

All thoughts of a retreat into Chili were abandoned; for his recent success had kindled new hopes in his bosom, and revived his ancient confidence. He trusted that it would have a similar effect on the vacillating temper of those whose fidelity had been shaken by fears for their own safety, and their distrust of his ability to cope with the president. They would now see that his star was still in the ascendant. Without further apprehensions for the event, he resolved to remain in Cuzco, and there quietly await the hour when a last appeal to arms should decide which of the two was to remain master of Peru.

Garcilasso de la Vega, who was a boy at the time, witnessed Pizarro's entry into Cuzco. He writes, therefore, from memory; though after an interval of many years. In consequence of his father's rank, he had easy access to the palace of Pizarro; and this portion of his narrative may claim the consideration due not merely to a contemporary, but to an eye-witness.

CHAPTER III.

DISMAY IN GASCA'S CAMP.—HIS WINTER QUARTERS.—RESUMES HIS MARCH.—CROSSES THE APURIMAC.—PIZARRO'S CONDUCT IN CUZCO.—HE ENCAMPS NEAR THE CITY.—ROUT OF XAQUXAGUANA.

1547–1548.

WHILE the events recorded in the preceding chapter were passing, President Gasca had remained at Xauxa, awaiting further tidings from Centeno, little doubting that they would inform him of the total discomfiture of the rebels. Great was his dismay, therefore, on learning the issue of the fatal conflict at Huarina,—that the royalists had been scattered far and wide before the sword of Pizarro, while their commander had vanished like an apparition,¹ leaving the greatest uncertainty as to his fate.

The intelligence spread general consternation among the soldiers, proportioned to their former confidence; and they felt it was almost hopeless to contend with a man who seemed protected by a charm that made him invincible against the greatest odds. The president, however sore his disappointment, was careful to conceal it, while he endeavored to restore the spirits of his followers. "They had been too sanguine," he said, "and it was in this way that Heaven rebuked their presumption. Yet it was but in the usual course of events, that Providence, when it designed to humble the guilty, should allow him to reach as high an elevation as possible, that his fall might be the greater!"

¹ "Y salio a la Ciudad de los Reyes, sin que Carbajal, ni alguno de los suyos supiese por donde fue, sino que parecia encantamiento." Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 5, cap. 22.

But while Gasca thus strove to reassure the superstitious and the timid, he bent his mind, with his usual energy, to repair the injury which the cause had sustained by the defeat at Huarina. He sent a detachment under Alvarado to Lima, to collect such of the royalists as had fled thither from the field of battle, and to dismantle the ships of their cannon, and bring them to the camp. Another body was sent to Guamanga, about sixty leagues from Cuzco, for the similar purpose of protecting the fugitives, and also of preventing the Indian caciques from forwarding supplies to the insurgent army in Cuzco. As his own forces now amounted to considerably more than any his opponent could bring against him, Gasca determined to break up his camp without further delay, and march on the Inca capital.²

Quitting Xauxa, December 29, 1547, he passed through Guamanga, and after a severe march, rendered particularly fatiguing by the inclement state of the weather and the badness of the roads, he entered the province of Andaguaylas. It was a fair and fruitful country, and since the road beyond would take him into the depths of a gloomy sierra, scarcely passable in the winter snows, Gasca resolved to remain in his present quarters until the severity of the season was mitigated. As many of the troops had already contracted diseases from exposure to the incessant rains, he established a camp hospital; and the good president person-

² Gasca, according to Ondegardo, supported his army, during his stay at Xauxa, from the Peruvian granaries in the valley, as he found a quantity of maize still remaining in them sufficient for several years' consumption. It is passing strange that these depositaries should have been so long respected by the hungry Conquerors.—"Cuando el Señor Presidente Gasca pasó con la gente de castigo de Gonzalo Pizarro por el Valle de Jauja, estuvo allí siete semanas á lo que me acuerdo, se hallaron en deposito maiz de cuatro y de tres y de dos años mas de 15,000 hanegas junto al camino, é allí comió la gente." Ondegardo, Rel. Seg., MS.

ally visited the quarters of the sick, ministering to their wants and winning their hearts by his sympathy.³

