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978-1-108-01059-7 - Narrative of the Proceedings of Pedrarias Davila in the Provinces of Tierra Firme, or Castilla del Oro

Pascual de Andagoya

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### **Narrative of the Proceedings of Pedrarias Davila in the Provinces of Tierra Firme, or Castilla del Oro**

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Proceedings of  
Pedrarias Davila  
in the Provinces of  
Tierra Firme, or  
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*And of the Discovery of the South Sea and the  
Coasts of Peru and Nicaragua*

PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA



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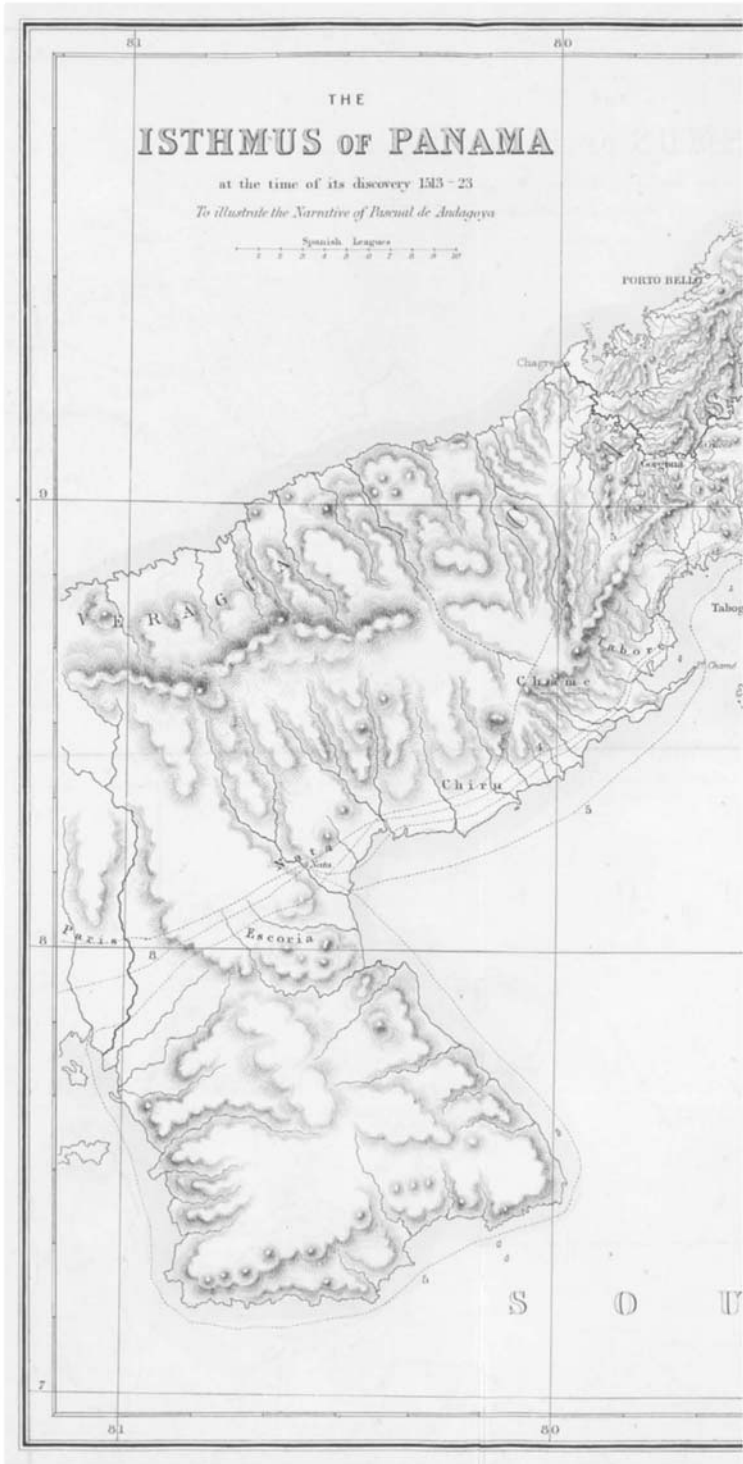
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OF  
PEDRARIAS DAVILA  
IN THE  
PROVINCES OF TIERRA FIRME OR CASTILLA DEL ORO,  
AND OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOUTH SEA AND  
THE COASTS OF PERU AND NICARAGUA.  
WRITTEN BY  
THE ADELANTADO  
PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA.  
TRANSLATED AND EDITED,  
WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION,  
BY  
CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY.

