

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
AMERICA.

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BOOK III.

BOOK  
III.

1504.  
State of  
the colony  
in His-  
paniola.

**W**HILE Columbus was employed in his last voyage, several events worthy of notice happened in Hispaniola. The colony there, the parent and nurse of all the subsequent establishments of Spain in the New World, gradually acquired the form of a regular and prosperous society. The humane solicitude of Isabella to protect the Indians from oppression, and particularly the proclamation by which the Spaniards were prohibited to compel them to work, retarded, it is true, for some time the progress of improvement. The natives, who considered exemption from toil as supreme felicity, scorned every allurements and reward by which they were invited to labour. The Spaniards had not a sufficient number of hands either to work the mines or to cultivate the soil. Several of the first colonists, who had been accustomed to the service of

the Indians, quitted the island, when deprived of those instruments, without which they knew not how to carry on any operation. Many of the new settlers who came over with Ovando, were seized with the distempers peculiar to the climate, and in a short space above a thousand of them died. At the same time, the exacting one half of the product of the mines as the royal share, was found to be a demand so exorbitant, that no adventurers would engage to work them upon such terms. In order to save the colony from ruin, Ovando ventured to relax the rigour of the royal edicts. He made a new distribution of the Indians among the Spaniards, and compelled them to labour, for a stated time, in digging the mines, or in cultivating the ground; but in order to screen himself from the imputation of having subjected them again to servitude, he enjoined their masters to pay them a certain sum, as the price of their work. He reduced the royal share of the gold found in the mines from the half to the third part, and soon after lowered it to a fifth, at which it long remained. Notwithstanding Isabella's tender concern for the good treatment of the Indians, and Ferdinand's eagerness to improve the royal revenue, Ovando persuaded the court to approve of both these regulations\*.

But the Indians, after enjoying respite from oppression, though during a short interval, now felt the yoke of bondage to be so galling, that they made several attempts to vindicate their own liberty. This the Spaniards considered as rebellion, and

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dians.

\* Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 3.

B O O K took arms in order to reduce them to subjection.

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When war is carried on between nations whose state of improvement is in any degree similar, the means of defence bear some proportion to those employed in the attack ; and in this equal contest such efforts must be made, such talents are displayed, and such passions roused, as exhibit mankind to view in a situation no less striking than interesting. It is one of the noblest functions of history to observe and to delineate men at a juncture when their minds are most violently agitated, and all their powers and passions are called forth. Hence the operations of war, and the struggles between contending states, have been deemed by historians, ancient as well as modern, a capital and important article in the annals of human actions. But in a contest between naked savages, and one of the most warlike of the European nations, where science, courage, and discipline on one side were opposed by ignorance, timidity, and disorder on the other, a particular detail of events would be as unpleasant as uninstrucive. If the simplicity and innocence of the Indians had inspired the Spaniards with humanity, had softened the pride of superiority into compassion, and had induced them to improve the inhabitants of the New World, instead of oppressing them, some sudden acts of violence, like the too rigorous chastisements of impatient instructors, might have been related without horror. But, unfortunately, this consciousness of superiority operated in a different manner. The Spaniards were advanced so far beyond the natives of America in improvement of every kind, that they viewed them

with contempt. They conceived the Americans to be animals of an inferior nature, who were not entitled to the rights and privileges of men. In peace, they subjected them to servitude. In war, they paid no regard to those laws, which, by a tacit convention between contending nations, regulate hostility, and set some bounds to its rage. They considered them not as men fighting in defence of their liberty, but as slaves who had revolted against their masters. Their caziques, when taken, were condemned, like the leaders of banditti, to the most cruel and ignominious punishments; and all their subjects, without regarding the distinction of ranks established among them, were reduced to the same state of abject slavery. With such a spirit and sentiments were hostilities carried on against the cazique of Higüey, a province at the eastern extremity of the island. This war was occasioned by the perfidy of the Spaniards, in violating a treaty which they had made with the natives, and it was terminated by hanging up the cazique, who defended his people with bravery so far superior to that of his countrymen, as entitled him to a better fate<sup>b</sup>.

The conduct of Ovando, in another part of the island, was still more treacherous and cruel. The province anciently named Xaragua, which extends from the fertile plain where Leogane is now situated to the western extremity of the island, was subject to a female cazique, named Anacoana, highly respected by the natives. She, from that partial fondness with which the women of America were attach-

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The cruel and treacherous conduct of Ovando.

<sup>b</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 9, 10.

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ked to the Europeans, (the cause of which shall be afterwards explained,) had always courted the friendship of the Spaniards, and loaded them with benefits. But some of the adherents of Roldan having settled in her country, were so much exasperated at her endeavouring to restrain their excesses, that they accused her of having formed a plan to throw off the yoke, and to exterminate the Spaniards. Ovando, though he knew well what little credit was due to such profligate men, marched, without further inquiry, towards Xaragua, with three hundred foot and seventy horsemen. To prevent the Indians from taking alarm at this hostile appearance, he gave out that his sole intention was to visit Anacoana, to whom his countrymen had been so much indebted, in the most respectful manner, and to regulate with her the mode of levying the tribute payable to the King of Spain. Anacoana, in order to receive this illustrious guest with due honour, assembled the principal men in her dominions, to the number of three hundred; and advancing at the head of these, accompanied by a great crowd of persons of inferior rank, she welcomed Ovando with songs and dances, according to the mode of the country, and conducted him to the place of her residence. There he was feasted for some days, with all the kindness of simple hospitality, and amused with the games and spectacles usual among the Americans upon occasions of mirth and festivity. But amidst the security which this inspired, Ovando was meditating the destruction of his unsuspecting entertainer and her subjects; and the mean perfidy with which he executed this scheme, equalled his

barbarity in forming it. Under colour of exhibiting **B O O K**  
 to the Indians the parade of an European tourna- **III.**  
 ment, he advanced with his troops, in battle array, **1505.**  
 towards the house in which Anacoana and the chiefs  
 who attended her were assembled. The infantry  
 took possession of all the avenues which led to the  
 village. The horsemen encompassed the house.  
 These movements were the object of admiration  
 without any mixture of fear, until, upon a signal  
 which had been concerted, the Spaniards suddenly  
 drew their swords, and rushed upon the Indians,  
 defenceless, and astonished at an act of treachery  
 which exceeded the conception of undesigning men.  
 In a moment Anacoana was secured. All her at-  
 tendants were seized and bound. Fire was set to  
 the house ; and without examination or conviction,  
 all these unhappy persons, the most illustrious in  
 their own country, were consumed in the flames.  
 Anacoana was reserved for a more ignominious  
 fate. She was carried in chains to St. Domingo,  
 and, after the formality of a trial before Spanish  
 judges, she was condemned, upon the evidence of  
 those very men who had betrayed her, to be publicly  
 hanged<sup>c</sup>.

Overawed and humbled by this atrocious treat- **Reduction**  
 ment of their princes and nobles, who were objects **of the In-**  
 of their highest reverence, the people in all the pro- **dians, and**  
 vinces of Hispaniola submitted, without further re- **its effects.**  
 sistance, to the Spanish yoke. Upon the death of  
 Isabella all the regulations tending to mitigate the

<sup>c</sup> Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 12. Herrera, dec. i. lib. vi. c. 4. Relacion de Destruyc. de las Indias por Bart. de las Casas. p. 8.

**B O O K** rigour of their servitude were forgotten. The small  
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1506. gratuity paid to them as the price of their labour was withdrawn, and at the same time the tasks imposed upon them were increased. Ovando, without any restraint, distributed Indians among his friends in the island. Ferdinand, to whom the Queen had left by will one half of the revenue arising from the settlements in the New World, conferred grants of a similar nature upon his courtiers, as the least expensive mode of rewarding their services. They farmed out the Indians, of whom they were rendered proprietors, to their countrymen settled in Hispaniola; and that wretched people, being compelled to labour in order to satisfy the rapacity of both, the exactions of their oppressors no longer knew any bounds. But, barbarous as their policy was, and fatal to the inhabitants of Hispaniola, it produced, for some time, very considerable effects. By calling forth the force of a whole nation, and exerting it in one direction, the working of the mines was carried on with amazing rapidity and success. During several years, the gold brought into the royal smelting-houses in Hispaniola amounted annually to four hundred and sixty thousand pesos, above a hundred thousand pounds sterling; which, if we attend to the great change in the value of money since the beginning of the sixteenth century to the present times, must appear a considerable sum. Vast fortunes were created, of a sudden, by some. Others dissipated in ostentatious profusion, what they acquired with facility. Dazzled by both, new adventurers crowded to America, with the most eager impatience, to

share in those treasures which had enriched their countrymen; and, notwithstanding the mortality occasioned by the unhealthiness of the climate, the colony continued to increase<sup>d</sup>.

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Ovando governed the Spaniards with wisdom and justice not inferior to the rigour with which he treated the Indians. He established equal laws; and, by executing them with impartiality, accustomed the people of the colony to reverence them. He founded several new towns in different parts of the island, and allured inhabitants to them by the concession of various immunities. He endeavoured to turn the attention of the Spaniards to some branch of industry more useful than that of searching for gold in the mines. Some slips of the sugarcane having been brought from the Canary islands by way of experiment, they were found to thrive with such increase in the rich soil and warm climate to which they were transplanted, that the cultivation of them soon became an object of commerce. Extensive plantations were begun; sugarworks, which the Spaniards called *ingenios*, from the various machinery employed in them, were erected, and in a few years the manufacture of this commodity was the great occupation of the inhabitants of Hispaniola, and the most considerable source of their wealth<sup>e</sup>.

Progress of  
the colony.

The prudent endeavours of Ovando, to promote the welfare of the colony, were powerfully seconded by Ferdinand. The large remittances which he received from the New World opened his eyes, at

Political  
regulation  
of Ferdi-  
nand.

<sup>d</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 19, &c.      <sup>e</sup> Oviedo, lib. iv. c. 8.



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 1506. length, with respect to the importance of those discoveries, which he had hitherto affected to undervalue. Fortune, and his own address, having now extricated him out of those difficulties in which he had been involved by the death of his Queen, and by his disputes with his son-in-law about the government of her dominions<sup>f</sup>, he had full leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of America. To his provident sagacity, Spain is indebted for many of those regulations which gradually formed that system of profound but jealous policy, by which she governs her dominions in the New World. He erected a court distinguished by the title of *Casa de Contratacion*, or Board of Trade, composed of persons eminent for rank and abilities, to whom he committed the administration of American affairs. This board assembled regularly in Seville, and was invested with a distinct and extensive jurisdiction. He gave a regular form to ecclesiastical government in America, by nominating archbishops, bishops, deans, together with clergymen of subordinate ranks, to take charge of the Spaniards established there, as well as of the natives who should embrace the Christian faith. But notwithstanding the obsequious devotion of the Spanish court to the Papal See, such was Ferdinand's solicitude to prevent any foreign power from claiming jurisdiction, or acquiring influence, in his new dominions, that he reserved to the crown of Spain the sole right of patronage to the benefices in America, and stipulated that no papal bull or mandate should be promul-

<sup>f</sup> Hist. of the Reign of Charles V. vol. ii. p. 6, &c.

gated there, until it was previously examined and approved of by his council. With the same spirit of jealousy, he prohibited any goods to be exported to America, or any person to settle there, without a special licence from that council<sup>g</sup>.

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But, notwithstanding this attention to the police and welfare of the colony, a calamity impended which threatened its dissolution. The original inhabitants, on whose labour the Spaniards in Hispaniola depended for their prosperity, and even their existence, wasted so fast, that the extinction of the whole race seemed to be inevitable. When Columbus discovered Hispaniola, the number of its inhabitants was computed to be at least a million<sup>h</sup>. They were now reduced to sixty thousand in the space of fifteen years. This consumption of the human species, no less amazing than rapid, was the effect of several concurring causes. The natives of the American islands were of a more feeble constitution than the inhabitants of the other hemisphere. They could neither perform the same work, nor endure the same fatigue, with men whose organs were of a more vigorous conformation. The listless indolence in which they delighted to pass their days, as it was the effect of their debility, contributed likewise to increase it, and rendered them, from habit as well as constitution, incapable of hard labour. The food on which they subsisted afforded little nourishment, and they were accustomed to take it in small quantities, not sufficient to invigorate a

The number of the Indians diminishes fast.

