

mountain and valley, in spite of every obstacle which man and nature had opposed to them.

Pizarro, meanwhile, forming his little corps into three divisions, now moved forward, at a more measured pace, and in order of battle, down the slopes that led towards the Indian city. As he drew near, no one came out to welcome him; and he rode through the streets without meeting with a living thing, or hearing a sound, except the echoes, sent back from the deserted dwellings, of the tramp of the soldiery.

It was a place of considerable size, containing about ten thousand inhabitants, somewhat more, probably, than the population assembled at this day within the walls of the modern city of Caxamalca.<sup>10</sup> The houses, for the most part, were built of clay, hardened in the sun; the roofs thatched, or of timber. Some of the more ambitious dwellings were of hewn stone; and there was a convent in the place, occupied by the Virgins of the Sun, and a temple dedicated to the same tutelary deity, which last was hidden in the deep embowering shades of a grove on the skirts of the city. On the quarter towards the Indian camp was a square—if square it might be called, which was almost triangular in form—of an immense size, surrounded by low buildings. These consisted of capacious halls, with wide doors or openings communicating with the square. They were probably intended as a sort of barracks for the Inca's soldiers.<sup>11</sup> At the end of the *plaza*, looking towards the

<sup>10</sup> According to Stevenson, this population, which is of a very mixed character, amounts, or did amount some thirty years ago, to about seven thousand. That sagacious traveller gives an animated description of the city, in which he resided some time, and which he seems to have regarded with peculiar predilection. Yet it does not hold probably the relative rank at the present day, that it did in that of the Incas. *Residence in South America*, vol. II. p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> Carta de Hern. Pizarro, ap. Oviedo, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 15.—Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 195.

country, was a fortress of stone, with a stairway leading from the city, and a private entrance from the adjoining suburbs. There was still another fortress on the rising ground which commanded the town, built of hewn stone, and encompassed by three circular walls,—or rather one and the same wall, which wound up spirally around it. It was a place of great strength, and the workmanship showed a better knowledge of masonry, and gave a higher impression of the architectural science of the people, than any thing the Spaniards had yet seen.<sup>12</sup>

It was late in the afternoon of the fifteenth of November, 1532, when the Conquerors entered the city of Caxamalca. The weather, which had been fair during the day, now threatened a storm, and some rain mingled with hail—for it was unusually cold—began to fall.<sup>13</sup> Pizarro, however, was so anxious to ascertain the dispositions of the Inca, that he determined to send an embassy, at once, to his quarters. He selected for this, Hernando de Soto with fifteen horse, and, after his departure, conceiving that the number was too small, in case of any unfriendly demonstrations by the Indians, he ordered his brother Hernando to follow with twenty additional troopers. This captain and one other of his party have left us an account of the excursion.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Fuerças son, que entre Indios no se han visto tales." Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 195.—*Relacion del Primer Descub.* MS.

<sup>13</sup> "Desde à poco rato començo à llover, i caer graniço." (Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 195.) Caxamalca, in the Indian tongue, signifies "place of frost;" for the temperature, though usually bland and genial, is sometimes affected by frosty winds from the east, very pernicious to vegetation. Stevenson, *Residence in South America*, vol. II. p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> Carta de Hern. Pizarro, MS.

The Letter of Heruando Pizarro, addressed to the Royal Audience of St. Domingo, gives a full account of the extraordinary events recorded in this and the ensuing chapter, in which that cavalier took

Between the city and the imperial camp was a causeway, built in a substantial manner across the meadow land that intervened. Over this the cavalry galloped at a rapid pace, and, before they had gone a league, they came in front of the Peruvian encampment, where it spread along the gentle slope of the mountains. The lances of the warriors were fixed in the ground before their tents, and the Indian soldiers were loitering without, gazing with silent astonishment at the Christian cavalcade, as with clangor of arms and shrill blast of trumpet it swept by, like some fearful apparition, on the wings of the wind.

