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NARRATIVE OF THE CONQUEST OF PERU.

BY

FRANCISCO XERES.

BECAUSE the Divine Providence ; and the fortune of Cæsar ; and the prudence, fortitude, military discipline, labours, perilous navigations, and battles of the Spaniards, vassals of the most invincible Emperor of the Roman Empire, our natural King and Lord, will cause joy to the faithful and terror to the infidels ; for the glory of God our Lord and for the service of the Catholic Imperial Majesty ; it has seemed good to me to write this narrative, and to send it to your Majesty, that all may have a knowledge of what is here related. It will be to the glory of God, because they have conquered and brought to our holy Catholic Faith so vast a number of heathens, aided by His holy guidance. It will be to the honour of our Emperor because, by reason of his great power and good fortune, such events happened in his time. It will give joy to the faithful that such battles have been won, such provinces discovered and conquered, such riches brought home for the King and for themselves ; and that such terror has been spread among the infidels, such admiration excited in all mankind.

For when, either in ancient or modern times, have such great exploits been achieved by so few against so many ; over so many climes, across so many seas, over such distances by land, to subdue the unseen and unknown ? Whose deeds can be compared with those of Spain ? Not surely those of the Jews, nor of the Greeks, nor even of the

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Romans, of whom more is written than of any other people. For though the Romans subjugated so many provinces, yet they did so with an equal number of troops or but slightly less in number, and the lands were known, and well supplied with provisions, and their captains and armies were paid. But our Spaniards, being few in number, never having more than two hundred or three hundred men together, and sometimes only a hundred and even fewer (only once, and that twenty years ago, with the Captain Pedrarias, was there the larger number of fifteen hundred men); and those who have come at different times being neither paid nor pressed, but serving of their own free wills and at their own costs, have, in our times, conquered more territory than has ever been known before, or than all the faithful and infidel princes possessed. Moreover, they supported themselves on the savage food of the people, who had no knowledge of bread or wine, suffering on a diet of herbs, fruits, and roots. Yet they have made conquests which are now known to all the world. I will only write, at present, of what befell in the conquest of New Castille; and I will not write much, in order to avoid prolixity.

The South Sea having been discovered, and the inhabitants of Tierra Firme having been conquered and pacified, the Governor Pedrarias de Avila founded and settled the cities of Panama and of Nata, and the town of Nombre de Dios. At this time the Captain Francisco Pizarro, son of the Captain Gonzalo Pizarro, a knight of the city of Truxillo, was living in the city of Panama; possessing his house, his farm, and his Indians, as one of the principal people of the land, which indeed he always was, having distinguished himself in the conquest and settling, and in the service of his Majesty. Being at rest and in repose, but full of zeal to continue his labours and to perform other more distinguished services for the royal crown, he sought permission from Pedrarias to discover that coast of the South Sea to

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the eastward. He spent a large part of his fortune on a good ship which he built, and on necessary supplies for the voyage, and he set out from the city of Panama on the 14th day of the month of November, in the year 1524.¹ He had a hundred and twelve Spaniards in his company, besides some Indian servants. He commenced a voyage in which they suffered many hardships, the season being winter and unpropitious. I shall omit many things that happened which might be tedious, and will only relate the notable events, and those that are most to the purpose.

Seventy days after leaving Panama they landed at a port which was afterwards named Port Famine. They had previously landed at many ports, but had abandoned them because there were no inhabitants. The captain and eighty men remained in this port (the remainder having died); and because their provisions had come to an end, and there were none in that land, he sent the ship, with the sailors and an officer,² to the Isle of Pearls (which is in the jurisdiction of Panama) to obtain supplies, thinking that, at the end of ten or twelve days, they would return with succour. But Fortune is always, or generally, adverse; and the ship never returned for forty-seven days, during which time the captain and his companions subsisted on a sea-weed that they found on the shore, collecting it with much trouble. Some of them, being sorely weakened, died. They also fed on some very bitter palm fruits. During the absence of the ship, in going and returning, more than twenty men died. When the ship returned with supplies, the captain and mariners related how, when the supplies did not come, they had eaten a tanned cow-hide which had been used to cover the pump. They boiled it and divided it amongst themselves. The survivors were refreshed with the supplies brought by the ship, consisting of maize and pigs; and

¹ Herrera gives the same date. Cieza de Leon and Garcilasso de la Vega have 1525.

² Named Montenegro.

