led his horse through a meadow path.

After they had had occasion to cross several of these bridges the Spanish soldiers found that Hernando's words were true, and that, however frail they looked, they were strong enough to bear much greater weights than armed

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men and horses, though they had been built only for the passage of lightly-clad Indians and slender-limbed llamas.

As they passed along the road they frequently met with gangs of Indians under the command of some official, engaged in repairing the roads or bridges ; and in the loneliest regions of the mountains they would see huge flocks of whitey-brown llamas feeding on the stunted herbage of these high altitudes, tended by shepherds in gaudy blankets, the colour of the caps upon their head indicating the district of which they were natives. The Spaniards learned that these animals were carefully tended, and their migrations from mountain to valley pastures closely regulated, since the whole of the clothing of the Peruvians was made from their wool.

Except in the highest parts of the sierras, the Spaniards found hamlets and villages scattered everywhere, and every rood of ground was cultivated. Where the mountain declivities were too steep, they were cut into broad terraces, and the bare and sterile rock covered with soil brought from a distance. Water, also, by many channels marvellously arranged, was conducted to each field, so that where, at the turn of the road, the Spaniards often expected to see desolate windy ridges of lichen-covered rock, or wastes of sandy soil, they saw instead orchards and gardens bright with blossom, or fields of Indian corn, from the green and tender ear in the upper regions, to yellow ripeness in the lower lands, where the more genial climate quickened the time of harvest.

At all these villages the Spaniards were well received by the courteous people. Whether this was by reason of the commands of the Inca, or by the awe of their deeds, report of which had spread with words of terror through the land, the Spaniards did not know ; but lodgings were

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provided for them, with food and refreshments and all things which they needed.

At length, having descended from the mountains and traversed the few miles of level land which intervened between them and the coast, they approached the city of Pachacamac. It was a town of large size, with narrow streets, for the most part lined with houses of sun-dried mud or adobe ; but the dwellings of the Inca lords and the palace of the Inca were as usual built solidly of large worked stones.

The town lay at the foot of a hill about whose conical top was built a vast stone building, or several buildings, dominated by two of equal height, one on each side of the hill-top.

As Hernando Pizarro and his men approached the hill, Martinillo, the interpreter, riding beside the Spanish leader, told him of the origin of the town.

“ It takes its name from a god whose altars were found here when the ancestors of the Incas first conquered this land,” he said, “ So deeply was the worship of the god implanted in the hearts of the natives that the Incas deemed that they would not try to drive it out, but, instead, they caused a temple and an altar to be raised beside those to the native god. Thus have they stood for hundreds of years.”

“ If the god has been so venerated,” replied Hernando, “ the worshippers have surely brought much wealth in offerings to the temple.”

“ Men say it is the wealthiest in the land,” said Martinillo. “ Pilgrims come to the holy place of the god from every corner of the kingdom, and bring many gifts to please the god. His wisdom is said to be greatest of all the gods, and his words, spoken through the mouths of his

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priests, are valued as much by the highest Inca lord as by the poorest Indian bearer."

As the Spaniards approached the temple they saw people running this way and that along the causeway which led from the town to the temple. Some, in the dress of priests, rushed into the gate of the temple, and soon the causeway was deserted, except at the town end, where a dark mass of people gathered in a crowd which every moment became denser. These stood and watched with great intentness the strange armed men, and did not attempt to offer any opposition or show any hostility.

Hernando Pizarro reined his horse before the great wooden door of the temple, which was closed, and, by the mouth of Martinillo, demanded entrance in the name of the Inca, at the same time holding forth a wristlet of pure gold marked with the pattern worn only by the Inca.

For a few moments there was silence, during which Hernando and the other riders descended from their horses. Then a wicket opened in the great door, and a priest stood in the opening. He glanced at the mail-clad figures before him, and then at the gold wristlet held forth by Martinillo.

"The priests of the holy Pachacamac cannot admit into the sanctuary men with arms in their hands," said the priest, and was about to shut the door.

Leaping forward, Hernando shouted, "I have come too far to be stayed by a priest."

With one blow he had beaten back the wicket and dashed through into a dark tunnel, closely followed by his men. Swiftly running forward, they found that the tunnel opened into a stone gallery built in a spiral about the hill. They raced round this, and at length emerged

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on a flat area upon the top of the mount, at one end of which stood a square stone building.

Martinillo, who had followed them, now breathlessly shouted :

“That is the sanctuary, the place of the god. Have a care, for all dread to approach it.”

Martinillo, since he had taken service with the Spanish, professed himself a devout Catholic, but for all his protestations he remained as much a pagan as ever, and expected to see some dreadful death fall and blast the desecrating Christians.

Priests stood on the open space before the door of the sanctuary, and with loud voices besought the Spaniards not to affront the god, Martinillo adding his persuasions.

Suddenly, just as Hernando, with fierce looks, strode forward to thrust an old white priest from before the door, the ground shook, a muttering was heard beneath their feet, and the walls of the temples on the hill-side below them trembled and heaved.

With hands held before their faces, as if to shut out the dreadful sight of the vengeance of the outraged god, the priests fled, Martinillo running with them.

“Polluters and desecrators !” they shrieked. “He will engulf you ! He will blast you with his fire !”

Hernando, with stern look, glanced round at his men.

“Courage, lads !” he cried. “We fight the good fight of the Cross and no demons may have power over us.”

Then, approaching the door, he pushed it open and entered, followed by his men. They had expected to find the place blazing with gold and silver and precious jewels, but instead was a small and dimly lit chamber, from the floor and sides of which rose steam, which came from a

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hollow below the floor, where the victims were sacrificed to the god.

A few pieces of gold and some emeralds gleamed in the obscure light on the floor ; and then, as their eyes became used to the half darkness, they saw in the farthest corner of the room the figure of the god.

It was a roughly shaped log, black with age and blood, with a head roughly shaped to resemble that of a man.

This was Pachacamac, who granted the prayers of worshippers, and who uttered oracles in response to the petitions which the priests brought to him, bearing in their hands the gifts of those who craved the god's aid.

Tearing the figure from the recess in which it stood, Hernando threw it out among the feet of his men, who instantly seized it, and with their poniards hewed it into a hundred pieces.

Then, leaving the temple, the Spaniards regained their horses and went into the town, where the natives, finding that the powers of their god were less than those of the Spaniards, came to them and tendered their homage to the wonderful strangers, whom they now looked upon with superstitious awe.

Hernando took advantage of their feelings to tell them something of the religion of the Christians, and showed them how helpless their god had been when the power of the God of the Christians had been raised against it. They should learn from this, he said, to turn to the true God and worship Him, rather than the helpless demon they had hitherto venerated. Lest, however, Pachacamac should try to play any mean tricks upon them, or his obstinate priests should endeavour to frighten them, he showed them the sign of the Cross, and told them that no

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devil or demon could stand before the power of that sign, but would instantly fly in terror.

Hernando and his soldiers searched high and low for the treasure which was said to have been stored in the temple ; but no trace of it could be found. Finally, they had to recognize that they had come too late ; that the priests had got wind of their coming, and had made haste to seize the gold and had hidden it.

The sanctuary of the god Pachacamac was ordered by Hernando to be purified, and then, before the door, he had a great cross erected, made of stone and plaster. When the Spaniards had departed again, no priests returned to the temple from which the god had been hurled and hacked in pieces, and no devout pilgrims thronged to take part in the ritual of his worship. Instead, the simple Indians came to look upon this giant cross, the sign of a power which was mysterious and awful, before which their own god, who had ruled their generations for many ages, had gone down without a struggle.

CHAPTER XI

A Deed of Dishonour

MEANWHILE, at Caxamalca, into the camp of the Spaniards, three white horsemen had ridden one day in January, and, throwing themselves from their horses at the challenge of the sentry, had been received with shouts of welcome by their countrymen, who crowded up.

They were messengers from San Miguel, and one, who bore letters, was instantly conducted to Pizarro's apartments. After a brief welcome, the man handed Pizarro two letters, which, as he was unable to read, the general handed to his secretary. The messenger was then directed to withdraw, and orders were given for refreshment and rest for himself and his fellows.

Pizarro's secretary hurriedly scanned the letters, and his swarthy face assumed a graver aspect than usual.

"This is news indeed, Marquis," he said. "Almagro has reached San Miguel with one hundred and fifty men. The governor of the town sends you word thereof."

"Read me his words," said Pizarro.

Zerez read the formal letter, giving briefly the narrative of Almagro's voyage, the number of men brought with him, and telling how affairs went with the townspeople.

"What is the other letter? Read it."

"That, Marquis, is of still graver import. It is from Perez, Almagro's secretary, and runs thus: 'With this

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messenger, your Grace, you will receive news that your old comrade in arms and partaker in this venture hath arrived with three ships, a great quantity of stores and good appointments for war, and near two hundred men. Your Grace, in the pleasure of this hearing, might think that these are for your common use and mutual help ; but I would have your Grace to know that Don Diego de Almagro hath no thought of working with thee again in the great venture to which thou hast placed thy hand, but hath in his privy mind a plan to work apart from thee and to carve for himself a province in which he shall be sole lord. I write thus for your particular and private knowledge, your Grace, as I have ever had reverence for your great gifts and ever prophesied the greatness of your nature and the heights to which——’ ”

“ Enough ! ” cried Pizarro. “ I will listen no more to that serpent’s hiss. Write at once to my friend Almagro, with every expression of my esteem and friendship ; tell him I am overjoyed to learn that he has returned, and ask him to come to me here with his men at once, so that together we may advance to the conquest of richer treasures and the winning of the many heathen souls that inhabit this land in darkness. Write it at once, so that the messengers may return with it.”

The secretary set about the writing of the letter, and by the evening it was done to Pizarro’s satisfaction, who set his mark thereto, and gave orders for the messengers to begin their return at dawn next day.

“ Will your Grace take no notice of the letter of Perez the secretary ? ”

“ Yes,” said Pizarro, with a grim smile ; “ take occasion to speak of it to the couriers ere they go.”

The secretary bowed, and understood that it was

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Pizarro's intention that the treachery of Perez should return on his own head, for once it became the gossip of the men of San Miguel, Almagro would not fail to hear of it, and punish his deceitful servant accordingly.

When the couriers returned to San Miguel with the letter from Pizarro, Almagro received and heard its contents read to him with every sign of gladness. He received its frank welcome in the spirit with which Pizarro had expressed it, for Almagro, though headstrong and quick of temper, could not harbour enmity for long, and his frank and careless nature was always eager to meet friendliness half way. He gave orders, therefore, for all to be prepared, and notified his men that they would set out for Caxamalca in two days' time.

Perez the secretary, a close and secretive man, wondered at the tone of Pizarro's letter, thinking that its frankness hid a secret purpose. He measured other people's actions by his own crafty nature; but he was rather at a loss at not having received any letter from Pizarro in reply to his own.

He wondered what was best to be done, and cast about in his mind how further to sow dissension between the two leaders whereby he could gain some profit. But he had not long to hatch his crafty plots, for, suddenly, as he sat at his table, the door was flung violently open, and Almagro, his face flushed with passion, rushed in.

"What is this you do behind my back, traitor?" he cried, in a loud voice. "Would you stab me in the dark? Would you whisper treason about me to the marquis? Out, man, out, the rope's strung for you!"

"But, señor, señor," cried the secretary, his face white, his lips dry, "what is it you charge me with? Surely I may answer any——"

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Others had now come into the room, and Almagro turned to them.

“Hark to the traitorous cur !” he cried, almost beside himself with fury. “If I give him time enough, his twisty tongue will prove he never wrote to Pizarro saying I planned to leave him in the lurch and to carve out a kingdom for myself. Say, you dog,” he shouted, striding to the secretary, and shaking him by the breast of his doublet, like a terrier shaking a rat, “did you not write it, eh ? eh ? eh ?”

Men gaped to see the little man, broad, short, one-eyed, shaking the lean, tall secretary to and fro till his teeth rattled. Suddenly Almagro released him, and, in a terrible voice, cried :

“Make your peace with God, for in five minutes you shall die. Call a priest. Let him be shriven.”

The secretary made no appeal for mercy, but his dry, pale lips moved in rapid whispers in response to the priest’s ministration. A few moments and two soldiers entered, went up to the doomed man and pinioned him. Then they led him from the room, the priest going with him, holding a crucifix before the secretary’s eyes.

In a little while the body of Perez hung, turning and swaying, from the branch of a tall tree whose leaves gave a pleasant shade in the plaza of the town.

Almagro and his troops left San Miguel next day, and reached the camp of Pizarro in safety. They were met outside the town of Caxamalca by the soldiers of the marquis, who welcomed them most heartily. Pizarro and Almagro embraced each other with every friendly greeting ; and whatever bitter feeling may have existed between them formerly seemed now to be utterly forgotten.

As the fresh troops tramped into the town, Atahualpa



The body of Perez hung from the branch of a tall tree 170

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stood and looked at them from one of the narrow windows of his apartments. A gloom settled on his face as he looked at the files of marching men, their headpieces gleaming in the sun, the light of which also flashed from sword-belt, pike-head and harquebus. With their dark faces and brilliant, fierce eyes, and the swagger of their bearing, they were marked out as being a race of sterner, crueller, and more forceful mould than that of the mild-faced Indians who looked with wonder on them as they marched by.

To the imprisoned Inca their light laughter sounded like cries of triumph, and their numbers seemed to hem him still closer about with prison walls and guards. He turned away, heavy of mood.

Next day, as he walked with his guards in the garden attached to his prison, some soldiers pointed to the skies, where, at a distance from the sun, the fiery train of a comet was to be seen, so bright and big that even the radiance of the tropical sun did not quench it.

His face paled as he looked at it with fixed attention for some moments. Then sadly he said :

“Such a sign as that was shown in the heavens when my father, Huayna Capac, was about to die.”

He would walk no more that day, and from that time a settled sadness rested upon him.

When the Spaniards realized that their numbers were now large enough to justify their advancing farther into the country, so as to make their conquest more complete, the rank and file of the soldiers began to clamour for the treasure already collected to be divided among them.

The amount of gold, which was kept in the chamber which had been the scene of the Inca's promise, was enormous, but it still did not reach the red line along the wall. Often and often the rougher soldiers would come and

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gloat over the riches piled in confusion before them—vases and goblets, jars and cups of marvellous workmanship, richly wrought figures of flowers and fruit, and finely chased ewers, salvers, ornaments and utensils, torn from the temples and royal palaces throughout the land.

“If we share this not out now,” said one, “we shall never share it at all. If we wait longer, the Indians will surely try to rob us of it. Besides, no man knows what is his until it is shared out.”

“As for me,” said another, “when I get my share I shall go home and settle down in my native village, a rich man.”

“Pooh,” said a third, “not I. Whatever we get from this, why, man, there is plenty still in the land, to be got if we stay. No, I’m for Cuzco and its treasures.”

“They say that though all this gold here is more than has ever been collected together before,” said one of Almagro’s men, “the treasures at Cuzco and in the locked-up palaces of the Incas all about the land are to this as the ocean is to a village pond.”

“I believe that,” grumbled one of Pizarro’s men, “and while we waste our time here, the Indians will be hiding it.”

“That is true,” said another, “for Felipillo told me that at Cuzco some of the priests are already concealing many of the treasures of the temples.”

Great was the joy of all the Spaniards who had been with Pizarro when the news got about that the gold in the chamber was to be melted down so that the division might be more easily made. Indian workmen were immediately set to work to undo the beautiful work of their own people by melting down the various articles of delicate or magnificent workmanship.

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Pizarro determined, however, that a certain number of the most beautiful things should be sent to the Emperor Charles, and these were selected, to the value of a hundred thousand ducats, out of the fifth part of the whole treasure which was the share of the Spanish crown.

The man whom Pizarro chose to take these first-fruits of conquest to the emperor was Hernando, his brother, who, when Almagro came into camp, had shown dislike of him in so offensive a manner as to bring upon him his brother's sharp reproof. The general thought that the best way of preventing a quarrel between Hernando and Almagro was to send his brother to Spain, and this was accordingly done, after the gold treasure had been shared out.

The Indian smiths, toiling over their fires in the work of melting down the precious spoil, always had, besides a strong guard, a perpetual crowd of Spanish soldiers, hungrily watching every step in the process. The Indians were ordered to work day and night, but so enormous was the amount of gold that it took a whole month to finish the task.

Then the great day came, when the whole of the Spanish camp was in a fever of excitement. The gold had been made into bars of equal thickness so as to make division easier, and the royal inspectors had already weighed the whole of the treasure, and found that its value amounted to what, in English money, at the present time, would be equal to £3,500,000 !

Truly the conquerors had succeeded in their quest ; Gold had been the aim of all their efforts, the lure which had made them struggle through destitution and miseries, and even risk death itself. Here at last was gold beyond the dreams of avarice—gold to an amount such as probably

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had never been collected together as booty by so small a band of conquerors since the world began.

But this gold brought a curse to its new owners ! The very magnitude of the quantity, and the swiftness with which it had been obtained spoiled the Spanish conquerors for any useful work in the land which they were so soon to possess. Like poor men suddenly raised to wealth, they lost their heads, despised the sober tasks whereby ordinary citizens live and become prosperous, and became prodigals and wasters.

When, however, the Spaniards had collected in the great square which had seen the dreadful massacre of the Peruvians, and Pizarro's men, with eager eyes and jesting words, were guessing what treasure each would be given, murmurs began to arise among the men who had come with Almagro.

At length one of them came to a group of Pizarro's men and said :

“ Comrades, we think we ought to share in this.”

Loud cries of disagreement instantly arose from the others, and an angry altercation instantly began between the two bands. The soldiers of Almagro outnumbered those of Pizarro, and the latter felt that if their comrades were to share, the gains which each man had reckoned on would be very greatly reduced.

“ You have done nothing to earn any of that gold,” said they to their comrades. “ You didn't seize the Inca, you weren't at the massacre, and the Inca didn't make his compact with you for his ransom.”

“ That's true enough,” the others replied. “ We don't say we ought to have as much as you, but we ought to have something. We take our turn in mounting guard over him, we have also guarded your treasure, and if we

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had not arrived you would not be able to go forward as you are about to do and make further conquests in the land.”

By this time Pizarro and Almagro had come to the disputing men, and the case was laid before them. Finally it was settled that Almagro's followers should have a certain small sum given to them, but that for any great gains they must look to further conquests.

Then, the troops having lined up round the square, Pizarro prepared to divide the spoil. This was a delicate task, for he had to distribute it according to what he thought were the deserts of each soldier, and therefore he risked offending many of them.

First of all he commanded that the fifth belonging to the Crown should be weighed and set aside, and under the brilliant sunlight, all looked on while the royal inspectors weighed the bars of gold in a great pair of scales and placed the amount aside.

Then his secretary read out from a paper which had been prepared the names of all who were about to share, with the amount which was to be given to them, after which he called each man forward, and in his presence his share was weighed out and given to him.

The men in the cavalry were called out first, one by one, and to each was given bars of gold to the value of 8880 pesos of gold (in English money of to-day worth about £23,000), which the men bore off to their quarters, some with jests and others with serious looks, as if already troubled by the possession of so much wealth.

The infantry, to the number of one hundred and five men, were not paid equally. Some were thought not to have done so much as others ; and as a whole, the foot soldiers were not paid so much as the horsemen, because

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it had been the latter who had been of most service in the terrible massacre at the capture of the Inca.

A fifth of the infantry were allowed gold bars to the value of about £12,000 each, and the remainder were given about £8000 each ; some, however, had even less than that.

