

### CHAPTER III.

THE SPANIARDS LAND AT TUMBEZ.—PIZARRO RECONNOITRES THE COUNTRY.—FOUNDATION OF SAN MIGUEL.—MARCH INTO THE INTERIOR.—EMBASSY FROM THE INCA.—ADVENTURES ON THE MARCH.—REACH THE FOOT OF THE ANDES.

1532.

WE left the Spaniards at the island of Puná, preparing to make their descent on the neighboring continent at Tumbez. This port was but a few leagues distant, and Pizarro, with the greater part of his followers, passed over in the ships, while a few others were to transport the commander's baggage and the military stores on some of the Indian balsas. One of the latter vessels which first touched the shore was surrounded, and three persons who were on the raft were carried off by the natives to the adjacent woods and there massacred. The Indians then got possession of another of the balsas, containing Pizarro's wardrobe; but, as the men who defended it raised loud cries for help, they reached the ears of Hernando Pizarro, who, with a small body of horse, had effected a landing some way farther down the shore. A broad tract of miry ground, overflowed at high water, lay between him and the party thus rudely assailed by the natives. The tide was out, and the bottom was soft and dangerous. With little regard to the danger, however, the bold cavalier spurred his horse into the slimy depths, and followed by his men, with the mud up to their saddle-girths, they plunged forward until they came into the midst of the marauders, who, terrified by the strange apparition of the horsemen, fled

precipitately, without show of fight to the neighboring forests.

This conduct of the natives of Tumbez is not easy to be explained; considering the friendly relations maintained with the Spaniards on their preceding visit, and lately renewed in the island of Puná. But Pizarro was still more astonished, on entering their town, to find it not only deserted, but with the exception of a few buildings, entirely demolished. Four or five of the most substantial private dwellings, the great temple, and the fortress—and these greatly damaged, and wholly despoiled of their interior decorations—alone survived to mark the site of the city, and attest its former splendor.<sup>1</sup> The scene of desolation filled the conquerors with dismay; for even the raw recruits, who had never visited the coast before, had heard the marvellous stories of the golden treasures of Tumbez, and they had confidently looked forward to them as an easy spoil after all their fatigues. But the gold of Peru seemed only like a deceitful phantom, which, after beckoning them on through toil and danger, vanished the moment they attempted to grasp it.

Pizarro despatched a small body of troops in pursuit of the fugitives; and, after some slight skirmishing, they got possession of several of the natives, and among them, as it chanced, the curaca of the place. When brought before the Spanish commander, he exonerated himself from any share in the violence offered to the white men, saying that it was done by a lawless party of his people, without his knowledge at the time; and he expressed his willingness to deliver them up to punishment, if they could be detected. He explained the dilapidated condition of the town by the

<sup>1</sup> Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 185.

“Aunque lo del templo del Sol en quien ellos adoran era cosa de ver, porque tenian grandes edificios, y todo el por de dentro y de fuera pintado de grandes pinturas y ricos matizes de colores, porque los hay en aquella tierra.” *Relacion del Primer. Descub.*, MS.

long wars carried on with the fierce tribes of Puná, who had at length succeeded in getting possession of the place, and driving the inhabitants into the neighboring woods and mountains. The Inca, to whose cause they were attached, was too much occupied with his own feuds to protect them against their enemies.

Whether Pizarro gave any credit to the cacique's exculpation of himself may be doubted. He dissembled his suspicions, however, and, as the Indian lord promised obedience in his own name, and that of his vassals, the Spanish general consented to take no further notice of the affair. He seems now to have felt for the first time, in its full force, that it was his policy to gain the good-will of the people among whom he had thrown himself in the face of such tremendous odds. It was, perhaps, the excesses of which his men had been guilty in the earlier stages of the expedition that had shaken the confidence of the people of Tumbes, and incited them to this treacherous retaliation.