<sup>g</sup> Herrera, dec. 1, lib. vi. c. 19, 20.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

B O O K languid frame, and render it equal to the efforts of  
 III. active industry. The Spaniards, without attending  
 1507. to those peculiarities in the constitution of the  
 Americans, imposed tasks upon them, which, though  
 not greater than Europeans might have performed  
 with ease, were so disproportioned to their strength,  
 that many sunk under the fatigue, and ended their  
 wretched days. Others, prompted by impatience  
 and despair, cut short their own lives with a violent  
 hand. Famine, brought on by compelling such  
 numbers to abandon the culture of their lands, in  
 order to labour in the mines, proved fatal to many.  
 Diseases of various kinds, some occasioned by the  
 hardships to which they were exposed, and others  
 by their intercourse with the Europeans, who com-  
 municated to them some of their peculiar maladies,  
 completed the desolation of the island. The Spa-  
 niards, being thus deprived of the instruments which  
 they were accustomed to employ, found it impossi-  
 ble to extend their improvements, or even to carry  
 1508. on the works which they had already begun. In  
 order to provide an immediate remedy for an evil  
 so alarming, Ovando proposed to transport the in-  
 habitants of the Lucayo islands to Hispaniola, under  
 pretence that they might be civilized with more  
 facility, and instructed to greater advantage in the  
 Christian religion, if they were united to the Spa-  
 nish colony, and placed under the immediate in-  
 spection of the missionaries settled there. Ferdi-  
 nand, deceived by this artifice, or willing to connive  
 at an act of violence which policy represented as  
 necessary, gave his assent to the proposal. Several  
 vessels were fitted out for the Lucayos, the com-

manders of which informed the natives, with whose language they were now well acquainted, that they came from a delicious country, in which the departed ancestors of the Indians resided, by whom they were sent to invite their descendants to resort thither, to partake of the bliss enjoyed there by happy spirits. That simple people listened with wonder and credulity; and, fond of visiting their relations and friends in that happy region, followed the Spaniards with eagerness. By this artifice, above forty thousand were decoyed into Hispaniola, to share in the sufferings which were the lot of the inhabitants of that island, and to mingle their groans and tears with those of that wretched race of men<sup>1</sup>.

The Spaniards had, for some time, carried on their operations in the mines of Hispaniola with such ardour as well as success, that these seemed to have engrossed their whole attention. The spirit of discovery languished; and, since the last voyage of Columbus, no enterprize of any moment had been undertaken. But as the decrease of the Indians rendered it impossible to acquire wealth in that island with the same rapidity as formerly, this urged some of the more adventurous Spaniards to search for new countries, where their avarice might be gratified with more facility. Juan Ponce de Leon, who commanded under Ovando in the eastern district of Hispaniola, passed over to the island of St. Juan de Puerto Rico, which Columbus had dis-

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New discoveries  
and settlements.

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. Gomara Hist. c. 41.

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covered in his second voyage, and penetrated into the interior part of the country. As he found the soil to be fertile, and expected, from some symptoms, as well as from the information of the inhabitants, to discover mines of gold in the mountains, Ovando permitted him to attempt making a settlement in the island. This was easily effected by an officer eminent for conduct no less than for courage. In a few years Puerto Rico was subjected to the Spanish government, the natives were reduced to servitude; and being treated with the same inconsiderate rigour as their neighbours in Hispaniola, the race of original inhabitants, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, was soon exterminated<sup>k</sup>.

About the same time Juan Diaz de Solis, in conjunction with Vincent Yanez Pinzon, one of Columbus's original companions, made a voyage to the continent. They held the same course which Columbus had taken, as far as to the island of Guanaios; but, standing from thence to the west, they discovered a new and extensive province, afterwards known by the name of Yucatan, and proceeded a considerable way along the coast of that country<sup>l</sup>. Though nothing memorable occurred in this voyage, it deserves notice, because it led to discoveries of greater importance. For the same reason, the voyage of Sebastian de Ocampo must be mentioned. By the command of Ovando he sailed round Cuba, and

<sup>k</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1—4. Gomara Hist. c. 44. Relacion de B. de las Casas, p. 10.

<sup>l</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 17.

first discovered with certainty, that this country, which Columbus once supposed to be a part of the continent, was a large island<sup>m</sup>.

This voyage round Cuba was one of the last occurrences under the administration of Ovando. Ever since the death of Columbus, his son Don Diego had been employed in soliciting Ferdinand to grant him the offices of viceroy and admiral in the New World, together with all the other immunities and profits which descended to him by inheritance, in consequence of the original capitulation with his father. But if these dignities and revenues appeared so considerable to Ferdinand, that, at the expense of being deemed unjust as well as ungrateful, he had wrested them from Columbus, it is not surprising that he should be unwilling to confer them on his son. Accordingly Don Diego wasted two years in incessant but fruitless importunity. Weary of this, he endeavoured at length to obtain by a legal sentence what he could not procure from the favour of an interested monarch. He commenced a suit against Ferdinand before the council which managed Indian affairs; and that court, with integrity which reflects honour upon its proceedings, decided against the King, and sustained Don Diego's claim of the vicerealty, together with all the other privileges stipulated in the capitulation. Even after this decree, Ferdinand's repugnance to put a subject in possession of such extensive rights, might have thrown in new obstacles, if Don Diego had

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Diego Columbus appointed governor of Hispaniola.

<sup>m</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 1.

**B O O K** not taken a step which interested very powerful persons in the success of his claims. The sentence of the council of the Indies gave him a title to a rank so elevated, and a fortune so opulent, that he found no difficulty in concluding a marriage with Donna Maria, daughter of Don Ferdinand de Toledo, great commendator of Leon, and brother of the Duke of Alva, a nobleman of the first rank, and nearly related to the King. The Duke and his family espoused so warmly the cause of their new ally, that Ferdinand could not resist their solicitations. He recalled Ovando, and appointed Don Diego his successor, though even in conferring this favour he could not conceal his jealousy; for he allowed him to assume only the title of governor, not that of viceroy, which had been adjudged to belong to him<sup>n</sup>.

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He repairs to Hispaniola.

Don Diego quickly repaired to Hispaniola, attended by his brother, his uncles, his wife, whom the courtesy of the Spaniards honoured with the title of vice-queen, and a numerous retinue of persons of both sexes born of good families. He lived with a splendour and magnificence hitherto unknown in the New World; and the family of Columbus seemed now to enjoy the honours and rewards due to his inventive genius, of which he himself had been cruelly defrauded. The colony itself acquired new lustre by the accession of so many inhabitants, of a different rank and character from most of those who had hitherto migrated to America, and many of the most illustrious families in

<sup>n</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 4, &c.

the Spanish settlements are descended from the persons who at that time accompanied Don Diego Columbus.<sup>o</sup>

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No benefits accrued to the unhappy natives from this change of governors. Don Diego was not only authorized by a royal edict to continue the *repartimientos*, or distribution of Indians, but the particular number which he might grant to every person, according to his rank in the colony, was specified. He availed himself of that permission; and soon after he landed at St. Domingo, he divided such Indians as were still unappropriated, among his relations and attendants<sup>p</sup>.

The next care of the new governor was to comply with an instruction which he received from the King; about settling a colony in Cubagua, a small island which Columbus had discovered in his third voyage: Though this barren spot hardly yielded subsistence to its wretched inhabitants, such quantities of those oysters which produce pearls were found on its coast, that it did not long escape the inquisitive avarice of the Spaniards, and became a place of considerable resort. Large fortunes were acquired by the fishery of pearls, which was carried on with extraordinary ardour. The Indians, especially those from the Lucayo islands, were compelled to dive for them; and this dangerous and unhealthy employment was an additional calamity, which contributed not a little to the extinction of that devoted race<sup>q</sup>.

Pearl  
fishery of  
Cubagua.

<sup>o</sup> Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Recopilacion de Leyes, lib. vi. tit. 8. 1. 1, 2. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 10.

<sup>q</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9. Gomara Hist. c. 78.



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New  
voyages.

About this period, Juan Diaz de Solis and Pinzon set out, in conjunction, upon a second voyage. They stood directly south, towards the equinoctial line, which Pinzon had formerly crossed, and advanced as far as the fortieth degree of southern latitude. They were astonished to find that the continent of America stretched on their right hand through all this vast extent of ocean. They landed in different places, to take possession in name of their sovereign; but though the country appeared to be extremely fertile and inviting, their force was so small, having been fitted out rather for discovery than making settlements, that they left no colony behind them. Their voyage served, however, to give the Spaniards more exalted and adequate ideas with respect to the dimensions of this new quarter of the globe<sup>r</sup>.

A settle-  
ment on  
the con-  
tinent at-  
tempted.

Though it was about ten years since Columbus had discovered the main land of America, the Spaniards had hitherto made no settlement in any part of it. What had been so long neglected was now seriously attempted, and with considerable vigour; though the plan for this purpose was neither formed by the crown, nor executed at the expense of the nation, but carried on by the enterprising spirit of private adventurers. This scheme took its rise from Alonso de Ojeda, who had already made two voyages as a discoverer, by which he acquired considerable reputation, but no wealth. But his character for intrepidity and conduct easily procured him associates, who advanced the money requisite

<sup>r</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 9.

to defray the charges of the expedition. About the same time, Diego de Nicuessa, who had acquired a large fortune in Hispaniola, formed a similar design. Ferdinand encouraged both; and though he refused to advance the smallest sum, was extremely liberal of titles and patents. He erected two governments on the continent, one extending from Cape de Vela to the Gulf of Darien, and the other from that to Cape Gracias a Dios. The former was given to Ojeda, the latter to Nicuessa. Ojeda fitted out a ship and two brigantines, with three hundred men; Nicuessa, six vessels, with seven hundred and eighty men. They sailed about the same time from St. Domingo for their respective governments. In order to give their title to those countries some appearance of validity, several of the most eminent divines and lawyers in Spain were employed to prescribe the mode in which they should take possession of them<sup>s</sup>. There is not in the history of mankind any thing more singular or extravagant than the form which they devised for this purpose. They instructed those invaders, as soon as they landed on the continent, to declare to the natives the principal articles of the Christian faith; to acquaint them, in particular, with the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope over all the kingdoms of the earth; to inform them of the grant which this holy pontiff had made of their country to the King of Spain; to require them to embrace the doctrines of that religion which the Spaniards made known to them; and to submit to the sovereign whose au-

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<sup>s</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 15.

**B O O K** thority they proclaimed. If the natives refused to comply with this requisition, the terms of which must have been utterly incomprehensible to uninstructed Indians, then Ojeda and Nicuessa were authorized to attack them with fire and sword; to reduce them, their wives and children, to a state of servitude; and to compel them by force to recognise the jurisdiction of the church, and the authority of the monarch, to which they would not voluntarily subject themselves<sup>t</sup>.

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The disasters attending it.