The amount which Pizarro kept for himself amounted to 57,222 pesos of gold (about £150,000). Besides this he had a large share of the silver which had been collected, and the great chair or throne belonging to the Inca, which was of solid gold and beautifully wrought. This alone was reckoned to be worth about £52,000.

To Hernando, bars to the value of 31,080 pesos of gold (£82,000) were given, while to Hernando de Soto, gold to the value of 17,740 pesos was given (£37,000).

The silver which had been collected had not made up the amount which the Inca had promised, but it was still of considerable value, and every soldier received a share.

To the men of Almagro was given £52,000 to share between them, while for those who had remained behind at San Miguel, including the nine who had given up the venture at the beginning of the march, only £38,000 was set aside.

The claims of the Church, however, in this division, were not overlooked ; and the new Church of San Francisco at San Miguel, the first Christian Church in Peru, was endowed with about £6000.

When the public division had been completed, men went to their quarters. Some secreted their wealth, others let it lie about, as careless of it now that it was in their possession as before they had been eager to obtain it.

That night, when, as was the invariable custom, the conquerors played with dice or cards, there were higher

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stakes to play for than ever any of them had hitherto possessed since they had set foot in Peru. Far into the night did the fever of play, mingled with laughter, anger and reckless cries, rule in the camp of the Spaniards, and by morning many a fortune had been doubled or trebled, and many, having hazarded on the throw of the dice the fortune which they had handled but a few hours, looked with haggard eyes at the fresh light of the rising sun as beggared as they had been when they were hiding from their creditors in the alleys of Seville or Panama.

Two days after the division of the spoil, Hernando Pizarro started on his journey to the coast, bearing with him letters from his brother making report of all he had done, and taking a large treasure for the Emperor Charles the Fifth. With him also went several of the conquerors, who, satisfied with their gains, were taking their wealth to Spain, there to live in comfort for the rest of their lives.

There were also two friends of Almagro who promised that they would remind the emperor of his services in the conquest of this rich country. Almagro had sent these men because he knew of Hernando's enmity towards himself.

As the days passed at Caxamalca, after the division of the spoil, men began to ask themselves why they did not press forward to Cuzco, to further conquests and to still richer gains.

"That's easily answered," was one soldier's reply. "What's to be done with the Inca? If we leave him here under a guard, will any guard be strong enough to resist the attempts which will be made to rescue him?"

"Well, he has paid his ransom," said a generous man, a scholar from Toledo, "such a ransom as never prince or potentate has ever paid in the history of mankind. Why

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not fulfil the terms of the compact with him and give him his freedom ? ”

“Hark you, Montillo,” replied a grey old soldier, wise with thirty years of Indian warfare, “you are too clean a man for this work. Think you that our general ever intended to carry out the terms of that compact with the Inca ? Our marquis is a crafty man—no one knows his mind ; he knows that if he lets the Inca go free he will let loose our most powerful enemy. The whole nation would rally to the Inca’s help, and we should be fortunate if we escaped with our lives.”

“Then, at least, we might send him to Spain,” replied the scholar, “to be kept in honourable captivity there.”

“That may be what is in the general’s mind,” said another ; “but I doubt it. There is no way to the coast except through those horrible passes in the mountains. Think you that the Inca’s people would let us go through them in peace ? ”

All through the camp men’s minds were busied with thinking what was going to be done. Meanwhile Pizarro, silent and stern, kept to himself and gave no one his counsel. Almagro did not trouble himself greatly with the question as to what was to be done with the Inca ; but de Soto, a man of generous instincts, who was on more intimate terms with the Inca than anyone else, often asked Pizarro what was to be his decision. But for reply he was told that the general was still considering the matter.

Day after day Atahualpa urged that he should be set at liberty, but evasive answers were returned to all his requests. Pizarro never visited him now, but de Soto often came to speak to the Inca, and it was to him that the latter made his demands.

At length, to de Soto’s repeated arguments, Pizarro so

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far agreed that though the ransom collected by the Inca had not been the full amount which he had promised, it was large enough ; and the general bade his notary draw up a document, by which it was declared that no further ransom was expected from the Inca. The soldiers were brought together by the call of a trumpet and the document was publicly read out to them. For the moment men thought that it meant that the Inca would shortly be released ; but when the notary had folded up the parchment he cried out :

“ It is the decision of the general, Marquis Pizarro, that the safety of his Majesty’s forces in this land demands that, until further reinforcements arrive, the Inca be continued in captivity.”

The soldiers grumbled at this. To their restless spirits inaction was not to be borne patiently, and to the more mean and avaricious it was a cause of complaint that while they sat rusting there, the enormous wealth of the temples and palaces about the land was doubtless being hidden by the Indians.

Frequently Felipillo, the chief interpreter, was questioned by the more discontented, and at length was asked what the native Peruvians thought of the Spaniards staying fixed in one place and doing naught.

“ What think they ? ” he said, and a smile lit up his mean and crafty face. “ They think that it is well.”

“ What mean you by that ? ” demanded his questioner, a man named Spagno, a cruel and coarse man who had lost his fortune of £23,000 in play the first night he received it. “ Tell me, you limb of Satan,” he commanded fiercely, “ why should you slaves think it well that we do naught ? ”

“ It is not I who think so,” replied Felipillo ; “ but there are rumours, señor, which of course are only rumours.”

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“What rumours are they?” asked others who had now strolled across the courtyard when they heard Spagno’s hectoring voice questioning the Indian.

“Well, señores,” replied the interpreter, “it is rumoured that an army is gathering in the land of Atahualpa’s birth—Quito, the land to the north—an army which numbers, it is said, two hundred thousand men, and, besides that, there are thirty thousand Caribs—the savages, your honours will remember, who eat human flesh—who are marching to join them, and who promise themselves—so it is rumoured—a feast from the bones of the white men.”

The soldiers shuddered. They had ever looked on the cannibal Caribs with peculiar fear and horror, and this news disturbed them greatly.

“And is it the Inca who is secretly causing this army to assemble?” asked a soldier. “I always said he should not be permitted to see whom he pleased—those gold-eared ones [the noblemen] come and go as they please, and I ever said that none knew what they were plotting. And here is proof of it.”

Felipillo would not say it was the Inca himself who was plotting this rising; but the rumours were as he had stated.

Quickly this report spread among the soldiers, and caused a great fever of excitement throughout the camp. Many other Indians, in broken Spanish, supported the rumours which Felipillo had described, and in the minds of the soldiers it was soon established as a certainty that a great army was marching south to massacre them, and that Atahualpa was the prime mover of the whole plot.

CHAPTER XII

The Death of the Inca

IF the Spaniards had not been in a state of great fear they might have looked a little more coolly and critically into the rumours and their sources. Felipillo himself was a mean and cowardly fellow, who never missed an opportunity of currying favour with his white masters. Since the capture of Atahualpa he had treated his own king with petty insults and annoyances, and had never failed, when it was possible, to twist the speeches of the Inca which he had to interpret to the Spaniards in a way which would cast suspicion or doubt upon the captive prince

Added to this, there were Indians in the camp who were of the party of the murdered Huascar, and bitter enemies of the Inca. These also never failed to speak or suggest evil of him.

When the rumours were brought to the notice of Pizarro he went at once, accompanied by his secretary and by Almagro, and was ushered into the presence of Atahualpa.

“What is this I hear?” demanded Pizarro of the Inca, in cold, hard tones. “What treason is this that you meditate against me?”

“You jest with me!” replied Atahualpa, a bitter smile on his face; “you are always jesting with me. How could I or my people hope to conspire against the Spaniards, who are so valiant, so strong, so victorious? Do not jest with me, I pray you.”

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Pizarro, Almagro and the secretary looked darkly at the smiling face of the Inca. The latter spoke in a most composed and natural manner, and the Spaniards, believing he was guilty of that which they charged against him, wondered that he could disguise his feelings so cunningly.

“It is you who jest,” replied Pizarro. “You know the smallness of our numbers, while you have a hundred thousand warriors whom a word from you would bring upon us.”

“But I have not given that word,” replied the Inca. “Why should I? What would it profit me, while I am captive and in your power? Were my people to rise I should be the first victim of your anger. Believe me, señor, I have given no word for any treason against you, and until I do, no man of all my legions would raise his weapon. You know that the very birds in my kingdom hardly fly except according to my commands.”

The Spaniards left him without further words. They were still not convinced of his innocence, and when Almagro, blustering and angry, repeated about the camp the words of Atahualpa, the men twisted them this way and that, until they seemed full of the most sinister suggestions.

Fear grew in the heart of every soldier day by day, until at length the word went through the camp, “The Inca’s troops are gathering at Guamachucho, a hundred miles away, and any night may find us rushed by overwhelming forces and utterly wiped out.”

No one could say whence this news had sprung. One said an Indian had told it to him, another said an Inca woman had prophesied that the braves of Guamachucho would soon pick their bones clean, while Felipillo said it was the common rumour of all the Indians in the place.

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Panic seized the camp, sentries were doubled, the horses were kept saddled and bridled, men slept in their boots, with swords beside them, and by night, at the least sound, men turned out, buzzing like angry bees.

Restless by night, by day the men were full of menaces and murmurs.

“This cannot go on,” said one to Almagro ; “ while the Inca is here in our hands we shall be the mark for his army.”

“’Tis I that have said that ever since I came,” cried Almagro angrily. “ But Pizarro will not listen, or feigns not to do so, and de Soto, forsooth, says there is naught to fear from the Inca.”

“ It is he that is the cause of it all,” cried another. “ With him away we should be free of this fear and ready to go forward to conquer the whole land and to gain treasure. As it is, we who came with Don Diego are as poor as if we had never left Panama, and it looks as if we are to stop here till the Inca dies or we are all massacred by night.”

The advice of the more reckless was supported by those higher in authority, such as the Royal Treasurer, and other State officials. These had been left by Pizarro at San Miguel, but they had come to Caxamalca with Almagro. These, with Almagro, took an opportunity of seeking Pizarro, and urged upon him that, to put an end to the plots which were evidently being formed for setting the Inca at liberty and massacring themselves, the Inca should be executed.

“ By my faith, Pizarro,” said one reckless man, a noble of the highest rank but of the most insolent bearing, “ one would think you loved the Inca as your own brother. What is it, man, that keeps you from letting

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his life out? An Indian more or less, what does it matter?"

"Let us get on to Cuzco," said another, equally insolent. "Is it because you don't wish us who have come later to share in the treasures of the Incas? I'd have you know, general, that I want my share, and as big a share as you've got. But we shall get nothing by staying here."

To these and similar reckless speeches Pizarro turned, or seemed to turn, an unwilling ear.

"It does not appear to me to be wise," he said, "to proceed to extreme measures with the Inca."

"I agree with the marquis," said de Soto, and returned the haughty and scornful looks of Almagro's reckless young nobles with an eye as scornful and a look as proud. "I think the Inca is innocent of any plot against us."

"Nevertheless," went on Pizarro, "I think it well to send a small detachment to Guamachueho to see what grounds there may be there for the constant rumours of a rising in that town. De Soto, you shall go thither, with thirty cavaliers."

De Soto set out that day, and as the distance of the town was little more than a hundred miles, he was not expected to be absent more than a few days.

Immediately on his departure the officers who desired the Inca's death above all things set about inflaming the minds of the others. They knew that de Soto was the chief obstacle to the use of extreme measures, and therefore made every effort in his absence to bring about the result they desired, for they did not believe that Pizarro was sincere in his reluctance to execute the Inca.

So great did the agitation become among the soldiers, inflamed and encouraged by more rumours which were put about, that a great body of them went to the general's

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quarters and requested that he should bring the Inca to trial without delay.

“We fear for our lives day and night,” said they; “and for the safety of us all we think that the many rumours of plots demand that the truth concerning him be sought out, and at once.”

At length the general consented that the Inca should be placed upon his trial. Immediately a council was formed, consisting of Pizarro, Almagro, Riquelme the Royal Treasurer, Valverde the priest, the notary, and one or two others who had been loudest in demanding the Inca's death. The result of their meeting was that they drew up twelve charges which were to be made against the Inca.

A court of justice was immediately set up, the judges of which were Pizarro and Almagro. All things were done in proper form, an attorney-general being named to prosecute for the Crown, and a counsel being appointed to plead on behalf of the Inca.

When the court was set, such of the soldiers as were not on sentry crowded round, and behind them was a wide fringe of Indians. Then the Inca was brought in between guards and accompanied by his favourite wife and by a single member of his suite, an Inca noble of high rank. The face of the Inca was calm as he looked on his judges and the force of men about him.

Then the charges were read out and were interpreted by Felipillo, who stood midway between the Inca and the attorney-general. The most important of the crimes laid against the Inca were, that he had usurped the crown and assassinated his brother Huascar, that he was guilty of idolatry, and finally that he had plotted to make an insurrection against the Spaniards.

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At most of the charges the Inca smiled in a grave way, but said nothing. When the list had been read, a number of Indian witnesses were examined, and their testimony was interpreted to the Spaniards by Felipillo. Those who knew a little Peruvian have left it on record that the interpreter tried to make the most innocent piece of evidence appear incriminating in order to excite the feelings of the Spaniards still more against the Inca.

When the examination of the witnesses was finished—and not much time was spent upon it—the Inca was taken back to his prison, and the council of judges and the officers of the army retired to consider their verdict. We are told that the point discussed by the majority was not—“Is the Inca guilty or not guilty of the charges made against him?” but “Will his death be to our advantage or not?”

The matter was warmly discussed. The great majority—and they were ten to one—had made up their minds that it was better for them that the Peruvian king should be out of the way; but there were a few of more generous instincts who strongly urged that the evidence was not sufficient to condemn the Inca.

The discussion became warm—it was a contest of generous impulses against mean, covetous or bloodthirsty instincts.

“Señores,” cried one, “I do beseech you not to hurry this matter—not to push this business to an end which will cover us all with shame.”

“We are accountable to no one,” said one of the young nobles of Almagro’s party. “The general is leader and he has decided with us to get rid of this encumbrance and to push forward in the conquest of this land.”

“But it will be a shameful deed,” urged the other, with

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passionate voice and gesture. "Men will say we murdered him if ye condemn him on the unreliable evidence which those Indians gave and that false scoundrel Felipillo interpreted. He gave a dark colour to every innocent word, and is fit only to be beaten out of our camp."

"Moreover," cried a friend of the last speaker, "I deny that the general or any of you here have the right to sit in judgment on the Inca. We have invaded his land, and have no right to expect him to be aught but hostile to us. He is a sovereign prince in his own dominions, and we as interlopers and invaders cannot judge him. That should be left to our gracious master, the emperor. He alone can judge him, and therefore the Inca should be sent to Spain."

"Out upon such talk!" cried those that wished for the Inca's death. "You talk as if the Inca was a Spaniard instead of a mere barbarian."

"Nay," said the others, "it is you who are barbarians—dead to every spark of justice, lacking in the generous instincts of gentlemen and cavaliers of Spain!"

At this the interchange of words became so heated that faces went red or pale, hands leaped to sword-hilts and menacing looks were exchanged. For a time it looked as if men's swords would be at each other's throats; but at length the minority, finding that they were howled down, withdrew from the chamber in a body, refusing to be parties any longer to this murderous plot.

Thereupon Pizarro and Almagro proceeded to pass judgment upon the Inca. Speaking in stern tones, Pizarro said:

"We have heard the evidence brought against the Inca, and we deem that it has been established that the Inca is

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guilty of the crimes charged against him. Therefore we condemn him to be put to death by burning, and that the execution be carried out this night, so that there may be no time for his subjects to rise against us in order to rescue him." They were not even to wait for the return of de Soto, whose report would, of course, go far to establish the truth or falsehood of the principal charge—that of conspiracy.

The judgment was received with expressions of agreement from those now present, and Riquelme, the chief royal officer, spoke as follows :—

"I think," he said, "that all who are here now are confident of the guilt of our prisoner, as indeed no true cavalier of Spain could doubt who has heard the evidence. Further, we are all ready to assume the responsibility of the execution. I propose that a full account of the proceedings shall be sent to the Court of our gracious emperor, so that he may be informed who are those who are loyal servants of the Crown and of the Church, and who are those whose quibbling, petty souls would place the interests of our royal master and of this, his new colony, in danger and risk of war."

Immediately the council had broken up, Pizarro, with his secretary Felipillo, and a kinsman named Pedro Pizarro, went to the quarters of the Inca to announce to him the judgment of the court.

"Inca," said Pizarro's secretary, "the court has considered the charges which have been brought against you, and it has sentenced you to death by burning. You will be executed this night."

For a moment the Inca seemed stunned, and looked from one to the other with wonder and pain in his eyes. Then, turning to Pizarro, he said :

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“What have I done, or my people, that I should meet such a fate? And from your hands, too—you who have ever met with friendship and kind greeting from my people wherever you have gone! You have shared my treasures, you have received nothing but benefits from my hands—and you repay me with death.”

The tears burst from his eyes, and stretching out his hands in pleading to the Spanish leader he said, in piteous tones :

“Do not slay me! Spare my life! I will be faithful to you. You have conquered me and my people—what more do you want? Is it more gold you want? Give me time, and I will give you double the treasure which I have already given in vain for my ransom. Let me live, señor! Give me my life and I will give you my fealty for the remainder of my days.”

Pedro Pizarro looked at his kinsman and saw the stern mouth twitch and the eyes suffuse with tears as he turned his face away. Even the iron heart of Pizarro could not bear the pleadings of the Inca.

“It is in vain that you plead,” said Pizarro, in low tones. “The army has decided that you must die, and I have no power to alter that judgment.”

The Inca drew himself up at those words; a change came over his looks and bearing. He resumed his proud air, the tears dried from his eyes, his face resumed its calm look, and he walked away to the other end of the apartment, where his women sat with wide, soft eyes, wondering what had moved their lord so deeply.

An hour later, at the sound of the trumpet, the army gathered in the great square of Caxamalca, and then in formal tones the doom of the Inca was proclaimed to them. Those cavaliers who objected to the execution of the Inca

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met together in a place apart, and drew up a written protest against the whole of the proceedings which had been put in force against the Inca.

When all had signed it, Montillo the scholar spoke in bitter tones, and said: "Señores, we never have been aught but freebooters since we set foot upon this venture, Spanish gentlemen though we be; but now we have burdened ourselves with a greater crime, that of cold-blooded murder; and the names of the *conquistadores* [conquerors] of Peru will be handed down through history stained with this crime."

Two hours after sunset the Spanish soldiery assembled in the great square at the sound of a trumpet. The night was dark, and soldiers held torches to give light to the scene, and their uncertain flicker shone on grim, hard faces, and flashed from headpiece and breastplate as the night wind moved the flames. On the verge of the great square stood crowds of Indians, silent for the most part, but with what bitterness and rage and horror in their hearts one can only guess. For their king, the representative of their gods, was to die by a shameful death at the hands of these strange demi-gods or demons.

There was a cleared space in the plaza, where a thick stake had been sunk in the soil. Round about it were scattered faggots of wood.

The word was given, and Atahualpa was led from a cell beside the plaza, chained hand and foot. Beside him walked the priest Valverde, who had willingly signed the death warrant of the Inca, but who now strove to persuade him to abjure the faith of his fathers and to embrace the creed of the white men. But the Inca remained unmoved by all the torrent of the priest's fanatical exhortations,

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which the interpreter who walked beside them was hardly permitted time to translate.

Soldiers bound Atahualpa to the stake, and the uncertain light of the torches, shining upon his face, showed him pale, with compressed lips, and calm, stern eyes looking straight before him.

