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LISMO DE LA PAZ Y DE LA DEMOCRACIA, ESPAÑA
HEROICA, CENTROAMERICA EN PIE, MORELOS Y BO-
LIVAR.

CHAPTER I

HOW THE AMERICAN CONTINENT WAS BORN TO THE SO CALLED OCCIDENTAL CIVILIZATION

FROM MARCO POLO TO THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

AT the end of the XIIIth century and beginning of the XIVth an extraordinary man, the Venetian traveler Marco Polo, astounded the Western world of that time with the tales of his marvelous journeys. He had been able to cross the country of the Turks and of the Persians several times; he travelled right across Asia by way of India and Mongolia; he almost met his death in the unlimited Empire of Catay, which is now the immense China; he was delayed during several months in Tartary while planning his return by Sumatra; but nothing appears to have impressed him as greatly as the island of Cipango, centre of the Japan of today, which enjoys at present the good fortune of being converted to democracy by General Douglas McArthur, in friendly connivance with the Mikado.

One should have heard Marco Polo and seen the open-mouthed and dazzled people, when he recounted his adventures in this fashion:

"I must tell you about an extraordinary palace inhabited by the lord of Cipango. It is completely covered with fine gold, like we cover our houses and our churches with lead. . . The floors of its halls, which are numerous, are also covered with a layer of gold almost two inches

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thick... The inhabitants possess quantities of large rose-tinted pearls, as valuable as the white ones or even more so. The riches of Cipango are so dazzling that the mere sight of them leaves one tongue-tied and unable to describe the astonishing effect they produce."

After having transcribed some of these sentences Ramón García Ruiz, in his study, "The Panama Canal", —chapter dealing with voyages of Columbus and the legend of the Great Khan— comments as follows:

"Is it surprising that such description should have given birth to the enthusiasm for adventures of discovery? Rich and poor, lords and vassals alike, flocked to enroll themselves in whatever expedition was organized. All of them wanted to reach the legendary Cipango and the dominions of the Great Khan, king of kings, lord of Cambalú, with his millions of subjects, the happy possessor of fantastic castles, studded with gold and precious stones."

"There was opulent Catay! Over there the island of Taprobana, with immense jungles full of elephants from which one could obtain the finest ivory, and with palaces encrusted with emeralds which shone in the light like enormous torches! There also the island of Ofir which, as people said, was visited to load gold in olden times by the fleets of the wise and powerful King Solomon!"

* * *

It is pointed out in this same work that the studies of the geographers tended to confirm, little by little, the roundness of the earth. Years after Christopher Columbus and Vasco de Gama —who sailed all the way to the Cape of Good Hope and by that route to India—, other sailors and explorers, seeing that the earth appeared to

be a globe, prepared themselves to find the way to the Far East by sailing in the opposite direction.

Thus was born that great enterprise, the discovery of America, a glory which destiny reserved for Columbus. After having sailed across the Atlantic, which for the Europeans had been a long and century old mystery, Columbus formed the impression, in his first three voyages, of having reached at last by the West the far-away oriental lands of gold and precious stones, of cinnamon, aromatic cloves and spices.

But on his last crossing, after discovering and exploring a part of the coast of the mainland, he was assailed by doubts. He then attempted to find a channel or strait (which later was to be the Panama Canal) which would lay open the path to the heart of India.

In those years, at the end of the XVth and beginning of the XVIth century the Anglo-Saxons had not yet put in their appearance in any part of the New World!

EL DORADO AND OTHER ARABIAN NIGHTS LEGENDS,
THAT MADE THE WISEST MEN LOSE THEIR MINDS

THERE were few lands as attractive for the daring explorers of the XVIth century as the immense territory of the Guiana. Her natural boundaries are the Atlantic —its extensive coastline bordering on Venezuela— the Orinoco, the Rio Negro and the Amazon River with its vast basins.

At the highest point of the Sierra Roraima, 2,700 meters above sea level, are intertwined the frontiers of Venezuela, Brazil and Guiana, a colony of Great Britain, who, even in the very hottest of our tropics and the very thickest of our

jungles, wants to maintain and to advance the milestones of her Empire.