M.DCCC.LXV.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA was one of the officers who accompanied Pedrarias, when he went out as governor of the newly discovered isthmus between the North and South Seas in 1514. Andagoya was engaged in several of the exploring expeditions which were despatched from Darien, and he was the first Spaniard who obtained authentic information respecting the rich empire of the Yncas. His discoveries led to the expeditions of Pizarro and Almagro, and Andagoya himself was eventually governor, for a very short time, of the provinces round Popayan. His narrative is that of an eye-witness of some of the most stirring events which preceded the discovery of Peru. The conquest of the isthmus and the establishment of a colony at Panama were the necessary preliminaries to Spanish dominion along the shores of the South Sea. An account of these events, written by one of the actors in them, therefore, possesses peculiar interest, and the narrative of Pascual de Andagoya<sup>1</sup> has

<sup>1</sup> It is printed in the work of Navarrete. *Coleccion de los viages y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los Españoles, desde fines de siglo xv. Seccion iii. Establicimientos de los Españoles en el Darien.* Tom. iii, No. vii, p. 393. The original MS. is preserved in the Indian Archives at Seville.

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accordingly been deemed worthy of a place in the series of volumes printed for the Hakluyt Society.

A famous discovery had been made, before the arrival of Pedrarias and his train of officers and lawyers, by one of the greatest men that the age of Spanish conquest in America produced. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, in March 1511, found himself the leading and most popular man in the forlorn colony of Darien. The expeditions of Nicuesa and Ojeda had failed, chiefly through the incompetence of their unfortunate leaders.<sup>1</sup> The man who, a few short months before, had been a fugitive debtor headed up in a cask, was now the commander of a great enterprise. An incapable though learned lawyer, the Bachelor Enciso, alone stood between Vasco Nuñez and his ambition, and such an obstacle was at once removed. The erudite author of the *Suma de Geografia* was shipped off to Spain, and Vasco Nuñez commenced his short but brilliant career of discovery.

His acts, during his government of the colony of Darien, stamp him as a born ruler of men. His policy towards the Indians was humane and statesman-like, while his sympathy for the sufferings of his own men ensured him just popularity among the wild and reckless spirits who formed his colony. There is more of diplomacy and negotiation, than of massacre and oppression in the history of this great discoverer's career; but there was no want of that dauntless spirit of enterprise, that resolute endurance of incredible hardships and sufferings by which alone the conquest of the New World

<sup>1</sup> See note at p. 34 of my translation of Cieza de Leon.

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could be achieved. His treatment of the cacique of Coiba secured the little colony of Darien a most valuable ally. His visit to the wealthy chief Comogre, from whose son the first news of the existence of the great South Sea was received, added another nation to the list of his allies. His romantic expedition in search of the golden Dobaybe was unstained by the atrocities which usually marked the proceedings of Spanish explorers. Finally, his memorable discovery of the Pacific Ocean could not have been achieved if his humane diplomacy had not secured the friendship of the Indian tribes in his rear.

Reduced to the greatest distress by the neglect of the authorities in Spain and St. Domingo to send him succour, and surrounded by dense forests and pestilential morasses, Vasco Nuñez never lost heart. He overcame difficulties which to most men would have appeared insuperable, and won the proud distinction of having equalled Cortes and Pizarro in bravery and perseverance; while he is among the few *Conquistadores* who showed any sign of such qualities as humanity and generosity, when the unfortunate natives were concerned. Vasco Nuñez fully explained the difficulties which surrounded him, to the Spanish Government, in a long letter dated January 1513 from Darien, six months before his discovery of the South Sea; and the words of the man himself convey the best idea of his position. He says:—

“Most Christian and most puissant Lord,

“Some days ago I wrote to your Majesty by a caravel which came to this town, giving your very Royal Highness

