

CHAPTER X.

ESCAPE OF THE INCA.—RETURN OF HERNANDO PIZARRO.
—RISING OF THE PERUVIANS.—SIEGE AND BURNING OF
CUZCO.—DISTRESSES OF THE SPANIARDS.—STORMING OF
THE FORTRESS.—PIZARRO'S DISMAY.—THE INCA RAISES
THE SIEGE.

1535-1536.

WHILE the absence of his rival Almagro relieved Pizarro from all immediate disquietude from that quarter, his authority was menaced in another, where he had least expected it. This was from the native population of the country. Hitherto the Peruvians had shown only a tame and submissive temper, that inspired their conquerors with too much contempt to leave room for apprehension. They had passively acquiesced in the usurpation of the invaders; had seen one monarch butchered, another placed on the vacant throne, their temples despoiled of their treasures, their capital and country appropriated and parcelled out among the Spaniards; but, with the exception of an occasional skirmish in the mountain passes, not a blow had been struck in defence of their rights. Yet this was the warlike nation which had spread its conquests over so large a part of the continent!

In his career, Pizarro, though he scrupled at nothing to effect his object, had not usually countenanced such superfluous acts of cruelty as had too often stained the arms of his countrymen in other parts of the continent, and which, in the course of a few years, had exterminated nearly a whole population in Hispaniola. He had struck one astounding blow, by the seizure of Atahualpa; and he seemed willing to rely on this to strike terror into the natives. He even

affected some respect for the institutions of the country, and had replaced the monarch he had murdered by another of the legitimate line. Yet this was but a pretext. The kingdom had experienced a revolution of the most decisive kind. Its ancient institutions were subverted. Its heaven-descended aristocracy was levelled almost to the condition of the peasant. The people became the serfs of the Conquerors. Their dwellings in the capital—at least, after the arrival of Alvarado's officers—were seized and appropriated. The temples were turned into stables; the royal residences into barracks for the troops. The sanctity of the religious houses was violated. Thousands of matrons and maidens, who, however erroneous their faith, lived in chaste seclusion in the conventual establishments, were now turned abroad, and became the prey of a licentious soldiery.¹ A favorite wife of the young Inca was debauched

¹ So says the author of the *Conquista i Poblacion del Piru*, a contemporary writer, who describes what he saw himself as well as what he gathered from others. Several circumstances, especially the honest indignation he expresses at the excesses of the Conquerors, lead one to suppose he may have been an ecclesiastic, one of the good men who attended the cruel expedition on an errand of love and mercy. It is to be hoped that his credulity leads him to exaggerate the misdeeds of his countrymen.

According to him, there were full six thousand women of rank, living in the convents of Cuzco, served each by fifteen or twenty female attendants, most of whom, that did not perish in the war, suffered a more melancholy fate, as the victims of prostitution.—The passage is so remarkable, and the MS. so rare, that I will cite it in the original.

"De estas señoras del Cuzco es cierto de tener grande sentimiento el que tuviese alguna humanidad en el pecho, que en tiempo de la prosperidad del Cuzco quando los Españoles entraron en el havia grand cantidad de señoras que tenian sus casas i sus asientos mui quietas i sosegadas i vivian mui politicamente i como mui buenas mugeres, cada Señora acompañada con quince o veinte mugeres que tenia de servicio en su casa bien traídas i aderezadas, i no salian menos desto i con grand onestidad i gravedad i atavio a su usanza, i es a la cantidad destas señoras principales creo yo que en el . . .

by the Castilian officers. The Inca, himself treated with contemptuous indifference, found that he was a poor dependant, if not a tool, in the hands of his conquerors.²

Yet the Inca Manco was a man of a lofty spirit and a courageous heart; such a one as might have challenged comparison with the bravest of his ancestors in the prouder days of the empire. Stung to the quick by the humiliations to which he was exposed, he repeatedly urged Pizarro to restore him to the real exercise of power, as well as to the show of it. But Pizarro evaded a request so incompatible with his own ambitious schemes, or, indeed, with the policy of Spain, and the young Inca and his nobles were left to brood over their injuries in secret, and await patiently the hour of vengeance.