From that knot and towards the Southwest spreads the Sierra of Paracaima. From there toward the sunrise, the green plains of the subtropics and tropics, are ploughed by the great rivers Blanco, Parú, Jamondá, Napo, Urubú and many other larger affluents of the gigantic Amazon. And, still facing Eastward but deviating toward the North, lies the majestic bed of the Orinoco into which so many rivers flow that only to list their names would fill several pages. Let us just mention in passing, as a tribute to their bountiful waters, the Caura, the Atoica, the Caño Casiquiare which forms a link with the Rio Negro, the Guaviare, the Amana, the Vichada, the Meta, the huge Apure and the Caroní with its marvellous cascades and waterfalls.

What an abundance of riches, of flora and fauna—tempting and awe-inspiring alike to the white man—are enclosed in that mysterious and inaccessible region of the Guiana! Jaguars, giant anthills, thousands of birds and monkeys of all species; crocodiles that bathe in the sun and bare their threatening fangs on the banks of the rivers; poisonous snakes and boas whose size would make them appear to be antediluvian; the flamingo, the toucan, the big tapir; *lignum vitae*, green ebony, mahogany, rosewood, cedars and other secular trees of the impenetrable jungle; gold, silver, platinum, pearls, emeralds, amethysts, diamonds of incredible size.

And in the distance, beyond the Roraima, with its many-hued rocks and stones; beyond other mountains with a metallic orange glow at sunset; farther, much farther still, on the banks of the Parima Lake, the sacred and le-

gendary city of Manoa, centre and heart of the fantastic empire of El Dorado! The lords of the city would come out to bathe their bodies with ointment of "curca", blended with flour of rubies and powdered gold.

Yes, Sir, the legend of El Dorado was indeed a fairytale, which made so many and such brave captains lose their heads! Too long is its history to be included in the limited scope of this study. But it should be touched upon, nevertheless, so that the readers may see how profound a spell it also cast upon the English without a sign, up to now, of their having come to their senses.

ANAYANSI, NUÑEZ DE BALBOA AND THE TREASURE OF THE DABAIBE

ONCE the Spaniards had convinced themselves that the islands and new territories were actually a continent which lay across the route to Asia, they began to search for its hidden treasures. Maybe they were equal to or greater still than those of the Far East, described by Marco Polo!

In these parts pearls of large size and quantities of fine gold were also to be found, to judge from the ornaments of the Indians and from the amounts of the coveted metal they were able to collect on their expeditions. Firmer became their conviction that these riches existed, and keener their appetite for greater ones still, when Cortés and Pizarro conquered the vast empires of Moctezuma and Atahualpa.

But before those doughty men from Extremadura had dominated the Incas and the Aztecas in the summits of the Andes and the valleys of the Anahuac; before the Malinche had surrendered her heart to Cortés, a fusion

already anticipated by the Mayor of Santo Domingo, don Francisco Roidán and 70 of his companions, who had united themselves to native women (Enrique de Gandía, Buenos Aires, 1948); before or at the same time that other "white and bearded" Conquistadores laid the amorous foundations to the cross breeds of America and Spain. . ., in Castilla del Oro the gentle Princess Anayansi had already captivated don Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who was shortly afterwards to discover the Pacific Ocean. She fascinated him with her intelligence, her beauty and charms; but, also, with her marvellous narratives. One day, in Santa María la Antigua del Darién, she spoke to him these words:

"Over there in the far distance, my lord and master, going towards the ridge of the high sierra of the South, there exists a sacred mountain from the summit of which one can glimpse a great blue sea; a sea which men only cross to bring rich offerings to the god of the stars. This god dwells in the great temple which lies on the very peak, guarded day and night by priests and warriors whom nobody will defeat".

"In that temple, which even in mere daylight sends forth a glow blinding to the eyes, gold, pearls and fiery-red stones are kept, and others which are brought there in vessels from very remote places by men speaking strange languages. The mountain cannot be reached without great perils and fatigues, because it is surrounded by enormous swamps, lagoons and dense forests, where the crocodile and the serpent keep watch so that nobody may reach the temple from that side. The gold and precious stones guarded therein are of the great and omnipotent gods". (Book quoted, ver-

sion of García Ruiz, Popular Encyclopaedic Library, Ministry of Public Education, México).

