

CHAPTER VII.

FRANCIS PIZARRO.

Birthplace—Education—Early Life—Embarkation for America—Visit to Peru—Return to Spain—Sent to Peru as Colonizing Governor—How he was received—Movement upon effecting a Landing—His Law—Description of Caxamarca—Pizarro's Scheme—Seizure of the Incas—The Ransom—Pizarro's Treachery—Death of the Incas—Conspired against—Murdered.

AMONG the brilliant adventurers who left Spain for the New World, in the fifteenth century, one of the most daring, unscrupulous and successful was Francisco Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru. Born under unfortunate and degrading circumstances, he achieved a splendid renown as a soldier, which, however, was tarnished by dishonorable and cruel conduct through all his career. His birthplace was Truxillo, a city in Estremadura. He was the son of Colonel Gonzalo Pizarro, but, born out of wedlock, he was deserted by both parents, and, it is said, was left as a foundling at the door of a church. His boyhood received but little care, he was never taught even to read, and when old enough, he was employed as a swineherd. But the stories of the New World beyond the sea, which were then rife, reached even him in his obscurity. His fancy dwelt on these reports, until he decided to escape from his menial occupation, and, going to Seville, he embarked with a number of other Spanish adventurers.

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The dates of his birth and of his leaving his native land are unknown. In the New World, we first hear of him in 1510, in Hispaniola, where he served as a lieutenant under Alonzo de Ojeda. Afterwards he accompanied Balboa to Darien, and was one of the first Europeans whose eyes rested on the vast Pacific.

In 1515 he was commissioned to cross the Isthmus, and traffic with the natives. Some years were spent in this way, but Pizarro had not acquired, so far, either wealth or fame. At the age of fifty, he still possessed only a tract of unhealthy land.

Reports of a land of gold and diamonds lying south of the great mountains that bounded their vision reached the adventurers from time to time. A confederacy was formed, consisting of Pizarro, Almagro (a captain), and Luque (a priest), the object of which was to cross the mountains and obtain possession of El Dorado (the land of gold.) Pizarro was to lead the expedition, for which the funds and supplies were to be furnished by the others. Two small vessels were purchased; a body of one hundred men were assembled, of whom Pizarro assumed command, and left Panama in the middle of November, 1524. Almagro was to follow in another vessel, as soon as it could be fitted out.

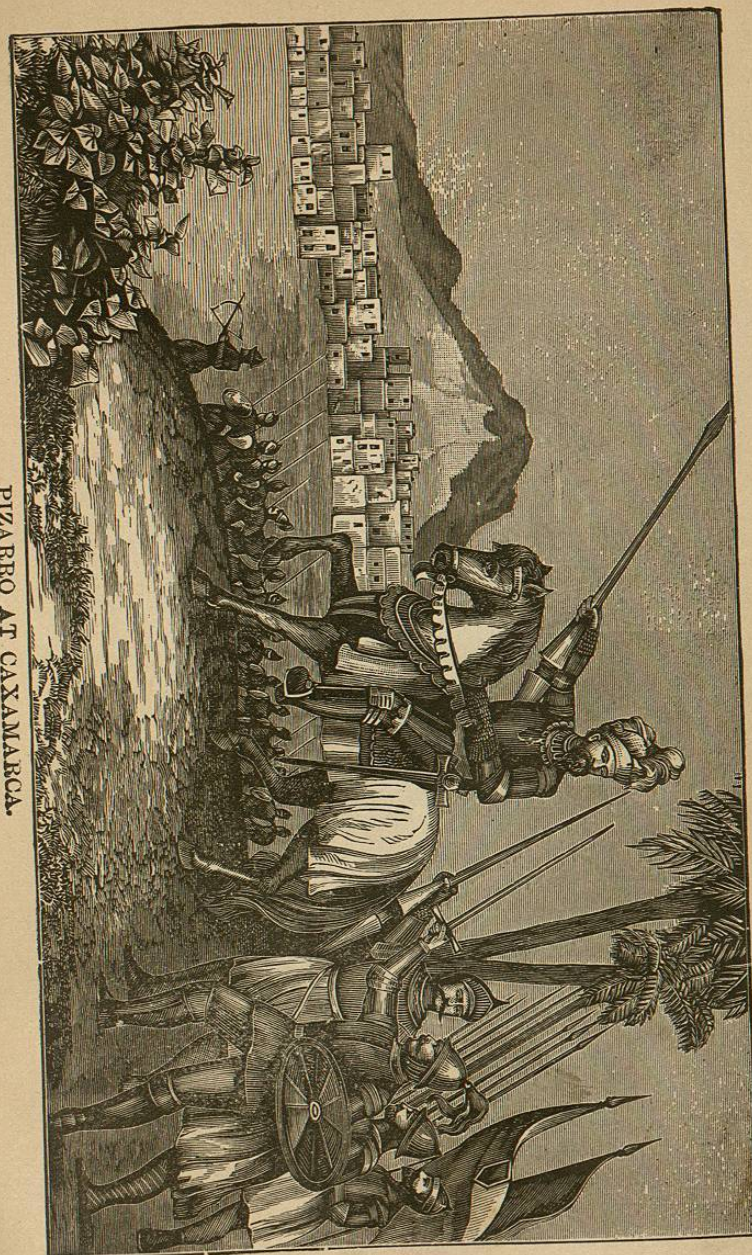
Steering almost due south, the expedition moved for many weeks along the shores of the unknown ocean. Several times they landed, but were compelled to return to their boats. The shores were one vast forest, and from the ground to the tops of the huge trees hung gigantic vines and creepers, making a net-work that could only be cleared by the axe. The season of heavy rains was just over, and the ground, saturated

