

ent cordiality, that "he desired nothing better for himself." He then swore in the most solemn manner, and pledged his knightly honor,—the latter, perhaps, a pledge of quite as much weight in his own mind as the former,—that he would faithfully comply with the terms stipulated in the treaty. He was next conducted by the marshal to his quarters, where he partook of a collation in company with the principal officers; several of whom, together with Diego Almagro, the general's son, afterward escorted the cavalier to his brother's camp, which had been transferred to the neighboring town of Mala. Here the party received a most cordial greeting from the governor, who entertained them with a courtly hospitality, and lavished many attentions, in particular, on the son of his ancient associate. In short, such, on their return, was the account of their reception, that it left no doubt in the mind of Almagro that all was at length amicably settled.²⁸—He did not know Pizarro.

²⁸ Ibid., loc. cit.—Carta de Gutierrez, MS.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 3, cap. 9.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST CIVIL WAR.—ALMAGRO RETREATS TO CUZCO.—BATTLE OF LAS SALINAS.—CRUELTY OF THE CONQUERORS.—TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF ALMAGRO.—HIS CHARACTER.

1537–1538.

SCARCELY had Almagro's officers left the governor's quarters, when the latter, calling his little army together, briefly recapitulated the many wrongs which had been done him by his rival, the seizure of his capital, the imprisonment of his brothers, the assault and defeat of his troops; and he concluded with the declaration,—heartily echoed back by his military audience,—that the time had now come for revenge. All the while that the negotiations were pending, Pizarro had been busily occupied with military preparations. He had mustered a force considerably larger than that of his rival, drawn from various quarters, but most of them familiar with service. He now declared, that, as he was too old to take charge of the campaign himself, he should devolve that duty on his brothers; and he released Hernando from all his engagements to Almagro, as a measure justified by necessity. That cavalier, with graceful pertinacity, intimated his design to abide by the pledges he had given, but, at length, yielded a reluctant assent to the commands of his brother, as to a measure imperatively demanded by his duty to the Crown.¹

The governor's next step was to advise Almagro that the treaty was at an end. At the same time, he warned him to relinquish his pretensions to Cuzco, and withdraw into his

¹ Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 6, lib. 3, cap. 10.

own territory, or the responsibility of the consequences would lie on his own head.

Reposing in his false security, Almagro was now fully awakened to the consciousness of the error he had committed; and the warning voice of his lieutenant may have risen to his recollection. The first part of the prediction was fulfilled. And what should prevent the latter from being so? To add to his distress, he was laboring at this time under a grievous malady, the result of early excesses, which shattered his constitution, and made him incapable alike of mental and bodily exertion.²

In this forlorn condition, he confided the management of his affairs to Orgoñez, on whose loyalty and courage he knew he might implicitly rely. The first step was to secure the passes of the Guaitara, a chain of hills that hemmed in the valley of Zangalla, where Almagro was at present established. But, by some miscalculation, the passes were not secured in season; and the active enemy, threading the dangerous defiles, effected a passage across the sierra, where a much inferior force to his own might have taken him at advantage. The fortunes of Almagro were on the wane.

His thoughts were now turned towards Cuzco, and he was anxious to get possession of this capital before the arrival of the enemy. Too feeble to sit on horseback, he was obliged to be carried in a litter; and, when he reached the ancient town of Bilcas, not far from Guamanga, his indisposition was so severe that he was compelled to halt and remain there three weeks before resuming his march.

The governor and his brothers, in the mean time, after traversing the pass of Guaitara, descended into the valley of Ica, where Pizarro remained a considerable while, to get

² "Cayó enfermo i estuvo malo a punto de muerte de bubas i dolores." (Carta de Espinall, MS.) It was a hard penalty, occurring at this crisis, for the sins, perhaps, of earlier days; but

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us."

his troops into order and complete his preparations for the campaign. Then, taking leave of the army, he returned to Lima, committing the prosecution of the war, as he had before announced, to his younger and more active brothers. Hernando, soon after quitting Ica, kept along the coast as far as Nasca, proposing to penetrate the country by a circuitous route in order to elude the enemy, who might have greatly embarrassed him in some of the passes of the Cordilleras. But unhappily for him, this plan of operations, which would have given him such manifest advantage, was not adopted by Almagro; and his adversary, without any other impediment than that arising from the natural difficulties of the march, arrived, in the latter part of April, 1538, in the neighborhood of Cuzco.