The party soon came to a broad but shallow stream, which, winding through the meadow, formed a defence for the Inca's position. Across it was a wooden bridge; but the cavaliers, distrusting its strength, preferred to dash through the waters, and without difficulty gained the opposite bank. A battalion of Indian warriors was drawn up under arms on the farther side of the bridge, but they offered no molestation to the Spaniards; and these latter had strict orders from Pizarro—scarcely necessary in their present circumstances—to treat the natives with courtesy. One of the Indians pointed out the quarter occupied by the Inca.<sup>15</sup>

It was an open court-yard, with a light building or pleasure-house in the centre, having galleries running around it, and opening in the rear on a garden. The walls were covered with a shining plaster, both white and colored, and in the area before the edifice was seen

a prominent part. Allowing for the partialities incident to a chief actor in the scenes he describes, no authority can rank higher. The indefatigable Oviedo, who resided in St. Domingo, saw its importance, and fortunately incorporated the document in his great work, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 15.—The anonymous author of the *Relacion del Primer. Descub.*, MS., was also detached on this service.

<sup>15</sup> Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.—Carta de Hern. Pizarro, MS.

a spacious tank or reservoir of stone, fed by aqueducts that supplied it with both warm and cold water.<sup>16</sup> A basin of hewn stone—it may be of a more recent construction—still bears, on the spot, the name of the “Inca's bath.”<sup>17</sup> The court was filled with Indian nobles, dressed in gayly ornamented attire, in attendance on the monarch, and with women of the royal household. Amidst this assembly it was not difficult to distinguish the person of Atahualpa, though his dress was simpler than that of his attendants. But he wore on his head the crimson *borla* or fringe, which, surrounding the forehead, hung down as low as the eyebrow. This was the well-known badge of Peruvian sovereignty, and had been assumed by the monarch only since the defeat of his brother Huascar. He was seated on a low stool or cushion, somewhat after the Morisco or Turkish fashion, and his nobles and principal officers stood around him, with great ceremony, holding the stations suited to their rank.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 202.

“Y al estanque venian dos caños de agua, uno caliente y otro frio, y alli se templava la una con la otra, para quando el Señor se queria bañar ó sus mugeres que otra persona no osava entrar en el so pena de la vida.” Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.

<sup>17</sup> Stevenson, *Residence in South America*, vol. II. p. 164.

<sup>18</sup> Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 196.—Carta de Hern. Pizarro, MS.

The appearance of the Peruvian monarch is described in simple but animated style by the Conqueror so often quoted, one of the party. “Llegados al patio de la dicha casa que tenia delante della, vimos estar en medio de gran muchedumbre de Indios asentado aquel gran Señor Atabalica (de quien tanta noticia, y tantas cosas nos habian dicho) con una corona en la cabeza, y una borla que le salia della, y le cubria toda la frente, la cual era la insinia real, sentado en una sillecita muy baja del suelo, como los turcos y moros acostumbraban sentarse, el cual estaba con tanta magestad y aparato cual nunca se ha visto jamas, porque estaba cercado de mas de seiscientos Señores de su tierra.” *Relacion del Primer. Descub.*, MS.

The Spaniards gazed with much interest on the prince, of whose cruelty and cunning they had heard so much, and whose valor had secured to him the possession of the empire. But his countenance exhibited neither the fierce passions nor the sagacity which had been ascribed to him; and, though in his bearing he showed a gravity and a calm consciousness of authority well becoming a king, he seemed to discharge all expression from his features, and to discover only the apathy so characteristic of the American races. On the present occasion, this must have been in part, at least, assumed. For it is impossible that the Indian prince should not have contemplated with curious interest a spectacle so strange, and, in some respects, appalling, as that of these mysterious strangers, for which no previous description could have prepared him.