tion and adornment of the palace; the court-yard was filled with richly dressed nobles and women of the royal household. The Indian prince sat in the midst of the assembly, but though he must have felt great curiosity as to the dreaded white strangers, his impassive countenance betrayed no emotion. They, on their side, having heard much of the cruel and cunning character of this prince, were surprised to find in him a calm and grave demeanor, which showed nothing of the savage passions he had displayed in war.

Hernando Pizarro and De Soto, with only a few followers, rode up to the Inca, and the former announced to Atahualpa that his brother, the commander of the white men, desired to visit him. The Inca, in a somewhat imperious manner, appointed an interview for the next day.

When his messenger returned, Pizarro went round among his men begging them not to become discouraged now, when the prize they had so long desired was almost within their grasp. He had formed the daring plan of seizing the Inca in the midst of his own people. The remainder of the day and night was spent in plans for battle, and at the first light of dawn the trumpet called the Spaniards to arms. Mass was said and the aid of the God of battles was invoked. The complex character of the Castilian soldier, who was capable of every kind of perfidy and cruelty, contained also a very genuine piety of the fashion of that period. Both he and his soldiers believed that they were serving the cause of God, and this religious ardor served at times as a pretext for their worst actions.

Towards noon the Inca appeared, sitting on a throne of solid gold, borne on the shoulders of his nobles, and



PIZARRO AT CAXAMARCA.

followed by a multitude that spread over the country as far as the eye could reach. The Inca and his attendants were so covered with gold and diamonds that they blazed "like the sun." When the monarch had entered the plaza, the Inca demanded to meet the white strangers.

Pizarro's chaplain came forward and briefly explained the Christian beliefs to the Inca, adding that the popes, as successors of the apostles, had been commanded to rule the world. He ended by adjuring him to embrace the Christian faith, and, furthermore, to acknowledge himself the tributary of the Emperor Charles.

How far the Indian prince followed this train of argument is doubtful, but he vehemently refused to acknowledge himself a vassal, and seizing a Bible which was in the hands of the monk, he flung it on the ground. The indignant friar hastened to Pizarro and urged him to attack the infidels; a white scarf, the appointed signal, was waved high in the air, and the whole Spanish force rushed on the Indians. The latter, trampled down by the cavalry and stunned by the report of the cannon, were seized with panic. Both horses and cannon were unknown to them, and filled them with terror. The struggle raged fiercely around the Inca, but at length, most of his nobles being slain, the monarch literally fell into the hands of Pizarro and his cavaliers.

The Spaniards treated the captive monarch kindly, but proceeded at once to pillage his pleasure-house. The enormous masses of gold and the quantity of emeralds found there astonished the Spaniards. This gave Atahualpa the idea of purchasing his freedom,

and he told Pizarro that if he would set him at liberty he would not merely cover the floor, but fill the room with gold. Pizarro acquiesced. A line nine feet high was drawn on the wall of the room, which was seventeen feet long by twenty-two broad. This space was to be filled with gold, and another to be twice filled with silver. The treasures began to pour in, but the distances whence they had to be carried were sometimes very great, and months were consumed in collecting it. The plate was melted down and recast in bars, which also took time. One-fifth of the treasure was sent to Spain, and the rest divided among the adventurers. The Inca now demanded his freedom, but his prayer was disregarded. The Spanish commander said the safety of his troops required that the Inca should be held until reinforcements arrived.