The Dominican friar made a last appeal. Holding up a silver cross before the condemned king's eyes, he cried :

“ Embrace the cross, abjure the idolatry of your evil and false gods, and you shall escape the agony of death by fire. A more merciful death shall be yours ! ”

This was interpreted to Atahualpa by Felipillo, and the Inca then bent his eyes upon Pizarro, who stood beside the priest.

“ Does the priest speak truly ? ” he asked. “ Will you grant me that ? ”

“ It shall surely be done,” replied the Spanish leader. “ Your death will be painless.”

“ Then, I agree,” replied the doomed man.

Speedily, while he stood pinioned to the stake, the rite of baptism was performed upon the unhappy monarch, who, repeating the words of the priest Valverde, abjured the faith of his fathers and accepted that of his executioners. He received the baptismal name of Juan de Atahualpa, the name of Juan being given him in honour of John the Baptist, on whose day the tragic baptism took place.

When this had been done, he spoke to the priest, saying :

“ When I am dead, I would desire my body to be carried to Quito, the place where I was born, to be laid among the dead of my mother's people.”

Then, turning to Pizarro, he said, in a voice which trembled with emotion :

“ Señor, señor, have pity on my little children. They

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are still young—I pray you take them under your protection so that no evil befall them.”

For a moment only, his lips twitched and his eyes softened with tears ; then, recovering his calm bearing, he held his head up proudly and submitted to the cord which was thrown about his neck from behind. A few moments, while the soldiers who looked on muttered rapidly their prayers for the salvation of the passing soul, then the head of the Inca bent forward—he was dead !

The body was allowed to remain tied to the stake all night ; but early next day it was carried into the Church of San Francisco, where his obsequies were performed with great solemnity. Afterwards, notwithstanding his request that his remains should be taken to Quito, his body was interred in the cemetery attached to the church. When, however, the Spaniards had left Caxamalca, some of his faithful nobles caused his body to be raised, and it was taken secretly to Quito.

Two days after this, while Pizarro and his officers were parading their mourning for the man they had murdered, Hernando de Soto and his men rode into the square.

One of those who had protested against the murder of the Inca met de Soto as he rode forward.

“ Well, de Soto,” he asked bitterly, “ found you the armies of the Inca ? Are they on their way to overwhelm us ? ”

“ I found not one man with arms in his hands,” said de Soto ; “ but instead was met with kindly welcome everywhere.”

“ ’Tis as I said,” rejoined the other ; “ one would almost think they knew it would be so. De Soto, they have murdered the Inca, and I think they sent you out of the way, because they knew you would oppose it.”



The body was allowed to remain tied to the stake

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De Soto's handsome face flushed and then darkened with wrath. He swung himself off his horse.

"What!" he said; "they have executed him?"

"He was strangled the night before last, and is buried, while those that murdered him pretend to mourn him."

De Soto turned without a word and strode to Pizarro's quarters. The general was just issuing from his chamber, in a black doublet, with a great black felt hat, as additional mourning, slouched over his eyes.

"Pizarro," said de Soto, and there was anger and scorn in his voice, "you have acted with strange haste. The Inca has been basely slandered—there was no enemy at Guamachucho—no rising among the natives. I have met with nothing but courtesy and kindness, and all is quiet. This is ill done, I say. If it was necessary to bring the Inca to trial, he should have been taken to Castile and judged by the emperor. I would have pledged myself to see him safely on board."

For once Pizarro's keen eyes faltered; he could not look into the scornful face of de Soto.

"Perhaps," he murmured, "I have been hasty, but I have been deceived. Riquelme, Valverde and the others—they have pressed it upon me and deceived me."

De Soto turned away without a word.

Very soon it got to the ears of Riquelme and Valverde that Pizarro had blamed them for the execution of the Inca, and instantly, in fierce wrath, they buzzed about Pizarro like hornets, vowing that he alone was responsible for the deed, and as guilty as any of them. The quarrel ran high, charges and countercharges, abuse and bad names were exchanged with much heat, until, neither side feeling they had got the better of the other, they mutually

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withdrew, every man smarting under a sense of unworthiness.

Now that the Inca was dead, the minds of the Spaniards dwelt eagerly on the tales of the treasures of the city of Cuzco, and all were eager to begin the journey to the City of Gold. Preparations were accordingly made, and, more reinforcements having arrived from San Miguel, it was found that the forces of the Spaniards amounted to almost five hundred men, of whom a third were cavalry.

Meanwhile certain tidings came to the camp of strange events in various parts of the country—of Indians rising against their Inca lords, of their burning villages and palaces and temples, which first they plundered, and the gold and treasure from which they scattered or concealed. It was said that whole provinces had revolted, captains and chieftains were setting up kingdoms for themselves, and that a commander, named Ruminavi, a general of the dead Inca, had proclaimed that Quito would henceforth be a kingdom apart from Peru, with himself as king.

The Spaniards thought little of these rumours. To them they seemed of no more importance than tales about “battles of kites and crows.” They had always found the Indians to be quiet, obedient and inoffensive, and therefore did not credit the tales brought in by wandering traders.

But, indeed, a great change had come upon the whole land. The news of the death of the Inca—the last monarch of a mighty line of kings that were almost gods—struck horror at first into the minds of the natives. It seemed unbelievable that the Child of the Sun had passed away for ever, and that the king, whose merest word was law, whose person was divine, whose presence thrilled each beholder with awe, had been done to death shamefully by

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the hands of the strange bearded men, half demons, gods or monsters.

When, however, the more unruly of the natives had grown accustomed to the thought that the dreaded power of the Inca was at an end, they broke out into disorder, they seized weapons, left the task that hitherto they had been compelled by the law to perform, and, mad with the unusual liberty, had gathered themselves into bands of marauders and given themselves up to pillage and bloodshed.

CHAPTER XIII

In the City of Gold

THE road taken by the Spaniards lay along the great highway between Caxamalca and Cuzco. This being levelled and paved made the march a comparatively easy matter, except when it mounted the crests of the Cordilleras, where, owing to the steepness of the way and the icy air, both men and horses suffered severely.

At one place a horde of Indians, whose neighbourhood they had already guessed, by the burning villages and broken bridges they passed, formed themselves on the opposite bank of a river as if to contest the passage of the Spaniards ; but the conquerors, without hesitation, dashed boldly into the river, swimming their horses or wading, and the Indians did not wait to receive them, but took to flight. The cavaliers followed them, however, and punished them severely for daring even to meditate resistance.

Having arrived at Xauxa, a city built in a beautiful, fertile valley, Pizarro decided to rest there and to found a colony. Meanwhile, however, he sent de Soto forward with sixty horsemen to reconnoitre the country in advance, and, by the aid of Indian allies who were with them, to repair the bridges where they had been broken down by the natives who had revolted.

As he advanced, de Soto found the traces of the enemy

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more and more marked. Villages were burnt, bridges destroyed, and heavy rocks and uprooted trees were lying across the path to impede his advance. Late in the afternoon of the same day he reached a spur of the Cordilleras which lay between him and the valley in which Cuzco lay ; and, wishing to cross the mountains before dark, he entered the defiles, although his horses were wearied.

All seemed quiet, as the cavaliers urged their horses up the steep slope of the pass. Suddenly, at a bend in the narrow way, men's blood ran chill as the narrow gorge resounded with horrible war-cries, and before they were aware of what had happened, from every crevice and thicket Indian warriors had risen like a cloud of hornets, and with spears, knives and axes were among the soldiers of Spain.

So taken by surprise were the Spaniards that, in the first mad rush, many of the foremost men and horses were dashed down and rolled over and over among the feet of those behind, increasing the terror and confusion.

De Soto, who was leading, quickly recovering, ran his sword through an Indian who leaped at him, and cried out to his men :

“ Steady, cavaliers. Form up—keep close and advance ! Advance ! ”

He looked behind him. Some of the Indians had leaped like mountain cats upon the horses and were locked in terrible struggles with the horsemen ; others clung like panthers to the legs of the horses. But there were others of his men who, with swift sword-strokes to right and left, had already cut down many of their assailants, and to these he shouted the old soul-stirring battle-cry which would make even a dying Spaniard strike yet another stroke.

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“ We must gain the level ground above us ! St Jago !
St Jago ! ”

Instantly the men responded. Putting spurs to their exhausted and frightened animals, they pushed on, broke through the cloud of dark warriors and, shaking them off, at length reached the broad level just above them. Here both parties paused, glaring at each other at a little distance, as if to take breath. A small stream ran through the plain, at which the Spaniards watered their horses and snatched a few moments to rest.

“ Now, lads,” said de Soto, “ form up and at them again. Advance ! ”

Almost as if moved by one spur, the horses dashed across the brook and into the mass of Indians. Most of the Spaniards thought that the latter would scatter, but this was not the case. The warriors, undaunted and fierce of look, gave not an inch, but leaped at the cavaliers and gave their blows with great bravery. Each horseman became the centre of a group of crouching, leaping Indians ; as soon as his sword passed through one and the warrior fell dead, another took his place. So fierce were they that several of the cavaliers were soon killed, and the Indians then slew their horses. One tall Indian had a great Peruvian axe, made of bronze, and this he sank into the brain of the horse of one of the Spaniards, and when the cavalier came to ground, with the next blow the Indian had cleft him through the headpiece and brain to the chin.

At length, in the darkness, nothing could be seen, and the battling warriors separated. Each withdrew to the farthest ends of the level space, but so near were they that the voices of each could be heard distinctly in the silent hours of the night.

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Full of gloomy thoughts were the minds of the Spaniards as, huddling themselves in their cloaks beside their horses for warmth, they nursed their aching wounds and waited, almost in despair, for the dawn. Few of them believed that victory would be theirs when the light should filter down into the rocky hollow where they lay. They had never expected such stern resistance from timid and servile Indians, and therefore were greatly discouraged by this first fierce check.

But de Soto, stout-hearted as ever, went among them, trying to cheer them up.

“Keep heart, lads,” he said; “if we have been able to beat off a superior number of the rascals when our horses were spent and we ourselves were weary, how much easier will it be to beat them after we have rested.”

“It may be as you say,” said one; “but every one of us is stiff and sore with a wound or two, and our beasts have cuts and maims. And while help for us lies leagues behind us, these Indian fiends are probably gathering in great crowds through the mountains to cut us up at dawn.”

“Nay, despair not,” said de Soto; “trust in the Almighty, for I am assured that He will never desert His faithful followers in this our extremity.”

As if to mock him came a cry as of triumph from the camp of the Indians, and voices in eager speech could be heard. The Spaniards sank deeper into despair, and when they slept their sleep was broken by fears of creeping foes or by dreadful carnage.

Half way through the dark, suddenly the Spanish sentries thought they heard far and faint the sound as of a trumpet. Straining their ears, they listened, and soon were certain that it was indeed the clear call of a bugle at some distance far in the rear. Most of the men started

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up from sleep at the sound, and one, seizing his bugle, blew a note or two upon it, and then listened. In a few moments the answer came clearer than before. It was indeed the signal that some of their countrymen were on their way to their aid.

“Truly,” said one, “the captain said aright. Heaven has not left us to the savages, but is sending us aid in our greatest hour of need.”

Some began to give thanks to Heaven already, while others kept up the signals. In a little while they heard the beat of horses’ hoofs coming swiftly nearer and nearer in the darkness, and soon the gruff voice of Almagro, sounding like sweet music in their ears, cried :

“Are ye all alive still, lads ? ”

Very joyful were the greetings which de Soto’s men gave to their rescuers, who, they learned, numbered almost all the remaining cavalry of the Spanish force. It appears that Pizarro had become afraid that the company under de Soto might be insufficient to push through the increasing clouds of hostile Indians, and had therefore sent Almagro forward, who, good soldier that he was, had left nothing to chance, but had come on by forced marches, not staying even when night had come on.

When the morning light broke in the cleft of the mountains, where Spaniard and Indian lay in opposite camps, the Indians saw with dismay that the number of their opponents had greatly increased during the night. They could be seen to cluster in groups as if taking counsel among themselves ; but it seemed that they were disinclined to fight.

A thick fog began to draw over the slopes of the mountains as the sun’s light strengthened, and for the moment the Spaniards feared the Indians might attack

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them under its cover, and therefore stood to arms. But as the warmth of the sun increased and the rolling mist thinned and vanished, they saw that not an Indian remained.

Almagro and de Soto thereupon advanced upon their way, and found that the passes were entirely open. They were no more molested, and when they had passed through the sierra they made a camp in the valley and awaited the arrival of Pizarro.

The Spanish leader was informed by an Indian runner of the retreat of the insurgents, and after leaving a strong force at Xauxa to found a settlement so as to hold the district in subjection, he pushed on with his remaining force and joined Almagro and de Soto. The treasure of the Spaniards was also left at Xauxa under the protection of the garrison, as they feared that if they carried it about with them it stood greater chance of being lost.

When Pizarro had joined forces with Almagro and de Soto they rested for some days in a beautiful valley a few miles from Cuzco, where, in the midst of gardens and orchards, many houses belonging to the Inca nobles were embosomed in the trees. These the soldiers looted, discovering a considerable quantity of treasure.

While resting there, a great procession of splendidly dressed Inca chiefs was seen coming up the road, at the head of which, in a gorgeous litter, sat a young man, from whose jewelled dress the light flashed as he moved. Descending from the litter, the young noble craved leave to speak with Pizarro, and being admitted into the apartment of the Spaniard, he said :

“Señor, I am Manco, brother to Huascar, whom Atahualpa slew. I am the rightful heir to the throne of Peru, and I crave your protection and your aid to

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set me upon the throne of my fathers, the Children of the Sun.”

Pizarro heard the young prince with great satisfaction, and received him with kindness. The Spanish general thought that if he placed Manco upon the throne he would be an instrument in his hand which he could use as he pleased for the better subjugation of the whole land. He therefore promised his protection to the young prince, and when, a day or two later, Pizarro resumed his march to Cuzco, Manco and his suite of Inca nobles accompanied him.

It was late in the afternoon when the conquerors, standing on a hill-side, saw the city of Cuzco in the valley below them. The evening sun was streaming upon the white walls of the famous city, at which the Spaniards gazed with eager eyes. They could see the great square in the midst of the town, and the low white-walled palaces near it ; and down the long regular streets they could see the people passing. In the gentle evening air all looked quiet and peaceful in the city, as if it expected that the dawn which would rise upon it on the morrow would be no different from thousands of other dawns, which had found it secure and at peace under the strong protection of the Children of the Sun.

Behind the city rose a rocky hill, almost a mountain, on the slopes of which rose three great towers beside each other. A triple wall surrounded them, and the practised eyes of the Spaniards told them that these dark towers, built of immense stones, were of stupendous strength, sufficient to resist even the art of European war. These towers, frowning over the city, seemed to forbid the approach of the Spaniards, or to defy their power.

The night was falling so rapidly that Pizarro determined

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to encamp where he was, and after the evening meal, sentries were set and the soldiers slept on their arms, lest a sudden attack should be intended from the city. The night, however, passed in quietness, and early next day Pizarro formed his little army in an ordered array, and continued his march towards the city.

The suburbs of the city, composed of narrow streets lined by little one-storeyed huts of sun-baked mud, were thronged with a countless multitude who had come forth to see the approach of the strangers, whose terrible deeds had sent a thrill of horror through the land.

The people gazed with wide eyes at the fair faces, the flashing headpieces and the shining breastplates, and looked in fear at the mettlesome chargers as they tossed their heads and champed their bits. When the trumpeters sent forth their long, challenging notes through the streets of the city, the people seemed to shrink away, and the tramp, tramp, tramp of the cavalry, which shook the very earth beneath them, caused many to hide themselves indoors.

Pizarro, at the head of his army, rode directly to the great square, and, there halting, he turned to his men and said :

“ We have now reached this famed treasure city of the Incas, and the capital of its kingdom. I charge you all to bear yourselves to the inhabitants with all courtesy and gentleness, to provoke no hostility and to do no deeds of violence to any. I forbid any man to enter the house of any dweller in this city, or to take anything from them under pain of punishment. You will camp here in the plaza with your horses picketed by your side, so that you may be ready to repulse any attack.”

As soon as Pizarro had finished speaking, the cavalry

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dismounted and picketed their horses, and sentries were set at numerous points about the square. Then the main part of the soldiers separated in bands about the city, seeking for treasure in the palaces and temples, which, not being private houses, were not covered by Pizarro's prohibition.

Those among the conquerors whose minds were not filled with the greed for gold were struck by the air of refinement and luxury which marked not only the dresses and bearing of many of the people standing in the streets, or gazing from their doors, but the interiors of the houses of which they caught glimpses as they passed.

Then, also, the length and regularity of the streets were remarkable. Certainly they were narrow, but most were paved with small stones, and down the centre ran an open gutter. They crossed each other at right angles, and from the great square ran four principal streets connecting with the four great highways running through the kingdom. The square itself was paved with fine pebbles.

Through the heart of the city ran a river of pure water, the banks or sides of which for a distance of sixty miles through the valley were faced with stone. Across it, at places here and there, were placed paved bridges.

The sight, however, which struck the coarsest soul among the conquerors with wonder was that of the great Temple of the Sun, which filled one side of the great square. With its chapels, dormitories and other buildings, it covered a large extent of ground, and was completely surrounded by an immense wall, built of fine stones, beautifully polished, and so large that many of the Spaniards wondered how they had been placed in position.

A band of Spanish soldiers thundered with the handles of their poniards at the great gate in the wall of this edifice,

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and quickly obtained admission. They dashed across the courtyard to where the broad entrance of the temple yawned open, and, running in, stood still at the wonderful sight that dazzled their eyes.

The inside of the temple was literally a mine of pure gold !

The vast interior before them shone with the glory of the western sun, the rays of which, striking through an opening, were reflected in a blinding light from the ceiling and every corner of the great chamber, for its rays rested on nothing but pure gold and brilliant gems.

On the western wall was a massive plate of gold, with a human face engraved upon it, and from its head long rays stretched, also made of gold. Every part of the face was thickly set with gems and precious stones. This was the figure of the Sun, the god of the Peruvians ; and was so placed that the dawning rays of the rising sun should strike upon it in the first soft light of the day, lighting up the temple with the dazzling presence as of the god himself.

Strangest sight of all, perhaps, were the effigies of dead Incas which were ranged on opposite sides of the great apartment. The mummies sat on chairs of gold, their heads bent as if in thought, their hands clasped across their bosoms, their hair, silver-grey or black, according to the time of life at which they had died, dressed with the sign of royal power. Rich clothing covered the dead limbs, and so well preserved were the bodies that the hue of each face seemed to say that this was the living form, not one which had been the tenement of death for perhaps ten generations.

On the floor of the great apartment stood golden censers, in which sweet incenses were burning, ewers holding water, and, most striking of all, twelve great vases of pure silver

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holding the grain of Indian corn. Each vase or bin was the height of a lance, and so large that two men with outstretched arms could hardly encompass them.

All about the chamber were other utensils, and on the walls were great bosses or plates of massive gold, burnished and dazzling.

The Spaniards ran through the temple and entered a smaller chapel, which they found was full of silver light. This was dedicated to the Moon, and her effigy was shown on a vast plate of silver on one wall, and all the utensils and decorations of the chamber were of the same metal. Other chapels were found, dedicated, one, to the Stars, another to the Thunder and the Lightning, and a third to the Rainbow. All were adorned with the precious metals, jewels and brilliants.