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an account of all that has happened in these parts. I also wrote by a brigantine which left this town for the island of Española, to let the admiral<sup>1</sup> know that we were in extreme distress; and now we have been supplied by two ships laden with provisions. We were then reduced to such extremities that, if succour had been delayed, it would no longer have been necessary. For no remedy could then have delivered us from the consequences of famine; and in our great need we lost 300 of the men we found here of those I commanded, of those of Uraba under Alonzo de Ojeda, and of those under Diego de Nicuesa at Veragua. With much labour I have united all these parties together, as your Royal Majesty will see in another letter which I write to your very Royal Highness, where I give an account of all that has taken place here. I sent, most Royal Highness, to order that the persons who were in the settlement of Diego de Nicuesa should be brought to this town, and I treated them with all the attention that was possible. Your most Royal Highness will be aware that, after Diego de Nicuesa came to this town and thence departed for Española, I took as much care of the people that were left in his settlement, as if they had been under my own charge, and had been conveyed from Castile by order of your Royal Highness. When I found that they were in want, I remembered to send provisions to them one two or three times, until after a year and a half I conveyed them to this town, seeing that I should thus further the service of your most Royal Highness. For if I had not helped them they would have been lost, five or six dying of hunger every day, and the survivors being thinned by the Indians. Now all the men who were left behind by Diego de Nicuesa are in this town. From the first day of their arrival here they have been treated as well as if they had been sent by

<sup>1</sup> The son of Christopher Columbus, who had inherited that title, and the government of Hispaniola, from his father.

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order of your most Royal Highness, for there has been no difference made with them, any more than if they had come here on the first day. As soon as they arrived here they were given their pieces of land for building and planting in a very good situation, close to those occupied by the men who came with me to this town, for the land was not yet divided, and they arrived in time to receive some of the best pieces. I have to inform your most Royal Highness that both the governors, as well Diego de Nicuesa as Alonzo de Ojeda, performed their duties very ill, and that they were the causes of their own perdition, because they knew not how to act, and because, after they arrived in these parts, they took such presumptuous fancies into their thoughts that they appeared to be lords of the land. They imagined they could rule the land and do all that was necessary from their beds; and thus they acted, believing that they had nothing further to do. But the nature of the land is such that if he who has charge of the government sleeps, he cannot awake when he wishes, for this is a land that obliges the man who governs to be very watchful. The country is difficult to travel through, on account of the numerous rivers and morasses and mountains, where many men die owing to the great labour they have to endure, for every day we are exposed to death in a thousand forms. I have thought of nothing, by day or by night, but how to support myself and the handful of men whom God has placed under my charge, and how to maintain them until your Highness sends reinforcements. I have taken care that the Indians of this land are not ill-treated, permitting no man to injure them, and giving them many things from Castile, whereby they may be drawn into friendship with us. This honourable treatment of the Indians has been the cause of my learning great secrets from them, through the knowledge of which large quantities of gold may be obtained, and your Highness will thus be well served. I have often thought how it will be

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possible for us to sustain life, seeing that we have been as badly succoured from the island of Española as if we had not been Christians. But our Lord, by his infinite mercy, has chosen to supply us with provisions in this land, though we have often been in such straits that we expected to die of hunger; yet at the time of our greatest necessity our Lord has pointed out the means of relief. Your most Royal Highness must know that after we came here, we were forced to travel from one place to another, by reason of the great scarcity, and it astonishes me how we could have endured such hardships. The things that have happened have been more by the hand of God than by the hand of men. Up to the present time I have taken care that none of my people shall go hence unless I myself go in front of them, whether it be by night or day, marching across rivers, through swamps and forests and over mountains; and your Royal Highness should not imagine that the swamps of this land are so light that they can be crossed easily, for many times we have had to go a league, and two and three leagues, through swamps and water, stripped naked, with our clothes fastened on a shield upon our heads, and when we had come to the end of one swamp we have had to enter another, and to walk in this way from two or three to ten days. And if the person who is entrusted with the government of this land remains in his house, and leaves the work to others, no one else he can send in his place can manage the people so well, or fail to make mistakes which may cause the destruction of himself and of all who are with him. I can say this with truth, as a person that has seen what happens; for sometimes, when I have been unable to go with the men because I have been detained by some business connected with the sowing of the crops, I have observed that those whom I have sent in my place, have not acted according to reason.