He managed at last to find pretexts for bringing the Inca to trial. The principal charge was that he had usurped the crown of his brother, Huascar; that he was guilty of idolatry and adultery, and that he had incited his subjects to rebel against the Spaniards. On these charges he was condemned to death by fire. When bound to the stake, he was told that if he became a Christian he should die by the milder method of the garrote. This he accepted, and after the ceremony of baptism had been performed he was strangled by the executioner. Thus died the last Inca of Peru.

The next important step in the conquest of Peru was the taking of the city of Cuzco. The whole vast country passed into the possession of Spain in the course of years. It is impossible to admire Pizarro's conduct in this conquest. He found a beautiful and

prosperous country, a contented people, living under a mild government and religion, and in a condition which closely approached civilization. He carried terror and devastation everywhere he went; he was absolutely merciless to the unfortunate natives, and even his own officers were frequently shocked at his cruelty. His brother, Hernando Pizarro, who possessed some of Francisco's characteristics, had caused the execution of Almagro, one of the bravest leaders of the Spaniards. The young son of Almagro and a number of his friends, thirsting for revenge, formed a plan to assassinate Pizarro, who now, at the age of sixty-five, had been created marquis, and was in the enjoyment of absolute power and vast wealth. But through life he had been more feared than loved; and his enemies were so convinced of this that they determined to attack him openly, instead of assassinating him, as had first been planned.

Pizarro was seated at dinner in his palace, with about twenty friends, when the assailants entered the corridor leading to his apartment, with loud cries of "Death to the tyrant!" He coolly ordered Chaves, one of the cavaliers, to fasten the door while the party should put on armor. Chaves made the mistake of attempting to parley with the conspirators, but was killed almost immediately. A frightful struggle followed, Pizarro and his companions fighting desperately. But the chief received a wound in his throat, and, sinking on the floor, was pierced by the swords of a number of the conspirators at once. Tracing a cross on the floor, he bent to kiss it, when a final sword-thrust ended his life.

That night, in silence and darkness, a grave was

dug in an obscure corner, a brief religious service was held, and the body of Pizarro, wrapped only in a shroud, was consigned to earth. Neither love nor pity presided over that miserable burial. "There was none even to say, 'God forgive him!'" says a writer of that period.

In 1607, when time had softened the animosities he had incurred, his remains were disinterred and removed to a tomb in the cathedral.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN CHURCHILL (DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH).

Ancestors—Birth and Education—Love for Military Studies—Page to King James—Commissioned at Sixteen—Sent to the Continent—Publicly Commended—Return to London—Marriage—Created Peer—The "One Blot"—Possible Extenuation—Commanding the Horse-Guards—Duke of Marlboro'—In Ireland—Arrested by the New King—Retired to Private Life—Restored to Rank—Intrusted with Public Affairs—Death of King William—Churchill Promoted—At the Head of the English Army—Narrow Escape from Captivity—Battle of Blenheim—A Hero's Honors—Fighting his Old Enemy—Narrow Escape—Crowning Glories—Retirement—Last Appearance in the House of Lords.

JOHN CHURCHILL, afterward Duke of Marlborough, made in his day a powerful impression on the continent of Europe. The Dutch found in his conquering arm the stay of their sorely-pressed country; the Germans beheld the ravages of war rolled back from the Rhine to the land of their enemies; the Lutherans regarded him as an instrument of divine vengeance to punish the perfidy and cruelty of the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and the French saw the glory of triumph torn from their *grande monarchie*, and for years afterward frightened their children with stories of "Marlbrook."

His father was Sir Winston Churchill, a gallant cavalier who had been driven into exile by Cromwell, and

with moisture and heaped with fallen leaves, presented an insuperable obstacle to progress. Among all this luxuriant vegetation, no edible thing could be found, except unwholesome berries; and the adventurers began to fear that they would perish of famine, for, counting on finding supplies as they went along, they had brought with them no great quantity of provisions.