But Almagro was already in possession of that capital, which he had reached ten days before. A council of war was held by him respecting the course to be pursued. Some were for making good the defence of the city. Almagro would have tried what could be done by negotiation. But Orgoñez bluntly replied,—“It is too late; you have liberated Hernando Pizarro, and nothing remains but to fight him.” The opinion of Orgoñez finally prevailed, to march out and give the enemy battle on the plains. The marshal, still disabled by illness from taking the command, devolved it on his trusty lieutenant, who, mustering his forces, left the city, and took up a position at Las Salinas, less than a league distant from Cuzco. The place received its name from certain pits or vats in the ground, used for the preparation of salt, that was obtained from a natural spring in the neighborhood. It was an injudicious choice of ground, since its broken character was most unfavorable to the free action of cavalry, in which the strength of Almagro's force consisted. But, although repeatedly urged by the officers to advance into the open country, Orgoñez persisted in his position, as the most favorable for defence, since the front was protected by a marsh, and by a little stream that

flowed over the plain. His forces amounted in all to about five hundred, more than half of them horse. His infantry was deficient in fire-arms, the place of which was supplied by the long pike. He had also six small cannon, or falconets, as they were called, which, with his cavalry, formed into two equal divisions, he disposed on the flanks of his infantry. Thus prepared, he calmly awaited the approach of the enemy.

It was not long before the bright arms and banners of the Spaniards under Hernando Pizarro were seen emerging from the mountain passes. The troops came forward in good order, and like men whose steady step showed that they had been spared in the march, and were now fresh for action. They advanced slowly across the plain, and halted on the opposite border of the little stream which covered the front of Orgoñez. Here Hernando, as the sun had set, took up his quarters for the night, proposing to defer the engagement till daylight.³

The rumors of the approaching battle had spread far and wide over the country; and the mountains and rocky heights around were thronged with multitudes of natives, eager to feast their eyes on a spectacle, where, whichever side were victorious, the defeat would fall on their enemies.⁴ The Castilian women and children, too, with still deeper anxiety, had thronged out from Cuzco to witness the deadly strife in which brethren and kindred were to contend for mastery.⁵ The whole number of the combatants was insignificant; though not as compared with those usually engaged in these American wars. It is not, however, the number of the players, but the magnitude of the stake,

³ Carta de Gutierrez, MS.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 6, lib. 4, cap. 1-5.—Carta de Espinall, MS.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 3, cap. 10, 11.—Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 36, 37.

⁴ Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 6, lib. 4, cap. 5, 6.

⁵ Ibid., ubi supra.

that gives importance and interest to the game; and in this bloody game, they were to play for the possession of an empire.

The night passed away in silence, unbroken by the vast assembly which covered the surrounding hill-tops. Nor did the soldiers of the hostile camps, although keeping watch within hearing of one another, and with the same blood flowing in their veins, attempt any communication. So deadly was the hate in their bosoms!⁶

The sun rose bright, as usual in this beautiful climate, on Saturday, the twenty-sixth day of April, 1538.⁷ But long before his beams were on the plain, the trumpet of Hernando Pizarro had called his men to arms. His forces amounted in all to about seven hundred. They were drawn from various quarters, the veterans of Pizarro, the followers of Alonso de Alvarado,—many of whom, since their defeat, had found their way back to Lima,—and the late reinforcement from the isles, most of them seasoned by many a toilsome march in the Indian campaigns, and many a hard-fought field. His mounted troops were inferior to those of Almagro; but this was more than compensated by the strength of his infantry, comprehending a well-trained corps of arquebusiers, sent from St. Domingo, whose weapons were of the improved construction recently introduced from Flanders. They were of a large calibre, and threw double-headed shot, consisting of bullets linked together

⁶ "I fue cosa de notar, que se estuvieron toda la Noche, sin que nadie de la vna i otra parte pensase en mover tratos de Paz: tanta era la ira i aborrecimiento de ambas partes." Ibid., cap. 6.