Meanwhile, the royal camp was strengthened by the continual arrival of reinforcements; for notwithstanding the shock that was caused throughout the country by the first tidings of Pizarro's victory, a little reflection convinced the people that the right was the strongest, and must eventually prevail. There came, also, with these levies, several of the most distinguished captains in the country. Centeno, burning to retrieve his late disgrace, after recovering from his illness, joined the camp with his followers from Lima. Benalcazar, the conqueror of Quito, who, as the reader will remember, had shared in the defeat of Blasco Nuñez in the north, came with another detachment; and was soon after followed by Valdivia, the famous conqueror of Chili, who, having returned to Peru to gather recruits for his expedition, had learned the state of the country, and had thrown himself, without hesitation, into the same scale with the president, though it brought him into collision with his old friend and comrade, Gonzalo Pizarro. The arrival of this last ally was greeted with general rejoicing by the camp; for Valdivia, schooled in the Italian wars, was esteemed the most accomplished soldier in Peru; and Gasca complimented him by declaring "he would rather see him than a reinforcement of eight hundred men!"⁴

Besides these warlike auxiliaries, the president was attended by a train of ecclesiastics and civilians, such as was rarely found in the martial fields of Peru. Among them were the bishops of Quito, Cuzco, and Lima, the four

³ Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 7, cap. 4.—Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 82-85.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Cieza de Leon, cap. 90.

⁴ At least, so says Valdivia in his letter to the emperor. "I dixo publico que estimara mas mi persona que á los mejores ochocientos hombres de guerra que le pudieran venir aquella hora." Carta de Valdivia, MS.

judges of the new Audience, and a considerable number of churchmen and monkish missionaries.⁵ However little they might serve to strengthen his arm in battle, their presence gave authority and something of a sacred character to the cause, which had their effect on the minds of the soldiers.

The wintry season now began to give way before the mild influence of spring, which makes itself early felt in these tropical, but from their elevation temperate, regions; and Gasca, after nearly three months' detention in Andaguaylas, mustered his levies for the final march upon Cuzco.⁶ Their whole number fell little short of two thousand,—the largest European force yet assembled in Peru. Nearly half were provided with fire-arms; and infantry was more available than horse in the mountain countries which they were to traverse. But his cavalry was also numerous, and he carried with him a train of eleven heavy guns. The equipment and discipline of the troops were good; they were well provided with ammunition and military stores; and were led by officers whose names were associated with the most memorable achievements in the New World. All who had any real interest in the weal of the country were to be found, in short, under the president's banner, making a striking contrast to the wild and reckless adventurers who now swelled the ranks of Pizarro.

Gasca, who did not affect a greater knowledge of military affairs than he really possessed, had given the charge of his forces to Hinojosa, naming the Marshal Alvarado as second in command. Valdivia, who came after these dispositions had been made, accepted a colonel's commission, with the understanding that he was to be consulted and

⁵ Zarate, MS.

⁶ Cieza de Leon, Cronica, cap. 90.

The old chronicler, or rather geographer, Cieza de Leon, was present in the campaign, he tells us; so that his testimony, always good, becomes for the remaining events of more than usual value.

employed in all matters of moment.⁷—Having completed his arrangements, the president broke up his camp in March, 1548, and moved upon Cuzco.

The first obstacle to his progress was the river Abancay, the bridge over which had been broken down by the enemy. But as there was no force to annoy them on the opposite bank, the army was not long in preparing a new bridge, and throwing it across the stream, which in this place had nothing formidable in its character. The road now struck into the heart of a mountain region, where woods, precipices, and ravines were mingled together in a sort of chaotic confusion, with here and there a green and sheltered valley, glittering like an island of verdure amidst the wild breakers of a troubled ocean! The bold peaks of the Andes, rising far above the clouds, were enveloped in snow, which, descending far down their sides, gave a piercing coldness to the winds that swept over their surface, until men and horses were benumbed and stiffened under their influence. The roads, in these regions, were in some places so narrow and broken, as to be nearly impracticable for cavalry. The cavaliers were compelled to dismount; and the president, with the rest, performed the journey on foot, so hazardous, that, even in later times, it has been no uncommon thing for the sure-footed mule to be precipitated, with its cargo

⁷ Valdivia, indeed, claims to have had the whole command intrusted to him by Gasca. "Luego me dio el autoridad toda que traia de parte de V. M. para en los casos tocantes a la guerra, i me encargó todo el exercito, i le puso baxo de mi mano rogando i pidiendo por merced de su parte á todos aquellos caballeros capitanes e gente de guerra, i de la de V. M. mandandoles me obedesciesen en todo lo que les mandase acerca de la guerra, i cumplisen mis mandamientos como los suyos." (Carta de Valdivia, MS.) But other authorities state it, with more probability, as given in the text. Valdivia, it must be confessed, loses nothing from modesty. The whole of his letter to the emperor is written in a strain of self-glorification, rarely matched even by a Castilian hidalgo.