As the inhabitants of the continent could not at once yield assent to doctrines too refined for their uncultivated understandings, and explained to them by interpreters imperfectly acquainted with their language; as they did not conceive how a foreign priest, of whom they had never heard, could have any right to dispose of their country, or how an unknown Prince should claim jurisdiction over them as his subjects; they fiercely opposed the new invaders of their territories. Ojeda and Nicuessa endeavoured to effect by force what they could not accomplish by persuasion. The contemporary writers enter into a very minute detail in relating their transactions; but as they made no discovery of importance, nor established any permanent settlement, their adventures are not entitled to any considerable place in the general history of a period where romantic valour, struggling with incredible hardships, distinguishes every effort of the Spanish arms. They found the natives in those countries of which they went to assume the government, to

<sup>t</sup> See NOTE XXIII.

be of a character very different from that of their countrymen in the islands. They were free and warlike. Their arrows were dipped in a poison so noxious, that every wound was followed with certain death. In one encounter they slew above seventy of Ojeda's followers, and the Spaniards, for the first time, were taught to dread the inhabitants of the New World. Nicuessa was opposed by people equally resolute in defence of their possessions. Nothing could soften their ferocity. Though the Spaniards employed every art to soothe them, and to gain their confidence, they refused to hold any intercourse, or to exchange any friendly office, with men whose residence among them they considered as fatal to their liberty and independence. This implacable enmity of the natives, though it rendered an attempt to establish a settlement in their country extremely difficult as well as dangerous, might have been surmounted at length by the perseverance of the Spaniards, by the superiority of their arms, and their skill in the art of war. But every disaster which can be accumulated upon the unfortunate, combined to complete their ruin. The loss of their ships by various accidents upon an unknown coast, the diseases peculiar to a climate the most noxious in all America, the want of provisions unavoidable in a country imperfectly cultivated, dissension among themselves, and the incessant hostilities of the natives, involved them in a succession of calamities, the bare recital of which strikes one with horror. Though they received two considerable reinforcements from Hispaniola, the greater part of those who had engaged in this unhappy ex-

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**B O O K** III. }  
 1510. } expedition perished, in less than a year, in the most extreme misery. A few who survived, settled as a feeble colony at Santa Maria el Antigua, on the Gulf of Darien, under the command of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, who, in the most desperate exigencies, displayed such courage and conduct, as first gained the confidence of his countrymen, and marked him out as their leader in more splendid and successful undertakings. Nor was he the only adventurer in this expedition who will appear with lustre in more important scenes. Francisco Pizarro was one of Ojeda's companions, and in this school of adversity acquired or improved the talents which fitted him for the extraordinary actions which he afterwards performed. Hernan Cortes, whose name became still more famous, had likewise engaged early in this enterprise, which roused all the active youth of Hispaniola to arms; but the good fortune that accompanied him in his subsequent adventures, interposed to save him from the disasters to which his companions were exposed. He was taken ill at St. Domingo before the departure of the fleet, and detained there by a tedious indisposition<sup>u</sup>.

Conquest  
of Cuba.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of this expedition, the Spaniards were not deterred from engaging in new schemes of a similar nature. When wealth is acquired gradually by the persevering hand of industry, or accumulated by the slow operations of regular commerce, the means employed

<sup>u</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vii. c. 11, &c. Gomara Hist. c. 57, 58, 59. Benzon. Hist. lib. 1. c. 19—23. P. Martyr, decad. p. 122.

are so proportioned to the end attained, that there is nothing to strike the imagination, and little to urge on the active powers of the mind to uncommon efforts. But when large fortunes were created almost instantaneously ; when gold and pearls were procured in exchange for baubles ; when the countries which produced these rich commodities, defended only by naked savages, might be seized by the first bold invader ; objects so singular and alluring roused a wonderful spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards, who rushed with ardour into this new path that was opened to wealth and distinction. While this spirit continued warm and vigorous, every attempt either towards discovery or conquest was applauded, and adventurers engaged in it with emulation. The passion for new undertakings, which characterises the age of discovery in the latter part of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, would alone have been sufficient to prevent the Spaniards from stopping short in their career. But circumstances peculiar to Hispaniola, at this juncture, concurred with it in extending their navigation and conquests. The rigorous treatment of the inhabitants of that island having almost extirpated the race, many of the Spanish planters, as I have already observed, finding it impossible to carry on their works with the same vigour and profit, were obliged to look out for settlements in some country where people were not yet wasted by oppression. Others, with the inconsiderate levity natural to men upon whom wealth pours in with a sudden flow, had squandered in thoughtless prodigality what they acquired with ease, and

B O O K  
III.  
1510.

BOOK were driven by necessity to embark in the most desperate schemes, in order to retrieve their affairs. From all these causes, when Don Diego Columbus proposed to conquer the island of Cuba, and to establish a colony there, many persons of chief distinction in Hispaniola engaged with alacrity in the measure. He gave the command of the troops destined for that service to Diego Velasquez, one of his father's companions in his second voyage, and who, having been long settled in Hispaniola, had acquired an ample fortune, with such reputation for probity and prudence, that he seemed to be well qualified for conducting an expedition of importance. Three hundred men were deemed sufficient for the conquest of an island of above seven hundred miles in length, and filled with inhabitants. But they were of the same unwarlike character with the people of Hispaniola. They were not only intimidated by the appearance of their new enemies, but unprepared to resist them. For though, from the time that the Spaniards took possession of the adjacent island, there was reason to expect a descent on their territories, none of the small communities into which Cuba was divided, had either made any provision for its own defence, or had formed any concert for their common safety. The only obstruction the Spaniards met with was from Hatuey, a cazique, who had fled from Hispaniola, and had taken possession of the eastern extremity of Cuba. He stood upon the defensive at their first landing, and endeavoured to drive them back to their ships. His feeble troops, however, were soon broken and dispersed; and he himself being taken prisoner,

III.

1511.

Velasquez, according to the barbarous maxim of **B O O K**  
 the Spaniards, considered him as a slave who had **III.**  
 taken arms against his master, and condemned him **1511.**  
 to the flames. When Hatuey was fastened to the  
 stake, a Franciscan friar labouring to convert him,  
 promised him immediate admittance into the joys  
 of heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith.  
 "Are there any Spaniards," says he after some  
 pause, "in that region of bliss which you describe?"  
 —"Yes," replied the monk, "but only such as  
 are worthy and good."—"The best of them," re-  
 turned the indignant cazique, "have neither worth  
 nor goodness: I will not go to a place where I may  
 meet with one of that accursed race\*." This dread-  
 ful example of vengeance struck the people of Cuba  
 with such terror, that they scarcely gave any oppo-  
 sition to the progress of their invaders; and Velas-  
 quez, without the loss of a man, annexed this ex-  
 tensive and fertile island to the Spanish mo-  
 narchy.

The facility with which this important conquest **Discovery**  
 was completed, served as an incitement to other **of Florida.**  
 undertakings. Juan Ponce de Leon, having acquired  
 both fame and wealth by the reduction of Puerto  
 Rico, was impatient to engage in some new enter-  
 prise. He fitted out three ships at his own ex- **1512.**  
 pense, for a voyage of discovery, and his reputation  
 soon drew together a respectable body of followers.  
 He directed his course towards the Lucayo islands;  
 and after touching at several of them, as well as of

\* B. de las Casas, p. 40.

† Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 2, 3, &c. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3.  
 p. 179.



**B O O K** the Bahama isles, he stood to the south-west, and discovered a country hitherto unknown to the Spaniards, which he called Florida, either because he fell in with it on Palm Sunday, or on account of its gay and beautiful appearance. He attempted to land in different places, but met with such vigorous opposition from the natives, who were fierce and warlike, as convinced him that an increase of force was requisite to effect a settlement. Satisfied with having opened a communication with a new country, of whose value and importance he conceived very sanguine hopes, he returned to Puerto Rico through the channel now known by the name of the Gulf of Florida.

III.  
1512.

It was not merely the passion of searching for new countries that prompted Ponce de Leon to undertake this voyage; he was influenced by one of those visionary ideas, which at that time often mingled with the spirit of discovery, and rendered it more active. A tradition prevailed among the natives of Puerto Rico, that in the isle of Bimini, one of the Lucayos, there was a fountain of such wonderful virtue as to renew the youth and recall the vigour of every person who bathed in its salutary waters. In hopes of finding this grand restorative, Ponce de Leon and his followers ranged through the islands, searching with fruitless solicitude and labour for the fountain which was the chief object of their expedition. That a tale so fabulous should gain credit among simple uneducated Indians is not surprising. That it should make any impression upon an enlightened people appears in the present age altogether incredible.

The fact, however, is certain; and the most authentic Spanish historians mention this extravagant sally of their credulous countrymen. The Spaniards at that period were engaged in a career of activity which gave a romantic turn to their imagination, and daily presented to them strange and marvellous objects. A New World was opened to their view. They visited islands and continents, of whose existence mankind in former ages had no conception. In those delightful countries nature seemed to assume another form: every tree and plant and animal was different from those of the ancient hemisphere. They seemed to be transported into enchanted ground; and after the wonders which they had seen, nothing, in the warmth and novelty of their admiration, appeared to them so extraordinary as to be beyond belief. If the rapid succession of new and striking scenes made such impression even upon the sound understanding of Columbus, that he boasted of having found the seat of Paradise, it will not appear strange that Ponce de Leon should dream of discovering the fountain of youth<sup>z</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1512.

Soon after the expedition to Florida, a discovery of much greater importance was made in another part of America. Balboa having been raised to the government of the small colony at Santa Maria in Darien, by the voluntary suffrage of his associates, was so extremely desirous to obtain from the crown

Progress  
of Balboa  
in Darien.

<sup>z</sup> P. Martyr, decad. p. 202. Ensayo Chronol. para la Hist. de la Florida, par. D. Gab. Cardenas, p. 1. Oviedo, lib. xvi. c. 11. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. Hist. de la Conq. de la Florida, par Garc. de la Vega, lib. i. c. 3.

**B O O K** a confirmation of their election, that he dispatched  
III. one of his officers to Spain, in order to solicit a  
1512. } royal commission, which might invest him with a  
legal title to the supreme command. Conscious,  
however, that he could not expect success from the  
patronage of Ferdinand's ministers, with whom he  
was unconnected, or from negotiating in a court to  
the arts of which he was a stranger, he endeavoured  
to merit the dignity to which he aspired, and  
aimed at performing some signal service that would  
secure him the preference to every competitor.  
Full of this idea, he made frequent inroads into the  
adjacent country, subdued several of the caziques,  
and collected a considerable quantity of gold, which  
abounded more in that part of the continent than  
in the islands. In one of those excursions, the  
Spaniards contended with such eagerness about the  
division of some gold, that they were at the point  
of proceeding to acts of violence against one an-  
other. A young cazique who was present, astonished  
at the high value which they set upon a thing of  
which he did not discern the use, tumbled the gold  
out of the balance with indignation; and turning  
to the Spaniards, "Why do you quarrel (says he)  
about such a trifle? If you are so passionately fond  
of gold, as to abandon your own country, and to  
disturb the tranquillity of distant nations for its  
sake, I will conduct you to a region where the me-  
tal which seems to be the chief object of your ad-  
miration and desire is so common that the meanest  
utensils are formed of it." Transported with what  
they heard, Balboa and his companions inquired  
eagerly where this happy country lay, and how they

might arrive at it. He informed them that at the distance of six suns, that is, of six days' journey, towards the south, they should discover another ocean, near to which this wealthy kingdom was situated; but if they intended to attack that powerful state, they must assemble forces far superior in number and strength to those with which they now appeared<sup>a</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1512.

This was the first information which the Spaniards received concerning the great southern ocean, or the opulent and extensive country known afterwards by the name of Peru. Balboa had now before him objects suited to his boundless ambition, and the enterprising ardour of his genius. He immediately concluded the ocean which the cazique mentioned, to be that for which Columbus had searched without success in this part of America, in hopes of opening a more direct communication with the East-Indies; and he conjectured that the rich territory which had been described to him must be part of that vast and opulent region of the earth. Elated with the idea of performing what so great a man had attempted in vain, and eager to accomplish a discovery which he knew would be no less acceptable to the King than beneficial to his country, he was impatient until he could set out upon this enterprise, in comparison of which all his former exploits appeared inconsiderable. But previous arrangement and preparation were requisite to insure success. He began with courting and securing the friendship of the neigh-

The  
schemes  
which he  
forms;

<sup>a</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix, c. 2. Gomara, c. 60. P. Martyr, dec. p. 149.

**B O O K** bouring caziques. He sent some of his officers to Hispaniola with a large quantity of gold, as a proof of his past success, and an earnest of his future hopes. By a proper distribution of this, they secured the favour of the governor, and allured volunteers into the service. A considerable reinforcement from that island joined him, and he thought himself in a condition to attempt the discovery.