“I, my Lord, have taken care that everything that has



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been obtained, up to the present day, shall be properly divided, as well the gold and the pearls (the shares of your most Royal Highness being put on one side) as the clothing and eatables; but up to the present time we have valued the eatables more than the gold, for we have more gold than health, and often have I searched in various directions, desiring more to find a sack of corn than a bag of gold; and I can certify the truth of this to your most Royal Highness, for we have been more in want of food than of gold. I assure your most Royal Highness that if I had not personally gone in front of my men, searching for food for those who went with me, as well as for those that remained in this town, there would have been no one left in the town or in the land, unless our Lord had miraculously taken pity upon us. The way I have adopted in dividing the gold that has been procured, is to give a proper share to each man who has been engaged in finding it. All receive shares of the food, although some have not gone in search of it.

“I desire to give an account to your most Royal Highness of the great secrets and marvellous riches of this land of which God has made your most Royal Highness the Lord, and me the discoverer before any other, for which I give many thanks and much praise for all the days of the world, and I hold myself to be the most fortunate man that has been born in the world, seeing that our Lord has been served at my hands rather than at those of another. As so propitious a commencement has been made, I beseech your most Royal Highness that I may be permitted to complete this great enterprise, and I am bold to make this supplication to your most Royal Highness, because I know that you will thus be well served, for I venture to say that, with the help of God, and with industry, I shall be able to conduct the enterprise in such a way that your most Royal Highness will be thereby well served. But for this purpose your most Royal Highness should order that 500 or more men be presently sent from

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the island of Española, that, united with those already here, although we have not more than 100 fit to bear arms, I may be able to march into the interior of the land, and pass over to the other sea on the south side.

“That which I, by much labour and great hardships, have had the fortune to discover, is as follows :—In this province of Darien many very rich mines have been found, and there is gold in great quantities. Twenty rivers have been discovered, and thirty containing gold flow from a mountain about two leagues from this town, towards the south. This mountain is towards the west, and between the town and the mountain no gold bearing rivers have been seen, but I believe they exist. Following the course of the great river of San Juan for thirty leagues on the right hand side, one arrives at a province called Abanumaqué, which contains much gold. I have certain intelligence that there are very rich rivers of gold in this province, from a son of a Cacique,<sup>1</sup> and from other Indian men and women whom I have taken. Thirty leagues up this great river, on the left hand, a very large and beautiful stream flows into it, and two days’ journey up this stream there is a Cacique called Davaive. He is a very great lord with a large and very populous land. He has great store of gold in his house, so much indeed that he who does not know the things of this land would be very hard of belief. I know this of a certainty. All the gold that goes forth from this gulf comes from the house of the cacique Davaive, as well as all that is owned by the caciques of those districts, and it is reported that they have many pieces of gold curiously worked, and very large. Many Indians who have seen them, tell me that this cacique Davaive has certain bags of gold, and that it takes the whole strength of a man to lift one of them on to his back.

“The cacique collects the gold, and this is the manner of his obtaining it.

<sup>1</sup> This was the son of the Cacique Comogre. See p. 11 (note).

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“Two days’ journey from his house there is a very beautiful country inhabited by a very evil Carib race, who eat as many men as they can get. They are a people without a chief, and there is no one whom they obey. They are warlike, and each man is his own master. They are lords of the mines, and these mines, according to the news I have heard, are the richest in the world. They are in a land where there is a mountain which appears to be the largest in the world, and I believe that so large a mountain has never before been seen. It rises up on the Uraba side of this gulf, somewhat inland, it may be twenty leagues from the sea. The way to it is in a southerly direction. At first the land is flat, but it gradually rises, and at last it is so high that it is covered with clouds. During two years we have only twice seen its summit, because it is continually obscured by clouds. Up to a certain point it is covered with a forest of great trees, and higher up the mountain has no trees whatever. It rises in the most beautiful and level country in the world, near the territory of this cacique Davaive. The very rich mines are in this land towards the rising of the sun, and it is two days’ journey from the rich mines to the abode of this cacique Davaive.