Some of the Spaniards began at once to seize what could be carried away. The plates of gold were prised from the walls of the temple, the ewers and vases were emptied, and all were carried to a great hall opening out of the plaza, to which other Spaniards were running up with other treasures in their hands. These they deposited in the common heap, and, their eyes shining, their faces bedewed with perspiration, they stayed but to exchange a jest and ran off again, filled with the lust of treasure-hunting.

From every quarter of the great city, indeed, the soldiers were dragging the riches which the piety or reverence of generations of Peruvians had deposited. From temples, where worshippers had brought offerings to their gods, and from the silent and closed palaces of dead Incas, where all their treasures had been sealed up for many generations—all were rifled, and things beautiful and rich were piled up pell-mell.



The Spaniards began to seize what could be carried away 206

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Meanwhile the priests and guardians from whose care these things were taken either fled away into hiding, or looked on with impotent wrath in their eyes, calling down the curses or instant wrath of their gods upon the polluters of the sanctuaries. But with a reckless laugh or a jest at the dark, sour faces of the priests, the conquerors, their hands full of the rifled riches, hurried past them unharmed, their work of spoliation unchecked by any sudden death-stroke.

Not only were there things of beauty and wealth within the temples and palaces, but the gardens attached to them sparkled with gold and silver, undimmed in the dry and brilliant climate where rain rarely fell. Every form of fruit and flower, vegetable and tree, was carved delicately in gold or silver, and planted in the soil, knowing no decay of the season ; while here and there were golden animals, crouching or lying amid the rich artificial vegetation.

All these were torn up by the conquerors and deposited on the great heap now rising higher and higher in the hall of the plaza. Nor did they hesitate to plunder the royal mummies, but overturning each, they dragged the golden chairs away, and then, tearing the rich ornaments and vestures from the bodies of the dead Incas, left them lying as they had fallen. In some places they believed they traced where other mummies had lately sat upon golden thrones, and, seeking the priests, they charged them with concealing some of their treasures. Some denied this, while others scornfully smiled. Many of them were put to the torture by the more rapacious Spaniards, in the endeavour to extort from them the confession of their hiding-places.

Not a corner was left unsearched by the bands of conquerors that swarmed through the city. Every palace was

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ransacked, even the sepulchres which honeycombed the rocks and sands outside the city were broken open where it seemed likely treasure might be buried, nor was this narrow search always left unrewarded. In a cavern they found a number of vases of pure gold, richly embossed with the figures of serpents and locusts. Deeper in the gloom of the cave they came upon four llamas made of gold, and behind these were lying a dozen figures of women, some of gold and others of silver. The figures were life-size, but the gold was only a thin covering of the plaster beneath it; nevertheless the workmanship was very delicate. Some of these were afterwards sent to Spain, as part of the emperor's fifth share.

The various storehouses or magazines which were placed here and there about the city were not left unsearched; but in these the looters found little to their liking in their present lust for gold. There were richly tinted robes of cotton and feather work, sandals and slippers adorned with gold for women, and dresses composed entirely of beads of gold. The more valuable of these they took; but the greater portion of the stores with which the magazines were filled—maize and other articles of food—were held in contempt by the freebooters and scattered or overturned.

Several days were spent in this search for plunder, and every article discovered brought to the heap, which now was of enormous proportions. A date was then proclaimed at which the general would distribute the treasure, and on the day appointed, when most of the gold and silver had been melted down into bars of equal weight and size, the soldiers formed up in the great square, and Pizarro then proceeded to divide the spoil.

The total value of the treasure was 580,200 pesos of gold, worth in English money of the present time about

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£1,524,000. Four hundred and eighty men had to receive a share of this, so that the amount received by each man was comparatively small. The horsemen had larger shares than the infantry.

Great disappointment was expressed by some at the smallness of the total amount. It had been thought that, once having reached the City of Gold itself, the treasure to be found there would far exceed that collected by the Inca for his ransom, which, it will be remembered, amounted to 1,326,539 pesos of gold. Then tales were called to mind which they had heard at Caxamalca when it had been told them how priests of many of the temples at Cuzco and elsewhere had disobeyed the commands of the Inca, and had hidden away the choicest parts of the treasures of the temples. Henceforth the conquerors were never weary of seeking for the gold concealed at that time; every tomb was rifled, rivers were dragged and lakes were drained in the endeavour to light upon the hidden treasure. To the present day such tales are repeated, and to many a lake and many a solitary place in Peru still clings the legend of treasure hidden hurriedly by the priests or Indians when they heard of the Inca's imprisonment, of his death, or of the advance of the fierce conquerors.

The night after the division of the spoil was spent by the Spaniards in the same reckless way as was the case after the similar event at Caxamalca. They sat in the great hall leading out of the square in which they had now taken up their quarters, and gambled until the small hours. Some won the fortunes of others and then lost that and their own to a more fortunate gamester. Among them was a cavalry officer, a reckless man, who could never keep from the dice, and who had frequently, both in Spain and the New World, gambled away his possessions down to the

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very clothes in which he stood. His name was Mancio Sierra Leguisamo, and to him had fallen the great image of the Sun which, raised on a plate of massive gold, had been fixed on the western wall of the temple. This was his share of the booty, and by a single throw of the dice he lost it, thus giving rise to a Spanish proverb which describes a reckless spendthrift as one who would "play away the sun before sunrise."

A few there were, however, who, now that they had secured that for which they had left their native land, were content to tempt fate no further, and having given their leader due notice, they set off with the treasure they had gained and travelled back to the coast. There they took ship to Spain, where, returning to their native places, their riches gave them a sufficiency for the remainder of their lives, while the fame of the manner in which they had acquired their wealth excited others to enlist in the expeditions which, when the news of Pizarro's success had got abroad, issued from every port in Spain, to hurry across the ocean to the Land of Gold.

After the division of the spoil, the chief men among the Spaniards began to take possession of many of the places surrounding the great square, which were formerly owned by the Incas or their nobles. Many of them also took as wives the daughters or other kinswomen of the Inca nobles, and began to settle down in the place as if they had no thought of ever again leaving it.

The young Inca, Manco, was presented to the people by Pizarro as their future king, and was received with great enthusiasm. His coronation took place at once, at which both he and the Peruvian nobles performed the ceremony of homage to the Crown of Castile, and thus confessed that the conquest of their land was now complete.

CHAPTER XIV

The Rebellion of the Indians

WHEN all things had been settled, and the city had been placed under the control of duly appointed municipal officers, Pizarro, who was now called governor, set out towards the coast for the purpose of founding a city which should be the capital of the new colony of Spain.

After some time he decided to lay out the new town some six miles from the broad mouth of a river which lay some twelve degrees south of the line. He planned the town with almost Roman regularity. Its streets were wider than usual in Spanish towns, and perfectly straight, crossing one another at right angles, and so far apart as to afford ample space for gardens to the houses and for public squares. The name of the city was to be the City of the Kings, but this was soon changed for the native name of Lima.

Indians were got together from villages many miles around, and the soldiers, laying aside their weapons, took building tools, plumb-lines, and measuring tapes, and the whole area was soon a hive of industry. The plaza, which was an extensive place, was first laid out, and then the foundations were laid of the buildings which were to surround it—the cathedral, the town hall and the palace of the governor. So firmly were they built and so solidly, that they have defied the shocks of many earthquakes

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which have laid other parts of the town in ruins, and a great part of the palace of Pizarro still stands facing the public square of Lima.

While these works were going on, Pizarro called Almagro and bade him go back to Cuzco, to take command of that capital, which had been left in the hands of a younger brother of Pizarro, named Juan. He also desired Almagro to send an expedition, or to go himself, and endeavour to conquer the land which lay south of Cuzco, which we still know by its native name of Chili.

The two commanders separated in all friendliness, and no one, seeing them shake hands and bow in parting, could have dreamed that within the next few months they were to be opposed in deadly enmity.

Almagro made his way leisurely to Cuzco, accompanied by a troop of cavaliers. Just as he was about to strike his camp on the morning of the day he was to enter Cuzco, shouts were heard behind, and, looking back, he and his men saw a solitary horseman coming down the sloping ground of the Cordilleras, waving his hand as if bidding the others wait for him.

Almagro marvelled how the man came to be solitary in that part, for he knew by the fact of his riding a horse that he must be a Spaniard. Very soon the rider came swiftly into camp, his horse blown and exhausted, and on his garments was every sign of extreme haste.

“Who are you?” demanded Almagro, “and why ride you alone after me?”

“Señor,” replied the man, “I come from Sancho Aquil, one of the two friends whom you sent with Hernando Pizarro to Spain to give a due account of your services to the emperor. I have pleasant news for you, señor.”

“Now, that is good, señor,” replied Almagro, pleased

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at the words. "Alight, for you seem wearied, and need rest. You seem to have travelled fast, and were bold to travel alone, seeing that there are insurgent Indians swarming the country. Ho! there, Pedro, Martin, get our comrade some food and drink. We will rest here a while longer. While they prepare food for you, tell me your story."

"Señor, I knew you would like to learn quickly what had passed," went on the man, "and therefore I hastened with the best speed I could from Nombre de Dios, so soon as Hernando's fleet touched land. The emperor has given you power and authority to conquer and rule the land for a distance of two hundred leagues from the southern limit of the governor's territory."

Almagro's face brightened; he pushed out his chest, straightened himself, curled his moustache, and began to walk up and down with quick steps and an air of self-importance upon him.

"Come, come," he said, "that is very good. So his Majesty hath remembered me at last, and now—now I am free of those envious Pizarros who have ever ousted me. I imagine, my man, that Hernando put in no word for me so that the emperor should grant me this government?"

"Your friends, Don Rafael and Don Enrique, gave his Majesty a full account of your services, señor," was the reply; "but Don Hernando mentioned not your name."

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried Almagro, and his face darkened with a scowl. "They never loved me, those Pizarros, though Francisco and I have shared our beds and our watches on many a perilous march. Well, I am free of him now, and henceforth I will be lord in my own marches and brook none of their insults and suspicions. Two hundred leagues, you said? What say you, Or-

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goñez," said Almagro, turning to his lieutenant, who was standing beside him, "will not that give me Cuzco itself?"

The man he spoke to was tall of stature, well built and of great strength. He was dressed in shining breastplate and helmet, and grizzled eyebrows jutted over grim grey eyes. His face was seamed and tanned, and every gesture betrayed something of the stern training he had received in the long years of war in Italy, where he had served. He had taken part in the famous sack of Rome in 1527, and was known to every general on the continent of Europe as an excellent soldier, loyal to the last, prompt of action, utterly fearless and unflinching in the execution of any order. His opinion, therefore, was sought by Almagro on every occasion.

"If it does," Orgoñez replied, with a grim smile, "we shall see some pretty fighting ere long. Think you, Pizarro will let go the brightest jewel in his marquês's coronet?"

"If it comes within my grant from the emperor," said Almagro, with a threatening air, "he must needs lose it. Where," he went on, turning to the messenger, "is the document giving me this territory?"

"It is with Hernando Pizarro," replied the man, "whom I left at Panama. I pushed on before him."

"The Pizarros will be slow to send it me, I doubt not," said Almagro; "but it matters not. What I have I will hold against any of them."

Almagro's good-nature had quickly won his soldiers to be his devoted friends, and on the question as to whether Cuzco did or did not fall within the territory granted to him, all were confident that the rich city, which had been the aim of all Pizarro's efforts, did indeed fall within the

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country now ceded to their chief. Full of elation, therefore, Almagro continued his journey, and, entering Cuzco, was received with all respect by Juan and Gonzalo Pizarro, who, in accordance with instructions sent them by the marquis, instantly resigned the government of the city into the hands of Almagro.

Meanwhile Pizarro at Lima had heard also of the rumours as to Almagro's advancement. He had not received any news from his brother Hernando, who was still at Panama ; but the thought that Cuzco was to be given to his friend and rival was a very disturbing one.

Without loss of time, therefore, he sent messengers with letters to Almagro and to Juan and Gonzalo Pizarro. The latter he instructed to take over again the government of the city, and in his letter to Almagro he said that this course was necessary because, when he should receive the royal grant itself, it would be unbecoming to be already found in possession of the post. He advised him, moreover, to go forward without delay in his conquest of the land to the south.

When the letter was read to him, Almagro, in a great rage, said he would not give up his government, and his friends supported him in this. Many of these, having felt themselves secure under the easy and extravagant rule of Almagro, had taken possession of several of the houses of the well-to-do inhabitants, turning the people out into the street, and using their goods, their treasures and their servants as if the real owners were of no account whatever.

The dispute between Almagro and the two Pizarros rose high. Daily there were wrangles between them, either in Almagro's house, or in the street ; so that soon all the city knew of the quarrel, and the municipal officers, the soldiers, the Inca nobles, and the Indian population chose

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sides, and wordy quarrels took place in nearly every street in the town.

Soon, indeed, the dispute became so hot that it seemed as though little more were wanting to plunge the whole city in bloodshed. Suddenly, however, a clear trumpet call was heard, and into the plaza rode Pizarro at the head of a troop. He had received tidings of the pass to which events were drifting and had posted in all haste to Cuzco.

Pizarro's first interview was with Almagro, whom he kissed in the Spanish fashion with great cordiality, and without any show of ill-feeling inquired what was the cause of the disagreement. Almagro, won over by Pizarro's friendliness, grumblingly blamed the two Pizarros, who, of course, retorted in the same spirit.

The final result of the discussion seemed to hang in the balance for some time, but at last, with the aid of temperate friends on both sides, a reconciliation was brought about, and Almagro consented to give up the city until the document containing the emperor's grant should arrive. Meanwhile he was to make preparations for his conquest of the land of Chili, lying to the south of Cuzco.

So popular had Almagro become, by reason of his open-hearted manner and extravagant gifts, that as soon as he raised his banner, numbers of soldiers volunteered to go with him on his expedition, trusting as they did that Chili would be found as rich in treasure as Peru, if not richer. Two Peruvians, Paulo Topa, a brother of Manco, the Inca, and Villac Uma, the high priest of the nation, were sent forward with three Spaniards to prepare the people of Chili for the advance of their conquerors. Then a detachment of a hundred and fifty men followed, under the command of an officer named Saavedra, and a little while

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after Almagro followed, leaving Orgoñez to enlist more forces and to follow as soon as possible.

When Almagro had gone, Pizarro, leaving Cuzco under the control of his brother Juan, set out for his new city of Lima, in the building and beautifying of which he took the keenest pleasure. He also founded other cities along the coast, chief of which was Truxillo, which he named after his own birthplace in Spain.

All now seemed peaceful in Peru, and to promise a future of undisturbed occupation. The Indians appeared to be content with their change of masters, and the Inca nobles to feel no resentment against the conquerors who, in the course of a few months, had broken the power of the royal clan of the Incas, and had put an end to a beneficent rule under which many generations of Indians had lived peaceful and comfortable lives.

Indeed, in the minds of Pizarro and his brothers was a sense of perfect security, and so much did the majority of the Spaniards despise the Indians, or so confident were they in the fear inspired by the Spanish arms, that many of them, having obtained from Pizarro the grant of lands which they coveted in various places, took their wives and children and built farmhouses out in the country, away from towns where the Spanish soldiers were in force. Every Spanish colonist, besides the land granted to him, had a certain number of Indians given to him as slaves, who had to cultivate the soil for him in the same way as English serfs worked for their lords in early English and Norman times.

Thus, scattered in many solitary places, miles away from the Spanish garrison towns, Spanish families dwelt, surrounded by Indians whose language they hardly knew, and who had been conquered but a few short months.

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Moreover, many of the Spanish masters were brutally harsh, and, finding their Indian slaves generally timid and servile, they treated them very cruelly, and thus, as is ever the effect of slavery, both master and serf became worse men under its influence. This was foreseen by many noble-minded Spaniards then dwelling in the land, and one such has left on record his detestation of the slavery which was then established, and which has lain like a curse ever since upon the land and its development.

To the eyes of the Spaniards, therefore, the Indians and the Inca nobles seemed cowed and broken-spirited, but if they could have seen into the darkest room of many of the dark houses in Cuzco at the time when Pizarro was settling the quarrel with Almagro, they would have known how deeply the shames and wrongs of defeat had entered into the hearts of the people whom they despised.

The spirit of vengeance, indeed, was spreading silently, but with the speed of wildfire, throughout the hearts of the seemingly submissive Indians and Inca nobles. It had flamed up one day when Manco the Inca returned to his home from another vain interview with Pizarro. As he had done many times before, he had asked the Spanish leader to restore to him the real exercise of power as King of Peru. The show, the title, had been given him ; but it was but an empty name.

To this Pizarro had again given no direct refusal, but had said that it should be considered later. The young Inca had gone in deep depression to his own house, and there the high priest of his nation, a venerable and wise old man, Villac Uma, had met him and had learnt the cause of his prince's sadness.

“Inca,” he had cried, while his eyes flashed, and the usual calm face had paled, “the cup of our shame is over-

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full. We must rise against the white fiends, we must thrust their hateful yoke from our necks, or we shall be for ever sunk in shame and slavery. What have we done hitherto? We have struck not one blow for our freedom. We have suffered the invasion of these strangers, we have seen one monarch butchered, but nothing have we done. Now you, Inca in name only, have been placed on the vacant throne. Did you receive your crown from your high priest, as was the ancient custom of your ancestors? No, you received it from the hands of your conqueror. You are but his puppet, and we are all his slaves. We have seen our temples polluted, our treasures torn from sanctuaries and from our homes, our people made the slaves of their soldiers, and last, but not least, many of our noble Inca maidens have been forced to abjure their ancient faith, to receive baptism, and then to become the wives of these foreign demons. They respect nothing of ours, and we, descended from the Sun, whose divinity has never been questioned, are treated with contempt as if we are no more than tillers of the soil. 'Tis for you, Inca, to say the word—whether we shall try to thrust them into the sea whence they came, or let them rivet the chains of slavery still closer to our limbs."

The young Inca, a man with a noble spirit and a generous nature, had been stung to the quick by the picture thus presented by his high priest. The word had gone forth. Secretly, by wandering Indians whom passing Spaniards had despised as beneath their notice, or whom they had slashed with their riding-whips if they passed too close to their horses—the news had passed through the length and breadth of the land, lighting up the callous-looking faces, straightening the backs of those bending patiently beneath the overseer's whip over the furrowed

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fields, and putting all, from noble to peasant, into remembrance of the happy days, but a short year or so ago, when, under the benign despotism of the Inca, the land had dwelt in peace, security and contentment.

Villac Uma himself had been appointed by the Inca to go south with Almagro's company, so that he could spread the word among the people in those parts, and this done, he had secretly returned to Cuzco, to await the signal for the rising that would at one blow—if the gods so pleased—free their country from bondage.

Once, indeed, it seemed that all their hopes were doomed to ruin, for the Spaniards became suspicious of the movements of the young Inca, and therefore Juan Pizarro arrested him one day and put him in prison. For a time the Peruvians had to lament their ruined plans, but soon accident or good fortune gave them a better chance.

This was brought about by the return of Hernando Pizarro to Lima. His brother the governor then learned for the first time that his province had been enlarged by the emperor so that he was to govern the territory for two hundred and seventy leagues south of the river Santiago, which lay far north of Quito. This was seventy leagues farther south than had before been granted to him, and both Pizarro and his brother were now convinced that Cuzco now lay within the newly extended limits of his new territory.

To make sure of the city, however, Pizarro sent Hernando to take command of it as governor, and the latter instantly set forth and reached the place in safety. Hernando, although his bearing toward his own countrymen was very arrogant, had always behaved well to the Peruvians, and had been a friend to Atahualpa. Indeed, it was said that if Hernando had been in Peru at the time of the

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trial of the Inca, the latter would never have been executed.