III.  
1512.

difficulty  
of exe-  
cuting  
them;

The isthmus of Darien is not above sixty miles in breadth; but this neck of land, which binds together the continents of North and South America, is strengthened by a chain of lofty mountains stretching through its whole extent, which render it a barrier of solidity sufficient to resist the impulse of two opposite oceans. The mountains are covered with forests almost inaccessible. The valleys in that moist climate, where it rains during two-thirds of the year, are marshy, and so frequently overflowed that the inhabitants find it necessary, in many places, to build their houses upon trees, in order to be elevated at some distance from the damp soil, and the odious reptiles engendered in the putrid waters<sup>b</sup>. Large rivers rush down with an impetuous current from the high grounds. In a region thinly inhabited by wandering savages, the hand of industry had done nothing to mitigate or correct those natural disadvantages. To march across this unexplored country with no other guides but Indians, whose fidelity could be little trusted, was, on all those accounts, the boldest enterprise on which the Spaniards had hitherto ventured in the New

<sup>b</sup> P. Martyr, dec. p. 158.

World. But the intrepidity of Balboa was such as distinguished him among his countrymen, at a period when every adventurer was conspicuous for daring courage. Nor was bravery his only merit; he was prudent in conduct, generous, affable, and possessed of those popular talents which, in the most desperate undertakings, inspire confidence and secure attachment. Even after the junction of the volunteers from Hispaniola, he was able to muster only an hundred and ninety men for his expedition. But they were hardy veterans, inured to the climate of America, and ready to follow him through every danger. A thousand Indians attended them to carry their provisions; and, to complete their warlike array, they took with them several of those fierce dogs, which were no less formidable than destructive to their naked enemies.

B O O K  
III.  
1513.

Balboa set out upon this important expedition on the first of September, about the time that the periodical rains began to abate. He proceeded by sea, and without any difficulty, to the territories of a cazique whose friendship he had gained; but no sooner did he begin to advance into the interior part of the country, than he was retarded by every obstacle, which he had reason to apprehend, from the nature of the territory, or the disposition of its inhabitants. Some of the caziques, at his approach, fled to the mountains with all their people, and carried off or destroyed whatever could afford subsistence to his troops. Others collected their subjects, in order to oppose his progress; and he quickly perceived what an arduous undertaking it was to conduct such a body of men through hostile

discovers  
the South  
Sea.

B O O K nations, across swamps, and rivers, and woods,  
III. which had never been passed but by straggling  
1513. Indians. But by sharing in every hardship with  
the meanest soldier, by appearing the foremost to  
meet every danger, by promising confidently to his  
troops the enjoyment of honour and riches superior  
to what had been attained by the most successful  
of their countrymen, he inspired them with such  
enthusiastic resolution, that they followed him  
without murmuring. When they had penetrated  
a good way into the mountains, a powerful cazique  
appeared in a narrow pass, with a numerous body  
of his subjects, to obstruct their progress. But  
men who had surmounted so many obstacles, de-  
spised the opposition of such feeble enemies. They  
attacked them with impetuosity, and, having di-  
persed them with much ease and great slaughter,  
continued their march. Though their guides had  
represented the breadth of the isthmus to be only  
a journey of six days, they had already spent twenty-  
five in forcing their way through the woods and  
mountains. Many of them were ready to sink  
under such uninterrupted fatigue in that sultry  
climate, several were taken ill of the dysentery and  
other diseases frequent in that country, and all be-  
came impatient to reach the period of their labours  
and sufferings. At length the Indians assured  
them, that from the top of the next mountain they  
should discover the ocean which was the object of  
their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had  
climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent,  
Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced  
alone to the summit, that he might be the first who

should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and, lifting up his hands to heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude. They held on their course to the shore with great alacrity, when Balboa, advancing up to the middle in the waves with his buckler and sword, took possession of that ocean in the name of the King his master, and vowed to defend it, with these arms, against all his enemies<sup>c</sup>.

B. O. O. K.  
III.  
1513.

That part of the great Pacific or Southern Ocean, which Balboa first discovered, still retains the name of the Gulf of St. Michael, which he gave to it, and is situated to the east of Panama. From several of the petty Princes, who governed in the districts adjacent to that gulf, he extorted provisions and gold by force of arms. Others sent them to him voluntarily. To these acceptable presents, some of the caziques added a considerable quantity of pearls; and he learned from them, with much satisfaction, that pearl oysters abounded in the sea, which he had newly discovered.

Together with the acquisition of this wealth, which served to soothe and encourage his followers, he received accounts which confirmed his sanguine

He receives information concerning

<sup>c</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 1, &c. Gomara, c. 62, &c. P. Martyr, dec. p. 205, &c.



**B O O K** hopes of future and more extensive benefits from the expedition. All the people on the coast of the South Sea concurred in informing him that there was a mighty and opulent kingdom situated at a considerable distance towards the south-east, the inhabitants of which had tame animals to carry their burdens. In order to give the Spaniards an idea of these, they drew upon the sand the figure of the llamas or sheep, afterwards found in Peru, which the Peruvians had taught to perform such services as they described. As the llama in its form nearly resembles a camel, a beast of burden deemed peculiar to Asia, this circumstance, in conjunction with the discovery of the pearls, another noted production of that country, tended to confirm the Spaniards in their mistaken theory with respect to the vicinity of the New World to the East Indies<sup>d</sup>.

obliged to return,

But though the information which Balboa received from the people on the coast, as well as his own conjectures and hopes, rendered him extremely impatient to visit this unknown country, his prudence restrained him from attempting to invade it with an handful of men exhausted by fatigue and weakened by diseases<sup>e</sup>. He determined to lead back his followers, at present, to their settlement of Santa Maria in Darien, and to return next season with a force more adequate to such an arduous enterprise. In order to acquire a more extensive knowledge of the isthmus, he marched back by a different route, which he found to be no less dangerous and difficult than that which he had formerly

<sup>d</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 2.

<sup>e</sup> See NOTE XXIV.

taken. But to men elated with success, and animated with hope, nothing is insurmountable. Balboa returned to Santa Maria, from which he had been absent four months, with greater glory and more treasure than the Spaniards had acquired in any expedition in the New World. None of Balboa's officers distinguished themselves more in this service than Francisco Pizarro, or assisted with greater courage and ardour in opening a communication with those countries in which he was destined to act soon a most illustrious part<sup>f</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1514.

Balboa's first care was to send information to Spain of the important discovery which he had made; and to demand a reinforcement of a thousand men, in order to attempt the conquest of that opulent country concerning which he had received such inviting intelligence. The first account of the discovery of the New World hardly occasioned greater joy, than the unexpected tidings that a passage was at last found to the great southern ocean. The communication with the East Indies, by a course to the westward of the line of demarcation drawn by the Pope, seemed now to be certain. The vast wealth which flowed into Portugal from its settlements and conquests in that country, excited the envy and called forth the emulation of other states. Ferdinand hoped now to come in for a share in this lucrative commerce, and, in his eagerness to obtain it, was willing to make an effort beyond what Balboa required. But even in this exertion, his jealous policy, as well as the fatal anti-

Pedrarias  
appointed  
governor  
of Darien.

<sup>f</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 3—6. Gomara, c. 64. P. Martyr, dec. p. 229, &c.

**B O O K** pathy of Fonseca, now Bishop of Burgos, to every  
 III. man of merit who distinguished himself in the New  
 1514. World, was conspicuous. Notwithstanding Balboa's recent services, which marked him out as the most proper person to finish that great undertaking which he had begun, Ferdinand was so ungenerous as to overlook these, and to appoint Pedrarias Davila, governor of Darien. He gave him the command of fifteen stout vessels and twelve hundred soldiers. These were fitted out at the public expense, with a liberality which Ferdinand had never displayed in any former armament destined for the New World; and such was the ardour of the Spanish gentlemen to follow a leader who was about to conduct them to a country where, as fame reported, they had only to throw their nets into the sea and draw out gold<sup>s</sup>, that fifteen hundred embarked on board the fleet, and, if they had not been restrained, a much greater number would have engaged in the service<sup>b</sup>.

Pedrarias reached the Gulf of Darien without any remarkable accident, and immediately sent some of his principal officers ashore to inform Balboa of his arrival, with the king's commission, to be governor of the colony. To their astonishment, they found Balboa, of whose great exploits they had heard so much, and of whose opulence they had formed such high ideas, clad in a canvass jacket, and wearing coarse hempen sandals used only by the meanest peasants, employed, together with some Indians,

<sup>s</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. c. 6, 7. P. Martyr, dec. p. 177, 296.

in thatching his own hut with reeds. Even in this simple garb, which corresponded so ill with the expectations and wishes of his new guests, Balboa received them with dignity. The fame of his discoveries had drawn so many adventurers from the islands, that he could now muster four hundred and fifty men. At the head of those daring veterans, he was more than a match for the forces which Pedrarias brought with him. But though his troops murmured loudly at the injustice of the King in superseding their commander, and complained that strangers would now reap the fruits of their toil and success, Balboa submitted with implicit obedience to the will of his sovereign, and received Pedrarias with all the deference due to his character<sup>1</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1514.

Notwithstanding this moderation, to which Pedrarias owed the peaceable possession of his government, he appointed a judicial inquiry to be made into Balboa's conduct, while under the command of Nicuessa, and imposed a considerable fine upon him, on account of the irregularities of which he had then been guilty. Balboa felt sensibly the mortification of being subjected to trial and to punishment in a place where he had so lately occupied the first station. Pedrarias could not conceal his jealousy of his superior merit; so that the resentment of the one and the envy of the other gave rise to dissensions extremely detrimental to the colony. It was threatened with a calamity still more fatal. Pedrarias had landed in Darien at a most July.

Dissention  
between  
him and  
Balboa.

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 13, 14.

**B O O K** unlucky time of the year, about the middle of the rainy season, in that part of the torrid zone where the clouds pour down such torrents as are unknown in more temperate climates<sup>k</sup>. The village of Santa Maria was seated in a rich plain, environed with marshes and woods. The constitution of Europeans was unable to withstand the pestilential influence of such a situation, in a climate naturally so noxious, and at a season so peculiarly unhealthy. A violent and destructive malady carried off many of the soldiers who accompanied Pedrarias. An extreme scarcity of provision augmented this distress, as it rendered it impossible to find proper refreshment for the sick, or the necessary sustenance for the healthy<sup>l</sup>. In the space of a month, above six hundred persons perished in the utmost misery. Dejection and despair spread through the colony. Many principal persons solicited their dismissal, and were glad to relinquish all their hopes of wealth, in order to escape from that pernicious region. Pedrarias endeavoured to divert those who remained from brooding over their misfortunes, by finding them employment. With this view, he sent several detachments into the interior parts of the country, to levy gold among the natives, and to search for the mines in which it was produced. Those rapacious adventurers, more attentive to present gain than to the means of facilitating their future progress, plundered without distinction wherever they marched. Regardless of the alliances which Balboa had made with several of the caziqués, they strip-

<sup>k</sup> Richard, *Hist. Naturelle de l'Air*, tom. i. p. 204.

<sup>l</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 14. P. Martyr, decad. p. 272.

ped them of every thing valuable, and treated them, as well as their subjects, with the utmost insolence and cruelty. By their tyranny and exactions, which Pedrarias, either from want of authority or inclination, did not restrain, all the country from the Gulf of Darien to the lake of Nicaragua was desolated, and the Spaniards were inconsiderately deprived of the advantages which they might have derived from the friendship of the natives, in extending their conquests to the South Sea. Balboa, who saw with concern that such ill-judged proceedings retarded the execution of his favourite scheme, sent violent remonstrances to Spain against the imprudent government of Pedrarias, which had ruined a happy and flourishing colony. Pedrarias, on the other hand, accused him of having deceived the King, by magnifying his own exploits, as well as by a false representation of the opulence and value of the country<sup>m</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1514.

Ferdinand became sensible at length of his imprudence in superseding the most active and experienced officer he had in the New World, and, by way of compensation to Balboa, appointed him *Adelantado*, or Lieutenant-Governor of the countries upon the South Sea, with very extensive privileges and authority. At the same time he enjoined Pedrarias to support Balboa in all his operations, and to consult with him concerning every measure which he himself pursued. But to effect such a sudden transition from inveterate enmity to perfect confidence, exceeded Ferdinand's power.

Violent  
proceed-  
ings  
against  
Balboa.

1515.

<sup>m</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 15. dec. 2. c. 1, &c. Gomara, c. 66. P. Martyr, dec. 3. c. 10. Relacion de B. de las Casas, p. 12.

B O O K

III.

1516.