Pizarro inquired of the natives who now, under promise of impunity, came into the camp, what had become of his two followers that remained with them in the former expedition. The answers they gave were obscure and contradictory. Some said, they had died of an epidemic; others, that they had perished in the war with Puná; and others intimated, that they had lost their lives in consequence of some outrage attempted on the Indian women. It was impossible to arrive at the truth. The last account was not the least probable. But, whatever might be the cause, there was no doubt they had both perished.

This intelligence spread an additional gloom over the Spaniards; which was not dispelled by the flaming pictures now given by the natives of the riches of the land, and of the state and magnificence of the monarch in his distant capital among the mountains. Nor did they credit the authenticity of a scroll of paper, which Pizarro had obtained from an Indian, to whom it had been delivered by

one of the white men left in the country. "Know, whoever you may be," said the writing, "that may chance to set foot in this country, that it contains more gold and silver than there is iron in Biscay." This paper, when shown to the soldiers, excited only their ridicule, as a device of their captain to keep alive their chimerical hopes.<sup>2</sup>

Pizarro now saw that it was not politic to protract his stay in his present quarters, where a spirit of disaffection would soon creep into the ranks of his followers, unless their spirits were stimulated by novelty or a life of incessant action. Yet he felt deeply anxious to obtain more particulars than he had hitherto gathered of the actual condition of the Peruvian empire, of its strength and resources, of the monarch who ruled over it, and of his present situation. He was also desirous, before taking any decisive step for penetrating the country, to seek out some commodious place for a settlement, which might afford him the means of a regular communication with the colonies, and a place of strength, on which he himself might retreat in case of disaster.

He decided, therefore, to leave part of his company at Tumbes, including those who, from the state of their health, were least able to take the field, and with the remainder to make an excursion into the interior, and reconnoitre the land, before deciding on any plan of operations. He set out early in May, 1532; and, keeping along the more level regions himself, sent a small detachment under the command of Hernando de Soto to explore the skirts of the vast sierra.

He maintained a rigid discipline on the march, com-

<sup>2</sup> For the account of the transactions in Tumbes, see Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 1.—*Relacion del Primer. Descub.*, MS.—Herrera, *Hist. General*, dec. 4, lib. 9, cap. 1, 2.—Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap Barcia, tom. III. p. 185.

manding his soldiers to abstain from all acts of violence, and punishing disobedience in the most prompt and resolute manner.<sup>3</sup> The natives rarely offered resistance. When they did so, they were soon reduced, and Pizarro, far from vindictive measures, was open to the first demonstrations of submission. By this lenient and liberal policy, he soon acquired a name among the inhabitants which effaced the unfavorable impressions made of him in the earlier part of the campaign. The natives, as he marched through the thick-settled hamlets which sprinkled the level region between the Cordilleras and the ocean, welcomed him with rustic hospitality, providing good quarters for his troops, and abundant supplies, which cost but little in the prolific soil of the *tierra caliente*. Everywhere Pizarro made proclamation that he came in the name of the Holy Vicar of God and of the sovereign of Spain, requiring the obedience of the inhabitants as true children of the Church, and vassals of his lord and master. And as the simple people made no opposition to a formula of which they could not comprehend a syllable, they were admitted as good subjects of the Crown of Castile, and their act of homage—or what was readily interpreted as such—was duly recorded and attested by the notary.<sup>4</sup>

At the expiration of some three or four weeks spent in

<sup>3</sup> "Mando el Gobernador por pregon é so graves penas que no le fuese hecha fuerza ni descortesía é que se les hiciese muy buen tratamiento por los Españoles é sus criados." Oviedo, Hist. de las Indias, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "E mandabales notificar ó dar á entender con las lenguas el requerimiento que su Magestad manda que se les haga á los Indios para traellos en conocimiento de nuestra Santa fé catolica, y requiriendoles con la paz, é que obedezcan á la Iglesia e Apostolica de Roma, é en lo temporal den la obediencia á su Magestad é á los Reyes sus sucesores en los regnos de Castilla i de Leon; respondieron que asi lo querian é harian, guardarian é cumplirian enteramente; e el Gobernador los recibio por tales vasallos de sus Magestades por auto publico de notarios." Ibid., MS., ubi supra.