of silver, thousands of feet down the sheer sides of a precipice.⁸

By these impediments of the ground, the march was so retarded, that the troops seldom accomplished more than two leagues a day.⁹ Fortunately, the distance was not great; and the president looked with more apprehension to the passage of the Apurimac, which he was now approaching. This river, one of the most formidable tributaries of the Amazon, rolls its broad waters through the gorges of the Cordilleras, that rise up like an immense rampart of rock on either side, presenting a natural barrier which it would be easy for an enemy to make good against a force much superior to his own. The bridges over this river, as Gasca learned before his departure from Andaguaylas, had been all destroyed by Pizarro. The president, accordingly, had sent to explore the banks of the stream, and determine the most eligible spot for reëstablishing communications with the opposite side.

The place selected was near the Indian village of Cotapampa, about nine leagues from Cuzco; for the river, though rapid and turbulent from being compressed within more narrow limits, was here less than two hundred paces in width; a distance, however, not inconsiderable. Directions had been given to collect materials in large quantities in the neighborhood of this spot as soon as possible; and at the same time, in order to perplex the enemy and compel him to divide his forces, should he be disposed to resist, materials in smaller quantities were assembled on three other points of the river. The officer stationed in the neighborhood of Cotapampa was instructed not to begin to lay the bridge, till the arrival of a sufficient force should accelerate the work, and insure its success.

The structure in question, it should be remembered, was one of those suspension bridges formerly employed by the

⁸ Cieza de Leon, Cronica, cap. 91.

⁹ MS. de Caravantes.

Incas, and still used in crossing the deep and turbulent rivers of South America. They are made of osier withes, twisted into enormous cables, which, when stretched across the water, are attached to heavy blocks of masonry, or, where it will serve, to the natural rock. Planks are laid transversely across these cables, and a passage is thus secured, which, notwithstanding the light and fragile appearance of the bridge, as it swings at an elevation sometimes of several hundred feet above the abyss, affords a tolerably safe means of conveyance for men, and even for such heavy burdens as artillery.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the peremptory commands of Gasca, the officer intrusted with collecting the materials for the bridge was so anxious to have the honor of completing the work himself, that he commenced it at once. The president, greatly displeased at learning this, quickened his march, in order to cover the work with his whole force. But, while toiling through the mountain labyrinth, tidings were brought him that a party of the enemy had demolished the small portion of the bridge already made, by cutting the cables on the opposite bank. Valdivia, accordingly, hastened forward at the head of two hundred arquebusiers, while the main body of the army followed with as much speed as practicable.

That officer, on reaching the spot, found that the interruption had been caused by a small party of Pizarro's followers, not exceeding twenty in number, assisted by a stronger body of Indians. He at once caused *balsas*, broad and clumsy barks, or rather rafts, of the country, to be provided, and by this means passed his men over, without opposition, to the other side of the river. The enemy, disconcerted by the arrival of such a force, retreated and

¹⁰ Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 86, 87.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 7, cap. 5.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—MS. de Caravantes.—Carta de Valdivia, MS.—Relacion del Lic. Gasca, MS.

made the best of their way to report the affair to their commander at Cuzco. Meanwhile, Valdivia, who saw the importance of every moment in the present crisis, pushed forward the work with the greatest vigor. Through all that night his weary troops continued the labor, which was already well advanced, when the president and his battalions, emerging from the passes of the Cordilleras, presented themselves at sunrise on the opposite bank.

Little time was given for repose, as all felt assured that the success of their enterprise hung on the short respite now given them by the improvident enemy. The president, with his principal officers, took part in the labor with the common soldiers;¹¹ and before ten o'clock in the evening, Gasca had the satisfaction to see the bridge so well secured, that the leading files of the army, unencumbered by their baggage, might venture to cross it. A short time sufficed to place several hundred men on the other bank. But here a new difficulty, not less formidable than that of the river, presented itself to the troops. The ground rose up with an abrupt, almost precipitous, swell from the river-side, till, in the highest peaks, it reached an elevation of several thousand feet. This steep ascent, though not to its full height, indeed, was now to be surmounted. The difficulties of the ground, broken up into fearful chasms and water-courses, and tangled with thickets, were greatly increased by the darkness of the night; and the soldiers, as they toiled slowly upward, were filled with apprehension, akin to fear, from the uncertainty whether each successive step might not bring them into an ambushade, for which the ground was so favorable. More than once, the Spaniards were thrown into a panic by false reports that the enemy were upon

¹¹ "La gente que estaua, de la vna parte y de la otra, todos tirauan y trabajauan al poner, y apretar de las Criznejas: sin que el Presidente ni Obispos, ni otra persona quisiessse tener preuilegio para dexar de trabajar." Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 87.

them. But Hinojosa and Valdivia were at hand to rally their men, and cheer them on, until, at length, before dawn broke, the bold cavaliers and their followers placed themselves on the highest point traversed by the road, where they waited the arrival of the president. This was not long delayed; and in the course of the following morning, the royalists were already in sufficient strength to bid defiance to their enemy.

