

Land of Flowers, and sent him thither again to establish a colony. The aged veteran did not, however, reach his province until the year 1521, and then it was only to find the Indians in a state of bitter hostility. Scarcely had he landed when they fell upon him in a furious battle; many of the Spaniards were killed outright, and the rest had to betake themselves to the ships for safety. Ponce de Leon himself received a mortal wound from an arrow, and was carried back to Cuba to die.

CHAPTER IV.

SPANISH DISCOVERIES IN AMERICA.—CONTINUED.

THE year 1517 was marked by the discovery of Yucatan and the Bay of Campeachy by FERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA. While exploring the northern coast of the country, his company was attacked by the natives, and he himself mortally wounded. During the next year the coast of Mexico was explored for a great distance by GRIJALVA, assisted by Cordova's pilot; and in the year 1519, FERNANDO CORTEZ landed with his fleet at Tabasco and began his famous conquest of Mexico.

As soon as the news of the invasion spread abroad, the subjects of the Mexican empire were thrown into consternation. Armies of native warriors gathered to resist the progress of the Spaniards, but were dispersed by the invaders. After freeing the coast of his opponents, Cortez proceeded westward to Vera Cruz, a seaport one hundred and eighty miles south-east of the Mexican capital. Here he was met by ambassadors from the celebrated Montezuma, emperor of the country. From him they delivered messages and exhibited great anxiety lest Cortez should march into the interior. He assured them that such was indeed his purpose; that his business in the country was urgent; and that he must confer with Montezuma in person.

The ambassadors tried in vain to dissuade the terrible Spaniard. They made him costly presents, and then hastened back to their alarmed sovereign. Montezuma immediately despatched them a second time with presents still more valuable, and with urgent appeals to Cortez to proceed no farther. But the cupidity of the Spaniards was now inflamed to the highest pitch, and burning their ships behind them, they began their march towards the capital. The Mexican em-

peror by his messengers forbade their approach to his city. Still they pressed on. The nations tributary to Montezuma threw off their allegiance, made peace with the conqueror, and even joined his standard. The irresolute and vacillating Indian monarch knew not what to do. The Spaniards came in sight of the city—a glittering and splendid vision of spires and temples; and the poor Montezuma came forth to receive his remorseless enemies. On the morning of the 8th of November, 1519, the Spanish army marched over the causeway leading into the Mexican capital and was quartered in the great central square near the temple of the Aztec god of war.



FERNANDO CORTEZ.

It was now winter time. For a month Cortez remained quietly in the city. He was permitted to go about freely with his soldiers, and was even allowed to examine the sacred altars and shrines where human sacrifices were daily offered up to the deities of Mexico. He made himself familiar with the defences of the capital and the Mexican mode of warfare. On every side he found inexhaustible stores of provisions, treasures of gold and silver, and what greatly excited his solicitude, arsenals filled with bows and javelins. But although surrounded with splendor and abundance, his own situation became extremely critical. The millions of natives who swarmed around him were becoming familiar with his troops and no longer believed them immortal. There were mutterings of an outbreak which threatened to overwhelm him in an hour. In this emergency the Spanish general adopted the bold and unscrupulous expedient of seizing Montezuma and holding him as a hostage. A plausible pretext for this outrage was found in the fact that the Mexican governor of the province

adjacent to Vera Cruz had attacked the Spanish garrison at that place, and that Montezuma himself had acted with hostility and treachery towards the Spaniards while they were marching on the city. As soon as the emperor was in his power, Cortez compelled him to acknowledge himself a vassal of the king of Spain and to agree to the payment of a sum amounting to six million three hundred thousand dollars, with an annual tribute afterwards.

