

CHAPTER IV Ferdinand de Soto

1496-1542

WHEN it was known that a new world had been discovered beyond the Atlantic, great excitement took possession of the inhabitants of Spain. A splendid opportunity was now thrown open to all who were brave and adventurous to explore these new regions.

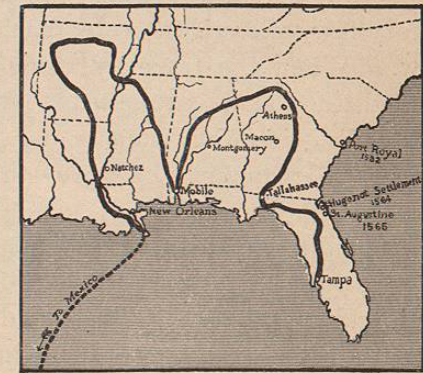
Those who were poor expected to gain great wealth, and those who were already rich wanted to add still more to their abundance. Not only was it said that gold, silver, and jewels could be obtained in great quantities, but it was also reported that somewhere in this new world was a wonderful fountain. If any one who was old should bathe in its waters, almost immediately his lost youth would return to him. This in the eyes of many would be of more importance than all the gold or jewels in the world. Therefore it was not strange that expedition after expedition was sent out, for all were anxious to obtain youth and riches.

One of the bravest of the leaders of these expeditions was the young and courageous Ferdinand de Soto. He belonged to a noble Spanish family, but was so poor that when he went on his first voyage he had no outfit but his sword and shield.

He was the bravest of the brave, however, and his valor soon made up for his poverty. He gained riches in Peru and was promoted step by step until he became Governor of Cuba and President of Florida.

Some one who had been to Florida had said that it was the richest country in the world. This traveler, seeing with the eyes of imagination, must have thought that the sand, sparkling in the sunshine, was gold, and the many bright colored flowers jewels.

But everybody shared fully in this belief, and thousands were crazy to go. So many prepared for the voyage that the ships would not hold them, and thus, disappointed, some had to stay behind. On a Sunday morning in early spring time (1539) seven ships set sail, with De Soto and six hundred eager companions on board.



THE LONG MARCH OF DE SOTO.

After touching at Cuba, De Soto arrived at Tampa Bay, on the western coast of Florida, without disaster. His plan was to go anywhere and everywhere in search of gold. At first he endeavored to capture some Indians who would serve as guides and interpreters.

He met with a remarkable piece of good fortune. He came upon a Spaniard, John Ortiz, who had been seized by the Indians many years before. He had lived with the red men, first as a captive cruelly treated, and afterward as a friend and counsellor; consequently he knew their language

and customs perfectly. No better guide and interpreter could have been found, and he was not at all unwilling to leave his Indian friends and cast in his lot with De Soto.

Now began a terrible march, northward and westward. The ground was covered with thick woods. Vines and tangled creepers ran from tree to tree. There were no roads except here and there Indian paths. The country was full of bogs and marshes, in which the horses stuck fast and sank. Every few miles rivers were reached—some wide, some narrow. When the travelers came to one that could not be forded, they made a rude bridge of trees; if the rivers were especially wide, they built boats. At times provisions were scarce, and men and horses grew thin and ill for lack of proper food.

Added to all this, the Indians were hostile and treacherous. In the land through which De Soto first passed, white men had been before. These had treated the Indians with great cruelty, and the red men, in their turn, were ready to fight and deceive whenever it was possible.

Then, too, De Soto was no improvement over the Spaniards whom the Indians had previously seen. When he passed into a region entirely unknown to white men, he was for a time received with kindness. The chiefs placed all their braves at his service and gave him plenty of food for his men and horses; in fact, gave him the best and all they had. But it did not take many days for this to change. De Soto was cruel; he captured the chiefs and made the Indians slaves, compelling them to carry his heavy burdens. If they rebelled or deserted they were tortured and killed. Therefore it was not strange that many battles were fought and many lives were lost.