The passage of the river had been effected with less loss than might have been expected, considering the darkness of the night, and the numbers that crowded over the aerial causeway. Some few, indeed, fell into the water, and were drowned; and more than sixty horses, in the attempt to swim them across the river, were hurried down the current, and dashed against the rocks below.¹² It still required time to bring up the heavy train of ordnance and the military wagons; and the president encamped on the strong ground which he now occupied, to await their arrival, and to breathe his troops after their extraordinary efforts. In these quarters we must leave him, to acquaint the reader with the state of things in the insurgent army, and with the cause of its strange remissness in guarding the passes of the Apurimac.¹³

From the time of Pizarro's occupation of Cuzco, he had lived in careless luxury in the midst of his followers, like a soldier of fortune in the hour of prosperity; enjoy-

¹² "Aquel dia pasaron mas de quatrocientos Hombres, llevando los Caballos a nado, encima de ellos atadas sus armas, i arcabuces, caso que se perdieron mas de sesenta Caballos, que con la corriente grande se desataron, i luego daban en vnas peñas, donde se hacian pedaços, sin darles lugar el impetu del rio, a que pudiesen madar." Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 7, cap. 5.—Gomara, Hist. de las Indias, cap. 184.

¹³ Ibid., ubi supra.—Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 87.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 7, cap. 5.—Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—MS. de Caravantes.—Carta de Valdivia, MS.—Cieza de Leon, Cronica, cap. 91.—Relacion del Lic. Gasca, MS.

ing the present, with as little concern for the future as if the crown of Peru were already fixed irrevocably upon his head. It was otherwise with Carbajal. He looked on the victory at Huarina as the commencement, not the close, of the struggle for empire; and he was indefatigable in placing his troops in the best condition for maintaining their present advantage. At the first streak of dawn, the veteran might be seen mounted on his mule, with the garb and air of a common soldier, riding about in the different quarters of the capital, sometimes superintending the manufacture of arms, or providing military stores, and sometimes drilling his men, for he was most careful always to maintain the strictest discipline.¹⁴ His restless spirit seemed to find no pleasure but in incessant action; living, as he had always done, in the turmoil of military adventure, he had no relish for anything unconnected with war, and in the city saw only the materials for a well-organized camp.

With these feelings, he was much dissatisfied at the course taken by his younger leader, who now professed his intention to abide where he was, and, when the enemy advanced, to give him battle. Carbajal advised a very different policy. He had not that full confidence, it would seem, in the loyalty of Pizarro's partisans, at least, not of those who had once followed the banner of Centeno. These men, some three hundred in number, had been in a manner compelled to take service under Pizarro. They showed no heartiness in the cause, and the veteran strongly urged his commander to disband them at once; since it was far better to go to battle with a few faithful followers than with a host of the false and faint-hearted.

¹⁴ "Andaua siempre en vna mula crescida de color entre pardo y bermejo, yo no le vi en otra caualgadura en todo el tiempo que estuuo en el Cozco antes de la batalla de Sacsahuana. Era tan contino y diligēte en solicitar lo que a su exercito conuenia, que a todas horas del dia y de la noche le topauan sus soldados haziendo su oficio, y los agenos." Garcilasso, *Com. Real.*, Parte 1, lib. 5, cap. 27.

But Carbajal thought, also, that his leader was not sufficiently strong in numbers to encounter his opponent, supported as he was by the best captains of Peru. He advised, accordingly, that he should abandon Cuzco, carrying off all the treasure, provisions, and stores of every kind from the city, which might, in any way, serve the necessities of the royalists. The latter, on their arrival, disappointed by the poverty of a place where they had expected to find so much booty, would become disgusted with the service. Pizarro, meanwhile, might take refuge with his men in the neighboring fastnesses, where, familiar with the ground, it would be easy to elude the enemy; and if the latter persevered in the pursuit, with numbers diminished by desertion, it would not be difficult in the mountain passes to find an opportunity for assailing him at advantage.—Such was the wary counsel of the old warrior. But it was not to the taste of his fiery commander, who preferred to risk the chances of a battle, rather than turn his back on a foe.