The dissensions among the Spaniards themselves seemed to afford a favorable opportunity for this. The Peruvian chiefs held many conferences together on the subject, and the high-priest Villac Umu urged the necessity of a rising so soon as Almagro had withdrawn his forces from the city. It would then be comparatively easy, by assaulting the invaders on their several posts, scattered as they were over the country, to overpower them by superior numbers, and shake off their detested yoke before the arrival of fresh reinforcements should rivet it for ever on the necks of his countrymen. A plan for a general rising was formed, and it was in conformity to it that the priest was selected by the Inca to bear Almagro company on the march, that he might secure the coöperation of the natives in the country,

que avia mas de seis mil sin las de servicio que creo yo que eran mas de veinte mil mugeres sin las de servicio i mamaconas que eran las que andavan como beatas i dende á dos años casi no se allava en el Cuzco i su tierra sino cada qual i qual porque muchas murieron en la guerra que hubo i las otras vinieron las mas á ser mala smugeres Señor perdone a quien fue la causa desto i a quien no lo remedia pudiendo." Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

² Ibid., ubi supra.

and then secretly return—as in fact he did—to take a part in the insurrection.

To carry their plans into effect it became necessary that the Inca Manco should leave the city and present himself among his people. He found no difficulty in withdrawing from Cuzco, where his presence was scarcely heeded by the Spaniards, as his nominal power was held in little deference by the haughty and confident Conquerors. But in the capital there was a body of Indian allies more jealous of his movements. These were from the tribe of the Cañares, a warlike race of the north, too recently reduced by the Incas to have much sympathy with them or their institutions. There were about a thousand of this people in the place, and, as they had conceived some suspicion of the Inca's purposes, they kept an eye on his movements, and speedily reported his absence to Juan Pizarro.

That cavalier, at the head of a small body of horse, instantly marched in pursuit of the fugitive, whom he was so fortunate as to discover in a thicket of reeds, in which he sought to conceal himself, at no great distance from the city. Manco was arrested, brought back a prisoner to Cuzco, and placed under a strong guard in the fortress. The conspiracy seemed now at an end; and nothing was left to the unfortunate Peruvians but to bewail their ruined hopes, and to give utterance to their disappointment in doleful ballads, which rehearsed the captivity of their Inca, and the downfall of his royal house.³

While these things were in progress, Hernando Pizarro returned to Ciudad de los Reyes, bearing with him the royal commission for the extension of his brother's powers, as well as of those conceded to Almagro. The envoy also brought the royal patent conferring on Francisco Pizarro the title of *Marques de los Atavillos*,—a province in Peru.

³ Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 5, lib. 8, cap. 1, 2.—Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 2, cap. 3.

Thus was the fortunate adventurer placed in the ranks of the proud aristocracy of Castile, few of whose members could boast—if they had the courage to boast—their elevation from so humble an origin, as still fewer could justify it by a show of greater services to the Crown.

The new marquess resolved not to forward the commission, at present, to the marshal, whom he designed to engage still deeper in the conquest of Chili, that his attention might be diverted from Cuzco, which, however, his brother assured him, now fell, without doubt, within the newly extended limits of his own territory. To make more sure of this important prize, he despatched Hernando to take the government of the capital into his own hands, as the one of his brothers on whose talents and practical experience he placed greatest reliance.