Hernando Pizarro and Soto, with two or three only of their followers, slowly rode up in front of the Inca; and the former, making a respectful obeisance, but without dismounting, informed Atahuallpa that he came as an ambassador from his brother, the commander of the white men, to acquaint the monarch with their arrival in his city of Caxamalca. They were the subjects of a mighty prince across the waters, and had come, he said, drawn thither by the report of his great victories, to offer their services, and to impart to him the doctrines of the true faith which they professed; and he brought an invitation from the general to Atahuallpa that the latter would be pleased to visit the Spaniards in their present quarters.

To all this the Inca answered not a word; nor did he make even a sign of acknowledgment that he comprehended it; though it was translated for him by Felipillo, one of the interpreters already noticed. He remained silent, with his eyes fastened on the ground; but one of his nobles, standing by his side, answered, "It is well."<sup>19</sup> This

<sup>19</sup> "Las cuales por él oídas, con ser su inclinacion preguntarnos y saber de donde veniamos, y que queriamos, y ver nuestras personas

was an embarrassing situation for the Spaniards, who seemed to be as wide from ascertaining the real disposition of the Peruvian monarch towards themselves, as when the mountains were between them.

In a courteous and respectful manner, Hernando Pizarro again broke the silence by requesting the Inca to speak to them himself, and to inform them what was his pleasure.<sup>20</sup> To this Atahuallpa condescended to reply, while a faint smile passed over his features,—“Tell your captain that I am keeping a fast, which will end to-morrow morning. I will then visit him, with my chieftains. In the mean time, let him occupy the public buildings on the square, and no other, till I come, when I will order what shall be done.”<sup>21</sup>

Soto, one of the party present at this interview, as before noticed, was the best mounted and perhaps the best rider in Pizarro's troop. Observing that Atahuallpa looked with some interest on the fiery steed that stood before him, champng the bit and pawing the ground with the natural impatience of a war-horse, the Spaniard gave him the rein,

y caballos, tubo tanta serenidad en el rostro, y tanta gravedad en su persona, que no quiso responder palabra á lo que se le decia, salvo que un Señor de aquellos que estaban par de el respondia: bien está." *Relacion del Primer. Descub., MS.*

<sup>20</sup> "Visto por el dicho Hernando Pizarro que él no hablaba, y que aquella tercera persona respondia de suyo, tomó le á suplicar. que el hablase por su boca, y le respondiese lo que quisiese." *Ibid., MS., ubi supra.*

<sup>21</sup> "El cual á esto volvió la cabeza á mirarle sonriendose y le dijo: Decid á ese Capitan que os embia acá; que yo estoy en ayuno, y le acabo mañana por la mañana que en bebiendo una vez, yo iré con algunos destos principales míos á verme con el, que en tanto él se aposente en esas casas que estan en la plaza que son comunes á todos, y que no entren en otra ninguna hasta que Yo vaya, que Yo mandaré lo que se ha de hacer." *Ibid., MS., ubi supra.*

In this singular interview I have followed the account of the cavalier who accompanied Hernando Pizarro, in preference to the latter, who represents himself as talking in a lordly key, that savors too much of the vaunt of the hidalgo.

and, striking his iron heel into his side, dashed furiously over the plain; then, wheeling him round and round, displayed all the beautiful movements of his charger, and his own excellent horsemanship. Suddenly checking him in full career, he brought the animal almost on his haunches, so near the person of the Inca, that some of the foam that flecked his horse's sides was thrown on the royal garments. But Atahualpa maintained the same marble composure as before, though several of his soldiers, whom De Soto passed in the course, were so much disconcerted by it, that they drew back in manifest terror; an act of timidity for which they paid dearly, *if*, as the Spaniards assert, Atahualpa caused them to be put to death that same evening for betraying such unworthy weakness to the strangers.<sup>22</sup>

Refreshments were now offered by the royal attendants to the Spaniards, which they declined, being unwilling to dismount. They did not refuse, however, to quaff the sparkling chicha from golden vases of extraordinary size, presented to them by the dark-eyed beauties of the harem.<sup>23</sup> Taking then a respectful leave of the Inca, the cavaliers rode back to Caxamalca, with many moody speculations on what they had seen; on the state and opulence of the Indian monarch; on the strength of his military array, their excellent appointments, and the apparent discipline in their ranks,—all arguing a much higher degree of civilization, and consequently of power, than any thing they had wit-

<sup>22</sup> Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Relacion del Primer. Descub., MS.