reconnoitring the country, Pizarro came to the conclusion that the most eligible site for his new settlement was in the rich valley of Tangarala, thirty leagues south of Tumbes, traversed by more than one stream that opens a communication with the ocean. To this spot, accordingly, he ordered the men left at Tumbes to repair at once in their vessels; and no sooner had they arrived, than busy preparations were made for building up the town in a manner suited to the wants of the colony. Timber was procured from the neighboring woods. Stones were dragged from their quarries, and edifices gradually rose, some of which made pretensions to strength, if not to elegance. Among them were a church, a magazine for public stores, a hall of justice, and a fortress. A municipal government was organized, consisting of regidores, alcaldes, and the usual civic functionaries. The adjacent territory was parcelled out among the residents, and each colonist had a certain number of the natives allotted to assist him in his labors; for, as Pizarro's secretary remarks, "it being evident that the colonists could not support themselves without the services of the Indians, the ecclesiastics and the leaders of the expedition all agreed that a *repartimiento* of the natives would serve the cause of religion, and tend greatly to their spiritual welfare, since they would thus have the opportunity of being initiated in the true faith."<sup>5</sup>

Having made these arrangements with such conscientious

<sup>5</sup> Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Conq. i Pob. del Peru, MS.—Cieza de Leon, Cronica, cap. 55.—Relacion del Primer Descub., MS.

"Porque los Vecinos, sin ajuda i servicios de los Naturales no se podian sostener, ni poblarse el Pueblo. . . . A esta causa, con acuerdo de el Religioso, i de los Oficiales que les parecio convenir asi al servicio de Dios, i bien de los Naturales, el Gobernador depositò los Caciques, i Indios en los Vecinos de este Pueblo, porque los ayudasen a sostener, i los Christianos los doctrinasen en nuestra Santa Fè, conforme á los Mandamientos de su Magestad." Xerez, Conq. del Peru, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 187.

regard to the welfare of the benighted heathen, Pizarro gave his infant city the name of San Miguel, in acknowledgment of the service rendered him by that saint in his battles with the Indians of Puná. The site originally occupied by the settlement was afterward found to be so unhealthy, that it was abandoned for another on the banks of the beautiful Piura. The town is still of some note for its manufactures, though dwindled from its ancient importance; but the name of San Miguel de Piura, which it bears, still commemorates the foundation of the first European colony in the empire of the Incas.

Before quitting the new settlement, Pizarro caused the gold and silver ornaments which he had obtained in different parts of the country to be melted down into one mass, and a fifth to be deducted for the Crown. The remainder, which belonged to the troops, he persuaded them to relinquish for the present; under the assurance of being repaid from the first spoils that fell into their hands.<sup>6</sup> With these funds, and other articles collected in the course of the campaign, he sent back the vessels to Panamá. The gold was applied to paying off the ship-owners, and those who had furnished the stores for the expedition. That he should so easily have persuaded his men to resign present possession for a future contingency is proof that the spirit of enterprise was renewed in their bosoms in all its former vigor, and that they looked forward with the same buoyant confidence to the results.

In his late tour of observation, the Spanish commander had gathered much important intelligence in regard to the state of the kingdom. He had ascertained the result of the struggle between the Inca brothers, and that the victor now lay with his army encamped at the distance of only ten

<sup>6</sup> "E sacado el quinto para su Magestad, lo restante que perteneció al Egercito de la Conquista, el Gobernador le tomó prestado de los compañeros para se lo pagar del primer oro que se obiese." Oviedo, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 2.

or twelve days' journey from San Miguel. The accounts he heard of the opulence and power of that monarch, and of his great southern capital, perfectly corresponded with the general rumors before received; and contained, therefore, something to stagger the confidence, as well as to stimulate the cupidity, of the invaders.