⁷ A church dedicated to Saint Lazarus was afterwards erected on the battle-ground, and the bodies of those slain in the action were interred within its walls. This circumstance leads Garcilasso to suppose that the battle took place on Saturday, the sixth,—the day after the Feast of Saint Lazarus,—and not on the twenty-sixth of April, as commonly reported. Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 38. See also Montesinos, (Annales, MS., año 1538,)—an indifferent authority for any thing.

by an iron chain. It was doubtless a clumsy weapon compared with modern fire-arms, but, in hands accustomed to wield it, proved a destructive instrument.⁸

Hernando Pizarro drew up his men in the same order of battle as that presented by the enemy,—throwing his infantry into the center, and disposing his horse on the flanks; one corps of which he placed under command of Alonso de Alvarado, and took charge of the other himself. The infantry was headed by his brother Gonzalo, supported by Pedro de Valdivia, the future hero of Arauco, whose disastrous story forms the burden of romance as well as of chronicle.⁹

Mass was said, as if the Spaniards were about to fight what they deemed the good fight of the faith, instead of imbruing their hands in the blood of their countrymen. Hernando Pizarro then made a brief address to his soldiers. He touched on the personal injuries he and his family had received from Almagro; reminded his brother's veterans that Cuzco had been wrested from their possession; called up the glow of shame on the brows of Alvarado's men as he talked of the rout of Abancay, and, pointing out the Inca metropolis that sparkled in the morning sunshine, he told them that there was the prize of the victor. They answered his appeal with acclamations; and the signal being given, Gonzalo Pizarro, heading his battalion of infantry, led it straight across the river. The water was neither broad nor deep, and the soldiers found no difficulty in gaining a landing, as the enemy's horse was prevented

⁸ Zarate, *Conq. del Peru*, lib. 3, cap. 8.—Garcilasso, *Com. Real*, Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 36.

⁹ The Araucana of Ercilla may claim the merit, indeed,—if it be a merit,—of combining both romance and history in one. Surely never did the Muse venture on such a specification of details, not merely poetical, but political, geographical, and statistical, as in this celebrated Castilian epic. It is a military journal done into rhyme.

by the marshy ground from approaching the borders. But, as they worked their way across the morass, the heavy guns of Orgoñez played with effect on the leading files, and threw them into disorder. Gonzalo and Valdivia threw themselves into the midst of their followers, menacing some, encouraging others, and at length led them gallantly forward to the firm ground. Here the arquebusiers, detaching themselves from the rest of the infantry, gained a small eminence, whence, in their turn, they opened a galling fire on Orgoñez, scattering his array of spearmen, and sorely annoying the cavalry on the flanks.

Meanwhile, Hernando, forming his two squadrons of horse into one column, crossed under cover of this well-sustained fire, and, reaching the firm ground, rode at once against the enemy. Orgoñez, whose infantry was already much crippled, advancing his horse, formed the two squadrons into one body, like his antagonist, and spurred at full gallop against the assailants. The shock was terrible; and it was hailed by the swarms of Indian spectators on the surrounding heights with a fiendish yell of triumph, that rose far above the din of battle, till it was lost in distant echoes among the mountains.¹⁰

The struggle was desperate. For it was not that of the white man against the defenceless Indian, but of Spaniard against Spaniard; both parties cheering on their comrades with their battle-cries of "*El Rey y Almagro*," or "*El Rey y Pizarro*,"—while they fought with a hate, to which na-

¹⁰ Herrera, *Hist. General*, dec. 6, lib. 4, cap. 6.—Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.—Carta de Espinall, MS.—Zarate, *Conq. del Peru*, lib. 3, cap. 11.