Pedrarias continued to treat his rival with neglect; and Balboa's fortune being exhausted by the payment of his fine, and other exactions of Pedrarias, he could not make suitable preparations for taking possession of his new government. At length, by the interposition and exhortations of the Bishop of Darien, they were brought to a reconciliation; and, in order to cement this union more firmly, Pedrarias agreed to give his daughter in marriage to Balboa. The first effect of their concord was, that Balboa was permitted to make several small incursions into the country. These he conducted with such prudence, as added to the reputation which he had already acquired. Many adventurers resorted to him, and, with the countenance and aid of Pedrarias, he began to prepare for his expedition to the South Sea. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to build vessels capable of conveying his troops to those provinces which he purposed to invade.

1517.

After surmounting many obstacles, and enduring a variety of those hardships which were the portion of the conquerors of America, he at length finished four small brigantines. In these, with three hundred chosen men, a force superior to that with which Pizarro afterwards undertook the same expedition, he was ready to sail towards Peru, when he received an unexpected message from Pedrarias<sup>n</sup>. As his reconciliation with Balboa had never been cordial, the progress which his son-in-law was making revived his ancient enmity, and added to its rancour. He dreaded the prosperity and elevation of a man

<sup>n</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 3. lib. ii. c. 11. 13. 21.

whom he had injured so deeply. He suspected that success would encourage him to aim at independence upon his jurisdiction; and so violently did the passions of hatred, fear, and jealousy, operate upon his mind, that, in order to gratify his vengeance, he scrupled not to defeat an enterprise of the greatest moment to his country. Under pretexes which were false, but plausible, he desired Balboa to postpone his voyage for a short time, and to repair to Acla, in order that he might have an interview with him. Balboa, with the unsuspecting confidence of a man conscious of no crime, instantly obeyed the summons; but as soon as he entered the place, he was arrested by order of Pedrarias, whose impatience to satiate his revenge did not suffer him to languish long in confinement. Judges were immediately appointed to proceed to his trial. An accusation of disloyalty to the King, and of an intention to revolt against the governor, was preferred against him. Sentence of death was pronounced; and though the judges who passed it, seconded by the whole colony, interceded warmly for his pardon, Pedrarias continued inexorable; and the Spaniards beheld, with astonishment and sorrow, the public execution of a man whom they universally deemed more capable than any who had borne command in America, of forming and accomplishing great designs°. Upon his death, the expedition which he had planned was relinquished. Pedrarias, notwithstanding the violence and injustice of his proceedings, was not only screened from

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

° Herrera, dec. 2, lib. ii. c. 21, 22.



**B O O K** punishment by the powerful patronage of the Bishop  
 III. of Burgos and other courtiers, but continued in  
 1517. power. Soon after he obtained permission to re-  
 move the colony from its unwholesome station of  
 Santa Maria to Panama, on the opposite side of  
 the isthmus; and though it did not gain much in  
 point of healthfulness by the change, the commo-  
 dious situation of this new settlement contributed  
 greatly to facilitate the subsequent conquests of the  
 Spaniards in the extensive countries situated upon  
 the Southern Ocean<sup>P</sup>.

1515.  
 New dis-  
 coveries.

During these transactions in Darien, the history  
 of which it was proper to carry on in an uninter-  
 rupted tenour, several important events occurred  
 with respect to the discovery, the conquest, and go-  
 vernment, of other provinces in the New World.  
 Ferdinand was so intent upon opening a commu-  
 nication with the Molucca or Spice Islands by the  
 west, that in the year one thousand five hundred  
 and fifteen he fitted out two ships at his own ex-  
 pense, in order to attempt such a voyage, and gave  
 the command of them to Juan Diaz de Solis, who  
 was deemed one of the most skilful navigators in  
 Spain. He stood along the coast of South America,  
 and on the first of January one thousand five hun-  
 dred and sixteen entered a river which he called  
 Janeiro, where an extensive commerce is now car-  
 ried on. From thence he proceeded to a spacious  
 bay, which he supposed to be the entrance into a  
 strait that communicated with the Indian Ocean;  
 but, upon advancing further, he found it to be the

<sup>P</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 1.

mouth of Rio de Plata, one of the vast rivers by which the southern continent of America is watered. In endeavouring to make a descent in this country, De Solis and several of his crew were slain by the natives, who, in sight of the ships, cut their bodies in pieces, roasted and devoured them. Discouraged with the loss of their commander, and terrified at this shocking spectacle, the surviving Spaniards set sail for Europe, without aiming at any further discovery<sup>9</sup>. Though this attempt proved abortive, it was not without benefit. It turned the attention of ingenious men to this course of navigation, and prepared the way for a more fortunate voyage, by which, a few years posterior to this period, the great design that Ferdinand had in view was accomplished.

Though the Spaniards were thus actively employed in extending their discoveries and settlements in America, they still considered Hispaniola as their principal colony, and the seat of government. Don Diego Columbus wanted neither inclination nor abilities to have rendered the members of this colony, who were most immediately under his jurisdiction, prosperous and happy. But he was circumscribed in all his operations by the suspicious policy of Ferdinand, who on every occasion, and under pretexts the most frivolous, retrenched his privileges, and encouraged the treasurer, the judges, and other subordinate officers, to counteract his measures, and to dispute his authority. The most valuable prerogative which the go-

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

State of  
the colony  
in Hispaniola.

<sup>9</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. i. c. 7. P. Martyr, dec. p. 317.

B O O K  
 III.  
 1517.

governor possessed, was that of distributing Indians among the Spaniards settled in the island. The rigorous servitude of those unhappy men having been but little mitigated by all the regulations in their favour; the power of parcelling out such necessary instruments of labour at pleasure, secured to the governor great influence in the colony. In order to strip him of this, Ferdinand created a new office, with the power of distributing the Indians, and bestowed it upon Rodrigo Albuquerque, a relation of Zapata, his confidential minister. Mortified with the injustice as well as indignity of this invasion upon his rights, in a point so essential, Don Diego could no longer remain in a place where his power and consequence were almost annihilated. He repaired to Spain with the vain hopes of obtaining redress<sup>r</sup>. Albuquerque entered upon his office with all the rapacity of an indigent adventurer impatient to amass wealth. He began with taking the exact number of Indians in the island, and found that from sixty thousand, who in the year one thousand five hundred and eight survived after all their sufferings, they were now reduced to fourteen thousand. These he threw into separate divisions or lots, and bestowed them upon such as were willing to purchase them at the highest price. By this arbitrary distribution, several of the natives were removed from their original habitations, many were taken from their ancient masters, and all of them subjected to heavier burdens, and to more intolerable labour, in order

<sup>r</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. lib. x. c. 12.

to reimburse their new proprietors. Those additional calamities completed the misery, and hastened on the extinction, of this wretched and innocent race of men<sup>s</sup>.

B O O K  
III.

1617.

The violence of these proceedings, together with the fatal consequences which attended them, not only excited complaints among such as thought themselves aggrieved, but touched the hearts of all who retained any sentiments of humanity. From the time that ecclesiastics were sent as instructors into America, they perceived that the rigour with which their countrymen treated the natives, rendered their ministry altogether fruitless. The missionaries, in conformity to the mild spirit of that religion which they were employed to publish, early remonstrated against the maxims of the planters with respect to the Americans, and condemned the *repartimientos*, or *distributions*, by which they were given up as slaves to their conquerors, as no less contrary to natural justice and the precepts of Christianity, than to sound policy. The Dominicans, to whom the instruction of the Americans was originally committed, were most vehement in testifying against the *repartimientos*. In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Montesino, one of their most eminent preachers, inveighed against this practice, in the great church at St. Domingo, with all the impetuosity of popular eloquence. Don Diego Columbus, the principal officers of the colony, and all the laymen who had been his hearers, complained of the monk to his superiors; but they,

Controversy with respect to the treatment of the Indians :

<sup>s</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

**B O O K** instead of condemning, applauded his doctrine, as  
 III.  
 1517. equally pious and seasonable. The Franciscans, influenced by the spirit of opposition and rivalry which subsists between the two orders, discovered some inclination to take part with the laity, and to espouse the defence of the *repartimientos*. But as they could not with decency give their avowed approbation to a system of oppression so repugnant to the spirit of religion, they endeavoured to palliate what they could not justify, and alleged, in excuse for the conduct of their countrymen, that it was impossible to carry on any improvement in the colony, unless the Spaniards possessed such dominion over the natives that they could compel them to labour<sup>t</sup>.

contrary  
 decisions  
 concerning  
 this point ;

The Dominicans, regardless of such political and interested considerations, would not relax in any degree the rigour of their sentiments, and even refused to absolve, or admit to the sacrament, such of their countrymen as continued to hold the natives in servitude<sup>u</sup>. Both parties applied to the King for his decision in a matter of such importance. Ferdinand empowered a committee of his privy-council, assisted by some of the most eminent civilians and divines in Spain, to hear the deputies sent from Hispaniola in support of their respective opinions. After a long discussion, the speculative point in controversy was determined in favour of the Dominicans, the Indians were declared to be a free people entitled to all the natural

<sup>t</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. viii. c. 11. Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

<sup>u</sup> Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97.

rights of men ; but notwithstanding this decision, B O O K  
the *repartimientos* were continued upon their an- III.  
cient footing<sup>x</sup>. As this determination admitted  
1517.  
the principle upon which the Dominicans founded  
their opinion, they renewed their efforts to obtain  
relief for the Indians with additional boldness and  
zeal. At length, in order to quiet the colony, which  
was alarmed by their remonstrances and censures,  
Ferdinand issued a decree of his privy council, de-  
claring, that after mature consideration of the  
Apostolic Bull, and other titles by which the crown  
of Castile claimed a right to its possessions in the 1513.  
New World, the servitude of the Indians was war-  
ranted both by the laws of God and of man ; that  
unless they were subjected to the dominion of the  
Spaniards, and compelled to reside under their in-  
spection, it would be impossible to reclaim them  
from idolatry, or to instruct them in the principles  
of the Christian faith ; that no further scruple ought  
to be entertained concerning the lawfulness of the  
*repartimientos*, as the King and council were will-  
ing to take the charge of that upon their own con-  
sciences ; and that therefore the Dominicans, and  
monks of other religious orders, should abstain for  
the future from those invectives which, from an  
excess of charitable but ill-informed zeal, they had  
uttered against that practice<sup>y</sup>.

That his intention of adhering to this decree  
might be fully understood, Ferdinand conferred  
new grants of Indians upon several of his cour-  
tiers<sup>z</sup>. But in order that he might not seem alto-

<sup>x</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. viii. c. 12. lib. ix. c. 5.

<sup>y</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14.

<sup>z</sup> See NOTE XXV.

**B O O K** together inattentive to the rights of humanity, he  
 III. published an edict, in which he endeavoured to pro-  
 1517. vide for the mild treatment of the Indians under  
 the yoke to which he subjected them ; he regulated  
 the nature of the work which they should be re-  
 quired to perform ; he prescribed the mode in which  
 they should be clothed and fed, and gave directions  
 with respect to their instruction in the principles of  
 Christianity<sup>a</sup>.

effect of  
 these.

But the Dominicans, who from their experience  
 of what was past judged concerning the future,  
 soon perceived the inefficacy of those provisions,  
 and foretold, that as long as it was the interest of  
 individuals to treat the Indians with rigour, no  
 public regulations could render their servitude mild  
 or tolerable. They considered it as vain, to waste  
 their own time and strength in attempting to  
 communicate the sublime truths of religion to men  
 whose spirits were broken, and their faculties im-  
 paired by oppression. Some of them, in despair,  
 requested the permission of their superiors to re-  
 move to the continent, and to pursue the object of  
 their mission among such of the natives as were not  
 hitherto corrupted by the example of the Spaniards,  
 or alienated by their cruelty from the Christian  
 faith. Such as remained in Hispaniola continued  
 to remonstrate, with decent firmness, against the  
 servitude of the Indians<sup>b</sup>.