All this time no gold was discovered. The Indians con-

tinually told stories of rich villages to the west. But when these settlements were reached, nothing of importance was found except a few pearls, which had been ruined by having holes bored through them. It was like following a will-o'-



THE BURIAL OF DE SOTO

the-wisp. Still they pushed on, their number daily growing smaller and the survivors weaker, ever hoping to find the fabled gold.

Finally they reached a mighty river, the Mississippi, which means in the Indian tongue the "father of waters." This river they crossed with great difficulty, and they pushed on west—ever west. After nearly a year more of travel, even De Soto became discouraged. The expedition turned and sought the sea. The Mississippi was again reached, where De Soto became ill and died. Then, a panic seized his followers; they feared that, now that their leader, whom the Indians supposed to be immortal, was gone, they would be

attacked and killed. Therefore they determined to conceal the death of De Soto from the Indians.

This was no small task, as the Indians were skilled in all kinds of woodcraft. They would be able to detect the slightest disturbance in leaf or twig, and a grave would quickly be discovered, no matter how skilfully concealed. One night a boat pushed out silently from the shore. When the deep water of the river was reached, the body of the intrepid leader was lifted over the side of the boat and lowered into the stream. Quickly it sank in the waters, with only a ripple to mark its resting-place.

It was a sad end for the brave De Soto, who had left his ships so hopefully three years before. His misfortunes he brought upon himself. The Indians were ready to repay kindness with kindness. They were cruelly and deceitfully treated, and they returned it doublefold.

De Soto's followers, discouraged and hopeless, succeeded in building a few small vessels. These were launched in the Mississippi River, and, fifteen months after the death of De Soto, reached Mexico. Out of the six hundred who set out from Tampa Bay, nearly half perished in this disastrous journey.

Describe the interest that Spaniards felt in the new countries.
Tell the story of De Soto's journey.
Describe the character of the country through which he passed.
Give an account of the death and burial of De Soto.

Was the desire for wealth sufficient to lead men to cross the ocean? Do you know of any recent cases where people have been "crazy to go" into some new country? How did it happen that John Ortiz was in America? Why were there "no roads"? What is meant by "fording a river"? Why did the Indians continually tell the Spaniards that there were "rich villages to the west"?



Sir Walter Raleigh



CHAPTER V

Sir Walter Raleigh

1552-1618

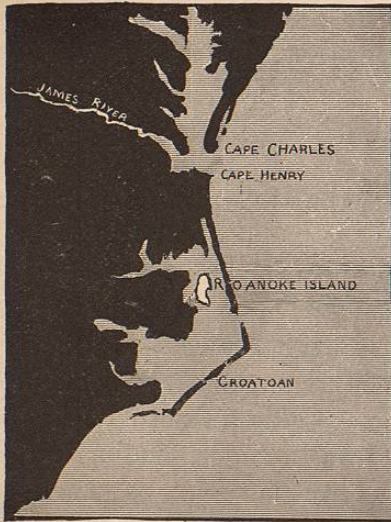
MORE than half a century after the voyages of Columbus an English boy was born, for whom the capital of North Carolina is named. His family had been illustrious for many generations, and, though it had lost much of its possessions, it was still able to give young Walter Raleigh a fair start in life.

After that, however, all that he accomplished was obtained by his own hard work. He was a soldier, fighting bravely in the civil wars in France. He was a sailor, leading in the overthrow of the famous Spanish Armada. He was an orator, able to dispute with the great statesmen of his day. He was a courtier, the favorite of Queen Elizabeth.

Raleigh was a man of commanding presence. He was six feet in height and remarkably well built. He was accustomed, like the other courtiers of Elizabeth, to set off his handsome face and striking form by dress of the richest material. Silks and velvets, embroidered with gems and gold, were his usual apparel. He possessed most charming manners and was a model of politeness. One day the queen, with her attendant courtiers, came to a muddy place in the road. Seeing that she hesitated to place her dainty slippers

in the mud, Raleigh immediately "spread his new plush cloak on the ground, whereon the queen trod gently over, rewarding him afterward with many suits for his so free and seasonable tender of so fair a foot-cloth."