On reaching Cuzco, he found that the new Inca, Manco, was a prisoner; and after his first interview with him, showed himself very friendly to the young prince and liberated him. With his freedom the hopes of bringing the rising to a successful finish revived in the breast of the Inca. An opportunity for escape soon offered itself, and he fled.

Hernando sent his brother Juan, at the head of some cavalry, to recapture him, and believed that this would be an easy matter. Three days passed, and then, early one morning, Hernando was awakened hurriedly and told that thousands of Indians were gathering to besiege the city. Quickly dressing, he mounted his horse, and with his officers he rode through the great street which led to the north. As they passed along they saw that almost all the small, mean houses of the suburbs were deserted.

“How is this?” asked Hernando, of his lieutenant, de Rojas, who rode at his side. “Yesterday these streets and houses swarmed with Indians.”

“It is all part of the plot,” returned the cavalier. “Our friendly Indians have learned that for weeks all the people of Cuzco have been ready to rise, and the flight of the Inca was the signal.”

It was true. Save for a few families who were faithful to the Spaniards, the whole population had stolen silently away during the past two days. Many had hidden their wealth, but left their other possessions in their houses, and with their women and children had fled.

“You will find the men in their thousands outside the city,” said de Rojas. “The women and children are doubtless hidden in the mountains.”

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Arriving at the end of the long road, where the houses ended and the country lay before them, Hernando saw that the great plain was covered, at the distance of a few hundred feet, with a mighty host which reached as far as the eye could see. The dusky lines of the Indian battalions stretched out to the very verge of the Cordilleras in the distance ; while, all around could be seen, above their heads, the crests and waving banners of chieftains. Long lances and battle-axes edged with copper leaped up when the cavaliers were perceived, and, amid cries and calls of defiance, were tossed to and fro in confusion, flashing in the light of the rising sun.

That evening Juan Pizarro returned from his vain pursuit of the Inca. He had been opposed at the crossing of a river by a great host of Indians, and, after fighting for some hours, had been glad to rest, having made but little headway against the enemy. Then a messenger from Hernando had recalled him ; he had led the way back, closely followed by the victorious Indians. Coming to the besieging host encamped about the city he had been allowed to pass through without attack, since the Peruvians knew that the greater the number of Spaniards cooped up in the city, the sooner would they know the pangs of famine.

When all the Spanish forces were united, they did not exceed two hundred, horse and foot, besides some Indians, who had been their allies from the very beginning of the conquest. These belonged to a northern tribe named the Canyares, who had been only recently conquered by the Incas, and therefore had welcomed the Spaniards as allies. These men numbered about a thousand.

At night the fires of the besieging Indians were seen to encircle the city like an infinite number of stars gleaming along the plain, and far up on the slopes of the hills. Be-

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fore these fires had paled in the rising sun, the Spaniards were awakened by the calls of their sentries and by the hideous yells of the Indians who, rushing down the streets of the suburbs, came near to the great square where the Spaniards were encamped, and threw arrows and javelins among them. These did little damage, but other missiles did more serious execution.

They tied burning cotton to the heads of spears and arrows, and shot these upon the roofs of the buildings, which were all, without exception, merely thatched. In a moment fire burst out upon the roofs, and on all sides of the city the flames roared and leaped. The woodwork in the interior of the houses soon caught, and there being a high wind, whole quarters of the city were soon in flames, the roar of the flames and the cracking and hissing of timbers contributing to the horror of the situation.

In the face of such a far-spread conflagration the Spaniards could do nothing. Standing as they were in the centre of the great square, while most of the buildings about them were in flames, they were protected from the heat in a great measure by the space which surrounded them on all sides. When, however, a gust of wind drove the heat and smoke among them, they were almost suffocated, and had much ado to quiet their horses, who were driven half wild by the heat, the glare and the smoke.

At night it seemed to the Spaniards as if they stood in a small space in the very midst of a blazing pit, and the red light in the sky, piercing through great rolling volumes of black smoke, only lit up the terror on each face and showed the dry lips muttering prayers.

For three days the fire raged and roared, and when at last the flames found nothing to devour, there remained in the centre of the city little more than the lower stone

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walls of the great palaces of the Incas and their nobles in the neighbourhood of the great square, besides the Temple of the Sun and the Convent of the Virgins of the Sun. These latter buildings were isolated, and thus, as by a miracle, escaped destruction. Of the nineteen thousand houses of which the whole city was composed when the conquerors entered it, there now remained but three or four thousand, which owed their escape to the fact that the wind did not blow the flames toward the quarter in which they were situated.

The Spaniards, however, did not remain idle. Even while the city was in flames they pushed their way through some of the streets which were not swept by the flames, and, bursting out upon the Indian host, killed hundreds of them with lance, sword and harquebus. Again and again, as the days went by, the Spaniards thus attacked them, but so multitudinous were the hordes of the enemy that though thousands were slain, thousands more came undauntedly to the attack.

Sometimes, as the Spaniards rode among the ruins of the still smoking streets, Indians in ambush would leap at them with horrible yells, and with bow and arrow, spear and sling, would wound or slay. The lasso was employed with great skill in the hands of the Peruvians, and many a cavalier found the dreadful cord about his body, and before he could cry for help, he would be dashed from his horse and his head would be sheared from his shoulders.

Many weeks went by, yet the enemy did not weaken in the stubborn siege, and the Spaniards wondered why Pizarro at Lima did not send reinforcements. Then a friendly Indian crept through the hordes of encircling Peruvians, and told them that the rising was general throughout the land, that Lima and Truxillo and the other



Whole quarters of the city were soon in flames

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Spanish cities were also besieged, and must soon fall into the hands of the enemy ; that the Indians were in possession of the passes, so that no relief could come to them, and they must therefore vanquish their enemies themselves or perish in the attempt.

Some believed this dismal story, others affected to think that it was exaggerated ; but one morning, in the dull light, the sentries in the plaza saw several dark objects rolling toward them as if thrown from the direction of a street opening. When they examined them, to their grief they found that they were the heads of some of their fellow-countrymen. They carried them to the camp, where their comrades slept beside their horses, and some of the horrified soldiers recognized the heads as those of men they had known. This one was that of Alonzo de Rieda, who had gone to live on a plantation which had been given to him, another was that of Garcia Pomba, an old soldier, one of the garrison at Xauxa, and so on. All were soon recognized as those of Spaniards who had been massacred either on their solitary farms or plantations, or slain at the siege of some neighbouring garrison.

Week after week rolled by, bringing no relief to the beleaguered Spaniards, who now began to feel the pinch of famine. Water they could always get, from the river running through the city ; but to obtain provisions they had to send out a band of cavaliers, who had to cut their way through the besieging hordes, and then, having captured some llamas, or wrested supplies of grain from a village, they had to fight their way back again. Every such foray cost the lives of Spaniards, though a much heavier loss was inflicted on the Indians.

The siege had lasted from February to August, and daily the Spaniards, lessened in numbers by the losses

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suffered in every attack on the Indians, and weak from famine, feared that by a simultaneous attack on all sides, they would be wiped out of existence by the sheer weight of numbers.

Suddenly, one day, some of the friendly Indians came running from their posts of observation in the ruins of the suburbs, crying out that the Peruvians were going away. It was indeed true. The forces of the Inca had themselves been feeling the pinch of famine, and as the season for planting had now approached, young Manco saw that dire famine would stalk through the land unless he disbanded most of his men and sent them to plant their fields. He therefore ordered them to their homes, telling them to return to resume the siege when their labours in the field were finished. He kept a large body with himself, and others were left to keep observation on Cuzco and to cut off supplies to the Spaniards.

The Spaniards, overjoyed to see their enemy melting away, signalized the event by issuing forth on a foray, and so successful were they that they captured, from the surrounding Indian villages, two thousand head of sheep, which they succeeded in driving into Cuzco, in spite of the attempts of the enemy to cut them off.

CHAPTER XV

The Quarrel of Almagro and Pizarro

WHILE these events were taking place in Peru, Almagro was pushing on toward the conquest of Chili. During the first part of the way, he travelled along the highway of the Incas which stretched across the tableland on which they were marching. When this ended, the road gave place to the almost tractless ways of the mountains. Deep and rugged ravines broke across his path, round whose sides his company had to travel by a narrow sheep track which wound ever upward to a dizzy height over the abysses of the mountain. Dark forests of pine would encompass them at one place, then the wide and rocky plateaus would open before them where, without a bush or a shrub to shelter them, the icy blast from the snowfields high above them would sweep about the shivering travellers.

So intense was the cold that many lost the nails of their fingers from frost-bite, others lost the fingers themselves, and one or two had to have their limbs amputated. Others were blinded by the snow-glare. The Indian allies especially suffered, for their thin clothing, made only for the genial plains, was totally unfitted for these rigorous altitudes.

Famine-stricken, the wretched Spaniards had finally to have recourse to the flesh of their horses. Many of these creatures, frozen to death during the night, were cut

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up in the morning to afford meals to their famishing masters.

Their own sufferings, however, did not soften the hearts of the Spanish cavaliers, for their line of march in the valleys was marked by burning villages, sorrowing natives and desolated fields. Men and women were chained in gangs of ten or twelve, and compelled to carry the baggage of the conquerors until, in sheer exhaustion, they fell and died upon the road. Almagro was not the stern disciplinarian that Pizarro was ; it was a saying among the conquerors of Peru that not one of the latter general's men would have dared pluck an ear of maize against his command ; but though Almagro looked with displeasure on the cruel treatment of the Indians by his own men, he did not repress it.

At length the "men of Chili," as Almagro's band was called, reached the genial valley of Coquimbo, where, after their sufferings, they rested to refresh themselves. Almagro then sent a detachment under one of his officers to advance farther to the south, to report on the land and the people there. Soon afterwards he himself was joined by his lieutenant, Orgoñez, who had been left behind at Cuzco to beat up more recruits.

The lieutenant brought with him the royal warrant, addressed to Almagro, giving him the rank of marshal and granting him territories extending two hundred leagues south of those given to Pizarro. When he communicated the terms of this document to his soldiers, they clamoured to be led back to Peru.

"We don't need to wander in this icy wilderness," they said, "when Cuzco is yours, as it undoubtedly is. Better get back to comfortable quarters there than wander like outcasts in these wastes where there is no gold."

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His men thought of another argument to turn their leader's mind in the direction of Cuzco. Almagro had an only son, named Diego, of whom he was excessively fond. This youth was still at Cuzco.

"It is only," they said, "by returning to Cuzco and looking after your interests there that you will be able to provide for your son, who at present has no future befitting his rank."

When the officer who had been sent to the south returned, saying that there were no rich towns there to make the conquest worth their while, Almagro was quite willing to fall in with the wishes of his soldiers.

To the Spaniards who had seen the golden treasures of Peru, any other land which did not offer riches as great and as easily obtainable was a country not worth regard. The advance into Chili had been made over land which bore in its rocks some of the richest minerals in the world ; but the Spaniards, drunk with the lust for gold, were too impatient or too ignorant to look closely. Having, as they thought, journeyed very near to the end of the world, and found nothing there but desolate rocks and savage natives, they turned back from the uninviting land.

It was resolved that the return should not be made by the way they came, through the mountains, but, marching to the coast, they turned north when they came to the sea, and hoped to find an easy way back through green valleys. They found, however, that, as they went northwards, they marched deeper and deeper into a dreary desert, a waste of sand, with hardly a green spot anywhere, to⁹ rest the wearied eye.

This was the desert of¹³ Atacama, which stretched for nearly a hundred leagues in a series of wide, sandy ridges,

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encrusted with salt. Under their feet, unknown to them, lay mineral wealth in the shape of silver, copper and nitrate ; but as their weary steps carried them up the slopes of successive ridges their aching eyes strained forward for a sight of the green fields of Peru, and the sparkle of clear streams.

Their sufferings in this terrible desolation were almost as severe as those they had undergone on the southward march through the mountains, but at length they reached the town of Arequipa, situated about sixty leagues west of Cuzco. Here Almagro learnt of the insurrection of the Peruvians and of the result, and resolved to push on to Cuzco and to insist on his claims to assume the government and to thrust out Hernando Pizarro.

Having arrived, therefore, at a place named Urcos, some six leagues from Cuzco, he sent officers to Cuzco with a copy of his royal grant, which they were to submit to the mayor and principal town officials, with the demand that they should recognize him as the governor. The municipal officers replied that they would require time to consider the matter, since there seemed to be some doubt whether Cuzco did really come within the boundary laid down by the royal grant to Almagro ; and, meanwhile, they proposed that Almagro should agree to a truce and should not come nearer to the town.

This was arranged between the parties ; but Almagro had been but a few days in his quarters when one of his soldiers rushed into his room, and said :

“ Señor, we are betrayed ! The truce they made with you has been made to blind you. I have but just come from Cuzco. Hernando Pizarro is fortifying the city, and the marquis is sending from Lima a body of men under Alvarado to strengthen the forces under Hernando ! ”

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“Is this so?” cried Almagro, starting up angrily. “Then, by Saint Jago, I stay here not another hour.”

He gave instant orders to prepare for marching, and as soon as it was dark, he led his men on the road toward Cuzco. It was in the winter season, and the rain fell in a deluge as they rode along the track. It was late when they reached the city, which they found was sunk in sleep. Creeping quietly up one of the roads leading into the great square, Almagro set strong parties of cavalry at the head of each avenue, so as to prevent a surprise by the garrison.

Then, selecting a number of men, he bade Orgoñez, his lieutenant, take these and force the dwelling of Hernando Pizarro.

“Take him captive,” he said, “and lodge him under close guard. You will answer for his security.”

Thereupon Orgoñez went off in the darkness and the rain across the plaza to one of the great halls of the Incas, where Hernando Pizarro was lodging with his brother Gonzalo. Immense wooden doors opened on the plaza, and Orgoñez ordered his men to take up their positions very quietly. With them they had a great baulk of timber which they had snatched up from before a house which was being rebuilt after the fire.

Poising this, at a quiet word from Orgoñez, the men dashed it with all their might at the lock of the door, which gave way before the crashing blow. Instantly from the dark interior a torch flamed up from the embers of a fire, and some twenty soldiers were found snatching up their weapons. The men of Chili threw themselves upon the men of the Pizarros, and a sharp hand-to-hand struggle began.

The Cuzco men were stout fighters, and would not give way. Already one or two on either side were killed or

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wounded, and Orgoñez, angry at the long resistance, picked up a torch, and, leaping on a chair, he held the flame against the thatch of the roof, which instantly began to burn. Speedily the whole roof was on fire, and pieces of the thatch and the rafters began to fall among the Pizarros and their men at the far end of the room.

Outside the doorway stood Orgoñez and his men, ready to thrust their countrymen back into the flames should they attempt to burst out.

“Surrender!” cried the harsh voice of Orgoñez, “or you die like rats in a burning house.”

The men could be heard urging the two Pizarros to yield, while the burning rafters had already set the clothes of some of them alight, and the wood of the walls was burning beside them.

At length Hernando Pizarro stepped forward to the doorway, and in silence threw down his sword at the feet of Orgoñez, his face dark with rage. Then, folding his arms, he awaited the cords with which he was instantly bound. Gonzalo, his brother, followed with the soldiers, and all gave themselves up in unconditional surrender. As the last man stepped from the building, the whole roof fell in with a tremendous crash, dashing blazing wood in the midst of the captors and the captives, and forcing them to retreat from the terrible heat.

No further resistance anywhere was made to Almagro's demands, and having placed the two Pizarros under a strong guard he felt himself almost secure. There was, however, still one other man to reckon with—Alvarado, the commander whom Francisco Pizarro had sent. He now lay with five hundred men at Xauxa, some thirteen leagues from the capital.

Almagro at once sent three officers to him with a message

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telling of his possession of the city, and requiring Alvarado to come in and acknowledge him as the master of Cuzco. The only reply which Alvarado gave was to put the officers in irons as traitors to the governor, and to send news of what had happened to the Marquis Pizarro at Lima.

On hearing what had been done, Almagro called his lieutenant to him and bade him prepare at once to march against Alvarado.

“By the Virgin!” he said wrathfully, “I will bring this cavalier to reason.”

“Ay,” replied Orgoñez, “you will do that easily. But you leave behind you here enemies whom you ought to deal with before you move a step farther.”

“Enemies? What mean you?”

“I mean the two Pizarros,” returned the grim soldier. “What do you intend to do with them?”

“They will be useful,” said Almagro, “when I and Francisco are dealing with each other. They are hostages.”

“They are dangerous hostages,” said Orgoñez. “I tell you, Almagro, you are mad to keep them alive. Your own life will never be safe unless you strike off their heads. Dead men never bite, but while they are alive they are dangerous.”

“Nay, nay,” replied Almagro. “You are too hard, Rodrigo. I hate Hernando, but he has done naught to deserve that.”

This was not the only reason which moved Almagro not to proceed to the extremity advised by Orgoñez. Such a deed would for ever sever the ties of friendship which, in spite of all that had happened, still existed between himself and his old friend Francisco Pizarro.

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“Never fear,” he went on; “they shall be safely guarded. And now, we will set out to meet Alvarado.”

Before Orgoñez could reply, a knock sounded at the door and a soldier entered.

“Señor,” he said, addressing Almagro, “an Indian desires to give you a letter.”

The Indian was bidden to enter, and from the folds of his voluminous blanket he produced a letter. Almagro tore it open, and gave it to Orgoñez to read, for he could not read himself. Orgoñez glanced at it, and a smile spread over his grim features. He dismissed the Indian with a present, and then, turning to Almagro, said :

“It is from Pedro de Lerma. He has ever been jealous that Alvarado should be set above him; he desires us to march against the commander, and he will send us word how best to make our attack.”

“Good!” said Almagro, with a laugh. “I thought I had friends with Alvarado’s force.”

Instantly the main force of Almagro’s men prepared to march, and the leader, putting himself at their head, made rapid progress towards Xauxa. He reached the river Abancay, a mile or two from the city, late in the afternoon, and found that Alvarado had taken up his position in front of a bridge, while a strong detachment occupied a spot commanding a ford lower down the river.

Already Almagro had received the promised letter from de Lerma, and following that cavalier’s advice, he took up his position on the bank in front of Alvarado, as if prepared to force a passage over the bridge. When darkness set in, however, he detached a large body under Orgoñez to go lower down and pass the ford. This was accordingly done. Orgoñez led his men across the river in the darkness, though several of his men were carried

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away by the swift current and drowned. As they gained the opposite bank, the sentinels of the force posted there gave warning, and the landing of Orgoñez was contested, he himself being wounded in the mouth. Nothing daunted, however, he cheered on his men, and fell furiously upon the enemy.

The struggle did not last long, however, for de Lerma and some of the men cried out that they were for Almagro, thus casting their loyal comrades into complete confusion.

Hearing the noise of battle in this quarter, Alvarado hastened to the spot with most of his men. As soon as he left the bridge, Almagro rushed his own force across it, and, dispersing the small body of men left to defend it, he hurried after Alvarado. That general, attacked in the front by Orgoñez and in the rear by Almagro, found himself hemmed in on all sides. He had nothing left to do but to surrender. Having passed the night on the spot, Almagro returned next day in triumph to Cuzco with an array of prisoners which equalled his own forces in numbers.

When, in the course of a few days, Pizarro learned what had happened, he hurriedly began to fortify Lima, fearing that Almagro, flushed with his rapid successes, might descend in force upon him. While making these warlike preparations, however, Pizarro also tried the effects of friendly negotiation, and therefore sent a man who was known both to himself and Almagro to endeavour to arrange a peace.