* * *

This legend of Dabaibe (to which, in ample bibliography, Dr. Octavio Méndez Pereira, Dean of the National University of Panama, also refers in his book "Vasco Núñez de Balboa") goaded the imagination of the sons of Castilla, who were confident of being able to reach the unknown sea, scale the sacred mountain and seize the treasure. Nuñez de Balboa embarked on this enterprise and discovered the Southern Sea in 1513, but the famous treasure slipped through the fingers of the Spaniards.

Thereupon Panquiaco, son of the chieftain Comagre, said to the "bearded ones": "If you are so greedy for gold that it causes you unrest and for this reason you kill those who hold it, I will show you a land where you can gorge yourselves on it. It is the land of Tumanamá, which lies six or seven suns to the South. The road is dangerous and you will have to take many men and good arms as otherwise you will be wiped out before arriving to the temple of solid gold, adorned with such a wealth of precious stones that the heavens themselves cannot equal their splendour".

Greater still was therefore the obsession of Vasco Núñez de Balboa to penetrate farther towards the South, in the search for the Dabaibe treasure, which perhaps was that of El Dorado, similar to the fable of the "Seven Cities". This fable, as explained by Luis Alberto Sánchez in his "Brief History of America", fascinated during many years Fray Marcos de Niza and other "lunatics" labouring under

sweet delusions, in the course of their wanderings through Central America, Mexico and the South of the United States.

After the 29th of September of 1513, the date on which Balboa set the pennon of Castilla to wave above the waters of the Pacific Ocean, he was beset by difficulties and persecutions. Pedrarias Dávila, appointed Governor of Castilla del Oro, the bachelor Enciso, Colmenares and many other rivals of the noble son of Jerez, attempted to wrest from him the glory of conquering the empire of the Incas and the fabulous treasure which had addled the brains of all of them.

And thus Núñez de Balboa, the first victim who fell prey to the Dabaibe or El Dorado, lost his life at the hands of Pedrarias, his most cruel and dangerous opponent! He was beheaded in the very city of Acla, which the "Adelantado" had founded and embellished when he lived his idyll with Anayansi.

DISCOVERY OF THE AMAZON RIVER

FROM the "Seven Cities", hardly more than alluded to above; and from the Dabaibe, whose legend we dealt with more fully due to its similarity with that of El Dorado, let us now betake ourselves once more to the sacred city of Manoa, concealed behind the well-guarded peaks, imaginary or mysterious, of the Guiana, on the shores of lake Parima. In those impenetrable latitudes, following the course of the Orinoco, we finally come upon the English.

Many were the expeditions undertaken in the first half of the XVIth century, without the mad longing for the fabulous treasure having abated during the remainder of

that period. Proof thereof are the Welsers, money-lenders to Emperor Charles Vth, son of none other than doña Juana la Loca (Juana the Madwoman)!

These bankers, the Welsers, supplied the monarch with all the money he needed for his wars and the splendid luxury of his Court. Instead of promissory notes and bills of exchange stamped with the royal seal, the Germans obtained, in 1527, an extraordinary and unheard-of concession, more than sufficient to repay them all their loans, in territory where is now Venezuela, from the coasts of Cumaná to the Vela Cape.

And there went their lieutenants, Alfinger, Federmann, George Spira and Philipp of Hutten. In 1546, the founder of El Tocuyo, Juan de Carvajal, in spite of Charles Vth, made short shrift of the concessionaries or their representatives by stringing them up on a tree! He himself was to be hanged shortly afterwards, without any fuss and ado, by Lic. Juan Pérez de Tolosa, the energetic envoy of the aforementioned Charles Vth, King of Spain and Emperor of Germany!

There, in turn, with Vicente Yáñez Pinzón leading the way, flocked the fortunate travelers Alonso Niño and Cristóbal Guerra, who returned to Spain "laden with pearls the size of hazelnuts". And Diego de Ordaz, who in 1531 penetrated beyond the Caroní, to where the Meta flows into the Orinoco. And following in his footsteps, across rivers and jungles, Pedro Hernández, the intrepid Aldarete, the inhuman Indian traders Jerónimo de Orta and Alonso Herrera, who were as hard of heart as the iron of their armours.