Bartholo-  
 mew de las  
 Casas ap-

The violent operations of Albuquerque, the new  
 distributor of Indians, revived the zeal of the Do-

<sup>a</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Id. *ibid.* Touron. *Histoire Generale de l'Amerique*, tom. i.  
 p. 252.

minicans against the *repartimientos*, and called forth an advocate for that oppressed people, who possessed all the courage, the talents, and activity requisite in supporting such a desperate cause. This was Bartholomew de las Casas, a native of Seville, and one of the clergymen sent out with Columbus in his second voyage to Hispaniola, in order to settle in that island. He early adopted the opinion prevalent among ecclesiastics, with respect to the unlawfulness of reducing the natives to servitude; and that he might demonstrate the sincerity of his conviction, he relinquished all the Indians who had fallen to his own share in the division of the inhabitants among their conquerors, declaring that he should ever bewail his own misfortune and guilt, in having exercised for a moment this impious dominion over his fellow-creatures<sup>c</sup>. From that time he became the avowed patron of the Indians; and by his bold interpositions in their behalf, as well as by the respect due to his abilities and character, he had often the merit of setting some bounds to the excesses of his countrymen. He did not fail to remonstrate warmly against the proceedings of Albuquerque; and, though he soon found that attention to his own interest rendered this rapacious officer deaf to admonition, he did not abandon the wretched people whose cause he had espoused. He instantly set out for Spain, with the most sanguine hopes of opening the eyes and softening the heart of Ferdinand, by that striking picture of the op-

<sup>c</sup> Fr. Aug. Davila Padilla Hist. de la Fundacion de la Provincia de St. Jago de Mexico, p. 303, 304. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.  
pears in  
defence of  
the In-  
dians ;



B O O K III. pressions of his new subjects, which he would exhibit to his view<sup>d</sup>.

1517. He easily obtained admittance to the King, whom he found in a declining state of health. With much freedom, and no less eloquence, he represented to him all the fatal effects of the *repartimientos* in the New World, boldly charging him with the guilt of having authorized this impious measure, which had brought misery and destruction upon a numerous and innocent race of men, whom Providence had placed under his protection. Ferdinand, whose mind as well as body was much enfeebled by his distemper, was greatly alarmed at this charge of impiety, which at another juncture he would have despised. He listened with deep compunction to the discourse of Las Casas, and promised to take into serious consideration the means of redressing the evil of which he complained. But death prevented him from executing his resolution. Charles of Austria, to whom all his crowns devolved, resided at that time in his paternal dominions in the Low Countries. Las Casas, with his usual ardour, prepared immediately to set out for Flanders, in order to occupy the ear of the young monarch, when Cardinal Ximenes, who, as regent, assumed the reins of government in Castile, commanded him to desist from the journey, and engaged to hear his complaints in person.

The regulations of Cardinal Ximenes.

He accordingly weighed the matter with attention equal to its importance; and as his impetuous mind delighted in schemes bold and uncommon,

<sup>d</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 12. Dec. 2. lib. i. c. 11. Davila Padilla Hist. p. 304.

he soon fixed upon a plan which astonished the ministers trained up under the formal and cautious administration of Ferdinand. Without regarding either the rights of Don Diego Columbus, or the regulations established by the late King, he resolved to send three persons to America as superintendants of all the colonies there, with authority, after examining all circumstances on the spot, to decide finally with respect to the point in question. It was a matter of deliberation and delicacy to choose men qualified for such an important station. As all the laymen settled in America, or who had been consulted in the administration of that department, had given their opinion that the Spaniards could not keep possession of their new settlements, unless they were allowed to retain their dominion over the Indians, he saw that he could not rely on their impartiality, and determined to commit the trust to ecclesiastics. As the Dominicans and Franciscans had already espoused opposite sides in the controversy, he, from the same principle of impartiality, excluded both these fraternities from the commission. He confined his choice to the monks of St. Jerome, a small but respectable order in Spain. With the assistance of their general, and in concert with Las Casas, he soon pitched upon three persons whom he deemed equal to the charge. To them he joined Zuazo, a private lawyer of distinguished probity, with unbounded power to regulate all judicial proceedings in the colonies. Las Casas was appointed to accompany them, with the title of protector of the Indians\*.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

\* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 3.

B O O K

III.

1517.

The man-  
ner in  
which they  
were exe-  
cuted.

To vest such extraordinary powers, as might at once overturn the system of government established in the New World, in four persons, who, from their humble condition in life, were little entitled to possess this high authority, appeared to Zapata, and other ministers of the late King, a measure so wild and dangerous, that they refused to issue the dispatches necessary for carrying it into execution. But Ximenes was not of a temper patiently to brook opposition to any of his schemes. He sent for the refractory ministers, and addressed them in such a tone, that in the utmost consternation they obeyed his orders<sup>f</sup>. The superintendants, with their associate Zuazo and Las Casas, sailed for St. Domingo. Upon their arrival, the first act of their authority was to set at liberty all the Indians who had been granted to the Spanish courtiers, or to any person not residing in America. This, together with the information which had been received from Spain concerning the object of the commission, spread a general alarm. The colonists concluded that they were to be deprived at once of the hands with which they carried on their labour, and that, of consequence, ruin was unavoidable. But the fathers of St. Jerome proceeded with such caution and prudence as soon dissipated all their fears. They discovered, in every step of their conduct, a knowledge of the world, and of affairs, which is seldom acquired in a cloister; and displayed a moderation as well as gentleness still more rare among persons trained up in the solitude and austerity of a monastic life. Their ears were open to information from

<sup>f</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 6.

every quarter; they compared the different accounts B O O K  
 which they received; and, after a mature consider- HI.  
 ation of the whole, they were fully satisfied that the 1517.  
 state of the colony rendered it impossible to adopt  
 the plan proposed by Las Casas, and recommended  
 by the Cardinal. They plainly perceived that the  
 Spaniards settled in America were so few in num-  
 ber, that they could neither work the mines which  
 had been opened, nor cultivate the country; that  
 they depended for effecting both upon the labour  
 of the natives, and if deprived of it, they must in-  
 stantly relinquish their conquests, or give up all the  
 advantages which they derived from them; that no  
 allurements were so powerful as to surmount the na-  
 tural aversion of the Indians to any laborious effort,  
 and that nothing but the authority of a master could  
 compel them to work; and if they were not kept  
 constantly under the eye and discipline of a superior,  
 so great was their natural listlessness and indiffer-  
 ence, that they would neither attend to religious in-  
 struction, nor observe those rites of Christianity  
 which they had been already taught. Upon all those  
 accounts, the superintendents found it necessary to  
 tolerate the *repartimientos*, and to suffer the In-  
 dians to remain under subjection to their Spanish  
 masters. They used their utmost endeavours, how-  
 ever, to prevent the fatal effects of this establish-  
 ment, and to secure to the Indians the consolation  
 of the best treatment compatible with a state of  
 servitude. For this purpose, they revived former  
 regulations, they prescribed new ones, they neglected  
 no circumstance that tended to mitigate the rigour  
 of the yoke; and by their authority, their example,

**B O O K** and their exhortations, they laboured to inspire their countrymen with sentiments of equity and gentleness towards the unhappy people upon whose industry they depended. Zuazo, in his department, seconded the endeavours of the superintendents. He reformed the courts of justice in such a manner as to render their decisions equitable as well as expeditious, and introduced various regulations which greatly improved the interior police of the colony. The satisfaction which his conduct and that of the superintendents gave, was now universal among the Spaniards settled in the New World; and all admired the boldness of Ximenes in having departed from the ordinary path of business in forming his plan, as well as his sagacity in pitching upon persons whose wisdom, moderation, and disinterestedness rendered them worthy of this high trust<sup>s</sup>.

**Las Casas** alone was dissatisfied. The prudential considerations which influenced the superintendents, made no impression upon him. He regarded their idea of accommodating their conduct to the state of the colony, as the maxim of an unhallowed timid policy, which tolerated what was unjust because it was beneficial. He contended that the Indians were by nature free, and, as their protector, he required the superintendents not to bereave them of the common privilege of humanity. They received his most virulent remonstrances without emotion, but adhered firmly to their own system. The Spanish planters did not bear with him

<sup>s</sup> Herrera, dec. 2, lib. ii. c. 15. Remesal, Hist. Gener. lib. ii. c. 14, 15, 16.

so patiently, and were ready to tear him in pieces for insisting in a requisition so odious to them. Las Casas, in order to screen himself from their rage, found it necessary to take shelter in a convent; and perceiving that all his efforts in America were fruitless, he soon set out for Europe, with a fixed resolution not to abandon the protection of a people whom he deemed to be cruelly oppressed<sup>b</sup>.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

Had Ximenes retained that vigour of mind with which he usually applied to business, Las Casas must have met with no very gracious reception upon his return to Spain. But he found the Cardinal languishing under a mortal distemper, and preparing to resign his authority to the young King, who was daily expected from the Low-Countries. Charles arrived, took possession of the government, and, by the death of Ximenes, lost a minister whose abilities and integrity entitled him to direct his affairs. Many of the Flemish nobility had accompanied their sovereign to Spain. From that warm predilection to his countrymen, which was natural at his age, he consulted them with respect to all the transactions in his new kingdom; and they, with an indiscreet eagerness, intruded themselves into every business, and seized almost every department of administration<sup>i</sup>. The direction of American affairs was an object too alluring to escape their attention. Las Casas observed their growing influence; and though projectors are usually too sanguine to conduct their schemes with much dexterity, he possessed a bustling, indefatigable ac-

his nego-  
tiations  
with the  
mini-  
sters of  
Charles V.

<sup>b</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 16.

<sup>i</sup> History of Charles V. vol. ii.

**B O O K** tivity, which sometimes accomplishes its purposes  
 III. with greater success than the most exquisite dis-  
 1517. cernment and address. He courted the Flemish  
 ministers with assiduity. He represented to them  
 the absurdity of all the maxims hitherto adopted  
 with respect to the government of America, parti-  
 cularly during the administration of Ferdinand,  
 and pointed out the defects of those arrangements  
 which Ximenes had introduced. The memory of  
 Ferdinand was odious to the Flemings. The su-  
 perior virtue and abilities of Ximenes had long been  
 the object of their envy. They fondly wished to have  
 a plausible pretext for condemning the measures  
 both of the monarch and of the minister, and of  
 reflecting some discredit on their political wisdom.  
 The friends of Don Diego Columbus, as well as  
 the Spanish courtiers who had been dissatisfied  
 with the Cardinal's administration, joined Las Ca-  
 sas in censuring the scheme of sending superin-  
 tendents to America. This union of so many  
 interests and passions was irresistible; and in con-  
 sequence of it the fathers of St. Jerome, together  
 with their associate Zuazo, were recalled. Rode-  
 rigo de Figueroa, a lawyer of some eminence, was  
 appointed chief judge of the island, and received  
 instructions, in compliance with the request of Las  
 Casas, to examine once more, with the utmost at-  
 tention, the point in controversy between him  
 and the people of the colony, with respect to the  
 treatment of the natives; and in the mean time to  
 do every thing in his power to alleviate their suffer-  
 ings, and prevent the extinction of the race<sup>k</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> Herrera, dcc. 2. lib. ii. c. 16. 19. 21. lib. iii. c: 7, 8.

This was all that the zeal of Las Casas could procure at that juncture in favour of the Indians. The impossibility of carrying on any improvements in America, unless the Spanish planters could command the labour of the natives, was an insuperable objection to his plan of treating them as free subjects. In order to provide some remedy for this, without which he found it was in vain to mention his scheme, Las Casas proposed to purchase a sufficient number of negroes from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Africa, and to transport them to America, in order that they might be employed as slaves in working the mines and cultivating the ground. One of the first advantages which the Portuguese had derived from their discoveries in Africa, arose from the trade in slaves. Various circumstances concurred in reviving this odious commerce, which had been long abolished in Europe, and which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity than to the principles of religion. As early as the year one thousand five hundred and three, a few negro slaves had been sent into the New World<sup>1</sup>. In the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, Ferdinand permitted the importation of them in greater numbers<sup>m</sup>. They were found to be a more robust and hardy race than the natives of America. They were more capable of enduring fatigue, more patient under servitude, and the labour of one negro was computed to be equal to that of four Indians<sup>n</sup>. Cardinal Ximenes, however, when solicited to encourage this commerce,

B O O K  
III.  
1517.  
Scheme of  
supplying  
the colonies  
with  
negroes.