In the mean time, Velasquez, the Spanish governor of Cuba, jealous of the fame of Cortez, had despatched a force to Mexico to arrest his progress and to supersede him in the command. The expedition was led by PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ, the same who was afterwards governor of Florida. His forces consisted of more than twelve hundred well armed and well disciplined soldiers, besides a thousand Indian servants and guides. But the vigilant Cortez had meanwhile been informed by messengers from Vera Cruz of the movement which his enemies at home had set on foot against him, and he determined to sell his command only at the price of his own life and the lives of all his followers. He therefore instructed Alvarado, one of his subordinate officers, to remain in the capital with a small force of a hundred and forty men; and with the remainder, numbering less than two hundred, he himself hastily withdrew from the city and proceeded by a forced march to encounter De Narvaez on the sea-coast. On the night of the 26th of May, 1520, while the soldiers of the latter were quietly asleep in their camp near Vera Cruz, Cortez burst upon them with the fury of despair, and before they could rally or well understand the terrible onset, compelled the whole force to surrender. Then, adding the general's skill to the warrior's prowess, he succeeded in inducing the conquered army to join his own standard; and with his forces thus augmented to six times their original numbers he began a second time his march towards the capital.

While Cortez was absent on this expedition, the Mexicans of the capital rose in arms, and the possession of the country was staked on the issue of war. Alvarado, either fearing a revolt or from a spirit of atrocious cruelty, had attacked the Mexicans while they were celebrating one of their festivals, and slain five hundred of the leaders and priests. The people in a frenzy of astonishment and rage flew to their arms and laid siege to the palace where Alvarado and his men were fortified. The Spaniards were already hard pressed when Cortez at the head of his new army reached the city. He entered without opposition and joined Alvarado's command; but the passions of the Mexicans were now thoroughly aroused, and not all

the diplomacy of the Spanish general could again bring them into subjection. In a few days the conflict began in earnest. The streets were deluged with the blood of tens of thousands; and not a few of the Spaniards fell before the vengeance of the native warriors. For months there was almost incessant fighting in and around the city; and it became evident that the Spaniards must ultimately be overwhelmed and destroyed.

To save himself from his peril, Cortez adopted a second shameless expedient, more wicked than the first. Montezuma was compelled to go upon the top of the palace in front of the great square where the besiegers were gathered and to counsel them to make peace with the Spaniards. For a moment there was universal silence, then a murmur of vexation and rage, and then Montezuma was struck down by the javelins of his own subjects. In a few days he died of wretchedness and despair, and for a while the warriors, overwhelmed with remorse, abandoned the conflict. But with the renewal of the strife Cortez was obliged to leave the city. Finally a great battle was fought, and the Spanish arms and valor triumphed. In the crisis of the struggle the sacred Mexican banner was struck down and captured. Dismay seized the hosts of puny warriors, and they fled in all directions. In December of 1520, Cortez again marched on the capital. A siege, lasting until August of the following year, ensued; and then the famous city yielded. The empire of the Montezumas was overthrown, and Mexico became a Spanish province.

Among the many daring enterprises which marked the beginning of the sixteenth century, that of FERDINAND MAGELLAN is worthy of special mention. A Portuguese by birth, a navigator by profession, this man, so noted for extraordinary boldness and ability, determined to discover a south-west rather than a north-west passage to Asia. With this object in view, he appealed to the king of Portugal for ships and men. The monarch listened coldly, and did nothing to give encouragement. Incensed at this treatment, Magellan threw off his allegiance, went to Spain—the usual resort of disappointed seamen—and laid his plans before Charles V. The emperor caught eagerly at the opportunity, and ordered a fleet of five ships to be immediately fitted at the public expense and properly manned with crews.

The voyage was begun from Seville in August of 1519. Sailing southward across the equinoctial line, Magellan soon reached the coast of South America, and spent the autumn in explorations, hoping to find some strait that should lead him westward into that ocean which Balboa had discovered six years previously. Not at first successful in this effort,

he passed the winter—which was summer on that side of the equator—somewhere on the coast of Brazil. Renewing his voyage southward, he came at last to the eastern mouth of that strait which still bears the name of its discoverer, and passing through it found himself in the open and boundless ocean. The weather was beautiful, and the peaceful deep was called the Pacific.

Setting his prows to the north of west, Magellan now held steadily on his course for nearly four months, suffering much meanwhile from want of water and scarcity of provisions. In March of 1520 he came to the group of islands called the Ladrões, situated about midway between Australia and Japan. Sailing still westward, he reached the Philippine group, where he was killed in a battle with the natives. But the fleet was now less than four hundred miles from China, and the rest of the route was easy. A new captain was chosen, and the voyage continued by way of the Moluccas, where a cargo of spices was taken on board for the market of Western Europe. Only a single ship was deemed in a fit condition to venture on the homeward voyage; but in this vessel the crews embarked, and returning by way of the Cape of Good Hope arrived in Spain on the 17th day of September, 1522. The circumnavigation of the globe, long believed in as a possibility, had now become a thing of reality. The theory of the old astronomers, of Mandeville and of Columbus had been proved by actual demonstration.