Raleigh, however, was more than a mere idler about the court. Before he was thirty years of age he began to



WHERE RALEIGH LANDED.

show an interest in America. Eighty years had passed since the voyages of Cabot gave England a claim to the Atlantic coast of America. Meanwhile, Spain had conquered Mexico and the West Indies, and had made a settlement at Saint Augustine in Florida. France had explored the coast and had tried to establish colonies. But England had apparently forgotten all about the new world.

The time had come for a revival of English interest in America. Sir Francis Drake returned from his voyage around the world and gave an account of what he had seen of the unknown lands. Martin Frobisher sought a northwest passage around the new continent to Asia. Sir Humphrey Gilbert made two expeditions from England, and tried in vain to make a settlement in Newfoundland. A few of the more thoughtful as well as the more adventurous Englishmen began to perceive that a new England in America would greatly increase

the power of the old England across the water. Among these statesmen was Walter Raleigh, the handsome, popular, brave courtier of Elizabeth.

Raleigh was a younger brother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and had taken part in his first expedition. Fortunately he did not accompany his brother in the second, or he might have lost his life in the same storm in which his brother perished.

The death of Gilbert and the loss of his entire fortune did not lessen Raleigh's desire to build up an English home in the new world. He took up the work where his brother left it, and the next year fitted out two ships to explore the coast of America and choose a suitable place for a colony.

The leaders of this expedition returned and reported that the Island of Roanoke, off the coast of what was later called Carolina, was well adapted for a settlement. There they had found a fertile soil, a delightful climate, and friendly Indians. Queen Elizabeth knighted Raleigh for this expedition, and directed that the new country be named, in her honor, Virginia.

The next year (1585) Sir Walter sent out his first colony. What energy and courage were needed by the one hundred colonists, who left England in a fleet of seven small vessels! A voyage across the Atlantic did not then contain the terrors that it had in the time of Columbus, but the thought of a home in the wilds of an unknown land, thousands of miles from England, with an ocean between them and all their friends, must have been disheartening. But they sailed bravely across the waters, began at once to build their rude houses, and sent all their vessels back to England.

Troubles arose at once. The friendly Indians of the year before began to show themselves hostile. They did not like

the thought that these newcomers were taking the land that had been theirs. They were angry, and they had reason to be, at the way the white men treated them.

Governor Ralph Lane had sent out an exploring party soon after the colonists arrived. On its return it was found that a silver cup, which one of the party had carried, was missing. Instantly they charged the red men with stealing it. Hastening back, they came to an Indian town from which all the inhabitants had fled. In retaliation for the loss of the cup the white men burned the whole town, with all the houses and stores of provisions. This foolish act was followed by a long series of injuries, until the red men plotted to massacre the entire colony.

Lane and his little band discovered the plot and succeeded in defending themselves. But the constant fear of the Indians and the unaccustomed hardships proved too much for the colonists. They missed their well-built houses at home, their wholesome food, and their soft beds. When Sir Francis Drake sailed into the harbor in June, he was eagerly besought to take them home. The admiral consented, and Raleigh's first colony was abandoned.

Governor Lane carried home with him samples of three of the products of the new world, which had hitherto been unknown in England—maize or Indian corn, white potatoes, and tobacco. Raleigh planted the potatoes on his estate in Ireland, where the root became popular. It has since been cultivated by the people of that island so persistently that it is now everywhere known as the Irish potato.

Lane and Raleigh also introduced into Europe the habit of smoking. Every one knows the story of Raleigh's servant, who, carrying his master a mug of ale, saw him for the first time sending forth whiffs of tobacco-smoke. Overcome

with fright, the man threw the ale in Raleigh's face and ran from the room, calling out that his master was on fire and would soon be consumed.

Still anxious to extend the English domain, Raleigh sent out a larger colony the next year, under Captain John White. When the fleet reached Roanoke Island, it was found that all the houses of the previous settlement had been destroyed by the Indians. Where the village had been was now a melon-patch.