Hernando, notwithstanding his arrogant bearing towards his countrymen, had ever manifested a more than ordinary sympathy with the Indians. He had been the friend of Atahualpa; to such a degree, indeed, that it was said, if he had been in the camp at the time, the fate of that unhappy monarch would probably have been averted. He now showed a similar friendly disposition towards his successor, Manco. He caused the Peruvian prince to be liberated from confinement, and gradually admitted him into some intimacy with himself. The crafty Indian availed himself of his freedom to mature his plans for the rising, but with so much caution, that no suspicion of them crossed the mind of Hernando. Secrecy and silence are characteristic of the American, almost as invariably as the peculiar color of his skin. Manco disclosed to his conqueror the existence of several heaps of treasure, and the places where they had been secreted; and, when he had thus won his confidence, he stimulated his cupidity still further by an account of a statue of pure gold of his father Huayna Capac, which the wily Peruvian requested leave to bring from a secret cave in which it was deposited, among the

neighboring Andes. Hernando, blinded by his avarice, consented to the Inca's departure.

He sent with him two Spanish soldiers, less as a guard than to aid him in the object of his expedition. A week elapsed, and yet he did not return, nor were there any tidings to be gathered of him. Hernando now saw his error, especially as his own suspicions were confirmed by the unfavorable reports of his Indian allies. Without further delay, he despatched his brother Juan, at the head of sixty horse, in quest of the Peruvian prince, with orders to bring him back once more a prisoner to his capital.

That cavalier, with his well-armed troops, soon traversed the environs of Cuzco without discovering any vestige of the fugitive. The country was remarkably silent and deserted, until, as he approached the mountain range that hems in the valley of Yucay, about six leagues from the city, he was met by the two Spaniards who had accompanied Manco. They informed Pizarro that it was only at the point of the sword he could recover the Inca, for the country was all in arms, and the Peruvian chief at its head was preparing to march on the capital. Yet he had offered no violence to their persons, but had allowed them to return in safety.

The Spanish captain found this story fully confirmed when he arrived at the river Yucay, on the opposite bank of which were drawn up the Indian battalions to the number of many thousand men, who, with their young monarch at their head, prepared to dispute his passage. It seemed that they could not feel their position sufficiently strong, without placing a river, as usual, between them and their enemy. The Spaniards were not checked by this obstacle. The stream, though deep, was narrow; and plunging in, they swam their horses boldly across, amidst a tempest of stones and arrows that rattled thick as hail on their harness, finding occasionally some crevice or vulnerable point,—although the wounds thus received only

goaded them to more desperate efforts. The barbarians fell back as the cavaliers made good their landing; but, without allowing the latter time to form, they returned with a spirit which they had hitherto seldom displayed, and enveloped them on all sides with their greatly superior numbers. The fight now raged fiercely. Many of the Indians were armed with lances headed with copper tempered almost to the hardness of steel, and with huge maces and battle-axes of the same metal. Their defensive armor, also, was in many respects excellent, consisting of stout doublets of quilted cotton, shields covered with skins, and casques richly ornamented with gold and jewels, or sometimes made like those of the Mexicans, in the fantastic shape of the heads of wild animals, garnished with rows of teeth that grinned horribly above the visage of the warrior.⁴ The whole army wore an aspect of martial ferocity, under the control of much higher military discipline than the Spaniards had before seen in the country.

The little band of cavaliers, shaken by the fury of the Indian assault, were thrown at first into some disorder, but at length, cheering on one another with the old war-cry of "St. Jago," they formed in solid column, and charged boldly into the thick of the enemy. The latter, incapable of withstanding the shock, gave way, or were trampled down under the feet of the horses, or pierced by the lances of the riders. Yet their flight was conducted with some order; and they turned at intervals, to let off a volley of arrows, or to deal furious blows with their pole-axes and

⁴ "Es gente," says Oviedo, "muy belicosa é muy diestra; sus armas son picas, é ondas, porras é Alabardas de Plata é oro é cobre." (Hist. de las Indias, MS., Parte 3, lib. 8, cap. 17.) Xerez has made a good enumeration of the native Peruvian arms. (Conq. del Peru, ap. Barcia, tom. III. p. 200.) Father Velasco has added considerably to this catalogue. According to him, they used copper swords, poniards, and other European weapons. (Hist. de Quito, tom. I. pp. 178-180.) He does not insist on their knowledge of fire-arms before the Conquest!

war-clubs. They fought as if conscious that they were under the eye of their Inca.