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the captain set out to continue his voyage. He came to a town on the sea-shore, built in a strong position and surrounded by pallisades. Here he found provisions in abundance, but the inhabitants fled from the town. The next day a number of armed men came. They were warlike and well armed; while the Christians were reduced by hunger and their previous hardships. The Christians were defeated and their captain received seven wounds, the slightest of which was dangerous. The Indians, who had wounded him, left him because they thought he was dead. Seventeen other men were wounded with him, and five were killed. Seeing the result of this disaster, and the small chance of being able to cure and revive his people, the captain embarked and returned to the land of Panama, landing at an Indian village near the island of Pearls, called Chuchama.² Thence he sent the ship to Panama,³ for she had become unseaworthy by reason of the *teredo*; and all that had befallen was reported to Pedrarias, while the captain remained behind to refresh himself and his companions.

When the ship arrived at Panama it was found that, a few days before, the Captain Diego de Almagro had sailed in search of the Captain Pizarro, his companion, with another ship and seventy men. He sailed as far as the village where the Captain Pizarro was defeated, and the Captain Almagro had another encounter with the Indians of that place, and was also defeated. He lost an eye, and many Christians were wounded; but, nevertheless, the Indians abandoned the village, which was set on fire. They again set out, and followed the coast until they came to a great river, which they called San Juan⁴ because they arrived there on his day. They there found signs of gold, but there being

² The province of Chuchama was discovered by Pascual de Andagoya in 1522. See my translation of Andagoya, p. 40.

³ In command of his treasurer, Nicolas de Ribera.

⁴ A few miles north of the port of Buenaventura, in New Granada.

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no traces of the Captain Pizarro, the Captain Almagro returned to Chuchama, where he found his comrade. They agreed that the Captain Almagro should go to Panama, repair the ships, collect more men to continue the enterprise, and defray the expenses, which amounted to more than ten thousand *castellanos*.⁵ At Panama much obstruction was caused by Pedrarias and others, who said that the voyage should not be persisted in, and that his Majesty would not be served by it. The Captain Almagro, with the authority given him by his comrade, was very constant in prosecuting the work he had commenced, and he required the Governor Pedrarias not to obstruct him, because he believed, with the help of God, that his Majesty would be well served by that voyage. Thus Pedrarias was forced to allow him to engage men. He set out from Panama with a hundred and ten men; and went to the place where Pizarro waited with another fifty of the first hundred and ten who sailed with him, and of the seventy who accompanied Almagro when he went in search. The other hundred and thirty were dead. The two captains, in their two ships, sailed with a hundred and sixty men, and coasted along the land.⁶ When they thought they saw signs of habitations, they went on shore in three canoes they had with them, rowed by sixty men, and so they sought for provisions.

They continued to sail in this way for three years, suffering great hardships from hunger and cold. The greater part of the crews died of hunger, insomuch that there were not fifty surviving, and during all those three years they discovered no good land. All was swamp and inundated country, without inhabitants. The good country they discovered was as far as the river San Juan, where the Captain

⁵ The value of the *castellano* varied. At this time it was worth about eight shillings.

⁶ Their experienced and resolute Pilot was Bartolomé Ruiz, a native of Moguer, in Andalusia.

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Pizarro remained with the few survivors, sending a captain⁷ with the smaller ship to discover some good land further along the coast. He sent the other ship, with the Captain Diego de Almagro, to Panama to get more men, because with the two vessels together and so few men no discovery could be made, and the people died. The ship that was sent to discover, returned at the end of seventy days to the river of San Juan, where the Captain Pizarro remained with his people, and reported to him what had befallen. They had arrived at the village of Cancebi, which is on this coast, and before they reached it, the crew of the ship had seen other inhabited places, very rich in gold and silver, and inhabited by more intelligent people than they had previously met with. They brought six persons that they might learn the language of the Spaniards, together with gold, silver, and cloths.⁸ The Captain and his comrades received this news with so much joy, that they forgot all their former sufferings, and the expenses they had incurred, and conceived a strong desire to see that land which appeared to be so inviting. As soon as the Captain Almagro arrived from Panama with a ship laden with men and horses, the two ships, with their commanders and all their people, set out from the river San Juan, to go to that newly-discovered land. But the navigation was difficult, they were detained so long⁹ that the provisions were exhausted, and the people were obliged to go on shore in search of supplies. The

⁷ Ruiz, the Pilot.

⁸ Ruiz discovered the bay of San Mateo and the isle of Gallo, and encountered a native raft, laden with merchandise: vases and mirrors of silver, and cotton and woollen cloths. Some of the people on board were natives of Tumbez; and he took six into his vessel, intending to make them learn Spanish, and become interpreters. The furthest point reached by Ruiz was the Cape of Passaos, and he was thus the first European to cross the line in the Pacific Ocean.

⁹ They had constant northerly winds, with heavy squalls, and storms of thunder and lightning.