"I algunos Indios, con miedo, se desviaron de la Carrera, por lo qual Atabalipa los hiço luego matar." (Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 2, cap. 4.)—Xerez states that Atahualpa confessed this himself, in conversation with the Spaniards after he was taken prisoner.—Soto's charger might well have made the Indians start, if, as Balboa says, he took twenty feet at a leap, and this with a knight in armor on his back! Hist. du Perou, chap. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Relacion del Primer. Descub., MS.—Xerez, Conq. del Peru, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 196.

nessed in the lower regions of the country. As they contrasted all this with their own diminutive force, too far advanced, as they now were, for succor to reach them, they felt they had done rashly in throwing themselves into the midst of so formidable an empire, and were filled with gloomy forebodings of the result.<sup>24</sup> Their comrades in the camp soon caught the infectious spirit of despondency, which was not lessened as night came on, and they beheld the watch-fires of the Peruvians lighting up the sides of the mountains, and glittering in the darkness, "as thick," says one who saw them, "as the stars of heaven."<sup>25</sup>

Yet there was one bosom in that little host which was not touched with the feeling either of fear or dejection. That was Pizarro's, who secretly rejoiced that he had now brought matters to the issue for which he had so long panted. He saw the necessity of kindling a similar feeling in his followers, or all would be lost. Without unfolding his plans, he went round among his men, beseeching them not to show faint hearts at this crisis, when they stood face to face with the foe whom they had been so long seeking.

<sup>24</sup> "Hecho esto y visto y atalayado la grandeza del exercito, y las tiendas que era bien de ver, nos bolvimos á donde el dicho capitan nos estaba esperando, harto espantados de lo que habiamos visto, habiendo y tomando entre nosotros muchos acuerdos y opiniones de lo que se debia hacer, estando todos con mucho temor por ser tan pocos, y estar tan metidos en la tierra donde no podiamos ser socorridos." (Relacion del Primer. Descub., MS.) Pedro Pizarro is honest enough to confirm this account of the consternation of the Spaniards. Descub. y Conq., MS.) Fear was a strange sensation for the Castilian cavalier. But if he did not feel some touch of it on that occasion, he must have been akin to that doughty knight who, as Charles V. pronounced, "never could have snuffed a candle with his fingers."

<sup>25</sup> "Hecimos la guardia en la plaza, de donde se vian los fuegos del exercito de los Indios, lo cual era cosa espantable, que como estaban en una ladera la mayor parte, y tan juntos unos de otros, no parecia sino un cielo muy estrellado." Relacion del Primer. Descub., MS.

"They were to rely on themselves, and on that Providence which had carried them safe through so many fearful trials. It would not now desert them; and if numbers, however great, were on the side of their enemy, it mattered little when the arm of Heaven was on theirs."<sup>26</sup> The Spanish cavalier acted under the combined influence of chivalrous adventure and religious zeal. The latter was the most effective in the hour of peril; and Pizarro, who understood well the characters he had to deal with, by presenting the enterprise as a crusade, kindled the dying embers of enthusiasm in the bosoms of his followers, and restored their faltering courage.

He then summoned a council of his officers, to consider the plan of operations, or rather to propose to them the extraordinary plan on which he had himself decided. This was to lay an ambuscade for the Inca, and take him prisoner in the face of his whole army! It was a project full of peril,—bordering, as it might well seem, on desperation. But the circumstances of the Spaniards were desperate. Whichever way they turned, they were menaced by the most appalling dangers; and better was it bravely to confront the danger, than weakly to shrink from it, when there was no avenue for escape.