It was evening before they had entirely quitted the level ground, and withdrawn into the fastnesses of the lofty range of hills which belt round the beautiful valley of Yucay. Juan Pizarro and his little troop encamped on the level at the base of the mountains. He had gained a victory, as usual, over immense odds; but he had never seen a field so well disputed, and his victory had cost him the lives of several men and horses, while many more had been wounded, and were nearly disabled by the fatigues of the day. But he trusted the severe lesson he had inflicted on the enemy, whose slaughter was great, would crush the spirit of resistance. He was deceived.

The following morning, great was his dismay to see the passes of the mountains filled up with dark lines of warriors, stretching as far as the eye could penetrate into the depths of the sierra, while dense masses of the enemy were gathered like thunder-clouds along the slopes and summits, as if ready to pour down in fury on the assailants. The ground, altogether unfavorable to the manœuvres of cavalry, gave every advantage to the Peruvians, who rolled down huge rocks from their elevated position, and sent off incessant showers of missiles on the heads of the Spaniards. Juan Pizarro did not care to entangle himself further in the perilous defile; and, though he repeatedly charged the enemy, and drove them back with considerable loss, the second night found him with men and horses wearied and wounded, and as little advanced in the object of his expedition as on the preceding evening. From this embarrassing position, after a day or two more spent in unprofitable hostilities, he was surprised by a summons from his brother to return with all expedition to Cuzco, which was now besieged by the enemy!

Without delay, he began his retreat, recrossed the valley, the recent scene of slaughter, swam the river Yucay, and, by

rapid countermarch, closely followed by the victorious enemy, who celebrated their success with songs or rather yells of triumph, he arrived before nightfall in sight of the capital.

But very different was the sight which there met his eye from what he had beheld on leaving it a few days before. The extensive environs, as far as the eye could reach, were occupied by a mighty host, which an indefinite computation swelled to the number of two hundred thousand warriors.⁵ The dusky lines of the Indian battalions stretched out to the very verge of the mountains; while, all around, the eye saw only the crests and waving banners of chieftains, mingled with rich panoplies of feather-work, which reminded some few who had served under Cortés of the military costume of the Aztecs. Above all rose a forest of long lances and battle-axes edged with copper, which, tossed to and fro in wild confusion, glittered in the rays of the setting sun, like light playing on the surface of a dark and troubled ocean. It was the first time that the Spaniards had beheld an Indian army in all its terrors; such an army as the Incas led to battle, when the banner of the Sun was borne triumphant over the land.

Yet the bold hearts of the cavaliers, if for a moment dismayed by the sight, soon gathered courage as they closed up their files, and prepared to open a way for themselves through the beleaguering host. But the enemy seemed to shun the encounter; and, falling back at their approach, left a free entrance into the capital. The Peruvians were, probably, not unwilling to draw as many victims as they could into the toils, conscious that, the greater the number, the sooner they would become sensible to the approaches of famine.⁶

⁵ "Pues junta toda la gente quel ynga avia embiado á juntar que á lo que se entendio y los indios dixeron fueron dozientos mil indios de guerra los que vinieron á poner este cerco." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

⁶ Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Conq. i Pob. del Piru,

Hernando Pizarro greeted his brother with no little satisfaction; for he brought an important addition to his force, which now, when all were united, did not exceed two hundred horse and foot,⁷ besides a thousand Indian auxiliaries; an insignificant number, in comparison with the countless multitudes that were swarming at the gates. That night was passed by the Spaniards with feelings of the deepest anxiety, as they looked forward with natural apprehension to the morrow. It was early in February, 1536, when the siege of Cuzco commenced; a siege memorable as calling out the most heroic displays of Indian and European valor, and bringing the two races in deadlier conflict with each other than had yet occurred in the conquest of Peru.