The next important voyage undertaken to the shores of America was in the year 1520. LUCAS VASQUEZ DE AYLLON, who had been a judge in St. Domingo and had acquired great riches, conducted the expedition. He and six other wealthy men, eager to stock their plantations with slaves, determined to do so by kidnapping natives from the neighboring Bahamas. Two vessels were fitted out for the purpose, and De Ayllon commanded in person. When the vessels were nearing their destination, they encountered a storm which drove them northward about a hundred and fifty leagues, and brought them against the coast of South Carolina. The ships entered St. Helena Sound and anchored in the mouth of the Cambahee River. The name of Chicora was given to the country, and the river was called the Jordan. The timid but friendly natives, as soon as their fears had subsided, began to make presents to the strangers and to treat them with great cordiality. They flocked on board the ships; and when the decks were crowded, De Ayllon, watching his opportunity, weighed anchor and sailed away. A few days afterward an avenging storm sent one of the ships to the bottom of the sea, and death came mercifully to most of the poor wretches who were huddled under the hatches of the other.

Going at once to Spain, De Ayllon repeated the story of his exploit to Charles V., who rewarded him with the governorship of Chicora and the privilege of conquest. Returning to his province in 1525, he found the natives intensely hostile. His best ship ran aground in the mouth of the Jordan, and the outraged Indians fell upon him with fury, killing many of the treacherous crew, and making the rest glad enough to get away with their lives. De Ayllon himself returned to St. Domingo humiliated and ruined. Thus ended the first disgraceful effort to enslave the Indians.

In the year 1526, Charles V. appointed the unprincipled PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ governor of Florida, and to the appointment was added the usual privilege of conquest. The territory thus placed at his disposal extended from Cape Sabie fully three-fifths of the way around the Gulf of Mexico, and was limited on the south-west by the mouth of the River of Palms. With this extensive commission De Narvaez arrived at Tampa Bay in the month of April, 1528. His force consisted of two hundred and sixty soldiers and forty horsemen. The natives treated them with suspicion, and, anxious to be rid of the intruders, began to hold up their gold trinkets and to point to the north. The hint was eagerly caught at by the avaricious Spaniards, whose imaginations were set on fire with the sight of the precious metal. They struck boldly into the forests, expecting to find cities and empires, and found instead swamps and savages. They reached the Withlacoochie and crossed it by swimming, they passed over the Suwanee in a canoe which they made for the occasion, and finally came to Apalachee, a squalid village of forty cabins. This, then, was the mighty city to which their guides had directed them.