“There are two methods of collecting the gold without any trouble. One is by waiting until the river rises in the ravines, and when the freshes pass off, the beds remain dry, and the gold is laid bare, which has been robbed from the mountains and brought down in very large lumps. The Indians describe them as being the size of oranges or of a fist, and others like flat slabs. The other way of gathering gold is by waiting until the plants on the hills are dry, which are set on fire, and when they are consumed the Indians go to search in the most likely places, and collect great quantities of very beautiful grains of gold. The Indians who gather this gold, bring it in grains to be melted, and barter it with this cacique Davaive, in exchange for youths and boys

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to eat, and for women to serve them as wives, whom they do not eat. He gives them also many pigs, as well as fish, cotton cloth, and salt, and such worked pieces of gold as they want. These Indians only trade with the cacique Davaive, and with no one else.

“This cacique Davaive has a great place for melting gold in his house, and he has a hundred men continually working at the gold. I know all this of a certainty, for I have never received any other account, in whatever direction I may have gone. I have heard it from many caciques and Indians, as well from natives of the territory of this cacique Davaive, as from those of other parts, so that I believe it to be true, because I have heard it in many forms, obtaining the information from some by torments, from others for love, and from others in exchange for things of Castile.<sup>1</sup> I also have certain information that, after ascending this river of San Juan for fifty leagues there are very rich mines on both sides of the river. The river is navigated in the small canoes of the Indians, because there are many narrow and winding mouths overhung with trees, and these cannot be passed except in canoes three or four *palmos* in breadth. After the river is entered ships may be built of eight or more *palmos*, which may be rowed with twenty oars, like *fastus*,<sup>2</sup> but the river has a very strong current, which even the Indian canoes can hardly stem. When it is blowing fresh the vessels may make sail, assisted by the oars in turning some of the windings.

“The people who wander along the upper course of this great river are evil and warlike. It is necessary to be very cunning in dealing with them. I have news of many other

<sup>1</sup> The Dobaybe was as famous a person as the El Dorado, amongst the early Spanish conquerors. He appears to have been a chief whose territory stretched along the banks of the river Atrato.

<sup>2</sup> Lateen rigged craft in the Mediterranean.

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things, but I will not declare them until I know them more fully, believing that I shall discover them with the help of God.

“That which is to be found down this coast to the westward is the province called Careta, which is twenty leagues distant. There are certain rivers in it which contain gold, according to Indian men and women who are in this town. The Spaniards have not gone there, in order not to rouse the country until we have more men, for we are now few in number. Further down the coast, at a distance of forty leagues from this city, and twelve leagues inland, there is a cacique named Comogre, and another named Pocorosa; who are at equal distances from the sea. They have many wars with each other. They each have a town inland, and another on the sea-coast, by which the interior is supplied with fish. The Indians assured me that there were very rich rivers of gold near the houses of these caciques. At the distance of a day’s journey from the cacique Pocorosa’s house there are the most beautiful mountains that have been seen in these parts. They are clear of forests, except some groves of trees along the banks of mountain streams.

“In these mountains there are certain caciques who have great quantities of gold in their houses. It is said that these caciques store their gold in *barbacoas* like maize, because it is so abundant that they do not care to keep it in baskets; that all the rivers of these mountains contain gold; and that they have very large lumps in great abundance. Their method of collecting the gold is by going into the water, and gathering it in their baskets. They also scrape it up in the beds of streams, when they are dry; and that your most Royal Highness may be more completely informed concerning these parts, I send an Indian workman of that district who has collected it many times. Your most Royal Highness must not hold this subject as one for a jest, for I am in truth well assured of it by many principal Indians and caci-