The numbers of the enemy seemed no less formidable during the night than by the light of day; far and wide their watch-fires were to be seen gleaming over valley and hill-top, as thickly scattered, says an eye-witness, as "the stars of heaven in a cloudless summer night."⁸ Before these fires had become pale in the light of the morning, the Spaniards were roused by the hideous clamor of conch, trumpet, and atabal, mingled with the fierce war-cries of the barbarians, as they let off volleys of missiles of every description, most of which fell harmless within the city. But others did more serious execution. These were burning arrows, and red-hot stones wrapped in cotton that had been steeped in some bituminous substance, which, scattering long trains of light through the air, fell on the roofs of the buildings, and speedily set them on fire.⁹ These roofs,

MS.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 5, lib. 8, cap. 4.—Gomara, Hist. de las Ind., cap. 133.

⁷ "Y los pocos Españoles que heramos aun no dozientos todos." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

⁸ "Pues de noche heran tantos los fuegos que no parecia sino vn cielo muy sereno lleno de estrellas." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

⁹ "Unas piedras rredondas y hochallas en el fuego y hazellas asqua

even of the better sort of edifices, were uniformly of thatch, and were ignited as easily as tinder. In a moment the flames burst forth from the most opposite quarters of the city. They quickly communicated to the wood-work in the interior of the buildings, and broad sheets of flame mingled with smoke rose up towards the heavens, throwing a fearful glare over every object. The rarefied atmosphere heightened the previous impetuosity of the wind, which, fanning the rising flames, they rapidly spread from dwelling to dwelling, till the whole fiery mass, swayed to and fro by the tempest, surged and roared with the fury of a volcano. The heat became intense, and clouds of smoke, gathering like a dark pall over the city, produced a sense of suffocation and almost blindness in those quarters where it was driven by the winds.¹⁰

The Spaniards were encamped in the great square, partly under awnings, and partly in the hall of the Inca Viracocha, on the ground since covered by the cathedral. Three times in the course of that dreadful day, the roof of the building was on fire; but, although no efforts were made to extinguish it, the flames went out without doing much injury. This miracle was ascribed to the Blessed Virgin, who was distinctly seen by several of the Christian combatants, hovering over the spot on which was to be raised the temple dedicated to her worship.¹¹

embolvianlas en vnos algodones y poniendolas en hondas las tiravan a las cassas donde no alcanzavan á poner fuego con las manos, y ansi nos quemavan las cassas sin entendello. Otras veces con flechas encendidas tirandolas á las casas que como heran de paja luego se encendian." Ibid., MS.

¹⁰ "I era tanto el humo que casi los oviera de agogar i pasaron grand trabajo por esta causa i sino fuera porque de la una parte de la plaza no havia casas i estava desconorado no pudieran escapar porque si por todas partes les diera el humo i el calor siendo tan grande pasaron trabajo, pero la divina providencia lo estorvó." Conq. i Pob del Piru, MS.

¹¹ The temple was dedicated to Our Blessed Lady of the Assump-

Fortunately, the open space around Hernando's little company separated them from the immediate scene of conflagration. It afforded a means of preservation similar to that employed by the American hunter, who endeavors to surround himself with a belt of wasted land, when overtaken by a conflagration in the prairies. All day the fire continued to rage, and at night the effect was even more appalling; for by the lurid flames the unfortunate Spaniards could read the consternation depicted in each others' ghastly countenances, while in the suburbs, along the slopes of the surrounding hills, might be seen the throng of besiegers, gazing with fiendish exultation on the work of destruction. High above the town to the north, rose the gray fortress, which now showed ruddy in the glare, looking grimly down on the ruins of the fair city which it was no longer able to protect; and in the distance were to be discerned the shadowy forms of the Andes, soaring up in solitary grandeur into the regions of eternal silence, far beyond the wild tumult that raged so fearfully at their base.