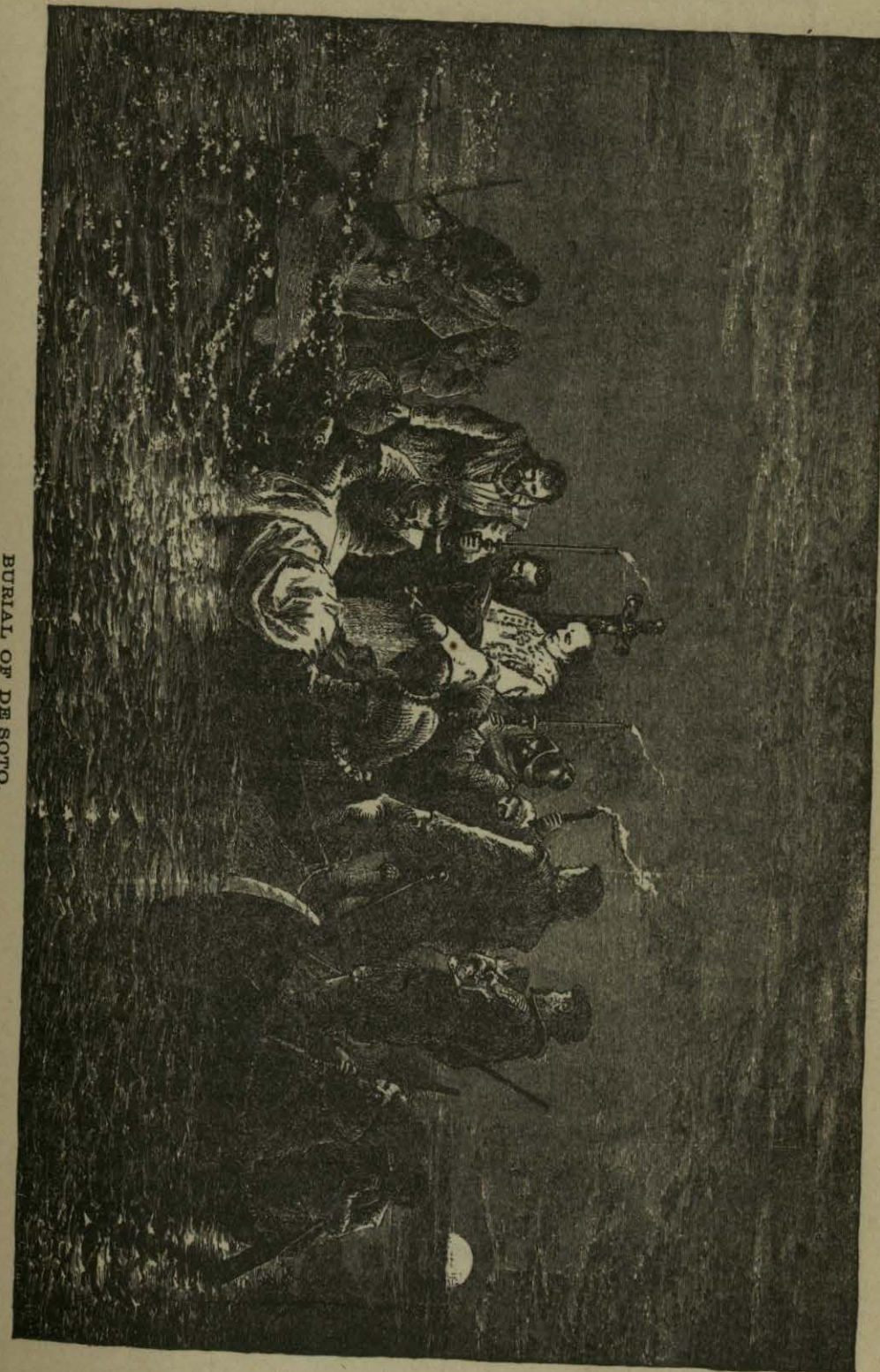
Oppressed with fatigue and goaded by hunger, they plunged again into the woods, wading through lagoons and assailed by lurking savages, until at last they reached the sea at the harbor of St. Mark's. Here they expected to find their ships, but not a ship was there, or had been. With great labor they constructed some brigantines, and put to sea in the vain hope of reaching the Spanish settlements in Mexico. They were tossed by storms, driven out of sight of land and then thrown upon the shore again, drowned, slain by the savages, left in the solitary woods dead of starvation and despair, until finally four miserable men of all the adventurous company, under the leadership of the heroic De Vaca, first lieutenant of the expedition, were rescued at the village of San Miguel, on the Pacific coast, and conducted to the city of Mexico. The story can hardly be paralleled in the annals of suffering and peril.

But the Spaniards were not yet satisfied. In the year 1537 a new expedition was planned which surpassed all the others in the bril-

liancy of its beginning and the disasters of its end. The most cavalier of the cavaliers was FERDINAND DE SOTO, of Xeres. Besides the distinction of a noble birth, he had been the lieutenant and bosom friend of Pizarro, and had now returned from Peru loaded with wealth. So great was his popularity in Spain that he had only to demand what he would have of the emperor that his request might be granted. At his own dictation he was accordingly appointed governor of Cuba and Florida, with the privilege of exploring and conquering the latter country at his pleasure. A great company of young Spaniards, nearly all of them wealthy and high-born, flocked to his standard. Of these he selected six hundred of the most gallant and daring. They were clad in costly suits of armor of the knightly pattern, with airy scarfs and silken embroidery and all the trappings of chivalry. Elaborate preparations were made for the grand conquest; arms and stores were provided; shackles were wrought for the slaves; tools for the forge and workshop were abundantly supplied; bloodhounds were bought and trained for the work of hunting fugitives; cards to keep the young knights excited with gaming; twelve priests to conduct religious ceremonies; and, last of all, a drove of swine to fatten on the maize and mast of the country.