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ships reached the bay of San Mateo, and some villages to which the Spaniards gave the name of Santiago. Next they came to the villages of Tacamez,¹ on the sea coast further on. These villages were seen by the Christians to be large and well peopled; and when ninety Spaniards had advanced a league beyond the villages of Tacamez,² more than ten thousand Indian warriors encountered them; but seeing that the Christians intended no evil, and did not wish to take their goods, but rather to treat them peacefully with much love, the Indians desisted from war. In this land there were abundant supplies, and the people led well-ordered lives, the villages having their streets and squares. One village had more than three thousand houses, and others were smaller.

It seemed to the Captains and to the other Spaniards that nothing could be done in that land by reason of the smallness of their number, which rendered them unable to cope with the Indians. So they agreed to load the ships with the supplies to be found in the villages, and to return to an island called Gallo,³ where they would be safe until the ships arrived at Panama with the news of what had been discovered, and to apply to the Governor for more men, in order that the Captains might be able to continue their undertaking, and conquer the land. Captain Almagro went in the ships. Many persons had written to the Governor entreating him to order the crews to return to Panama, saying that it was impossible to endure more hardships than they had suffered during the last three years.⁴ The Governor ordered that all those who wished to go to Panama

¹ Atacames, on the coast of modern Ecuador.

² The modern Atacames.

³ In the bay of Tumaco, just on the modern frontier dividing New Granada from Ecuador. It had already been discovered by the Pilot Ruiz.

⁴ See *Herrera*, Dec. III, lib. x, cap. 3; *Garcilasso de la Vega*, Pt. II; and *Cieza de Leon*, cap. cxix.

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might do so, while those who desired to continue the discoveries were at liberty to remain. Sixteen men stayed with Pizarro,⁵ and all the rest went back in the ships to

⁵ Thus simply does Pizarro's Secretary tell the story of this famous resolution. A ship was sent from Panama, by the Governor, under the command of an officer named Tafur, to take back those who wished to return; while those who chose to remain with Pizarro were allowed to do so. Garcilasso says that, when Pizarro saw his men electing to return in the ship, he drew his sword and made a long line on the ground with the point. Then, turning to his men, he said: "Gentlemen! This line signifies labour, hunger, thirst, fatigue, wounds, sickness, and every other kind of danger that must be encountered in this conquest, until life is ended. Let those who have the courage to meet and overcome the dangers of this heroic achievement cross the line in token of their resolution and as a testimony that they will be my faithful companions. And let those who feel unworthy of such daring return to Panama; for I do not wish to put force upon any man. I trust in God that, for his greater honour and glory, his eternal Majesty will help those who remain with me, though they be few, and that we shall not feel the want of those who forsake us." On hearing this speech the Spaniards began to go on board with all speed, lest anything should happen to detain them.

Herrera tells the story differently. He says that Tafur stationed himself in one part of the vessel and, drawing a line, placed Pizarro and the soldiers on the other side of it. He then told those who wished to return to Panama to come over to him, and those who would remain to stay on Pizarro's side of the line.

Of these two accounts, that of Garcilasso is far more likely to be true; for it is very improbable that they would all have embarked before the election was made. It would naturally be made on the beach before they went on board.

The authorities also differ as to the number of men who crossed the line and remained with Pizarro. Cieza de Leon, Gomara, Herrera, and Garcilasso say there were thirteen; Zarate gives the number at twelve; Xeres at sixteen. In the Capitulation for the Conquest of Peru, made by Francisco Pizarro with Queen Juana on July 26th, 1529, there is the following paragraph: "Remembering the great services that were performed in the said discovery by Bartolomé Ruiz, Cristoval de Peralta, Pedro de Candia, Domingo de Soria Luce, Nicolas de Ribera, Francisco de Cuellar, Alonzo de Molina, Pedro Alcon, Garcia de Jerez, Anton de Carrion, Alonzo Briceno, Martin de Paz, and Juan de la Torre; and because you have besought and prayed for the favour, it is our will and pleasure to grant it, as by these presents we do grant to such of them as

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Panama. The Captain Pizarro was on that island for five months, when one of the ships returned, in which he continued the discoveries for a hundred leagues further down the coast. They found many villages, and great riches ;

are not *Hidalgos*, that they shall be *Hidalgos* acknowledged in those parts, and that in all our Indies they shall enjoy rank and immunities and such other privileges as belong to acknowledged *Hidalgos*, and to those who now are *Hidalgos* we grant knighthood of gilt spurs."