From the opposite side, starting from Ecuatorian territory

toward the imagined and fabulous empire, the lofty peaks of the Andes were crossed by Sebastián de Belalcázar. Simultaneously the illustrious Andalusian lawyer, Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, founder of Santa Fe de Bogotá, also crossed the mountain barrier, in the same eastward direction.

The marvellous tales that were recounted to him by some Chibcha chieftains, once Don Gonzalo had subjected them to his rule!

* * *

Some years later, notwithstanding his failures, the indomitable captain don Gonzalo Díaz de Pineda sallied forth time after time from San Francisco de Quito, following the route of Belalcázar to El Dorado. His way led across almost inaccessible heights and snow-covered peaks, bringing him to the sierras of Yumbo and the Valley of Cosanga and bordering, on several occasions, the slopes of the volcano Sumaco. Finally he turned back in 1539, exhausted but not beaten, since his misfortunes only heaped fuel on his illusions, and his imagination remained perpetually kindled by the treasures, the precious spices and fragrant cinnamon which had led him to undertake such perilous adventures.

As one madman breeds a hundred, and since in the case of the El Dorado legend it would appear that madness was a virtue of sensible men, the contagion of this serious disease spread also to don Gonzalo Pizarro, representative of the authority and brother of the old Conquistador who ordained the execution —after having collected a ransom of not less than one hundred "quintales" of gold— of the vanquished and trusting emperor Atahualpa.

Don Gonzalo thus afflicted with the same madness as captain Pineda, with his assistance passed on the contagion

to the no less brave don Francisco de Orellana. The three of them banded themselves together and organized, in 1540, the memorable expedition which, after navigating the Amazon, was to end at the Atlantic.

The obsession had acquired such proportions that, when the three captains organized their expedition, the entire population, and even people of other latitudes, moved heaven and earth to be permitted to accompany them. However, "commonsense" prevailed, in this at least, and they only accepted some two hundred of their compatriots. They did take along, of course, a great number of skilful Indians as load carriers; food in such quantities as to provide for everybody during a long journey; and two stout-hearted priests so that neither the white men nor the Indians should lack spiritual nourishment. These latter were Fray Gonzalo de Vera and Fray Gaspar de Carvajal who, years later, was to write a detailed and pathetic account of the epic.

* * *

During months they wandered through the jungle, lost for nearly a year, suffering all the strain and indescribable hardships of an expedition so hazardous and with such a terrific number of victims that it is considered the boldest one of that epoch. It goes without saying that those heroic Spaniards did not encounter either the spices or the treasures they had set out to find. On the contrary, the two Gonzalos, Governor Pizarro and the incorrigible dreamer Pineda, came close to dying abandoned on the shores of the Coca River. In the meantime don Francisco de Orellana, with instructions and intention to return within a fortnight, continued sailing down the river in the only brigantine of the explorers built with their own hands.

Now don Francisco could no longer sail against the current. Now the swollen torrents prevented him from turning back. Now the explorers were sailing down the Napo into which the Coca had flowed. Until finally, on the 11th of February of 1542, the small brigantine, with its crew more dead than alive, came out into the gigantic river of the Marañones or Amazon, discovered by these brave men to their undying glory.

"Among all kinds of surprises and incredible adventures, Orellana followed the current of this great river. Fights with the most savage Indians; desperate men; whirlpools, thunderstorms and phenomena never before witnessed; a terrible climate; cruel and unknown diseases; the painful death of the bravest and best-beloved comrades: all this was experienced by the heroic explorers, with unequalled courage".

"From the mouth of the Napo onward they spent six months navigating the Amazon! At last, on the 24th of August of 1542, they found themselves face to face with the Atlantic, thus bringing to a close one of the most famous enterprises in the history of the world". (Oscar Efrén Reyes: "Discovery and Conquest of the Ecuador", Quito, 1948).

"While the fantastic odyssey of Francisco de Orellana on the Amazon was taking place —says the same author— those who had remained behind with Gonzalo Pizarro had to resort, in their solitude, to every possible means of survival... After long weeks of waiting they decided to return to Quito. And under the direction of the untiring and ever-loyal Gonzalo Díaz de Pineda, they took, by calculation, the route toward the high plateau of Quito. Thus, after long and unutterable sufferings, they reached

the land from which they had sallied forth... Gonzalo Pizarro and his companions returned exhausted from starvation, without clothing, unkempt and poverty-stricken. It was then already the month of June of 1543. More than two years had elapsed in explorations and misfortunes in the distant regions of the *Land of Cinnamon*, where no *Dorado* had revealed itself to them".