When, after a year of impatience and delay, everything was at last in readiness, the gay Castilian squadron, ten vessels in all, left the harbor of San Lucar to conquer imaginary empires in the New World. The fleet touched at Havana, and the enthusiasm was kindled even to a higher pitch than it had reached in Spain. De Soto left his wife to govern Cuba during his absence; and after a prosperous and exulting voyage of two weeks, the ships cast anchor in Tampa Bay. This was in the early part of June, 1539. When some of the Cubans who had joined the expedition first saw the silent forests and gloomy morasses that stretched before them, they were terrified at the prospect, and sailed back to the security of home; but De Soto and his cavaliers despised such cowardice, and began their march into the interior. During the months of July, August and September they marched to the northward, wading through swamps, swimming rivers and fighting the Indians. In October they arrived at the country of the Apalachians, on the left bank of Flint River, where they determined to spend the winter. For four months they remained in this locality, sending out exploring parties in various directions. One of these companies reached the gulf at Pensacola, and made arrangements that supplies should be sent out from Cuba to that place during the following summer.

In the early spring the Spaniards left their winter quarters and continued their march to the north and east. An Indian guide told them of



BURIAL OF DE SOTO.

a powerful and populous empire in that direction; a woman was empress, and the land was full of gold. A Spanish soldier, one of the men of Narvaez, who had been kept a captive among the Indians, denied the truth of the extravagant story; but De Soto only said that he would find gold or see poverty with his own eyes, and the freebooters pressed on through the swamps and woods. It was April, 1540, when they came upon the Ogechee River. Here they were delayed. The Indian guide went mad; and when the priests had conjured the evil spirit out of him, he repaid their benevolence by losing the whole company in the forest. By the 1st of May they had reached South Carolina, and were within a two days' march of where De Ayllon had lost his ships and men at the mouth of the Jordan. Thence the wanderers turned westward; but that De Soto and his men crossed the mountains into North Carolina and Tennessee is hardly to be believed. They seem rather to have passed across Northern Georgia from the Chattahoochee to the upper tributaries of the Coosa, and thence down that river to the valleys of Lower Alabama. Here, just above the confluence of the Alabama and the Tombeckee, they came upon the fortified Indian town called Mauville, or Mobile, where a terrible battle was fought with the natives. The town was set on fire, and two thousand five hundred of the Indians were killed or burned to death. Eighteen of De Soto's men were killed, and a hundred and fifty wounded. The Spaniards also lost about eighty horses and all of their baggage.

The ships of supply had meanwhile arrived at Pensacola, but De Soto and his men, although in desperate circumstances, were too stubborn and proud to avail themselves of help or even to send news of their whereabouts. They turned resolutely to the north; but the country was poor, and their condition grew constantly worse and worse. By the middle of December they had reached the country of the Chickasas, in Northern Mississippi. They crossed the Yazoo; the weather was severe; snow fell; and the Spaniards were on the point of starvation. They succeeded, however, in finding some fields of ungathered maize, and then came upon a deserted Indian village which promised them shelter for the winter. After remaining here till February, 1541, they were suddenly attacked in the dead of night by the Indians, who, at a preconcerted signal, set the town on fire, determined then and there to make an end of the desolating foreigners; but the Spanish weapons and discipline again saved De Soto and his men from destruction.

After gathering provisions and reclothing themselves as well as possible, the Spaniards set out again in early spring to journey still farther westward. The guides now brought them to the Mississippi. The point

where the majestic Father of Waters was first seen by white men was at the lower Chickasaw Bluff, a little north of the thirty-fourth parallel of latitude; the day of the discovery cannot certainly be known. The Indians came down the river in a fleet of canoes, and offered to carry the Spaniards over; but the horses could not be transported until barges were built for that purpose. The crossing was not effected until the latter part of May.