Neither did Pizarro show more favor to a proposition, said to have been made by the Licentiate Cepeda,—that he should avail himself of his late success to enter into negotiations with Gasca. Such advice, from the man who had so recently resisted all overtures of the president, could only have proceeded from a conviction, that the late victory placed Pizarro on a vantage-ground for demanding terms far better than would have been before conceded to him. It may be that subsequent experience had also led him to distrust the fidelity of Gonzalo's followers, or, possibly, the capacity of their chief to conduct them through the present crisis. Whatever may have been the motives of the slippery counsellor, Pizarro gave little heed to the suggestion, and even showed some resentment, as the matter was pressed on him. In every contest, with Indian or European, whatever had been the odds, he had come off victorious. He was not now for the first time to despond; and he resolved to remain in Cuzco, and hazard all on the

chances of a battle. There was something in the hazard itself captivating to his bold and chivalrous temper. In this, too, he was confirmed by some of the cavaliers who had followed him through all his fortunes; reckless young adventurers, who, like himself, would rather risk all on a single throw of the dice, than adopt the cautious, and, as it seemed to them, timid, policy of graver counsellors. It was by such advisers, then, that Pizarro's future course was to be shaped.¹⁵

Such was the state of affairs in Cuzco, when Pizarro's soldiers returned with the tidings, that a detachment of the enemy had crossed the Apurimac, and were busy in reëstablishing the bridge. Carbajal saw at once the absolute necessity of maintaining this pass. "It is my affair," he said; "I claim to be employed on this service. Give me but a hundred picked men, and I will engage to defend the pass against an army, and bring back the *chaplain*—the name by which the president was known in the rebel camp—a prisoner to Cuzco."¹⁶ "I cannot spare you, father," said Gonzalo, addressing him by this affectionate epithet, which he usually applied to his aged follower,¹⁷ "I cannot spare you so far from my own person;" and he gave the commission to Juan de Acosta, a young cavalier warmly attached to his commander, and who had given undoubted evidence of his valor on more than one occasion, but who, as the event proved, was signally deficient in the qualities

¹⁵ Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 5, cap. 27.—Gomara, Hist. de las Indias, cap. 182.—Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 88.

"Finalmente, Gonzalo Pizarro dixo que quería prouar su ventura: pues siempre auia sido vencedor, y jamas vencido." Ibid., ubi supra.

¹⁶ "Paresceme vuestra Señoria se vaya á la vuelta del Collao y me deje cien hombres, los que yo escojere, que yo me iré á vista deste capellan, que así llamaba él al presidente." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

¹⁷ Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 2, lib. 5, cap. 31.

demanded for so critical an undertaking as the present. Acosta, accordingly, was placed at the head of two hundred mounted musketeers, and, after much wholesome counsel from Carbajal, set out on his expedition.

But he soon forgot the veteran's advice, and moved at so dull a pace over the difficult roads, that, although the distance was not more than nine leagues, he found, on his arrival, the bridge completed, and so large a body of the enemy already crossed, that he was in no strength to attack them. Acosta did, indeed, meditate an ambuscade by night; but the design was betrayed by a deserter, and he contented himself with retreating to a safe distance, and sending for a further reinforcement from Cuzco. Three hundred men were promptly detached to his support; but when they arrived, the enemy was already planted in full force on the crest of the eminence. The golden opportunity was irrecoverably lost; and the disconsolate cavalier rode back in all haste to report the failure of his enterprise to his commander in Cuzco.¹⁸

The only question now to be decided was as to the spot where Gonzalo Pizarro should give battle to his enemies.

¹⁸ Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Fernandez, Hist. del Peru, Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 88.—Zarate, Conq. del Peru, lib. 7, cap. 5.—Carta de Valdivia, MS.

Valdivia's letter to the emperor, dated at Concepcion, was written about two years after the events above recorded. It is chiefly taken up with his Chilian conquests, to which his campaign under Gasca, on his visit to Peru, forms a kind of brilliant episode. This letter, the original of which is preserved in Simancas, covers about seventy folio pages in the copy belonging to me. It is one of that class of historical documents, consisting of the despatches and correspondence of the colonial governors, which, from the minuteness of the details and the means of information possessed by the writers, are of the highest worth. The despatches addressed to the Court, particularly, may compare with the celebrated *Relazioni* made by the Venetian ambassadors to their republic, and now happily in the course of publication, at Florence, under the editorial auspices of the learned Albèri.