Owing to the death of the intermediary, however, soon after his arrival at Cuzco, these attempts failed; and Almagro then determined to march to the sea-coast with a sufficient number of his men to found a seaport there, thus securing communication with Spain independently of Lima.

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Before doing this, however, he sent Orgoñez with a strong body of men, to disperse the forces of the Inca, who still lay some distance from Cuzco, in a fortified camp. By this time the Peruvians had almost all deserted their king, and, on the approach of Orgoñez, the Inca fled with a few followers into the mountains. Orgoñez, however, hotly pursued him, until the Inca, deserted by all his men, was left alone with one of his wives, and, having fled to the most inaccessible part of the Andes, baffled all the attempts of Orgoñez to discover him.

As, however, there was now little fear that the Peruvians would attempt to rise against the city during his absence, Almagro prepared to leave Cuzco and proceed to the coast. In the council which he held with Orgoñez and his second officer, a man named Diego de Alvarado, before beginning his march, the question of what should be done with the prisoners came up for decision.

“What are you going to do when you get to the coast?” asked Orgoñez.

“If Pizarro wishes to make terms with me,” said Almagro, “he may come to me wherever I may be. I shall not go to seek him.”

“Do you think that by any treaty you may make with Pizarro you will now escape his plotting for your ruin?” asked Orgoñez.

“There is plot and counterplot,” replied Almagro blusteringly. “Think you I fear Pizarro and his plots?”

“I have no doubt,” said Almagro’s second officer, who sat with him, “that the marquis will honourably hold by any treaty he may make.”

Orgoñez looked at the speaker with a scornful smile. He was perfectly aware of the noble qualities of his com-

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rade, but he knew that in the rough world of the conquerors the finer feelings which Don Diego expressed were misunderstood. Don Diego, though of the same name, was no relation to the Alonso de Alvarado whom Almagro now held a prisoner. He was a cavalier of good birth, and with the chivalrous instincts of a true knight.

“As for me,” said Orgoñez, in reply to the sentiment of Don Diego, “I know that Pizarro will abide by a treaty—but only if it is to his advantage. I tell you, Almagro, you have stirred up the rage of a bitter man by what you have already done. He will not strike until he is quite ready, and it is quite possible that, if he makes a treaty with you, you will think that everything is forgotten and that you are close friends once more. But I tell you that you would do better to strike off the heads of Hernando and Gonzalo at once, and then march on Lima with every man you can muster, and stake all on pulling down Francisco.”

“Out upon such counsel!” cried Don Diego, his face flushed with anger. “Think you, Don Rodrigo, that you deal with savages? I tell you that I would answer with my life for the fidelity of the three Pizarros.”

“Yes, yes,” said Almagro, “I think you are too bitter against them. You suspect too much.”

“I don’t suspect anything,” said Orgoñez grimly, “but I know the Pizarros.”

“But, señor, think!” cried Alvarado, turning to Almagro. “Such a deed would raise the country against you. Every honourable man would turn from a party which resorted to such a violent crime, and such indignation would arise in the Court of Spain that your fortunes would be utterly ruined.”

“You say truth, Diego,” replied Almagro. “’Twould

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be a death they have not merited, and the Court would of a surety deprive me of everything.”

“ I tell you that you are too soft a man for Francisco Pizarro,” said Orgoñez, his stern face flushed with annoyance at finding his leader reject his counsel so completely. “ The day will come when you will repent your mistaken softness. A Pizarro has never been known to forget an injury ; and that which you have already done is too deep a wrong to be forgiven. You will remember my words when it is too late ! ”

Saying these words, Orgoñez arose and strode from the room. In another hour Almagro, placing himself at the head of his army, began his march to the coast.

He took Hernando Pizarro with him, closely guarded, and left orders that the other prisoners should be kept in strict confinement during his absence.

When he arrived at the coast, he selected a spot in the pleasant valley of Chinchá, where he busied himself in laying out the plan of a town, which, in time, should rival the size, beauty and importance of Lima, his rival's city. He called it Almagro, after himself, and thus made it a standing defiance to his competitor.

A few weeks were occupied in this way, and then a messenger came from Cuzco with the news that Gonzalo Pizarro and Alonso de Alvarado had escaped from prison, and were now hastening with all speed to the camp of the marquis.

In his first fury at this news it might have gone hard with Hernando ; but while considering the best course open to him, an embassy came from Francisco Pizarro suggesting the terms of a peaceful arrangement between them.

Almagro, who was not of a nature to keep his anger long,

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was quite ready to resume negotiations. Finally, Pizarro proposed that the dispute, which was mainly a question of boundaries between their respective territories, should be submitted to the arbitration of a learned priest whose name was Francisco de Bovadilla. He was living at Lima, and though a friend of Pizarro's, he had a wide reputation for justice and honesty.

It was proposed, therefore, that all the parties should meet at the little seaport town of Mala, north of Chincha, that the priest should hear both sides, and should then make his award between them.

The interview between Almagro and Pizarro took place on the 13th November 1537. Almagro rode into the town at the head of a few cavaliers, and, leaving them outside the house of the chief of the village, where the meeting was to be held, entered with but two officers. In a few moments, from the opposite direction, came Pizarro and his band. Their leader gravely acknowledged the salute of Orgoñez, who was at the head of Almagro's supporters, and then entered the apartment where Almagro was waiting.

The latter, who was talking with several Spanish gentlemen as Pizarro entered, doffed his bonnet and advanced with a smile and an outstretched hand to meet his old friend. But Pizarro, drawing himself up, hardly returned his greeting, and would not give his hand.

"What madness," he said, looking with haughty glances and cold eyes, "has led you to seize my city of Cuzco with force and to imprison my brothers?"

"Madness, indeed!" cried Almagro, instantly fired to anger by the other's manner. "I maintain I did rightly, and we are here, I take it, to discover the truth. Have you already told the arbitrator what he shall decide?"

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“What title had you to seize my city, I demand,” went on Pizarro. “Think you his Majesty would include in his royal grant to you a city which you did nothing to gain? I had all the hazards and the dangers. I seized the Inca, and thus gained the city and subdued the land. Think you I won such a prize for you to take?”

Almagro returned an angry answer, and the quarrel became hot. Charges of treachery and want of faith were exchanged, and there seemed little prospect of anything in the nature of peaceful discussion ever being reached. Meanwhile, the other Spanish gentlemen and officers of both parties were standing together, listening or exchanging whispered talk, while they watched the two angry disputants.

Suddenly one of those who had come in with Pizarro began whistling the air of a ballad which was often heard in the camps of the Spanish soldiers. No one seemed to take notice of what he was doing at first. Then he repeated the refrain, and Almagro seemed to be struck by it. He turned his head and glanced keenly at the whistler, who, with legs stretched wide and arms folded across his breast, was looking up to the beams of the roof as if unconscious that he was whistling.

Now the words which went with the air which the cavalier was whistling were these :

“Tiempo es el caballero,
Tiempo es de andar de aqui.”
(’Tis time for the noble cavalier
To mount his steed and flee from here.)

Almagro broke off in the passionate speech which he was making, and, after darting a black and suspicious look at Pizarro, he suddenly turned and strode to the door,

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followed by his two officers. He ran to his troop before the house, and, vaulting on his horse, cried :

“The villain would betray us ! Back to quarters, as fast as you can.”

All struck spurs into their horses' flanks, and the whole party dashed away out of the town towards where the main part of their army lay at Chincha.

Next day a friendly Spaniard living at Mala was seen by one of Almagro's officers, and on being asked whether Pizarro had indeed meditated treachery against Almagro, he replied :

“Some say yea and some say nay. Some say that Gonzalo Pizarro lay with an ambush in the town, ready at a sign from his brother to fall upon Almagro. Others say he was but lying in readiness to aid his brother should Almagro himself attempt any tricks against Pizarro. Which is truth, I know not.”

It was left in doubt, indeed, whether Francisco Pizarro had really meditated treachery against Almagro ; but the mere suspicion, coupled with Pizarro's haughty behaviour, rankled in the heart of the old captain.

In a few days a messenger came to Almagro, bearing letters from the priest, who had been nominated to decide between him and Pizarro. When the letter was read to Almagro he burst forth in furious anger, denouncing the injustice of the award.

“I said he was but the hireling of Pizarro,” he said. “A sentence so unjust has not been pronounced since the time of Pontius Pilate. I will have none of it, and Pizarro can think himself fortunate if he does not drive me to hack off his brother's head in return for the affronts to which he is continually putting me.”

The decision of the priest was that a vessel, with a skilful

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pilot on board, should be sent to determine the exact latitude of the river Santiago in the north of Peru, from which, according to the royal grant, the territories of both Pizarro and Almagro were to be measured. Meanwhile Cuzco was to be delivered up by the latter, and Hernando Pizarro was to be set at liberty and to leave for Spain in six weeks.

The murmurs against this award among Almagro's men were many and violent.

"We have been sold," they said, "if our general consents to this. He is getting old, and may want peace at any price. But we will not give up the comforts of Cuzco for the barren lands of Chili without a fight."

Almagro caused it to be made known that he was as bitterly opposed as any of his men, and would never submit to the award. This being reported to Pizarro, the latter began to offer various other solutions of the dispute, and at length something more satisfactory was proposed.

The terms of this were that until the arrival of some definite instructions on the point from Castile, the city of Cuzco, with its territory, should remain in the hands of Almagro; and that Hernando Pizarro should be set at liberty on condition that he left the country within six weeks.

"Well," said Almagro to Orgoñez, when his secretary had read out these terms to his master, "what think you of this? Is it not more reasonable? Are they not such as I can accept? Pizarro has made concessions of some moment to him, and I will meet him in the same spirit and accept his terms."

"Concessions cost little to those who do not intend to abide by them," was the bitter reply. "I tell you, you

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know not whom you deal with when you talk thus of Pizarro."

"Out, man!" cried Almagro, in half-laughing reproach. "How you hate this Francisco."

"Nay, I hate him not," said Orgoñez, "but I know him and I know you!"

"Nevertheless, I will accept his terms and go myself to release Hernando," said Almagro, rising from his seat.

Orgoñez also raised his tall form from the chair on which he sat, and, clutching his own beard with his left hand, he thrust back his head and drew his hand across his throat, as if cutting it.

"Orgoñez, Orgoñez," he cried, "it is this you will get for your friendship with Don Diego de Almagro!"

CHAPTER XVI

The Battle at the Salt Pans

SECURE now in the sense that he was to be left quietly in possession of Cuzco, Almagro did not hasten to leave his present quarters in the lovely valley of Chíncha. Moreover he was ill, and felt old age creeping upon him, and dreamed of ending his days in peace and comfort.

A month passed thus, and then the thunderbolt descended. Three cavaliers rode into the camp one day and delivered a letter into the hands of Almagro's secretary. Without waiting, the riders turned their horses' heads and, laughing, rode out of the town again.

The secretary took the letter to his master, who was in bed ; Orgoñez was seated near him.

"Well, Espinall," asked Almagro kindly, "what have you there ?"

"A letter, my lord, from the marquis."

Orgoñez looked up, and met the gaze of Almagro. In the eyes of the latter man was no suspicion, but a grim light was in those of Orgoñez. The secretary was bidden to read the letter.

"Excellent sir," he read, "know you by these that I cannot forget the many wrongs and affronts which you have done and caused to me. I give you therefore to know that the treaty made lately between us is now at an end. I bid you therefore not to seize my city of Cuzco, but to

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retire into your own territory of Chili. If you do not relinquish your pretensions to this city, the responsibility of the consequences will lie upon your own head.”

Almagro, his lined and heavy face flushed with rage, looked round at his lieutenant.

“By the Virgin, Orgoñez!” he said, in a thick voice, “your words have come true! You judged him better than any of us. The perjured traitor! What doth he not still owe me of the treaty we made at Panama, and now he treats me thus! Well, this shall be the last tumble between us. One of us shall lose his life in this, for never more will I trust him! But I am sick and old—Orgoñez, to think this disease should sap my strength now when I need it all to pull him down!”

The sudden blow dealt by Pizarro’s letter had indeed a very weakening effect upon Almagro. His anger against his sickness flamed up in great bursts of rage, but he was impotent, and at length he had to tell Orgoñez that he would have to conduct the war for him.

“I know,” he said, taking the hand of the stern-faced warrior, “that I can rely on your loyalty and courage. We will beat him yet between us.”

They held counsel together as to what was best to be done, but Almagro’s illness had clouded the mind that was so keen in warcraft, and while he wondered what to do, his enemy had forestalled him.

Thus he advised Orgoñez too late to seize the passes through the mountains which hemmed in the valley in which he now lay. Some were occupied just in time, but from others his detachments were beaten back by the troops of Pizarro, who, even before announcing the end of the treaty to Almagro, had already planned and begun his order of campaign.

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When Almagro heard that this step had failed, he got up from his bed and commanded a litter to be prepared for him, and in this, at the head of his army, he began his march to Cuzco, which he wished to reach before his enemy could arrive there. Meanwhile, friendly Indian allies kept him informed of the movements of Pizarro.

In a few days Almagro arrived at the town of Bilcas, and there he became so ill that he had to command a halt. Hearing from his spies that Pizarro was intending to stay in a valley some miles in his rear, in order to complete his preparations and to gather a larger army, Almagro was enabled to stay and rest for three weeks, before the resumed activity of Pizarro forced him to proceed forward upon his journey.

Almagro was further told by his spies that Francisco Pizarro had returned to Lima, leaving his brother Hernando to conduct the campaign, assisted by his younger brother, Gonzalo. On hearing this Almagro bitterly regretted his leniency to Hernando while the latter was in his power.

“When he left me,” Almagro lamented, “he said that he desired nothing better than to live in amity with me, and pledged his honour as a knight that he would faithfully fulfil the terms of the treaty between us.”

Having reached Cuzco, Almagro called a council of war to decide what course to pursue. The advice varied with nearly every man, and Almagro, old and ill, seemed to have no spirit.

“I think,” said Pedro de Lerma, “that we should fortify and provision the town and await a siege.”

Others thought the same, including Diego de Alvarado, who wished to delay hostilities between the parties so as



“Your words have come true”

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to allow for an opportunity of making peace between them.

“Think you,” said Almagro, “that there is any chance of making terms with him?”

“What?” cried Orgoñez. “Do you wish to have another lesson? Do you still believe there is trust in the word of a Pizarro?”

Alvarado spoke in support of Almagro, but the latter silenced him. All could see that he was suffering both in mind and body. His face was leaden-hued, his flesh flabby and bedewed with sweat.

“I am sick of war, señores,” said the old man. “I would I could live in peace for the little while left to me, and see my son Diego settled on the road to prosperity and power. Well, well, Orgoñez, you are right. They cannot be trusted, so we must fight them, since there is no other course.”

“Ay,” replied Orgoñez bluntly, “you must fight them or be roped in like a bull to the slaughter. You have liberated Hernando Pizarro—it is too late now to do aught but fight!”

This opinion ultimately prevailed, and it was decided to march out of the city and meet Hernando in the field. As Almagro was too ill to lead his army personally, he gave the command to Orgoñez, who mustered his forces and marched out of the city, Almagro following in a litter to watch the issue of the contest from a place near by.

Orgoñez took up his position at a place called the Salt Pans, about three miles from the city and in the direct line of Hernando’s march upon the capital. A piece of marshy ground was in front of them, and before that ran a small river. Orgoñez counted on the enemy getting entangled either in the river or the marsh, but as the officers

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who were with him pointed out, more than half of his own forces consisted of cavalry, who would only flounder about in attacking the enemy as they crossed the marsh.

Their leader, however, was obstinate, and would not change his position. He arranged his infantry, who were mostly armed with the long pike, in the middle of his array, and placed the cavalry in equal parties on each side, together with six small cannon or falconets.

As the men rested on their arms, awaiting the approach of their enemies, they had leisure to look about them. Lifting their eyes to the mountain-slopes and rocky heights surrounding the valley in which they stood, they were amazed to see that thousands of Peruvians, in multi-coloured blankets, stood watching them. The news of the approaching battle had spread from mouth to mouth among the Indians for many miles through Peru, and the cowed natives smiled bitterly to think that now, having beaten them to the dust, their conquerors were to leap at each other's throats, like robbers who quarrel over the division of booty.

On the hills toward Cuzco, however, those were standing who looked with anxious eyes on the lines of the five hundred soldiers ranked in the middle of the plain. Many Spanish women had entered the country since the conquest, the wives or sweethearts of the soldiery, and these, together with many children, waited with white lips and beating hearts.

It was late in the afternoon before the cavaliers and infantry of Hernando came into sight; their burnished breastplates and bright headpieces reflecting the rays of the sinking sun. With steady step and in good order, showing how fresh and unstrained they were, the army of Hernando, numbering some seven hundred men, marched

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across the plain and took up their position on the opposite side of the little river.

The sun had set by the time they had taken up their position, and here, facing each other at a distance of a hundred feet, brothers and kindred, bent on shedding each other's blood, prepared for slumber.

The night passed in silence, unbroken by any alarm. The men slept about their camp fires, the sentinels passed to and fro in each camp, and the thousands on the hills about the plain watched the flames die down toward dawn.

Long before the beams of the sun shone along the valley the trumpets of Hernando woke his men to arms. Instantly the morning meal was prepared, and after this was taken he prepared the order of battle. In mounted troops he was inferior to Almagro, but as compensation for this his infantry was numerous, and contained a well-trained corps of harquebusiers recently sent from St Domingo, whose weapons were of the most recent form. They were of large size, and threw double-headed shot, consisting of two bullets linked together by an iron chain.

Hernando drew up his army in the same manner as Orgoñez had arranged his forces. One corps of the horse he placed under the command of Alonso de Alvarado, while the infantry was commanded by Gonzalo Pizarro.

Mass was said by a priest whom they had with them, and then Hernando, reining up his horse before the army, addressed the men.

“Comrades,” he said, “you know why we are here—to avenge, first, the many injuries done by Almagro upon the marquis and his kindred; second, to teach him, and those who hold with him, that where others have sown he must not hope to reap, that where others, with risk and suffering, have gained the prize, his hands shall not wrest that prize

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from those whose rightly it is. From you, veterans of Pizarro, has he seized Cuzco and its riches—from the first conquerors of Peru he has taken the brightest treasure of all those which you have won.”

He pointed with his sword to the distant city, whose white walls were now sparkling in the morning sun.

“That is the prize of the victor!” he cried. “Say, will you win it from this Almagro who claims to hold it, or will you suffer yourselves to be defeated and led captive within its walls?”

Such a cry of rage went up from the throats of the seven hundred men before him that it reverberated among the clefts and hollows of the mountains, and struck on the ears of the watching women and children with a mournful sound as of coming disaster. Among them was Almagro, who looked on with gloomy face. He had been assisted to a horse, but looked shrunken, old and thin, with nothing of the dashing air which had once distinguished him.

At a signal from Hernando his brother Gonzalo gave the word, “Advance!” and, heading his battalion of foot soldiers, led it straight across the river. The water was not deep, and soon they gained the other side, where, in the marshy ground, the foremost files hesitated. Instantly the guns of Orgoñez opened upon them, and the shot, striking down this man and that, spread disorder and dismay among the men. But only for a few moments. Gonzalo and his second in command, Pedro de Valdivia, threw themselves among the soldiers, cheering this one, threatening another, and putting such spirit into them that they quickly recovered, and now jumping from hummock to hummock, or floundering bravely through the bog, the infantry soon gained the firm ground on which their enemy stood ready to receive them.