Pizarro's pride revolted at the idea of returning unsuccessful to the Spanish colony. He decided to send back a vessel to obtain provisions, while he, with about half his men, remained where they were. Here they suffered extreme hardships, and as days and weeks passed, bringing no relief and no tidings of the vessel, the courage of the band gave way to despondency. Twenty of their number died, and many of the survivors were ill. During this period of suffering, Pizarro one night descried a light in the distance. It was the first sign of human existence that had appeared in this wilderness, and he at once started to reconnoitre, taking most of his followers with him. Pushing their way through a tract of shrubs and brushwood, they came upon an Indian village. The half-starved Spaniards rushed into the huts, and seized all the food they could find. It consisted principally of maize and cocoa-nuts. When their hunger had been satisfied, they observed that the Indians wore ornaments of gold. This led them to believe that their promised *El Dorado* had at last been reached, and questioning the Indians, they learned that across the mountains, about ten days' journey, there was such a country. A few days later their ship returned bringing supplies, and the band of adventurers set out to continue their

search. They moved along close to the shore, landing occasionally and having serious encounters with the natives. The men had grown seriously discouraged; many clamored to return to Panama. Pizarro called them together one day when they had landed at Tacamez, on the borders of the Peruvian empire; and, drawing his sword, he traced a line on the sand. "Comrades and friends," said he, "on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, storms, desertion, perhaps death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru and its riches; here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go south." Then he stepped across the line. Thirteen men followed him, and the rest returned to Panama. It is impossible not to admire the daring of this small band, who, in the face of innumerable obstacles, pursued their way, traversed the whole of northern Peru, and were at last rewarded for their toils by the discovery of numerous towns which were almost as rich in gold as they had ever imagined. They were received in a friendly manner by the natives, but Pizarro, although outwardly returning their friendship, determined on conquering this rich territory for Spain, and was only deterred by the want of forces. Having spent some fifteen months in these explorations, he decided to return to Spain, in order to obtain the means of conquest, and, embarking at *Nombre de Dios*, he reached Seville in 1528.

Here he was graciously received by the Emperor, Charles V. His stories of the land of gold were received with attention and belief, for he had brought with him immense quantities of the golden ornaments worn by the natives, which proved the abundance of

the precious metal. But Charles was then on his way to Italy, and he dismissed Pizarro, strongly recommending him to the protection and patronage of the King and Queen of Castile. In July, 1529, the queen signed the capitulation, an instrument which secured to Pizarro the right of discovery and conquest in Peru, or New Castile, as it was called. He was to be governor of the province for life, with the rank and privileges of a viceroy.

Pizarro then left Toledo for his native town, where he believed he could procure volunteers for his cause. In this he was successful; followers flocked to his standard, among them four of his own brothers, of whom one was his father's legitimate heir. It was a singular position for the formerly neglected and despised Francisco.

He sailed with his companions in three vessels, in 1530, and reached Santa Marta, on the northern shore of South America. Having made a visit to Panama, he at last set out on his career of conquest in 1531. The first place which they attacked was a village called Coaque, of which the inhabitants fled to the forest. In their deserted dwellings the invaders found great quantities of gold and silver ornaments, besides heaps of precious stones, for this was the region of the emeralds, and these valuable gems were very abundant there.

The treasures were brought together in heaps, of which one-fifth was reserved for the crown, and the remainder divided among the adventurers. In this one small town the share of the crown amounted to over twenty thousand castellanos. They continued their march, meeting little resistance from the inhabi-

tants, who no longer considered them as friends, but regarded them with superstitious terror, and fled to the woods, leaving them to pillage the towns unmolested. They suffered much, however, from sickness and unfit food. At length the inhabitants of Puna, in the bay of Guayaquil, set the example of resistance, and a succession of furious combats took place. The Spanish commander was glad when two vessels arrived, under charge of the famous De Soto, bringing a hundred soldiers, besides horses for his cavalry.

At this time the great Peruvian empire had completed the conquest of Quito, and both had been united under the rule of the Inca, Huayna Capac. This monarch left two sons, to one of whom, Atahualpa, he willed the ancient kingdom of Quito, and the rest of the empire to Huascar. For five years the brothers reigned in peace, but dissensions had sprung up, which at last culminated in war, which was carried on in the peculiarly savage and bloodthirsty manner practised by all the South American nations. A few months before the Spaniards landed Huascar had been captured, and a great massacre of his followers had taken place in Quito. The victorious Atahualpa declared himself Inca of the whole empire, and assumed imperial state at his residence in Caxamalca, the city now called Caxamarca. Pizarro with his followers determined to visit the victorious Inca. The city surpassed in wealth even the most dazzling visions of the adventurers. It was well built and fortified. In its centre was the residence of the monarch. In an open court-yard stood a light building surrounded by galleries. The walls were covered with a shining plaster; gold and silver were used in profusion in the construc-