Pizarro would gladly have seen his little army strengthened by reinforcements, however small the amount; and on that account postponed his departure for several weeks. But no reinforcement arrived; and, as he received no further tidings from his associates, he judged that longer delay would probably be attended with evils greater than those to be encountered on the march; that discontents would inevitably spring up in a life of inaction, and the strength and spirits of the soldier sink under the enervating influence of a tropical climate. Yet the force at his command, amounting to less than two hundred soldiers in all, after reserving fifty for the protection of the new settlement, seemed but a small one for the conquest of an empire. He might, indeed, instead of marching against the Inca, take a southerly direction towards the rich capital of Cuzco. But this would only be to postpone the hour of reckoning. For in what quarter of the empire could he hope to set his foot, where the arm of its master would not reach him? By such a course, moreover, he would show his own distrust of himself. He would shake that opinion of his invincible prowess, which he had hitherto endeavored to impress on the natives, and which constituted a great secret of his strength; which, in short, held sterner sway over the mind than the display of numbers and mere physical force. Worse than all, such a course would impair the confidence of his troops in themselves and their reliance on himself. This would be to palsy the arm of enterprise at once. It was not to be thought of.

But while Pizarro decided to march into the interior, it is doubtful whether he had formed any more def-

inite plan of action. We have no means of knowing his intentions, at this distance of time, otherwise than as they are shown by his actions. Unfortunately, he could not write, and he has left no record, like the inestimable Commentaries of Cortés, to enlighten us as to his motives. His secretary, and some of his companions in arms, have recited his actions in detail; but the motives which led to them they were not always so competent to disclose.

It is possible that the Spanish general, even so early as the period of his residence at San Miguel, may have meditated some daring stroke, some effective *coup-de-main*, which, like that of Cortés, when he carried off the Aztec monarch to his quarters, might strike terror into the hearts of the people, and at once decide the fortunes of the day. It is more probable, however, that he now only proposed to present himself before the Inca, as the peaceful representative of a brother monarch, and, by these friendly demonstrations, disarm any feeling of hostility, or even of suspicion. When once in communication with the Indian prince, he could regulate his future course by circumstances.

On the 24th of September, 1532, five months after landing at Tumbez, Pizarro marched out at the head of his little body of adventurers from the gates of San Miguel, having enjoined it on the colonists to treat their Indian vassals with humanity, and to conduct themselves in such a manner as would secure the good-will of the surrounding tribes. Their own existence, and with it the safety of the army and the success of the undertaking, depended on this course. In the place were to remain the royal treasurer, the *veedor*, or inspector of metals, and other officers of the crown; and the command of the garrison was intrusted to the *contador*, Antonio Navarro.<sup>7</sup> Then putting himself at the head of his troops, the chief struck boldly into the

<sup>7</sup> Xerez, Conq. del Peru, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 187.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Indias, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 10.

heart of the country in the direction where, as he was informed, lay the camp of the Inca. It was a daring enterprise, thus to venture with a handful of followers into the heart of a powerful empire, to present himself, face to face, before the Indian monarch in his own camp, encompassed by the flower of his victorious army! Pizarro had already experienced more than once the difficulty of maintaining his ground against the rude tribes of the north, so much inferior in strength and numbers to the warlike legions of Peru. But the hazard of the game, as I have already more than once had occasion to remark, constituted its great charm with the Spaniard. The brilliant achievements of his countrymen, on the like occasions, with means so inadequate, inspired him with confidence in his own good star; and this confidence was one source of his success. Had he faltered for a moment, had he stopped to calculate chances, he must inevitably have failed; for the odds were too great to be combated by sober reason. They were only to be met triumphantly by the spirit of the knight-errant.

After crossing the smooth waters of the Piura, the little army continued to advance over a level district intersected by streams that descended from the neighboring Cordilleras. The face of the country was shagged over with forests of gigantic growth, and occasionally traversed by ridges of barren land, that seemed like shoots of the adjacent Andes, breaking up the surface of the region into little sequestered valleys of singular loveliness. The soil, though rarely watered by the rains of heaven, was naturally rich, and wherever it was refreshed with moisture, as on the margins of the streams, it was enamelled with the brightest verdure. The industry of the inhabitants, moreover, had turned these streams to the best account, and canals and aqueducts were seen crossing the low lands in all directions, and spreading over the country like a vast network, diffusing fertility and beauty around them. The