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ques. I, sire, have myself been very near these mountains, within a day's journey, but I did not reach them, because I was unable to do so, owing to the want of men; for a man gets as far as he can, not as far as he wishes. Beyond these mountains the country is very flat towards the south, and the Indians say that the other sea is at a distance of three days' journey. All the caciques and Indians of the country of Comogre tell me that there is such great store of gold collected in lumps, in the houses of the caciques of the other sea, that we should be astonished. They declare that there is much gold in very large grains in all the rivers of the other coast, and that the Indians of the other sea come to the residence of this cacique Comogre by a river, and bring gold from the mines to be melted, in very large round grains, and in great quantity. In exchange for the gold they get cotton cloth and good looking Indian men and women. They do not eat them like the people towards the great river. They say that the people of the other coast are very good and well mannered; and I am told that the other sea is very good for canoe navigation, for that it is always smooth, and never rough like the sea on this side, according to the Indians. I believe that there are many islands in that sea. They say that there are many large pearls, and that the caciques have baskets of them, as well as the Indian men and women generally. The river which flows from the territory of the cacique Comogre to the other sea, forms itself into three branches, each one of which enters the other sea by itself. They say that the pearls are brought to the cacique Comogre in canoes by the western branch. The canoes with gold from all parts enter by the eastern branch. It is a most astonishing thing and without equal, that our Lord has made you the lord of this land. It should not be forgotten that your most Royal Highness will be served by sending me reinforcements; when I will, if our Lord favours me, discover things so grand, and places where so much

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gold and such wealth may be had, that a great part of the world might be conquered with it. I assure your most Royal Highness that I have worked with more diligence for the service of your most Royal Highness than the governors who were lost here, Alonzo de Ojeda and Diego de Nicuesa ; for I have not remained in my bed while my people were entering and exploring the country. I must let your most Royal Highness know that no party has gone into any part of this land unless I was in front as a guide opening the road with my own hands, for those who went with me. If this is not believed, I refer to what I have sent home, and to the fruits which each one of those who have laboured here has yielded.

“As one who has seen the things of these parts, and who has more knowledge of the land than anyone else has hitherto acquired, and because I desire that the affairs of these regions which I have originated, may flourish and reach such a position as to be of service to your most Royal Highness ; I must make known what is necessary to be done and to be provided at once, and until the land is known and explored. The chief requirement is that a thousand men should come from the island of Española, for those who might come direct from Castile would not be fit for much until they were accustomed to the country, for they would be lost, and us who are now here with them. Your most Royal Highness will please to order that, for the present, this colony be supplied with provisions at the hands of your most Royal Highness, that the land may be explored and its secrets made known. And thus two things will be effected; one that much money will be gained in the markets, and the other and principal one that, the land being supplied with provisions, great things and vast riches may be discovered, by the help of God. It is also necessary to provide the means of building small ships for the rivers, and to send pitch, nails, ropes, and sails, with some master shipwrights

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who understand ship-building. Your most Royal Highness should also send two hundred cross-bows with very strong stays and fittings, and with long ranges. They should not weigh more than two pounds; and money would thus be saved, because each man in this place ought to have one or two cross-bows, as they are very good arms against the Indians, and useful in the chase of birds and other game. Two dozen very good hand-guns, of light metal, are also required; for those made of iron are soon damaged by the constant damp, and are eaten away with rust. They should not weigh more than from twenty-five to thirty pounds, and they should not be long, so that a man may be able to carry one of them wherever it may be necessary. Very good powder is also wanted.

“For the present, it is necessary that as large a reinforcement of troops as possible should be sent to the province of Darien, because it is a land very full of hostile tribes. There should also be a force at the mines of Tubanama, in the province of Comogre, because it is also a very populous region. At present, most puissant lord, the troops cannot build with lime and stone, nor with mud, but are obliged to make double palisades of very strong wood, with mud between them, surrounded by a good strong ditch. And those who tell your most Royal Highness that forts may be built of stone and lime, or of other material, have not seen the quality of the land. What I would urge, most puissant lord, is that people should come, so that the land may be explored from these two stations of Davaive and Comogre, and that the secrets of it may be known, as well as those of the sea on the other side towards the south, and all other matters. Your most Royal Highness should also send workmen to look after the cross-bows, for every day they get out of order, owing to the constant damp. In all the matters which I have named, your most Royal Highness would gain money, and it would cost nothing beyond the order to send people here.