De Soto's men now found themselves in the land of the Dakotas. Journeying to the north-west, they passed through a country where wild fruits were plentiful and subsistence easy. The natives were inoffensive and superstitious. At one place they were going to worship the woe-begone cavaliers as the children of the gods, but De Soto was too good a Catholic to permit such idolatry. The Spaniards continued their march until they reached the St. Francis River, which they crossed, and gained the southern limits of Missouri, in the vicinity of New Madrid. Thence westward the march was renewed for about two hundred miles; thence southward to the Hot Springs and the tributaries of the Washita River. On the banks of this river, at the town of Atiamque, they passed the winter of 1541-42. The Indians were found to be much more civilized than those east of the Mississippi; but their civilization did not protect them in the least from the horrid cruelties which the Spaniards practiced. No consideration of justice, humanity or mercy moved the stony hearts of these polite and Christian warriors. Indian towns were set on fire for sport; Indian hands were chopped off for a whim; and Indian captives burned alive because, under fear of death, they had told a falsehood.

But De Soto's men were themselves growing desperate in their misfortunes. They turned again toward the sea, and passing down the tributaries of the Washita to the junction of that stream with the Red River, came upon the Mississippi in the neighborhood of Natchez. The spirit of De Soto was at last completely broken. The haughty cavalier bowed his head and became a prey to melancholy. No more dazzling visions of Peru and Mexico flitted before his imagination. A malignant fever seized upon his emaciated frame, and then death. The priests chanted a requiem, and in the middle of the solemn night his sorrowful companions put the dead hero's body into a rustic coffin, and rowing out a distance from shore sunk it in the Mississippi. Ferdinand de Soto had found a grave under the rolling waters of the great river with which his name will be associated for ever.

Before his death, De Soto had named Moscoso as his successor; and now, under the leadership of the new governor, the ragged, half-starved adventurers, in the vain hope of reaching Mexico, turned once more to the

west. They crossed the country to the upper waters of the Red River, on the confines of Texas. Thence they turned northward into the territory of the Pawnees and the Comanches, ranging the hunting-grounds of those fierce savages until stopped by the mountains. In December of 1542, after almost endless wanderings and hardships, they came again to the Mississippi, reaching the now familiar stream a short distance above the mouth of Red River. They now formed the desperate resolution of building boats, and thus descending the river to the gulf. They erected a forge, broke off the fetters of the captives in order to procure iron, sawed timber in the forest, and at last completed seven brigantines and launched them. The time thus occupied extended from January to July of 1543. The Indians of the neighborhood were now for the last time plundered in order to furnish supplies for the voyage; and on the 2d day of July the Spaniards went on board their boats and started for the sea. The distance was almost five hundred miles, and seventeen days were required to make the descent. On reaching the Gulf of Mexico, they steered to the south-west; and keeping as close to the shore as possible, after fifty-five days of buffetings and perils along the dangerous coast, they came—three hundred and eleven famished and heart-broken fugitives—to the settlement at the mouth of the River of Palms; and thus ended the most marvelous expedition in the early history of our country.

The next attempt by the Spaniards to colonize Florida was in the year 1565. The enterprise was entrusted to PEDRO MELENDEZ, a Spanish soldier of ferocious disposition and criminal practices. He was under sentence to pay a heavy fine at the very time when he received his commission from the bigoted Philip II. The contract between that monarch and Melendez was to the effect that the latter should within three years explore the coast of Florida, conquer the country, and plant in some favorable district a colony of not less than five hundred persons, of whom one hundred should be married men. Melendez was to receive two hundred and twenty-five square miles of land adjacent to the settlement, and an annual salary of two thousand dollars. Twenty-five hundred persons collected around Melendez to join in the expedition. The fleet left Spain in July, reached Porto Rico early in August, and on the 28th of the same month came in sight of Florida.

It must now be understood that the real object had in view by Melendez was to attack and destroy a colony of French Protestants called Huguenots, who, in the previous year, had made a settlement about thirty-five miles above the mouth of the St. John's River. This was, of course, within the limits of the territory claimed by Spain; and Melendez at once perceived that to extirpate these French heretics in the name of patriotism

and religion would be likely to restore his shattered character and bring him into favor again. His former crimes were to be washed out in the blood of the innocents. Moreover, the Catholic party at the French court had communicated with the Spanish court as to the whereabouts and intentions of the Huguenots, so that Melendez knew precisely where to find them and how to compass their destruction.