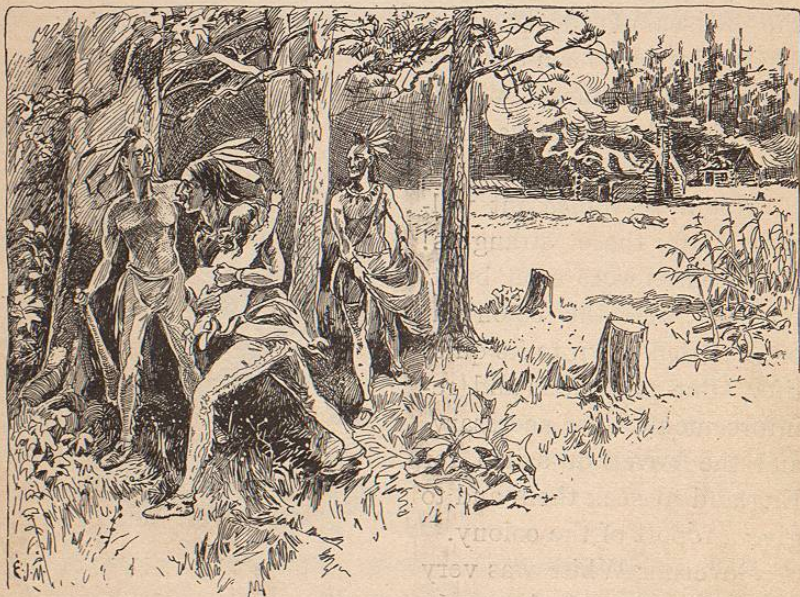
Not a very pleasant welcome for these strangers! New houses were soon built, however, and the colony at once settled down to its quiet life. But provisions and reinforcements were necessary, and the governor sailed for England to seek them and to give a report of the colony.

Governor White was very sorry to be compelled so early to leave the colony. He felt himself responsible for its welfare, and he was especially anxious because he left behind him a daughter, Mrs. Dare, and a little granddaughter. This girl was named Virginia, because she was the first English child born in the new land. She was but nine days old when her grandfather sailed out of sight of the colony. Anxiously did the governor look forward to a quick return from England.



RALEIGH'S FRIGHTENED SERVANT TRYING TO EXTINGUISH HIS SMOKING MASTER.

But England was at war with Spain. The Spanish Armada, of nearly a hundred and fifty vessels, was preparing to make an attack upon the English. Raleigh, like all other true Englishmen, was devoting his energies to aid in warding off the attack. The little band of exiles on Roanoke



VIRGINIA DARE, THE FIRST WHITE GIRL BORN IN AMERICA, CARRIED OFF BY INDIANS.

Island must wait a while. Two vessels, it is true, were sent to carry them supplies, but both met Spanish ships and were driven back to England. It was three years after Governor White sailed out of Roanoke Harbor before an English rescue fleet arrived.

The little settlement was nowhere to be seen. Scarcely any remains were found to indicate that white men had ever

lived there. On the bark of one of the trees the letters C-R-O-A-T-A-N had been cut. This was intended to show where the colonists had gone. But where was "Croatan"? And where were the eighty-nine men, the seventeen women, and the little Virginia Dare? No one could tell then and no one can tell now. They were never found. They may have been killed by the red men, though perhaps they were adopted into an Indian tribe. Thus perished the second colony.

Raleigh was discouraged. He could not afford to send out more expeditions. He was engaged in other matters during the rest of his life. He spent many of his later years in prison, and finally was beheaded, because of the hatred of the new king, James I. Yet he lived long enough to see the first permanent English colony established on the James River, a few hundred miles from Roanoke Island.

Tell the story of Raleigh: as a boy; as a courtier; as a sailor.

Describe Raleigh's first colony; his second colony.

Explain why English interest in the new world was awakened.

Give an account of the loss of the cup; of the possible fate of the colonists.

Why was the name Raleigh given to the capital of North Carolina rather than to that of some other State? Did Raleigh expect a reward when he kept the mud from the queen's slippers? What hope that Columbus had was still held by some people in Raleigh's time? Why was the voyage of Raleigh's colonists less dreaded than that of Columbus? Had the colonists any right to destroy the Indian town? Which of the three new plants found by Governor Lane has proved of the most value?