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“Those Indians, in certain of the provinces, who eat men, and others at the bottom of the gulf of Uraba and in the extensive flooded parts near the great river of San Juan and round the gulf, at the entrance of the flat country of the province of Davaive, have no workshops, nor do they support themselves on anything but fish, which they exchange for maize. These are worthless people, and when canoes of Christians have gone on the great river of San Juan, they have come against them, and have killed some of our people. The country where the Indians eat men is very bad and useless, and can never at any time be turned to account. But these Indians of Caribana have richly deserved death a thousand times over, for they are a very evil race, and have killed many of our Christians when we lost the ship. I would not make slaves of so bad a people, but would order them to be destroyed, both old and young, that no memory may remain of them. I speak now of Caribana and for twenty leagues inland, the people being evil, and the country sterile and worthless. And it will be serviceable to your Highness to give permission to take these natives to Española and the other islands occupied by Christians, to be sold and made profitable, that other slaves may be bought for their price; for it is impossible to keep them even for a day, the country being very extensive, where they can run away and hide. Thus the settlers in these parts, not having Indians secured, cannot work for the service of your Highness, nor extract any gold from the mines. The settlers would also beseech your Highness to grant them permission to bring Indians from Veragua, from a gulf called San Blas, which is fifty leagues from this town, down the coast. Your Highness will be well served in granting this request, because it is a very worthless land, covered with great swamps and forests, and, seen from the sea, it appears to be inundated. So that no profit whatever can be made out of these Indians of Veragua and Caribana, except in this way, by bringing them

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to Christian settlements, whence they can be taken to Cuba, Jamaica, and other islands inhabited by Christians, to be exchanged for other Indians, of which there are many in those islands. Thus by sending the warlike Indians far from their homes, the natives of these parts will labour well in the islands, and those of the islands here. I must inform your Highness that permission to take the Indians of the islands to the main land would be very conducive to your service, and I must make known to your Highness that, for a distance of two hundred leagues round this town there is no inhabited island, except one in Carthagena, where the people defend themselves well.

“As regards the gold that is collected from the Indians by barter or during war, it will conduce to your service to give permission that henceforth a fifth may be given to your Highness of all that may be obtained; and the reason why this will conduce to the service of your Highness is that, the share being a fourth, it is looked upon as hard service to discover land and to march in war through great hardships, for in truth they are so great as to be intolerable. The men prefer to seek for gold, and there are very good mines near here, rather than to go and die. And if I, or the governor who may succeed me, have to make the Christians go inland on expeditions of discovery, they will never go willingly, and a thing done against the will is never so well done as it should be; while, when it is done willingly, all will be done well and according to our desire. I, therefore, assure your Highness that if the Royal share of gold is a fifth, it will be collected in much larger quantity than when it is a fourth, besides which the country will be discovered according to your Highness’s desire.

“With respect to the arms and the means of building brigantines, and the shipwrights, these are important points, because without them no good work can be done. If your Highness should order them to be sent, it would be entirely

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at the cost of the settlers in these parts, without any expense to your Highness ; and if your Highness would command that everything should be supplied which I have asked for, it would be a great advantage, and the land would be provided with all that is necessary. Your Highness should receive all this from me as your loyal servant, and should give it credence because your Highness's service will thus be advanced. I do not desire to make towers of wind like the governors whom your Highness sent out, for between them both they have lost eight hundred men, and those whom I have rescued scarcely amount to fifty, and this is the truth. Your Highness will consider all that I have done, and discovered, and endured with these people, without any help but from God and my own industry.

"If I have erred in anything in working for the service of your Highness, I beseech your Highness that my earnest desire to serve your Highness may be considered. Although, most puissant Lord, I have not succeeded in doing all that is necessary in this land, I can certify that I know how to administer better than all those who have come here hitherto: and that your Highness may understand this, you must consider how little other governors have discovered until to-day, and how they have all failed, and left these shores very full of graves, while, although many Christians may lie underground, it is true that most of those that have died have been eaten by dogs and crows. I do not desire to enlarge upon this, but your Highness should know what each man has been able to do and has done up to this time.

"Most puissant Lord,—I have sent Sebastian del Campo, that your Highness may be better informed of all that has passed here ; and I entreat your Highness to give him full credence, for he has been informed by me of the whole truth concerning all that can be done in the service of your Highness, and of that which ought to be done for this land.