It was St. Augustine's day when the dastardly Spaniard came in sight of the shore, but the landing was not effected until the 2d of September. The spacious harbor and the small river which enters it from the south were named in honor of the saint. On the 8th day of the same month, Philip II. was proclaimed monarch of all North America; a solemn mass was said by the priests; and there, in the sight of forest, and sky, and sea, the foundation-stones of the oldest town in the United States were put into their place. This was seventeen years before the founding of Santa Fé by ANTONIO DE ESPEGO, and forty-two years before the settlement at Jamestown.

As soon as the new town was sufficiently advanced to be secure against accident, Melendez turned his attention to the Huguenots. The latter were expecting to be attacked, but had supposed that the Spanish fleet would sail up the St. John's, and make the onset from that direction. Accordingly, knowing that they must fight or die, all the French vessels except two left their covert in the river and put to sea, intending to anticipate the movements of the Spaniards; but a furious storm arose and dashed to pieces every ship in the fleet. Most of the crews, however, reached the shore just above the mouth of the river. Melendez now collected his forces at St. Augustine, stole through the woods and swamps, and falling unexpectedly on the defenceless colony, utterly destroyed it. Men, women and children were alike given up to butchery. Two hundred were killed outright. A few escaped into the forest, Laudonniere, the Huguenot leader, among the number, and making their way to the coast, were picked up by the two French ships which had been saved from the storm.

The crews of the wrecked vessels were the next object of Spanish vengeance. Melendez discovered their whereabouts, and deceiving them with treacherous promises of clemency, induced them to surrender. They were ferried across the river in boats; but no sooner were they completely in the power of their enemy than their hands were bound behind them, and they were driven off, tied two and two, toward St. Augustine. As they approached the Spanish fort the signal was given by sounding a trumpet, and the work of slaughter began anew. Seven hundred defenceless victims were added to the previous atrocious massacre. Only a few

mechanics and Catholic servants were left alive. Under these bloody auspices the first permanent European colony was planted in our country. In what way the Huguenots were revenged upon their enemies will be told in another place.

The Spaniards had now explored the entire coast from the Isthmus of Darien to Port Royal in South Carolina. They were acquainted with the country west of the Mississippi as far north as New Mexico and Missouri, and east of that river they had traversed the Gulf States as far as the mountain ranges of Tennessee and North Carolina. With the establishment of their first permanent colony on the coast of Florida the period of Spanish voyage and discovery may be said to end.

Before closing this chapter, a brief account of the only important voyage made by the Portuguese to America will be given: At the time of the first discovery by Columbus, the unambitious John II. was king of Portugal. He paid but little attention to the New World, preferring the security and dullness of his own capital to the splendid allurements of the Atlantic. In 1495 he was succeeded on the throne by his cousin Manuel, a man of very different character. This monarch could hardly forgive his predecessor for having allowed Spain to snatch from the flag of Portugal the glory of Columbus's achievements. In order to secure some of the benefits which yet remained, King Manuel fitted out two vessels, and in the summer of 1501 commissioned GASPAR CORTERREAL to sail on a voyage of discovery. The Portuguese vessels reached America in the month of July, and beginning at some point on the shores of Maine, sailed northward, exploring the coast for nearly seven hundred miles. Just below the fiftieth parallel of latitude Cortereal met the icebergs, and could go no farther. Little attention was paid by him to the great forests of pine and hemlock which stood tall and silent along the shore, promising ship-yards and cities in after times. He satisfied his rapacity by kidnapping fifty Indians, whom, on his return to Portugal, he sold as slaves. A new voyage was then undertaken, with the avowed purpose of capturing another cargo of natives for the slave-mart of Europe; but when a year went by, and no tidings arrived from the fleet, the brother of the Portuguese captain sailed in hope of finding the missing vessels. He also was lost, but in what manner has never been ascertained. The fate of the Cortereals and their slave-ships has remained one of the unsolved mysteries of the sea.