To fly was now too late. Whither could they fly? At the first signal of retreat, the whole army of the Inca would be upon them. Their movements would be anticipated by a foe far better acquainted with the intricacies of the sierra than themselves; the passes would be occupied, and they would be hemmed in on all sides; while the mere fact of this retrograde movement would diminish the confidence and with it the effective strength of his own men, while it doubled that of his enemy.

Yet to remain long inactive in his present position seemed almost equally perilous. Even supposing that

<sup>26</sup> Xerez, *Conq. del Peru*, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 197.—Naharro, *Relacion Sumaria*, MS.

Atahualpa should entertain friendly feelings towards the Christians, they could not confide in the continuance of such feelings. Familiarity with the white men would soon destroy the idea of any thing supernatural, or even superior, in their natures. He would feel contempt for their diminutive numbers. Their horses, their arms and showy appointments, would be an attractive bait in the eye of the barbaric monarch, and when conscious that he had the power to crush their possessors, he would not be slow in finding a pretext for it. A sufficient one had already occurred in the high-handed measures of the Conquerors, on their march through his dominions.

But what reason had they to flatter themselves that the Inca cherished such a disposition towards them? He was a crafty and unscrupulous prince, and, if the accounts they had repeatedly received on their march were true, had ever regarded the coming of the Spaniards with an evil eye. It was scarcely possible he should do otherwise. His soft messages had only been intended to decoy them across the mountains, where, with the aid of his warriors, he might readily overpower them. They were entangled in the toils which the cunning monarch had spread for them.

Their only remedy, then, was to turn the Inca's arts against himself; to take him, if possible, in his own snare. There was no time to be lost; for any day might bring back the victorious legions who had recently won his battles at the south, and thus make the odds against the Spaniards far greater than now.

Yet to encounter Atahualpa in the open field would be attended with great hazard; and even if victorious, there would be little probability that the person of the Inca, of so much importance, would fall into the hands of the victors. The invitation he had so unsuspectingly accepted to visit them in their quarters afforded the best means for securing this desirable prize. Nor was the enterprise so desperate, considering the great advantages afforded by the character

and weapons of the invaders, and the unexpectedness of the assault. The mere circumstance of acting on a concerted plan would alone make a small number more than a match for a much larger one. But it was not necessary to admit the whole of the Indian force into the city before the attack; and the person of the Inca once secured, his followers, astounded by so strange an event, were they few or many, would have no heart for further resistance;—and with the Inca once in his power, Pizarro might dictate laws to the empire.

In this daring project of the Spanish chief it was easy to see that he had the brilliant exploit of Cortés in his mind, when he carried off the Aztec monarch in his capital. But that was not by violence,—at least not by open violence,—and it received the sanction, compulsory though it were, of the monarch himself. It was also true that the results in that case did not altogether justify a repetition of the experiment; since the people rose in a body to sacrifice both the prince and his kidnappers. Yet this was owing, in part, at least, to the indiscretion of the latter. The experiment in the outset was perfectly successful; and, could Pizarro once become master of the person of Atahuallpa, he trusted to his own discretion for the rest. It would, at least, extricate him from his present critical position, by placing in his power an inestimable guaranty for his safety; and if he could not make his own terms with the Inca at once, the arrival of reinforcements from home would, in all probability, soon enable him to do so.

Pizarro having concerted his plans for the following day, the council broke up, and the chief occupied himself with providing for the security of the camp during the night. The approaches to the town were defended; sentinels were posted at different points, especially on the summit of the fortress, where they were to observe the position of the enemy, and to report any movement that menaced the tranquillity of the night. After these pre-

cautions the Spanish commander and his followers withdrew to their appointed quarters,—but not to sleep. At least, sleep must have come late to those who were aware of the decisive plan for the morrow; that morrow which was to be the crisis of their fate,—to crown their ambitious schemes with full success, or consign them to irretrievable ruin!