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, dec. 1. lib. v. c. 12.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid. lib. viii. c. 9.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. lib. ix. c. 5.



B O O K

III.

1517.

peremptorily rejected the proposition, because he perceived the iniquity of reducing one race of men to slavery, while he was consulting about the means of restoring liberty to another<sup>n</sup>. But Las Casas, from the inconsistency natural to men who hurry with headlong impetuosity towards a favourite point, was incapable of making this distinction. While he contended earnestly for the liberty of the people born in one quarter of the globe, he laboured to enslave the inhabitants of another region; and in the warmth of his zeal to save the Americans from the yoke, pronounced it to be lawful and expedient to impose one still heavier upon the Africans. Unfortunately for the latter, Las Casas's plan was adopted. Charles granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand negroes into America. The favourite sold his patent to some Genoese merchants for twenty-five thousand ducats, and they were the first who brought into a regular form that commerce for slaves between Africa and America, which has since been carried on to such an amazing extent<sup>o</sup>.

1518.  
Las Casas  
proposes  
sending  
labourers  
to Hispani-  
ola;

But the Genoese merchants, conducting their operations, at first, with the rapacity of monopolists, demanded such an high price for negroes, that the number imported into Hispaniola made no great change upon the state of the colony. Las Casas, whose zeal was no less inventive than indefatigable, had recourse to another expedient for the relief of the Indians. He observed, that most of the per-

<sup>n</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 8.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid. dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 20.

sons who had settled hitherto in America, were sailors and soldiers employed in the discovery or conquest of the country; the younger sons of noble families, allured by the prospect of acquiring sudden wealth; or desperate adventurers, whom their indigence or crimes forced to abandon their native land. Instead of such men, who were dissolute, rapacious, and incapable of that sober persevering industry which is requisite in forming new colonies, he proposed to supply the settlements in Hispaniola and other parts of the New World with a sufficient number of labourers and husbandmen, who should be allured by suitable premiums to remove thither. These, as they were accustomed to fatigue, would be able to perform the work to which the Indians, from the feebleness of their constitution, were unequal, and might soon become useful and opulent citizens. But though Hispaniola stood much in need of a recruit of inhabitants, having been visited at this time with the small pox, which swept off almost all the natives who had survived their long continued oppression; and though Las Casas had the countenance of the Flemish ministers, this scheme was defeated by the Bishop of Burgos, who thwarted all his projects<sup>p</sup>.

Las Casas now despaired of procuring any relief for the Indians in those places where the Spaniards were already settled. The evil was become so inveterate there, as not to admit of a cure. But such discoveries were daily making in the continent, as gave an high idea both of its extent and popu-

B O O K  
III.  
1518.

<sup>p</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 21.

forms the  
idea of a  
new colo-  
ny.

**B O O K** lousness. In all those vast regions there was but one  
 } <sup>III.</sup> feeble colony planted ; and except a small spot on  
 } 1518. the isthmus of Darien, the natives still occupied  
 the whole country. This opened a new and more  
 ample field for the humanity and zeal of Las Casas,  
 who flattered himself that he might prevent a per-  
 nicious system from being introduced there, though  
 he had failed of success in his attempts to overturn  
 it where it was already established. Full of this  
 idea, he applied for a grant of the unoccupied coun-  
 try stretching along the sea-coast from the gulf of  
 Paria to the western frontier of that province now  
 known by the name of Santa Martha. He proposed  
 to settle there with a colony composed of husband-  
 men, labourers, and ecclesiastics. He engaged in  
 the space of two years to civilize ten thousand of  
 the natives, and to instruct them so thoroughly in  
 the arts of social life, that from the fruits of their  
 industry an annual revenue of fifteen thousand du-  
 cats should arise to the King. In ten years he ex-  
 pected that his improvements would be so far ad-  
 vanced as to yield annually sixty thousand ducats.  
 He stipulated, that no sailor or soldier should ever  
 be permitted to settle in this district ; and that no  
 Spaniard whatever should enter it without his per-  
 mission. He even projected to clothe the people  
 whom he took along with him in some distinguishing  
 garb, which did not resemble the Spanish dress,  
 that they might appear to the natives to be a dif-  
 ferent race of men from those who had brought so  
 many calamities upon their country<sup>9</sup>. From this

<sup>9</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 2.

scheme, of which I have traced only the great lines, it is manifest that Las Casas had formed ideas concerning the method of treating the Indians, similar to those by which the Jesuits afterwards carried on their great operations in another part of the same continent. He supposed that the Europeans, by availing themselves of that ascendant which they possessed in consequence of their superior progress in science and improvement, might gradually form the minds of the Americans to relish those comforts of which they were destitute, might train them to the arts of civil life, and render them capable of its functions.

But to the Bishop of Burgos, and the council of the Indies, this project appeared not only chimerical, but dangerous in a high degree. They deemed the faculties of the Americans to be naturally so limited, and their indolence so excessive, that every attempt to instruct or to improve them would be fruitless. They contended, that it would be extremely imprudent to give the command of a country extending above a thousand miles along the coast, to a fanciful presumptuous enthusiast, a stranger to the affairs of the world, and unacquainted with the arts of government. Las Casas, far from being discouraged with a repulse, which he had reason to expect, had recourse once more to the Flemish favourites, who zealously patronized his scheme, merely because it had been rejected by the Spanish ministers. They prevailed with their master, who had lately been raised to the Imperial dignity, to refer the consideration of this measure to a select number of his privy-councillors ; and Las

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

favour-  
ably re-  
ceived.

**B O O K** III. 1517. Casas having excepted against the members of the council of the Indies, as partial and interested, they were all excluded. The decision of men chosen by recommendation of the Flemings, was perfectly conformable to their sentiments. They warmly approved of Las Casas's plan, and gave orders for carrying it into execution, but restricted the territory allotted him to three hundred miles along the coast of Cumana; allowing him, however, to extend it as far as he pleased towards the interior part of the country<sup>r</sup>.

A solemn deliberation concerning the mode of treating the Indians.

This determination did not pass uncensured. Almost every person who had been in the West-Indies exclaimed against it, and supported their opinion so confidently, and with such plausible reasons, as made it advisable to pause, and to review the subject more deliberately. Charles himself, though accustomed, at this early period of his life, to adopt the sentiments of his ministers with such submissive deference as did not promise that decisive vigour of mind which distinguished his riper years, could not help suspecting that the eagerness with which the Flemings took part in every affair relating to America, flowed from some improper motive, and began to discover an inclination to examine in person into the state of the question concerning the character of the Americans, and the proper manner of treating them. An opportunity of making this inquiry with great advantage soon occurred. Quevedo, the Bishop of Darien, who had accompanied Pedrarias to the continent in the

June 20.

<sup>r</sup> Gomara Hist. Gener. c. 77. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3. Oviedo, lib. xix. c. 5.

year one thousand five hundred and thirteen, hap- **B O O K**  
 pened to land at Barcelona, where the court then **III.**  
 resided. It was quickly known that his sentiments **1517.**  
 concerning the talents and disposition of the In-  
 dians differed from those of Las Casas: and Charles  
 naturally concluded that by confronting two re-  
 spectable persons, who, during their residence in  
 America, had full leisure to observe the manners of  
 the people whom they pretended to describe, he  
 might be able to discover which of them had formed  
 his opinion with the greatest discernment and ac-  
 curacy.

A day for this solemn audience was appointed.  
 The Emperor appeared with extraordinary pomp,  
 and took his seat on a throne in the great hall of  
 the palace. His principal courtiers attended. Don  
 Diego Columbus, admiral of the Indies, was sum-  
 moned to be present. The Bishop of Darien was  
 called upon first to deliver his opinion. He, in a  
 short discourse, lamented the fatal desolation of  
 America by the extinction of so many of its inha-  
 bitants; he acknowledged that this must be im-  
 puted, in some degree, to the excessive rigour and  
 inconsiderate proceedings of the Spaniards; but de-  
 clared that all the people of the New World whom  
 he had seen, either in the continent or in the is-  
 lands, appeared to him to be a race of men marked  
 out, by the inferiority of their talents, for servitude,  
 and whom it would be impossible to instruct or  
 improve, unless they were kept under the continual  
 inspection of a master. Las Casas, at greater length,  
 and with more fervour, defended his own system.  
 He rejected with indignation the idea that any race

**B O O K** of men was born to servitude, as irreligious and inhuman. He asserted that the faculties of the Americans were not naturally despicable, but unimproved; that they were capable of receiving instruction in the principles of religion, as well as of acquiring the industry and arts which would qualify them for the various offices of social life; that the mildness and timidity of their nature rendered them so submissive and docile, that they might be led and formed with a gentle hand. He professed, that his intentions in proposing the scheme now under consideration were pure and disinterested; and though from the accomplishment of his designs inestimable benefits would result to the crown of Castile, he never had claimed, nor ever would receive, any recompense on that account.

III.  
1517.  
The  
scheme of  
Las Casas  
approved  
of;

Charles, after hearing both, and consulting with his ministers, did not think himself sufficiently informed to establish any general arrangement with respect to the state of the Indians; but as he had perfect confidence in the integrity of Las Casas, and as even the Bishop of Darien admitted his scheme to be of such importance that a trial should be made of its effects, he issued a patent, granting him the district in Cumana formerly mentioned, with full power to establish a colony there according to his own plan<sup>s</sup>.

1522.  
his prepara-  
tions for  
executing  
it;

Las Casas pushed on the preparations for his voyage with his usual ardour. But, either from his own inexperience in the conduct of affairs, or from the secret opposition of the Spanish nobility,

\* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 3, 4, 5. Argensola Annales d'Aragon, 74. 97. Remisal Hist. Gener. kb. ii. c. 19, 20.

who universally dreaded the success of an institution that might rob them of the industrious and useful hands which cultivated their estates, his progress in engaging husbandmen and labourers was extremely slow, and he could not prevail on more than two hundred to accompany him to Cumana.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

Nothing, however, could damp his zeal. With this slender train, hardly sufficient to take possession of such a large territory, and altogether unequal to any effectual attempt towards civilizing its inhabitants, he set sail. The first place at which he touched was the island of Puerto Rico. There he received an account of a new obstacle to the execution of his scheme, more insuperable than any he had hitherto encountered. When he left America in the year one thousand five hundred and sixteen, the Spaniards had little intercourse with any part of the continent except the countries adjacent to the Gulf of Darien. But as every species of internal industry began to stagnate in Hispaniola, when, by the rapid decrease of the natives, the Spaniards were deprived of those hands with which they had hitherto carried on their operations, this prompted them to try various expedients for supplying that loss. Considerable numbers of negroes were imported; but, on account of their exorbitant price, many of the planters could not afford to purchase them. In order to procure slaves at an easier rate, some of the Spaniards in Hispaniola fitted out vessels to cruise along the coast of the continent. In places where they found themselves inferior in strength, they traded with the natives, and gave European toys in exchange for the plates

departs  
for Ame-  
rica, and  
meets with  
formidable  
obstacles ;



**B O O K** of gold worn by them as ornaments; but, wherever they could surprise or overpower the Indians, they carried them off by force, and sold them as slaves<sup>†</sup>. In those predatory excursions, such atrocious acts of violence and cruelty had been committed, that the Spanish name was held in detestation all over the continent. Whenever any ships appeared, the inhabitants either fled to the woods, or rushed down to the shore in arms to repel those hated disturbers of their tranquillity. They forced some parties of the Spaniards to retreat with precipitation; they cut off others; and in the violence of their resentment against the whole nation, they murdered two Dominican missionaries, whose zeal had prompted them to settle in the province of Cumana<sup>‡</sup>. This outrage against persons revered for their sanctity, excited such indignation among the people of Hispaniola, who, notwithstanding all their licentious and cruel proceedings, were possessed with a wonderful zeal for religion, and a superstitious respect for its ministers, that they determined to inflict exemplary punishment, not only upon the perpetrators of that crime, but upon the whole race. With this view, they gave the command of five ships and three hundred men to Diego Ocampo, with orders to lay waste the country of Cumana with fire and sword, and to transport all the inhabitants as slaves to Hispaniola. This armament Las Casas found at Puerto Rico, in its way to the continent; and as Ocampo refused to defer his voyage, he immediately perceived that it would be

III  
1517.