"Your Highness must know that formerly there were

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certain disagreements here, because the *alcaldes* and *regidores* of this town, filled with envy and treachery, attempted to seize me, and when they failed in that, they made false charges against me with false witnesses and in secret. I complain of this to your Highness, because if such acts are not chastised, no governor whom your Highness may send here will be free from attacks. For I, being *alcalde mayor* for your Highness, have been exposed to a thousand slanders; and if the representative of your Highness is not respected, he cannot do what is necessary for your service. And because the *alcaldes* and *regidores* sent an accusation against me, which I believe your Highness will see; I appointed two gentlemen as my judges, that they might draw up a report of my life, and of the great and loyal services which I have done for your Highness in those parts of the Indies where we now are; which I send to your Highness, that you may see the malice of these people, and because I believe that your Highness will be pleased with all that I have done in these parts for your service. I beseech your Highness that favour may be shown me in proportion to my services. I also send a report of what passed with respect to those who invented these calumnies.

“Most puissant Lord, I desire to ask a favour of your Highness, for I have done much in your service. It is that your Highness will command that no bachelor of laws nor of anything else, unless it be of medicine, shall come to this part of the Indies on pain of heavy punishment which your Highness shall order to be inflicted, for no bachelor has ever come here who is not a devil, and who does not lead the life of devils. And not only are they themselves evil, but they give rise to a thousand law-suits and quarrels. This order would be greatly to the advantage of your Highness’s service, for the country is new. Most puissant Lord, in a brigantine that we sent from here, on board of which was Juan de Quizedo and Rodrigo de Colmenares, I forwarded

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to your Highness 500 *pesos* of gold from the mines, in very beautiful grains, and as the voyage is somewhat dangerous for small vessels, I now send to your Highness, by Sebastian del Campo, 370 *pesos* of gold from the mines. I would have sent more if it had not been for the impossibility of collecting it during the short time the vessels were here. With respect to all that I have said, I beseech your Highness to do that which is best for your service. May the life and royal estate of your Highness prosper by the addition of many more kingdoms and lordships to your sacred rule, and may all that is discovered in these parts increase the power of your Highness, as your most Royal Highness may desire; for there are greater riches here than in any other part of the world. From the town of Santa Maria del Antigua, in the province of Darien, in the gulf of Uraba, to-day this Thursday the 20th of January in the year 1513. The making and creation of your Highness, who kisses your most royal hands and feet, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.”<sup>1</sup>

This interesting letter gives a clear insight into the position and designs of Vasco Nuñez two years after he had taken command of the colony at Darien. He had headed numerous exploring expeditions, had formed alliances with Indian tribes, and was then preparing his expedition to discover the South Sea, concerning which he had collected correct and detailed information. But his appeal to the king for reinforcements and supplies met with no response, while the crushing

<sup>1</sup> *Navarrete, Coll.*, tom. iii, No. v, p. 375. The original is in the Indian Archives at Seville. Vasco Nuñez addressed another letter to the Emperor, after the arrival of Pedrarias, from which I have quoted in the notes to Andagoya's narrative. It is dated October 16th, 1515.

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news was soon afterwards conveyed to him that the complaints of his enemy, the lawyer Enciso, had been favourably heard at court, and that he would probably be summoned to Spain to answer for his conduct. This intelligence made him resolve to attempt some great undertaking which might cast oblivion over the past, and on the 1st of September, 1513, he set out from Darien, to cross the mountains, and discover the South Sea.

The details of that famous enterprise are too well known to require repetition in this place. Had the news of its successful issue reached the Spanish court a few months earlier, the fate of half a continent would have been changed. A young and statesmanlike ruler, instead of a cruel and passionate old dotard, would have settled the Isthmus of Panama ; and the humane and enlightened Vasco Nuñez, instead of the ruthless and illiterate Pizarro, would have been the conqueror of Peru. But this was not to be. Vasco Nuñez returned to Darien, from the coast of that mighty ocean which he had discovered, only to receive the tidings that old Pedrarias, with fifteen hundred men, was coming out from Spain to supersede him.

Pedrarias was accompanied by many learned clerks and gallant knights. Among them were Quevedo the bishop, Oviedo the future historian, Enciso the learned geographer and spiteful enemy of Vasco Nuñez, Espinosa the subtle lawyer, Belalcazar the destined conqueror of Quito, Hernando de Soto the discoverer of the Mississippi, and Pascual de Andagoya.

Andagoya was born in the valley of Cuartango, in the