Such was the extent of the city, that it was several days before the fury of the fire was spent. Tower and temple, hut, palace, and hall, went down before it. Fortunately, among the buildings that escaped were the magnificent House of the Sun and the neighboring Convent of the Virgins. Their insulated position afforded the means, of

tion. The apparition of the Virgin was manifest not only to Christian but to Indian warriors, many of whom reported it to Garcilasso de la Vega, in whose hands the marvellous rarely loses any of its gloss. (Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 25.) It is further attested by Father Acosta, who came into the country forty years after the event. (lib. 7, cap. 27.) Both writers testify to the seasonable aid rendered by St. James, who with his buckler, displaying the device of his Military Order, and armed with his flaming sword, rode his white charger into the thick of the enemy. The patron Saint of Spain might always be relied on when his presence was needed. *dignus vindicæ nodus.*

which the Indians from motives of piety were willing to avail themselves, for their preservation.¹² Full one half of the capital, so long the chosen seat of Western civilization, the pride of the Incas, and the bright abode of their tutelar deity, was laid in ashes by the hands of his own children. It was some consolation for them to reflect, that it burned over the heads of its conquerors,—their trophy and their tomb!

During the long period of the conflagration, the Spaniards made no attempt to extinguish the flames. Such an attempt would have availed nothing. Yet they did not tamely submit to the assaults of the enemy, and they sallied forth from time to time to repel them. But the fallen timbers and scattered rubbish of the houses presented serious

¹² Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 24.

Father Valverde, Bishop of Cuzco, who took so signal a part in the seizure of Atahualpa, was absent from the country at this period, but returned the following year. In a letter to the emperor, he contrasts the flourishing condition of the capital when he left it, and that in which he now found it, despoiled, as well as its beautiful suburbs, of its ancient glories. "If I had not known the site of the city," he says, "I should not have recognized it as the same." The passage is too remarkable to be omitted. The original letter exists in the archives of Simancas.—"Certifico á V. M. que si no me acordara del sitio desta Ciudad yo no la conociera, á lo menos por los edificios y Pueblos della; porque quando el Gobernador D. Francisco Pizarro entró aqui y entré yo con él estava este valle tan hermoso en edificios y poblacion que en torno tenia que era cosa de admiracion vello, porque aunque la Ciudad en si no ternia mas de 3 o 4000 casas, ternia en torno quasi á vista 19 o 20,000; la fortaleza que estava sobre la Ciudad parecia desde á parte una mui gran fortaleza de las de España: agora la mayor parte de la Ciudad esta toda derivada y quemada; la fortaleza no tiene quasi nada enhiesso; todos los pueblos de alderredor no tienē sino las paredes que por maravilla ai casa cubierta! La cosa que mas contentamiento me dio en esta Ciudad fue la Iglesia, que para en Indias es harto buena cosa, aunque segun la riqueza a havido en esta tierra pudiera ser mas semejante al Templo de Salomon." Carta del Obispo F. Valverde al Emperador, MS., 20 de Marzo, 1539.

impediments to the movements of horse; and, when these were partially cleared away by the efforts of the infantry and the Indian allies, the Peruvians planted stakes and threw barricades across the path, which proved equally embarrassing.¹³ To remove them was a work of time and no little danger, as the pioneers were exposed to the whole brunt of the enemy's archery, and the aim of the Peruvian was sure. When at length the obstacles were cleared away, and a free course was opened to the cavalry, they rushed with irresistible impetuosity on their foes, who, falling back in confusion, were cut to pieces by the riders, or pierced through with their lances. The slaughter on these occasions was great; but the Indians, nothing disheartened, usually returned with renewed courage to the attack, and, while fresh reinforcements met the Spaniards in front, others, laying in ambush among the ruins, threw the troops into disorder by assailing them on the flanks. The Peruvians were expert both with bow and sling; and these encounters, notwithstanding the superiority of their arms, cost the Spaniards more lives than in their crippled condition they could afford to spare,—a loss poorly compensated by that of tenfold the number of the enemy. One weapon, peculiar to South American warfare, was used with some effect by the Peruvians. This was the *lasso*,—a long rope with a noose at the end, which they adroitly threw over the rider, or entangled with it the legs of his horse, so as to bring them both to the ground. More than one Spaniard fell into the hands of the enemy by this expedient.¹⁴