<sup>†</sup> Herrera, dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> Oviedo, Hist. lib. xix. p. 3.

impossible to attempt the execution of his pacific plan in a country destined to be the seat of war and desolation\*.

In order to provide against the effects of this unfortunate incident, he set sail directly for St. Domingo, leaving his followers cantoned out among the planters in Puerto Rico. From many concurring causes, the reception which Las Casas met with in Hispaniola was very unfavourable. In his negotiations for the relief of the Indians, he had censured the conduct of his countrymen settled there with such honest severity as rendered him universally odious to them. They considered their own ruin as the inevitable consequence of his success. They were now elated with hope of receiving a large recruit of slaves from Cumana, which must be relinquished if Las Casas were assisted in settling his projected colony there. Figueroa, in consequence of the instructions which he had received in Spain, had made an experiment concerning the capacity of the Indians, that was represented as decisive against the system of Las Casas. He collected in Hispaniola a good number of the natives, and settled them in two villages, leaving them at perfect liberty, and with the uncontrolled direction of their own actions. But that people, accustomed to a mode of life extremely different from that which takes place wherever civilization has made any considerable progress, were incapable of assuming new habits at once. Dejected with their own misfortunes as well as those of their

B O O K  
III.

1517.  
12th April.  
labours to  
surmount  
them;

\* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 8, 9.

B O O K country, they exerted so little industry in cultivating  
 III. the ground, appeared so devoid of solicitude or  
 1517. foresight in providing for their own wants, and were  
 such strangers to arrangement in conducting their  
 affairs, that the Spaniards pronounced them inca-  
 pable of being formed to live like men in social life,  
 and considered them as children, who should be  
 kept under the perpetual tutelage of persons super-  
 ior to themselves in wisdom and sagacity.

final mis-  
 carriage  
 of his  
 scheme.

Notwithstanding all those circumstances, which  
 alienated the persons in Hispaniola to whom Las  
 Casas applied from himself and from his measures,  
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 cessions, and many threats, obtained at length a  
 small body of troops to protect him and his colony  
 at their first landing. But upon his return to  
 Puerto Rico, he found that the diseases of the cli-  
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 such barbarous rage, having massacred many of the  
 inhabitants, sent others in chains to Hispaniola,  
 and forced the rest to fly for shelter to the woods,  
 that the people of a small colony, which he  
 had planted at a place which he named *Toledo*,  
 were ready to perish for want in a desolated coun-  
 try. There, however, Las Casas was obliged to fix  
 his residence, though deserted both by the troops  
 appointed to protect him, and by those under the

† Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5.

command of Ocampo, who foresaw and dreaded the calamities to which he must be exposed in that wretched station. He made the best provision in his power for the safety and subsistence of his followers; but as his utmost efforts availed little towards securing either the one or the other, he returned to Hispaniola, in order to solicit more effectual aid for the preservation of men who, from confidence in him, had ventured into a post of so much danger. Soon after his departure, the natives, having discovered the feeble and defenceless state of the Spaniards, assembled secretly, attacked them with the fury natural to men exasperated by many injuries, cut off a good number, and compelled the rest to fly in the utmost consternation to the island of Cubagua. The small colony settled there on account of the pearl fishery, catching the panic with which their countrymen had been seized, abandoned the island, and not a Spaniard remained in any part of the continent, or adjacent islands, from the gulf of Paria to the borders of Darien. Astonished at such a succession of disasters, Las Casas was ashamed to show his face after this fatal termination of all his splendid schemes. He shut himself up in the convent of the Dominicans at St. Domingo, and soon after assumed the habit of that order<sup>2</sup>.

Though the expulsion of the colony from Cumana happened in the year one thousand five hun-

<sup>2</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. dec. 3. lib. ii. c. 3, 4, 5. Oviedo Hist. lib. xix. c. 5. Gomara, c. 77. Davila Padilla, lib. i. c. 97. Remisal Hist. Gen. lib. xi. c. 22, 23.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

BOOK III. 1517. dred and twenty one, I have chosen to trace the progress of Las Casas's negotiations from their first rise to their final issue without interruption. His system was the object of long and attentive discussion; and though his efforts in behalf of the oppressed Americans, partly from his own rashness and imprudence, and partly from the malevolent opposition of his adversaries, were not attended with that success which he promised with too sanguine confidence, great praise is due to his humane activity, which gave rise to various regulations that were of some benefit to that unhappy people. I return now to the history of the Spanish discoveries, as they occur in the order of time.

New discoveries towards the west.

Diego Velasquez, who conquered Cuba in the year one thousand five hundred and eleven, still retained the government of that island, as the deputy of Don Diego Columbus, though he seldom acknowledged his superior, and aimed at rendering his own authority altogether independent<sup>b</sup>. Under his prudent administration, Cuba became one of the most flourishing of the Spanish settlements. The fame of this allured thither many persons from the other colonies, in hopes of finding either some permanent establishment or some employment for their activity. As Cuba lay to the west of all the islands occupied by the Spaniards, and as the ocean which stretches beyond it towards that quarter had not hitherto been explored, these circumstances naturally invited the inhabitants to attempt new discoveries. An expedition for this purpose, in which

<sup>a</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 5. p. 329.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. lib. ii. c. 19.

activity and resolution might conduct to sudden wealth, was more suited to the genius of the age, than the patient industry requisite in clearing ground, and manufacturing sugar. Instigated by this spirit, several officers, who had served under Pedrarias in Darien, entered into an association to undertake a voyage of discovery. They persuaded Francisco Hernandez Cordova, an opulent planter in Cuba, and a man of distinguished courage, to join with them in the adventure, and chose him to be their commander. Velasquez not only approved of the design, but assisted in carrying it on. As the veterans from Darien were extremely indigent, he and Cordova advanced money for purchasing three small vessels, and furnishing them with every thing requisite either for traffic or for war. A hundred and ten men embarked on board of them, and sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighth of February one thousand five hundred and seventeen. By the advice of their chief pilot, Antonio Alaminos, who had served under the first admiral Columbus, they stood directly west, relying on the opinion of that great navigator, who uniformly maintained that a westerly course would lead to the most important discoveries.

On the twenty-first day after their departure from St. Jago, they saw land, which proved to be *Cape Catoche*, the eastern point of that large peninsula projecting from the continent of America, which still retains its original name of *Yucatan*. As they approached the shore, five canoes came off full of people decently clad in cotton garments; an astonishing spectacle to the Spaniards, who had found

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

B O O K every other part of America possessed by naked  
 III. savages. Cordova endeavoured by small presents  
 1517. to gain the good will of these people. They, though  
 amazed at the strange objects now presented for  
 the first time to their view, invited the Spaniards  
 to visit their habitations, with an appearance of  
 cordiality. They landed accordingly, and as they  
 advanced into the country, they observed with new  
 wonder some large houses built with stone. But  
 they soon found that, if the people of Yucatan had  
 made progress in improvement beyond their coun-  
 trymen, they were likewise more artful and warlike.  
 For though the cazique received Cordova with many  
 tokens of friendship, he had posted a considerable  
 body of his subjects in ambush behind a thicket,  
 who, upon a signal given by him, rushed out and  
 attacked the Spaniards with great boldness, and  
 some degree of martial order. At the first flight  
 of their arrows, fifteen of the Spaniards were wound-  
 ed; but the Indians were struck with such terror by  
 the sudden explosion of the fire-arms, and so sur-  
 prised at the execution done by them, by the cross-  
 bows, and by the other weapons of their new ene-  
 mies, that they fled precipitately. Cordova quitted  
 a country where he had met with such a fierce re-  
 ception, carrying off two prisoners, together with  
 the ornaments of a small temple which he plun-  
 dered in his retreat.

Cam-  
peachy.

He continued his course towards the west, with-  
 out losing sight of the coast, and on the sixteenth  
 day arrived at Campeachy. There the natives re-  
 ceived them more hospitably; but the Spaniards  
 were much surprised, that on all the extensive coast

along which they had sailed, and which they imagined to be a large island, they had not observed any river. As their water began to fail, they advanced, in hopes of finding a supply; and at length they discovered the mouth of a river at Potonchan, some leagues beyond Campeachy.

B O O K  
III.  
1517.

Cordova landed all his troops, in order to protect the sailors while employed in filling the casks; but notwithstanding this precaution, the natives rushed down upon them with such fury and in such numbers, that forty seven of the Spaniards were killed upon the spot, and one man only of the whole body escaped unhurt. Their commander, though wounded in twelve different places, directed the retreat with presence of mind equal to the courage with which he had led them on in the engagement, and with much difficulty they regained their ships. After this fatal repulse, nothing remained but to hasten back to Cuba with their shattered forces. In their passage thither they suffered the most exquisite distress for want of water, that men wounded and sickly, shut up in small vessels, and exposed to the heat of the torrid zone, can be supposed to endure. Some of them, sinking under these calamities, died by the way; Cordova, their commander, expired soon after they landed in Cuba<sup>d</sup>.

Notwithstanding the disastrous conclusion of this expedition, it contributed rather to animate than

Voyage of  
Grijalva;

<sup>c</sup> See NOTE XXVI.

<sup>d</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 17, 18. *Histor. Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva Espana por Bernal Diaz del Castillo*, cap. 1—7. Oviedo, lib. xvii. c. 3. Gomara, c. 52. P. Martyr de Insulis nuper inventis, p. 329.



B O O K to damp a spirit of enterprise among the Spaniards.

III.

1517.

They had discovered an extensive country, situated at no great distance from Cuba, fertile in appearance, and possessed by a people far superior in improvement to any hitherto known in America. Though they had carried on little commercial intercourse with the natives, they had brought off some ornaments of gold, not considerable in value, but of singular fabric. These circumstances, related with the exaggeration natural to men desirous of heightening the merit of their own exploits, were more than sufficient to excite romantic hopes and expectations. Great numbers offered to engage in a new expedition. Velasquez, solicitous to distinguish himself by some service so meritorious as might entitle him to claim the government of Cuba independent of the admiral, not only encouraged their ardour, but at his own expense fitted out four ships for the voyage. Two hundred and forty volunteers, among whom were several persons of rank and fortune, embarked in this enterprise. The command of it was given to Juan de Grijalva, a young man of known merit and courage, with instructions to observe attentively the nature of the countries which he should discover, to barter for gold, and, if circumstances were inviting, to settle a colony in some proper station. He sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the eighth of April, one thousand five hundred and eighteen. The pilot Alaminos held the same course as in the former voyage; but the violence of the currents carrying the ships to the south, the first land which they made was the island of *Cozumel*, to the east of Yucatan.

1518.

discovers  
New  
Spain.

As all the inhabitants fled to the woods and mountains at the approach of the Spaniards, they made no long stay there, and without any remarkable occurrence they reached Potonchan on the opposite side of the peninsula. The desire of avenging their countrymen who had been slain there, concurred with their ideas of good policy, in prompting them to land, that they might chastise the Indians of that district with such exemplary rigour as would strike terror into all the people around them. But though they disembarked all their troops, and carried ashore some field-pieces, the Indians fought with such courage, that the Spaniards gained the victory with difficulty, and were confirmed in their opinion that the inhabitants of this country would prove more formidable enemies than any they had met with in other parts of America. From Potonchan they continued their voyage towards the west, keeping as near as possible to the shore, and casting anchor every evening, from dread of the dangerous accidents to which they might be exposed in an unknown sea. During the day their eyes were turned continually towards land, with a mixture of surprise and wonder at the beauty of the country, as well as the novelty of the objects which they beheld. Many villages were scattered along the coast, in which they could distinguish houses of stone that appeared white and lofty at a distance. In the warmth of their admiration, they fancied these to be cities adorned with towers and pinnacles; and one of the soldiers happening to remark that this country resembled Spain in appearance, Grijalva, with universal applause, called

B O O K  
III  
1512.

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 III. they could surprise or overpower the Indians, they  
 1517. carried them off by force, and sold them as slaves<sup>t</sup>.

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<sup>u</sup> Oviedo, Hist. lib. xix. p. 3.

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B O O K  
III.  
1517.

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III.  
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