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The spearman of Orgoñez advanced to attack, but, obeying the quick orders of Gonzalo, the harquebusiers among his men ran to a small hill beside the marsh, whence they began to fire with deadly effect upon the army of Orgoñez. So heavy was their fire that his spearmen could not stand before it, and the cavalry on the flanks were also thrown into some disorder.

Meanwhile Hernando, while his harquebusiers kept Orgoñez in check, formed up his cavalry, and, crossing the marsh, reached the firm ground. Orgoñez had seen this movement, and relying no longer on his broken infantry, he ordered his cavalry to form into one body.

Placing himself at the head of these, he spurred at full gallop against the advancing cavaliers of Pizarro. The shock as they clanged together was terrific, and from the throats of the watching Indians on the heights arose a fiendish cry of exultation. It sounded high above the din of battle, and struck terror into the hearts of the watching women, for it meant delight in the carnage which the conquerors were now meting out to one another.

The fighting between the two bands of cavaliers was fierce and deadly. Lance shivered against armour, and swords flashed and rose again tinged with a ruddy hue, while above the press of biting, plunging horses and thrusting cavaliers rang the opposing cries of "The king and Almagro!" and "The king and Pizarro!"

Orgoñez fought with the fierceness of despair. At the first onset he singled out a knight whom, in error, he thought to be Hernando Pizarro, and charging him in full career, overthrew him. Another he ran through in like manner, and then, his lance breaking, he drew out his sword, and with a cry of "Victory!" thrust another knight through the body.

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Suddenly those on the hills saw him check in his gallop ; he seemed to sway in his saddle, and next moment his horse fell. A chain shot from a harquebus had struck through the bars of his visor and bruised his forehead, so that for some moments he was dazed. Then another shot killed his horse, and he was down. Before he could recover himself from the entangling stirrups he was surrounded and outnumbered.

“ Surrender ! ” was shouted to him.

“ Never,” he said, “ unless it be to a knight of equal rank ! ”

“ I am a knight ! ” cried one. “ Give me your sword ! ”

Orgoñez did not know him, but believed the man was speaking truth. He held out his sword and the other dashed it from his hand. Then, drawing a poniard, the wretch leaned from his horse and stabbed Orgoñez to the heart.

When Orgoñez fell, the battle was lost for his party. The infantry was already scattered by the terrible hail of bullets, and now fled to shelter behind bushes, mounds or broken walls which stood here and there near the field of battle. The cavalry, also, outnumbered and leaderless, gave way and fled, and conqueror and conquered began a race to the city.

From the hills around them rose cries of lamentation from the watching women, and from the Indians yells of triumph. Almagro, who had watched the losing battle in gloomy despair, seeing now that his faithful followers were wholly lost, cried to his servants to help him into safety. They turned his horse for him, and rode beside him back to Cuzco. He seemed dazed and confused, and did not know where to go, until one suggested that he would find refuge in the fortress. Thither he rode, there-

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fore, but hardly had he alighted from his horse when the thud of advancing hoofs was heard ; a cavalier thundered at the gate and ordered it to be opened.

Almagro, seeing that resistance was useless, gave himself up, and he was taken in triumph through the city. Having arrived at the square he was put in irons, and was cast into the very prison in which he had confined Hernando Pizarro.

Hernando gave the capital up to pillage, and the treasure found by the conquerors was immense, especially in the quarters of Almagro's officers, who, as a rule, had been unbridled in their demands upon the natives in every town through which they had passed.

When at length the pillage had been completed and the town was quiet again, Hernando Pizarro set about the drawing up of charges against Almagro. Everyone whom the imprisoned general had ever offended was sought out, and slowly a thousand petty accusations were piled up against him, filling eventually no less than four thousand pages.

Meanwhile the other partisans of Almagro were sent out of the town, among them being his only son, Diego. The young man, full of anxiety concerning the fate of his father, was in charge of a strong escort, and was to be taken to the governor at Lima. But when they reached Xauxa they learned that the marquis was also there, on his way to Cuzco. Young Diego sought an interview with him at once, and, with tears in his eyes, said, after he had greeted him :

“ Marquis, I pray you hasten to Cuzco, and let not your brother Hernando do any harm to my father. He is old and ill and feeble, and is pining in prison.”

The marquis, with kindness in his tones, said : “ You

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must take heart, my young friend. Believe me, no harm shall come to your father. I trust indeed that the ancient friendship between myself and your father will soon be renewed."

Diego thanked the marquis with a full heart, and, much cheered by the words, continued his way to the coast. Bishop Valverde and cavaliers of high rank who were with Pizarro, and who were old friends of Almagro, also begged of the marquis that no ill should befall Almagro, and to all of them Pizarro returned assuring though formal answers.

Meanwhile in Cuzco, but forty miles away, Almagro still lay in prison, pining under the combined effects of bodily illness and distress of mind. Hernando, hearing he was like to die, visited him in prison, and assured him that he only awaited the governor's arrival to set him at liberty. Cheered by this speedy prospect of freedom, the old man mended in health and spirits.

Some weeks passed. Pizarro still delayed his advance from Xauxa, and daily Almagro asked his guards when the marquis would arrive to grant him freedom. But they knew nothing. Buoyed up with hope, however, Almagro felt that every day brought him nearer to release.

One day a friar was admitted into his room. The black-robed figure paced slowly and solemnly to where Almagro sat at the small window which let a meagre light into his prison. Almagro rose, a little startled at the other's mysterious entrance.

"Señor," said the priest, throwing back the hood which shrouded his face, "I have a mournful duty to perform. I have to inform you that you are condemned to die."

For some moments Almagro was dazed by so sudden a blow to all his hopes.

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“It cannot be—it cannot be!” he said. “Such a wrong cannot be done—I will not believe it!”

In spite of all the priest could say, Almagro refused to credit the other's words, and demanded that Hernando should come to him, and tell him the truth.

The interview was granted, but it is unnecessary to dwell upon it. To all the old man's piteous entreaties that life should be spared him—to his demand for some return for having spared Hernando's life so recently when Orgoñez had counselled his execution—to all that the old leader could urge, the cold and callous heart of Hernando returned one answer—that all his prayers were in vain, and he must prepare to meet his doom.

The news of the sentence produced a feeling of deep horror throughout Cuzco. Almagro had been generally liked by the community, and all recalled some generous or good-natured act of the old leader. Many high officers waited on Hernando, among them Diego de Alvarado, and besought mercy for him. But all was in vain. The only effect was that Hernando Pizarro consented that the execution of Almagro should not take place in the public square, but within the walls of the prison.

On the day appointed, a strong corps of harquebusiers were drawn up in the square to overawe any attempt on the part of the populace to demonstrate against an act which almost all denounced as the high-handed deed of a tyrant and traitor. Guards were doubled over the houses where dwelled the chief partisans of Almagro. At an hour unknown to any but those immediately about Hernando Pizarro, the executioner, attended by a priest, stealthily entered the prison of Almagro, who, without a word, submitted himself to death. He was strangled, his corpse was borne to the square, where the head was

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severed from the body. Then, huddled in the shroud, the remains were hurried to the house of his friend, Hernan Ponce de Leon, and next day were laid with all solemnity in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy.

Thus perished, at about the age of seventy, the hero of a hundred battles. With all his faults, he was a man who was generally liked. He was passionate, but not vindictive; and so unlike the average Spaniard was he, that even the Indians, when they heard of his conviction, bore testimony to the humanity and good-nature of the man by saying that, if he were slain, they would be without a friend among the white men.

CHAPTER XVII

The Vengeance of the Men of Chili

THREE years had passed since the execution of Almagro, when one day, in an upper room of a house in Lima, some twelve sat round a table. They had evidently just dined, but their hungry looks showed that their meal had been but a poor one. Indeed, they seemed to be men who were almost destitute. Several of them wore the Indian blanket, their legs had no hose, and their shoes were holed and patched. Others still had doublets, but the velvet was slashed in more places than fashion demanded, besides being frayed and shabby and soiled. The shirts beneath them were in rags; and generally in the haggard looks, unkempt hair and careless manner, the whole party appeared to be composed of men whose fortunes were at the lowest ebb.

At the head of the table sat one in whose eyes fire seemed still to smoulder as he sat with chin on hand in thought. His hair was grey, his face had several old wounds upon it, and the jutting white eyebrows, short, stiff beard and hanging moustache gave him a grim, fierce look.

These men were the "men of Chili," who, being partisans of Almagro, had rejected with scorn the overtures of Hernando Pizarro, and, refusing the gifts he offered for their friendship, had chosen poverty in which to

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nurse their lust for revenge upon the murderers of their old leader.

“We are becoming old women!” at length said the grim man at the head of the table. “Soon, I think, we shall go in our rags and beg for alms of the murderer Pizarro, or of that dog, his secretary, Picado. For here we sit and starve, and chafe up our old wounds and our old sorrows, cursing the day we were born, yet doing nothing to alter our fate.”

“It is hard to make head against such miseries as we have suffered,” said one, “and are still suffering.”

“Juan Rada says truth,” said another. “If we spoke less of our sufferings and thought more of revenge we should strike on some way to mend our fortunes.”

“Yet we should take care,” said Gomez Perez, a man of a better dress than the others, “that we do not drag young Almagro into our plots.”

“Who wishes to do that?” cried Rada, and his eyes shot a suspicious glance at the speaker. “We live in his house, and partake of the little wealth which the murderer in contempt has left to him. Whatever we do, the lad shall not be drawn into it. What we do should be done for the love we bear the memory of his father, and it will be for his gain—to give him the lands and the lordship which are his by right, and have been refted from him by that robber, Pizarro, who despises us so much that he even disdains to go about the city with a guard. We are but blind puppies to him, he can kick us out of the way when he likes, and in contempt he lets us live within a stone’s throw of his palace on sufferance.”

This was so true, yet so bitter a truth, that for a time men’s looks were gloomily bent on the table and on the floor—anywhere but in each other’s faces.

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“When Pizarro entered Cuzco after our brave old leader—whom God keep in heaven—was murdered in his prison,” went on Rada, “I sought the good Espinall, who, as you remember, was a secretary to my lord Almagro, whom he loved and for whose sake he dared the wrath of that stony-hearted wretch, Hernando Pizarro. I and others thought at that time that the governor had naught to do with the murder of Almagro, though we wondered why he delayed so long at Xauxa, and did not enter the city until the deed had been done. But Espinall, good man, with flashing eyes and angry looks, told me that this delay had been part of the plot which the callous-hearted brothers had made between them. Traitor that he is! You know what kindly words Francisco spoke to young Diego when, with tears, the boy besought him to save his father? Take heart, he said, for no harm should come to his father. What, too, said he to the Bishop Valverde and the other cavaliers who pressed him to save Almagro from harm? He had no other desire, he said, than to see the land in peace, and as to Almagro, that very soon their old friendship would be renewed.

“Señores,” Rada went on, “the secretary Espinall said that Francisco was in the plot, as he felt assured, but that he had at that time no proof of it. But he would make it his business to inquire of those that were about Pizarro during those days at Xauxa. You know that Espinall had to leave the country with others of those who loved Almagro—with some of us who, robbed of all we possessed, were too poor to buy food or clothes, and, too proud to appear in our rags before our countrymen, hid ourselves in the mountains, living and dressing like the Indians. Some of us died of hunger, others have lived through our miseries and now sit about this table.

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“The good Espinall was one of such wanderers. He found his way to Panama, in dire poverty, 'tis true, but still hoping for the proof he sought. Señores, I have a letter from him. It came by the caravel which reached Callao yesterday, and it hath the proof he sought. He learnt it from the lips of one of the cavaliers who were intimate with Pizarro during those days at Xauxa, and who, on his way home to Spain, was seen by Espinall at Panama and besought to tell him the truth.

“Now, señores,” thundered Rada, his face dark with passion, his great fist striking the table with a violent blow, “the truth is this. When the trial of our master was concluded in Cuzco, Hernando sent a trusty messenger with the words: ‘We have found him guilty. What shall be done with him?’ The reply which Pizarro gave with his own lips was: ‘Deal with him so that he shall give us no more trouble.’”

The listeners looked at each other as if they had heard what they had almost expected to hear, yet as if the truth were startling.

“It is borne out by what he hath ever been,” said one; “a man who values no treaty, no friendship if it stands in the way of his will. Yet 'tis well to know the truth.”

“With what savagery did he strip us of our lands,” said another, “because we were Almagro’s friends. He was glad to know that Almagro was out of the way, and that henceforth he was supreme in the land.”

There was a step at the door; it flew open and a cavalier entered, flinging off his cloak as he came in.

“Comrades,” he said, coming to the table, “there is good news for us. The Court has looked into our matter, so 'tis said, and the emperor is sending a Crown judge to make inquiry into the government of Pizarro.”

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“Where heard you that?” asked Rada, while the faces of the others showed their satisfaction at the news.

“Letters came to Pizarro yesterday,” was the reply. “He is madly angry, but, as usual, he hides his wrath with that cold mask of his. I had it from one of the soldiers of his guard who is a kinsman of mine.”

The spirits of the men about the table were greatly raised by this intelligence. They had already heard that Hernando Pizarro, who, after the execution of Almagro, had gone home to Spain with an immense treasure, had been charged with tyranny and oppression by several of Almagro’s friends in Spain, and that he had been imprisoned. The news, therefore, that the Court of Spain was sending its own agent to Peru to inquire into the conduct of the supreme governor, seemed to them to promise redress of all their wrongs, and vengeance upon the prime mover of Almagro’s murder.

They discussed the best means of taking advantage of this favourable turn in affairs, and at length it was decided that, if the money necessary for the purpose could be raised secretly among friends in the town, two of their number should travel to Panama to await the arrival of the government official, to lay their case before him before he entered the territory of Pizarro.

Some weeks passed before they succeeded in obtaining the money they required, and when it had been collected they chose two of their number, and, clothing them in suits of mourning, sent them by the next outgoing ship to Panama, where they were to await the arrival of the Crown judge.

News of this reached the ears of Pizarro, and it was urged that he should do something to break up the com-

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pany of Almagro's adherents who were dwelling together in young Almagro's house.

"Poor devils!" he said contemptuously, "let them be. They have had bad luck enough, these men of Chili. We will not trouble them."

Months passed and no news came concerning the arrival of the Crown official, nor did word come from the two men they had sent to meet him. Meanwhile, those who were left behind were reduced to the direst poverty and distress. They had not even sufficient food, for all had been stripped from them by Pizarro, and none of them now filled any office or had employment of any kind, and they were too proud to beg for any either from their friends or from those who were partisans of Pizarro.

So ragged were they that, with the pride of Spanish gentlemen, they would not venture abroad by day. They could only muster one good cloak among the ten or twelve who lived together, and when it was imperative that they should go out, they wore this cloak in turn to hide their rags.

At length news reached Lima that most of the squadron which had accompanied the Crown official, Don Vaca de Castro, had foundered in the heavy storms on the coast, and that it was believed the commissioner himself had been drowned with them.

This was grievous news to the men of Chili, who, having waited month after month to hear some hopeful tidings, now found all their hopes dashed to the ground. In the words of one of their number, they felt that their miseries were almost too grievous to be borne. So embittered were the men that they became desperate, and if any of them met the governor in the streets of Lima, they would pass him with head erect and threatening, flashing eyes,

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keeping covered while everyone else in the street stood with uncovered head as the marquis, with his slinking secretary at his heels, stalked proudly by.

Once, early-rising citizens, walking past the public gallows just outside the town, found three ropes suspended from the cross-bar. A scrap of paper fluttered from the end of each, and, curious of this strange sight, many went up and read on one, "For the dog Picado," on the second, "For the law-breaker, Judge Velasquez," and on the third, attached to the strongest and thickest rope, "For his Excellency." Many citizens went off after reading these with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile, for few loved the governor, whose pride and cold manner chilled them; but others, hoping to curry favour, ran quickly to the governor's house and told Picado, his secretary, of this outrage upon the dignity of the marquis, his great friend and supporter, the chief judge, and his excellent servant, Picado.

"Ah, the dogs!" cried that worthy, when he was told; "one need only go across the square to put one's hand on the dirty, ragged rascals who have done this shameful thing. It shall be reported to his Excellency, and I will advise his Excellency to root them out—the pack of snarling curs. His Excellency is too lenient with them. They will do him an injury if he be not careful."

But the marquis, despising the disaffected men of Chili too much to fear them, or to take annoyance at the jest, laughed the matter off. Not so Picado, the secretary. Two days later, as the men of Chili sat, hungry and gloomy, over an almost bare table, the noise of hoofs sounded on the stones before the house, as if someone had reined up and prepared to dismount. Eagerly they ran to

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the windows, thinking that at last news and perhaps succour had come to them.

Instead, however, they saw Picado, dressed out in rich clothes, with a gold chain upon a rich velvet coat, his hat adorned with diamonds, his sword gold-hilted and his white ruffles six inches deep. In his hat was a big paper like a pennon, with the words thereon, "For the men of Chili." Behind him was a man with a mule, with panniers filled with provisions.

Picado looked up at the window, and, seeing the eager faces, doffed his hat, his sleek face wreathed in a bitter smile. Then, spurring his horse, he rode away with a laugh, and the fellow with the mule followed him, the man shouting some insult as he led the loaded animal away.

So the hungry, harassed days went by, and slowly, in the desperate minds of the men of Chili, a dreadful thought grew. In these days of their greatest gloom they rarely spoke of their miseries, but all their thoughts were expressed in sudden looks, in restrained and desperate gestures, or in a word thrown out in sudden passion.

At length Herrada, or Rada, as he was more often called, took his fellows aside one by one and spoke to them. He found that the purpose which had been forming slowly in his own mind found its echo in the thoughts of most of his friends. One or two of them there were who seemed to start, shocked, at the thing he spoke of; but all were filled with the glow of revenge for their miseries, and at Rada's words the glow quickened into flame and burned high and fiercely.

"Above all," was ever his final word, "young Almagro must not be told. It is to avenge the wrongs done to his father and to us who loved our leader; the lad shall profit by our deed, but he shall not be a party to it."

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The house of young Almagro stood in the square of Lima next to the cathedral, to which on holy days the governor went regularly to hear mass. It was resolved that, on the following Sunday, the chief conspirators, eighteen or twenty in number, should assemble in Almagro's house, and as Pizarro left the cathedral he should be set upon and slain.

When all had been settled, and, almost in whispers, as they sat close together about their table, the last words had been said, one of them—but who is unknown—suddenly became fearful of doing the deed to which he had set his hand. That day he confessed the intended crime to his confessor, and the priest, hurrying from the confessional box, went straightway to the house of Pizarro. Picado saw him immediately, and was told the whole plot. Instantly the secretary carried the news to Pizarro as he sat at supper.

A scornful smile rose on the pale face of Pizarro.

“A fool's tale!” was all he said. “I suppose the priest wants a mitre.”

Velasquez, the chief judge, was sitting with him, and laughed boastfully.

“Have no fear, Picado,” he said, “for no harm shall come to his Excellency while the rod of justice is in my hands.”

Thus with scorn and boast the doomed governor treated the plot of desperate men as of no moment.

Nevertheless, when Sunday came, by the repeated advice of Picado, his master was persuaded to pretend to be unwell and to stay away from mass.

Meanwhile, in the house next the cathedral, the conspirators sat in a lower room, with their swords ready to their hand. Two of their number watched at the

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windows from behind heavy curtains. They saw the people come to the cathedral, but the governor, with his two or three intimates, was not among them, and they wondered.

“Doubtless,” said some of those in the room, “he has entered, but you missed him in the crowd. When folk press together it is hard to distinguish one or two among them. Wait till mass is done, and two or three of us will then go out and mingle with the people.”