It has always been supposed that these were the men who crossed the line, and hence their number has been placed at thirteen. But it is not asserted in the Capitulation that the men whose names are given in it were those who crossed the line, and it might be that Pizarro, in asking favours for his most faithful companions, on the one hand omitted one or more of those who crossed the line, and on the other included some who did not take part in that transaction, but who joined him afterwards. Herrera gives the names of the thirteen in the Capitulation, and says that one was a Mulatto. Zarate gives nine names, all of which are in the above paragraph of the Capitulation except one, Alonzo de Truxillo. Zarate's nine are—Pedro de Candia, Bartolomé Ruiz, Nicolas de Ribera, Juan de la Torre, Alonzo Briceño, Cristoval de Peralta, Alonzo de Truxillo, Francisco de Cuellar, and Alonzo de Molina. Balboa adds two more, Juan Roldan and Blas de Atienza. Garcilasso gives yet two more, whom he knew personally. He says that the correct name of Zarate's Alonzo de Truxillo was Diego de Truxillo; that there were two *Riberas*, one the Nicolas of the Capitulation, and the other Geronimo or Alonzo, he is not certain which, whom he knew personally; and that Francisco Rodriguez de Villafuerte, a citizen of Cuzco, whom he also knew personally, was the first to walk across the line.

In these conflicting lists, the names of Ruiz, Candia, Peralta, Briceño, Ribera, Torre, Cuellar, and Molina, are those on which all are agreed. The Capitulation makes up the thirteen with Soria Luce, Alcon, Jerez, Carrion, and Paz; which five names Zarate and Garcilasso omit. Zarate adds Truxillo. Garcilasso gives him also, and adds another Ribera and Villa-Fuerte. Balboa adds Roldan and Atienza.

Xeres had access to the best information, and I believe his number of sixteen to be correct; including the Pilot Ruiz, who returned to Panama to obtain another vessel. The three additional names of Zarate and Garcilasso may be supposed to have been omitted in the Capitulation, either intentionally by Pizarro for some reason of his own, or accidentally. The correct list of sixteen will then stand as follows: [c. before a name meaning that it occurs in the Capitulation and Herrera; z. that it is given by Zarate; and g. by Garcilasso.] The two additional names of

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and they brought away more specimens of gold, silver, and cloths than had been found before, which were presented by the natives. The Captain returned because the time granted

Balboa are no doubt inserted by mistake; but not so those of Garcilasso; for he knew the men personally.

(c. z. b. g.) 1. *Bartolomé Ruiz*, of Moguer, the Pilot.

(c. z. b. g.) 2. *Pedro de Candia*, a Greek. He commanded Pizarro's artillery, consisting of two falconets; and was an able and experienced officer. After Pizarro's death he joined the younger Almagro, who killed him on suspicion of treachery at the battle of Chupas. He left a half-caste son, who was at school with Garcilasso at Cuzco.

(c. z. g.) 3. *Cristoval de Peralta*, a native of Baeza. He was one of the first twelve citizens of Lima, when that city was founded by Pizarro in 1535.

(c. z. b. g.) 4. *Alonzo Briceño*, a native of Benavente. He was at the division of Atahualpa's ransom, and received the share of a cavalry captain.

(c. z. b. g.) 5. *Nicolas de Ribera*, the Treasurer, was one of the first twelve citizens of Lima, when Pizarro founded that city on January 18th, 1535. He passed through all the stormy period of the civil wars in Peru. He deserted from Gonzalo Pizarro to Gasca, and was afterwards Captain of the Guard of the Royal Seal. He eventually settled near Cuzco, and left children to inherit his estates.

(c. z. b. g.) 6. *Juan de la Torre* was a staunch adherent of Gonzalo Pizarro in after years, to whom he deserted when serving under the ill-fated Viceroy Blasco Nuñez de Vela. He carried his ferocious enmity to the Viceroy so far as to insult his dead body, and, pulling the hairs out of his beard, stuck them in his hat-band. He married the daughter of an Indian chief near Puerto Viejo, and acquired great wealth. He was captain of arquebusiers for Gonzalo Pizarro until 1548, and after the battle of Sacsahuana he was hanged by order of La Gasca.

(c. z. g.) 7. *Francisco de Cuellar*, a native of Cuellar. Nothing more is known of him.

(c. z. g.) 8. *Alonso de Molina*, a native of Ubeda. He afterwards landed at Tumbes, where it was arranged that he should remain until Pizarro's return; but he died in the interval.

(c.) 9. *Domingo de Soria Luce*. Nothing more is known of him.

(c.) 10. *Pedro Alcon*. He afterwards landed on the coast of Peru, fell in love with a Peruvian lady, and refused to come on board again. So the Pilot Ruiz was obliged to knock him down with