Thus harassed, sleeping on their arms, with their horses picketed by their side, ready for action at any and every

¹³ Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

"Los Indios ganaron el Cuzco casi todo desta manera que engamando la calle hivan haciendo una pared para que los cavallos ni los Españoles no los pudiesen romper." Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

¹⁴ Ibid., MS.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 5, lib. 8, cap. 4.

hour, the Spaniards had no rest by night or by day. To add to their troubles, the fortress which overlooked the city, and completely commanded the great square in which they were quartered, had been so feebly garrisoned in their false sense of security, that, on the approach of the Peruvians, it had been abandoned without a blow in its defence. It was now occupied by a strong body of the enemy, who, from his elevated position, sent down showers of missiles, from time to time, which added greatly to the annoyance of the besieged. Bitterly did their captain now repent the improvident security which had led him to neglect a post so important.

Their distresses were still further aggravated by the rumors, which continually reached their ears, of the state of the country. The rising, it was said, was general throughout the land; the Spaniards living on their insulated plantations had all been massacred; Lima and Truxillo and the principal cities were besieged, and must soon fall into the enemy's hands; the Peruvians were in possession of the passes, and all communications were cut off, so that no relief was to be expected from their countrymen on the coast. Such were the dismal stories, (which, however exaggerated, had too much foundation in fact,) that now found their way into the city from the camp of the besiegers. And to give greater credit to the rumors, eight or ten human heads were rolled into the *plaza*, in whose blood-stained visages the Spaniards recognized with horror the lineaments of their companions, who they knew had been dwelling in solitude on their estates!¹⁵

Overcome by these horrors, many were for abandoning the place at once, as no longer tenable, and for opening a passage for themselves to the coast with their own good swords. There was a daring in the enterprise which had a charm for the adventurous spirit of the Castilian. Better, they said, to perish in a manly struggle for life, than to die thus

¹⁵ Ibid., ubi supra.—Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

ignominiously, pent up like foxes in their holes, to be suffocated by the hunter!

But the Pizarros, De Rojas, and some other of the principal cavaliers, refused to acquiesce in a measure which, they said, must cover them with dishonor.¹⁶ Cuzco had been the great prize for which they had contended; it was the ancient seat of empire, and, though now in ashes, would again rise from its ruins as glorious as before. All eyes would be turned on them, as its defenders, and their failure, by giving confidence to the enemy, might decide the fate of their countrymen throughout the land. They were placed in that post as the post of honor, and better would it be to die there than to desert it.

There seemed, indeed, no alternative; for every avenue to escape was cut off by an enemy who had perfect knowledge of the country, and possession of all its passes. But this state of things could not last long. The Indian could not, in the long run, contend with the white man. The spirit of insurrection would die out of itself. Their great army would melt away, unaccustomed as the natives were to the privations incident to a protracted campaign. Reinforcements would be daily coming in from the colonies; and, if the Castilians would be but true to themselves for a season, they would be relieved by their own countrymen, who would never suffer them to die like outcasts among the mountains.

The cheering words and courageous bearing of the cavaliers went to the hearts of their followers; for the soul of the Spaniard readily responded to the call of honor, if not of humanity. All now agreed to stand by their leader to the last. But, if they would remain longer in their present

¹⁶ "Pues Hernando Pizarro nunca estuvo en ello y les respondia que todos aviamos de morir y no desamparar el cuzco. Juntavanse á estas consultas Hernando Pizarro y sus hermanos, Graviel de Rojas, Hernan Ponce de Leon, el Thesorero Riquelme." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.