This was agreed upon, and when mass was over and the people began to issue from the cathedral, three of the men went out to watch. It was arranged that when Pizarro came forth, one of their number should run back to those waiting in the house and tell them.

Mingling with a few townspeople who stood waiting for friends to come from mass, one of the conspirators asked if the governor were still in the church.

“He has not been to mass, señor,” said a fat citizen; “they say he is unwell and has stayed in the house this morning.”

The man of Chili murmured his thanks, and then, going to his two fellows, told them what he had learned. Consternation was in the faces of all three.

“Our plot is discovered,” said one. “He has kept away to foil us, and unless we strike now we shall be swinging on the gallows by to-night. Let us get back to the others.”

They reached the house and told their comrades. Then arose a babel of contrary advice. Some cried that as their plot was discovered they should scatter and hide, or they would be immediately captured.

“Perhaps, after all,” said others, “he does not know of our plot. If we separate we shall be safe.”

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“Out upon such cowards’ talk,” said others, and these were in the majority. “We must do the deed for which we have met. If we slay him not now, the noose will be tight round our necks, and we shall not even have struck a blow at the tyrant.”

But some still cried out for abandoning all further plotting, and said that now was their time to disband and save themselves.

Suddenly, from the place where, since the news had come, he had been sitting in gloomy silence, Rada started up, and, rushing to the door of the house, he flung it open.

“Now,” he said, his eyes flaming, his face pale with passion, “follow me all of ye, or I will shout the plot from the housetops.”

Those that had been ready now eagerly rose at his call, and those who had counselled abandoning the plot, for very shame and fear rose too and joined them. With Rada at their head, all rushed into the square, shouting :

“Long live the King ! Death to the tyrant !”

It was the hour of noon, and the streets and square were deserted, for the town was at dinner. But at the cries, people issued from their houses in the square to inquire the cause. They listened to the repeated cries as the conspirators, swords flashing in their hands, ran in a body across the wide square.

“They are going to kill the marquis !” said some, and shrugged their shoulders.

“No,” said others, “it must be Picado upon whom they wish to have vengeance. He has really treated those poor fellows of Chili very badly.”

They stood in groups, chatting, with their eyes on the gateway leading to the house of the governor. The power

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of Pizarro was not seated in the hearts of the people over whom he ruled.

As the men of Chili rushed across the square, one of them, Gomez Perez by name, made a circuit to avoid splashing in a pool of water.

“What !” cried Rada, checking for a moment in his mad rush, “afraid of wetting your feet, when you go to wade knee-deep in blood. Away and home with you !”

The man slunk aside, and the others swept past him into the outer courtyard of the governor’s house. This they found to be empty, and they rushed on into the inner courtyard. Here two men-servants met them. One they struck down, but the other one fled, shrieking, to the door of the house, crying :

“Help ! Help ! The men of Chili are coming to murder the marquis.”

In an upper room sat Pizarro at his dinner, and with him were fifteen or twenty of the principal men of the town, who had come in after mass to ask after the health of the governor. Hearing the uproar below, some of them went out to a lower landing, and hearing plainly the words cried by the man-servant, they ran to a verandah at the back of the house, from which they let themselves down into the garden and fled away. Among them was Velasquez the judge, who had with him his rod of justice, and so that he should use his hands freely in climbing down he held the rod in his mouth.

Meanwhile, the men of Chili had entered the house and were mounting the stairs, driving one of Pizarro’s guests before them. He, bursting into the room, told the governor that men had come to murder him. Pizarro instantly started up, and commanded one of his friends, Francisco de Chaves, to secure the door of the ante-room



A point of steel was in his throat

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leading to the stairs. Then Pizarro hastened, with a kinsman named Alcantara, into an inner room, and together they began hastily buckling on Pizarro's armour.

If Chaves had done as Pizarro had commanded him, the conspirators would have been baffled, since the door was stout, and Chaves and those with him could have kept them at bay until the cavaliers who had fled could bring aid. But Chaves half opened the door, and, glancing out, saw Rada and his fellows just leaping up the last of the stairs. In a moment they reached the door, and he cried to them :

“How dare you enter the house of the——”

Before he could finish his words, Rada thrust his sword at him and ran it through his body. Then he and his men dashed into the room, where Chaves' friends made play with their weapons. But it was for a few moments only. Soon they too were despatched, and then Rada and the others ran across the apartment, crying :

“Where is the marquis? Death to the tyrant!”

As the hoarse voices rang out so near them, Alcantara knew that the ante-room had not been secured. Leaving Pizarro, therefore, who was still only half armed, he ran toward the door of the room, with two young pages who had been assisting, and two cavaliers who were also in the chamber.

Before they could bar the half-open door it was dashed open by the kicks of the conspirators, and instantly a dreadful hand-to-hand struggle began. Swords flickered and thrust, ground against resisting steel, or hit the wood of the doorway. Several wounds were exchanged on either side. Suddenly a man among the conspirators shrieked, clutched his throat as his sword dropped from his hand, and sank down among the feet of his fellows.

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Then another, with a groan, gave way and withdrew, tottering across the room, while a comrade took his place. Already the two young pages, after fighting gallantly, had fallen, and Alcantara was wounded in many places.

Pizarro, in the room behind, was struggling with the buckles of his cuirass. At length, with a curse, he threw it from him, then wrapping a cloak around his left arm he seized his sword and sprang to the aid of his kinsman. The latter was already exhausted from loss of blood, and as Pizarro reached his side he fell.

With the fury of a lion the governor threw himself upon the conspirators, and with such fierceness and force did he attack them that two fell before his sword and the others gave way.

“What, traitors!” he cried, “would you kill me in my own house?”

Without a word the men of Chili dashed at him and the two cavaliers who still fought beside him. So swift and keen were his strokes, however, and so strong his guard, that it seemed that age had no power to diminish his force. For some moments the grinding and beat of steel in the narrow doorway continued, until Rada, impatient of the delay, cried :

“Why are we so long about it? Down with the tyrant!”

Saying this, he thrust one of his comrades toward Pizarro, who ran the man through the body. Before he could withdraw his sword, however, a point of steel was in his throat. He reeled to the floor, and the swords of Rada and several of the others were plunged into his body.

“Jesu!” panted the dying man. With a finger as he half reclined he traced a red cross on the floor, then bent toward it to kiss the holy sign. But another blow was given him, and he sank dead upon the floor.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Last of the Men of Chili

NEARLY a year had passed since the assassination of Pizarro, and it was the early summer of 1542. The great square of Cuzco was filled with ranks of armed men, some of whom, in complete armour, were on horseback, while the footmen, some with pikes and others with harquebuses, formed long lines between the bodies of cavalry. In front of the little army were a number of cannon, of so fine an appearance and of such number that never before had so many, been seen together in the kingdom of Peru. The cunning Greek, Pedro de Candia, and his Levantine countrymen had made them. Sixteen they were in number, and formed as good a showing as merited a place in the finest citadel of Spain.

Presently a clear bugle call sounded, and into the square rode a young man closely followed by two officers. He advanced until he reached a spot in front of the ranks of men, and then, lifting his hand, he silenced the cheers that rang out at his appearance. This was young Diego de Almagro, who, with all the qualities of his father which endeared him to every soldier, also excited their devotion and sympathy by the forlorn position in which he was placed.

All, indeed, were knitted together—soldiers and leader—in a common cause which must be seen through to the end. And success, if attained, would be almost as dreadful

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as defeat. For they met together with intent to go forth and fight the representative of the emperor himself, and if victory attended their arms they would be deeper in treason against the sovereign to whom all wished, as good and devoted Spaniards, to be wholly loyal.

“Men of Chili!” came the clear, young voice of their leader. He was still a boy; hardly twenty-two, yet already he had proved himself equal to the sad necessities of his fate, and in energy, forethought and self-reliance he was the equal of men seasoned by years of warfare.

“You know what stern necessity has brought us to this pass,” he went on, “and I cannot see that we could have done otherwise than we have done. You know the tyranny which forced you to put an end to the governor and to seize the province. Long and patiently did we wait for the representative of the emperor to come, but he delayed, and we could wait no longer. But after we had risen against the man who caused our miseries and scoffed at our wretchedness, the emperor’s officer, Vaca de Castro, comes to demand our submission, and will not listen to our cause. He will not make peace with us; therefore he drives us to take arms against him. He will not suffer us to retire to the territory granted to my father by the emperor, so that we may live in peace; therefore we have no other appeal than to arms. Nevertheless I declare here, before the face of Heaven, that in our hearts there is no rebellion against our august master, the emperor.”

His voice was drowned in the passionate shout of assent which rose from every throat.

“We are forced to this by the new governor himself. Vaca de Castro has exceeded the authority granted to him by his royal master, therefore the blood that may be spilled

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must be upon his head, and not on mine. In the assassination of the tyrant Pizarro, we took into our own hands that justice which he denied us. In this contest with the officer of his Majesty, we seek justice, but we are as true-hearted and as loyal subjects of the emperor as is the governor himself."

Loud and prolonged was the cheering which greeted the ending of the young leader's speech. Then one of the veterans of his father, standing forth, said :

"Don Diego, you have uttered the words which are in all our hearts. We have now only to prove to you, what we here assert, that one and all swear to brave every peril and every disaster, and to remain true to you to the end."

Again a hoarse shout of passion rose in assent. Someone from the crowd standing about brought an altar, on which was raised a cross, and this having been placed before the men, they ran up eagerly, rank after rank, and as each man came to it he placed his hand on the cross, uttering the words : " I swear ! " Many wept as they did this, and all were greatly moved.

Then the word was given to depart, and with a flourish of trumpets the little army, numbering some five hundred men, tramped out of the square, the guns rumbling on before them.

Much had happened since that day in the previous summer when the men of Chili, after slaying the tyrant, ran through the streets of Lima declaring their deed, and calling their adherents to rally to them. For a time all seemed to go well. Most of the towns had submitted, without resistance, to the demands of the Almagrians, who had immediately ousted the officials of Pizarro and replaced them by sympathizers with their own cause.

The first check had been from Alonso de Alvarado, the

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general who, it will be remembered, had been defeated by old Almagro at the river of Abancay. On receiving news of the slaying of Pizarro, he had instantly sent a messenger to the emperor's officer, Vaca de Castro. This functionary had landed in the north after a long and tempestuous voyage from Spain, and being disgusted with the dangers of the sea, he had resolved to reach Peru by land.

So slowly did he advance that it was some months before he reached Quito, where he was met by Alvarado and the captain, Belalcazar, both of whom brought troops with them. Vaca de Castro produced his authority from the emperor, under which he was empowered, in case of need, to assume the office of governor, and he immediately sent emissaries to the principal cities requiring their adherence to him as the lawful representative of their monarch.

Meanwhile, however, the forces of Almagro had increased ; supplies and arms and money were got together, and the soldiers, many of whom had hitherto been half-destitute, were every day assuming the appearance of good fighting men. Much treasure of gold and silver was discovered in the house of Pizarro, and the secretary, Picado, was ordered to reveal the hiding-places of other wealth which it was believed the marquis had possessed. This, however, he would not or, more probably, could not do, and was therefore taken to the public square and beheaded without further ado in front of the house where he had flaunted his wealth before the starving conspirators a few short weeks before.

Demand had been sent to Cuzco requiring Holguin, the commanding officer there, to hand over the city to one of young Almagro's friends ; but Holguin refused, and instantly set forth with some two hundred men to join Alvarado in the north. This was quickly reported to

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Almagro, and Rada, his chief officer, advised that he should be prevented from doing this. After some delay, pursuit was made, but the expedition failed, and Holguin joined Alvarado.

Almagro then marched south, intending to occupy Cuzco, which he considered to lie within the territory granted to his father by the emperor. On the way, Juan de Rada, who was a man advanced in years, fell into a fever and died, thus depriving the young leader of the one man in whose knowledge of military matters he could wholly depend. Much grieving for this great loss, Almagro continued his journey to Cuzco, whence he sent an embassy to the new governor, who by that time had reached Lima.

In his letter to Vaca de Castro he said that he had no desire to take arms against the officer of the Crown, but that he must secure the possession of the territory which belonged to him as the heir of his father. He proposed, therefore, that each party should remain in their own territory until the Court of Castile had decided between them.

As no reply was sent in answer to this respectful demand, but instead news came that Vaca de Castro was actively preparing an army, Almagro saw no other course open save an appeal to arms, and therefore set forth with his men to meet the army of the royal governor.

It was the middle of September, late in the day, before the two hostile armies faced each other, on the plains of Chupas. De Castro, though only a man of law and no soldier, drew up his army with skill. He had little artillery, and these he placed with his infantry in the centre of his army, the flanks being occupied by cavalry. On the right wing was Alvarado, who had the royal standard with him, while on the left was Holguin. De Castro himself was at the head of a reserve of forty cavalry, which he designed

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to use in whichever part of the field he saw support was wanted.

After a short address to his soldiers, he gave the order to advance. Almagro's forces were drawn up on rising ground about a mile distant, and their disposition was similar to that of the royal army. When the royalists came within range, Almagro ordered the guns to open upon them. The effect upon the enemy was great. They wavered and seemed confused. But soon they were seen to take a route which wound below the rising ground, so that for most part of the way they were hidden.

When they appeared again, quite near the Almagrians, their array made an excellent mark for the artillery, and the young leader gave orders to Pedro de Candia to fire the whole of the cannon at the approaching enemy. The effect of the first volley was tremendous ; gaps appeared in the ranks of the pikemen and arquebusiers, while riderless horses started from among the cavalry and rushed away.

Again the order was given to fire, but this time the shots passed harmlessly over the heads of the still advancing foe.

" Aim lower," shouted Almagro to de Candia, who stood ordering the gunners. De Candia muttered something in a sullen manner, and gave again the order to fire. But a second time the shot hurtled over the heads of de Castro's army.

" What means this ? " cried Almagro, dashing his horse to the side of the artillery officer. " Are you a traitor ? Has de Castro been tampering with you that you will not aim at his troops ? "

The other's sullen face fell before the flashing eyes of young Almagro.

" I want no rebel boy to teach me what to do," he said.

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Like a flash the sword of Almagro whipped through the air and sank in the breast of the treacherous Greek, who, clutching at the air with his hands, sank dead to the ground.

“The traitor!” cried Almagro. “He could not forget he was one of Pizarro’s faithful thirteen, I suppose.”

Leaping from his horse, he ordered the nearest gun to be charged again, and aiming it himself, he saw his shot plough with deadly effect through the cavalry, killing some six horsemen and wounding others.

The next volley swept away a whole rank of the royal infantry, and the Almagrians could see the officers driving the halting men forward to take the place where their comrades had fallen. The royalists tried to bring their own cannons into play, but the fire from Almagro’s guns made it impossible. The clumsy pieces were left behind on the field, and Alvarado gave the order to charge. The trumpets sounded, cries of “Saint Jago and the King!” arose, and, striking spurs into their horses, the cavaliers dashed up the sloping ground towards the foe.

Then Almagro made his fatal error. If he had stayed where he was and coolly used his artillery against the advancing enemy, only a few of them would have reached his line. But, from a false sense of knightly honour, he felt it a shameful act passively to await the attack of the foe. He therefore gave orders to advance, and placing himself at the head of his cavalry, he met the royal cavaliers half way down the slope.

Almost all the lances shivered as the opposing forces met, horses and riders reeled away in death, and for a moment the horsemen that were left recoiled with the force of the crash. Next moment, drawing their swords, maces and battle-axes, the cavaliers threw themselves

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upon each other with furious hatred—the more bitter since many of them were brothers, cousins or friends, alienated by the quarrel between their old leaders.

The artillery on Almagro's side continued to pour volleys of shot upon the advancing infantry, but the latter, under the command of their brave leader, Francisco de Carbajal, pressed gallantly forward, and reaching the guns they cut down the gunners, who were now unsupported by the cavalry, and thus gained command of the artillery.

The battle between the cavalry was hard and bitter, but the Almagrians were outnumbered. Nevertheless, so bravely did they fight that for a long time, in the gathering gloom of the evening, it was doubtful which side would have the victory.

The right flank of the Almagrians just held its own against the opponents, but on the left wing, commanded by young Almagro in person, the enemy, at the head of which was Alvarado, worse mounted and worse armed, was borne back again and again by the charges made by the impetuous young leader. Already he had taken the royal banner, and, generous in the sense of victory, shouted, "Take, but kill not!"

Details of the progress of the fight were carried continuously to de Castro in the rear, and at this moment he decided to advance with the forty horsemen held in reserve. He dashed forward in relief of Alvarado, whose men, cheered by the timely support, gained heart, raised deafening cheers, and charged the Almagrians with great spirit. The men of Chili made one more desperate effort, thirteen of de Castro's fresh men reeled dead from their saddles; but the Almagrians could do no more.

Outnumbered and spent with battle, they gave way and

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began to flee in all directions. Young Almagro used every effort to stay them, but in vain. Soon the dark battlefield was deserted, except by the dead and the dying, and streaming over the country were flying and pursuing horsemen. Here and there one with a red scarf on his arm came up with one who bore a white scarf, and ruthlessly cut him down.

Young Almagro, borne from the field with his men, rode into Cuzco, and, sick with defeat, made no resistance when the magistrates, meeting him, ordered him to be arrested. He was lodged in prison, indifferent to his fate.

Next day, such was the severity with which de Castro dealt with the prisoners he had taken, forty of them were executed on the spot and thirty others were banished. The governor then proceeded to Cuzco, which he entered with all the pomp and military display of a conqueror.

Almost immediately he called a council of war to decide the fate of young Almagro. Some were for sparing him, on account of his youth, and the injustice which had forced him into rebellion ; but the majority decided that mercy could not be shown to the leader of this treasonable rising.

Being led out to execution in the great square of Cuzco, young Almagro showed a dauntless bearing. When, however, the herald proclaimed the reason of his being doomed to death, he cried :

“ I am no traitor ! I am as devoutly loyal to my king as any man here, but the injustice under which I suffered forced me to do what I have done. I make no appeal for mercy to any ; all I ask is that my bones may be laid beside those of my father, as unjustly done to death as I am.”

He refused to have his eyes bandaged, and having

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kissed the cross, he quietly placed his head upon the block, and suffered the stroke of death with calmness.

With him the name of Almagro became extinct, and the men of Chili, so long a menace to the land, passed away for ever.

The history of the chief actors in the conquest of Peru ends with the death of young Almagro, the son of Pizarro's chief companion in the daring and tragic venture which, in spite of the contemptuous disbelief of many and in face of almost insuperable difficulties, the two Spanish soldiers of fortune had brought to a successful conclusion.

The later history of the dominion of the Spanish in Peru has little of the romance and heroism which forms part of the conquest. The cruel treatment of the Indians, exciting the pity of noble-hearted men like Las Casas, forced the government to endeavour to impose laws upon the colonists, which the latter bitterly resented. Rebellion broke out, and was only crushed after much bloodshed, and Gonzalo Pizarro, who had led the revolt, suffered execution on the field of battle.

The two viceroys who ruled the country for the Spanish crown from 1551 to 1580 did something to limit the almost despotic power of the colonists over their Indian slaves, but transgression of the laws caused misery and depopulation for some two hundred years. The Indians themselves rose against their masters in 1780, and under the leadership of a descendant of the Incas strove to put an end to all their wrongs. The revolt was crushed, but the seeds of liberty were not wholly destroyed, and in 1821, with the assistance of our own Lord Dundonald, the independence of Peru was proclaimed, and the grasping and inhuman rule of Spain was at an end.

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