Every thing relating to this battle,—the disposition of the forces, the character of the ground, the mode of attack, are told as variously and confusedly, as if it had been a contest between two great armies, instead of a handful of men on either side. It would seem that truth is nowhere so difficult to come at, as on the battle-field.

tional antipathy was as nothing; a hate strong in proportion to the strength of the ties that had been rent asunder.

In this bloody field well did Orgoñez do his duty, fighting like one to whom battle was the natural element. Singling out a cavalier, whom, from the color of the sobre-vest on his armor, he erroneously supposed to be Hernando Pizarro, he charged him in full career, and overthrew him with his lance. Another he ran through in like manner, and a third he struck down with his sword, as he was prematurely shouting "Victory!" But while thus doing the deeds of a paladin of romance, he was hit by a chain-shot from an arquebuse, which, penetrating the bars of his visor, grazed his forehead, and deprived him for a moment of reason. Before he had fully recovered, his horse was killed under him, and though the fallen cavalier succeeded in extricating himself from the stirrups, he was surrounded, and soon overpowered by numbers. Still refusing to deliver up his sword, he asked "if there was no knight to whom he could surrender." One Fuentes, a menial of Pizarro, presenting himself as such, Orgoñez gave his sword into his hands,—and the dastard, drawing his dagger, stabbed his defenceless prisoner to the heart! His head, then struck off, was stuck on a pike, and displayed, a bloody trophy, in the great square of Cuzco, as the head of a traitor.¹¹ Thus perished as loyal a cavalier, as decided in council, and as bold in action, as ever crossed to the shores of America.

The fight had now lasted more than a hour, and the fortune of the day was turning against the followers of Almagro. Orgoñez being down, their confusion increased. The infantry, unable to endure the fire of the arquebusiers, scattered and took refuge behind the stone-walls, that here and there straggled across the country. Pedro de Lerma, vainly striving to rally the cavalry, spurred his horse against Hernando Pizarro, with whom he had a personal

¹¹ Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Herrera, Hist. General, ubi supra.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, ubi supra.

feud. Pizarro did not shrink from the encounter. The lances of both the knights took effect. That of Hernando penetrated the thigh of his opponent, while Lerma's weapon, glancing by his adversary's saddle-bow, struck him with such force above the groin, that it pierced the joints of his mail, slightly wounding the cavalier, and forcing his horse back on his haunches. But the press of the fight soon parted the combatants, and, in the turmoil that ensued, Lerma was unhorsed, and left on the field covered with wounds.¹²

There was no longer order, and scarcely resistance, among the followers of Almagro. They fled, making the best of their way to Cuzco, and happy was the man who obtained quarter when he asked it. Almagro himself, too feeble to sit so long on his horse, reclined on a litter, and from a neighboring eminence surveyed the battle, watching its fluctuations with all the interest of one who felt that honor, fortune, life itself, hung on the issue. With agony not to be described, he had seen his faithful followers, after their hard struggle, borne down by their opponents, till, convinced that all was lost, he succeeded in mounting a mule, and rode off for a temporary refuge to the fortress of Cuzco. Thither he was speedily followed, taken, and brought in triumph to the capital, where, ill as he was, he was thrown into irons, and confined in the same apartment of the stone building in which he had imprisoned the Pizarros.

The action lasted not quite two hours. The number of killed, variously stated, was probably not less than a hun-

¹² Herrera, Hist. General, ubi supra.—Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 2, cap. 36.

Hernando Pizarro wore a surcoat of orange-colored velvet over his armor, according to Garcilasso, and before the battle sent notice of it to Orgoñez, that the latter might distinguish him in the *mêlée*. But a knight in Hernando's suite also wore the same colors, it appears, which led Orgoñez into error.