HOW "THE TYRANT AGUIRRE" BECAME CHIEF OF THE "MARAÑONES"

THE accounts of this noteworthy expedition —conceived and executed under indescribable sufferings by Pizarro and by Pineda, but which served to make a glorious pedestal for don Francisco de Orellana —awakened, as is only natural, new ambitions and lusts among Spaniards, Portuguese and some Dutch pirates, predecessors of the British ones who were already beginning to sail those seas.

As to when and how the English appetite for the Guiana became whetted, can be read in subsequent pages. But before this it is necessary to link up Sir Walter Raleigh with the extraordinary don Antonio de Berrío, always full of illusions, founder of San José de Oruña and re-builder of Santo Tomás, on the banks of the Orinoco. For this purpose there is no other method but to leap over half a century, although without failing to look for the growing connection between these two men until such time as we reach them and find them together.

Let it be said then, for our guidance, that the Spain of the missionaries had already penetrated into those regions. Religious congregations of Catalonia and the two Castiles: Capuchins, Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits, amongst

them Father Julián Vergara, Brother Luis de Mieses, Brother Juan de Peralta and many other holy men, were to calm, for lustrums to come, the despair and frenzy of the Caribbean tribes, revolted by the crimes of the "indios" and the encomienda.

For these crimes Brother Bartolomé de las Casas, when the colonization of other centres of the New World started, almost paid with his life! The autochthonous race, tormented, plundered, horribly tortured by lusts more powerful than the Laws of the Indies, did not distinguish between habits and armours.

Simultaneously with the establishment of religious missions, the foundations of new towns and cities, with their respective municipal governments, were to be laid. Guiana, in the meantime, developed in an almost autonomous manner, depending at times on the Viceroyship of Santa Fe or Nueva Granada, and at others on the Audiencia of Santo Domingo or on the Government of New Andalusia, established in 1569. That year marked the arrival of don Diego Fernández de Serpa, who came from the Peninsula provided with letters patent of Philipp II., to colonize and govern the western provinces of Cumaná, Margarita, Caura, Barcelona and the vast territory of the aforementioned Guiana which so greatly occupies our attention.

It seems to us indispensable to insist once more on the fact that the said territory depended in different epochs on Santo Domingo, Santa Fe or the above-quoted New Andalusia, until it became definitely subordinated to the Captaincy General of Venezuela in 1777, with boundaries extending to the Amazon.

In other words —and this essential fact should be duly

emphasized —all the aforesaid territories were undisputably under Spanish dominion (or Portuguese in Brazil), and neither England, the Netherlands nor France, who interfered in same only *de facto* but never *de jure*, are entitled to any claims of discovery, conquest or colonization.

* * *

But let us still go back a little before coming face to face with Sir Walter Raleigh, who was to sail from Plymouth in 1595 with the illusion and belief that he would make his Queen Elizabeth *Great Chieftainess of Guiana*. Let us leap across years and missions, who struggled with the natives and the wild animals as far as the confines of Nueva Granada, leaving aside personalities as outstanding even as the veteran don Pedro de Ursúa.

That don Pedro, nearly threescore and ten but with the tenacity of the Basque, was still engaging in new ventures towards 1561, which took him from the land of the Incas to the region of the Omaguas and the Marañones, always on the quest for El Dorado! And let us only take a glimpse at his lieutenant, the terrible and bloodthirsty Lope de Aguirre —"Tyrant Aguirre"!— who, in the light of the moon, stabbed old Ursúa, his trusting chief and protector, to death.

And he also used the language of the dagger, in the midst of the tropical jungle, on any of his men who showed any weakness or dared to raise covetous eyes to his wife or daughter, whom the barbarian took along with him, exposing them to crocodiles and serpents, the terrors of the wild and the lawlessness of his following!

His wife, according to some historians; both women,

according to others, were put to death by Aguirre with his own hands before he himself was drawn and quartered, in Barquisimeto, by García de Paredes and Gutiérrez de la Peña. More than with "La Segua", "La Llorona" or "El Cadejos", the children of Venezuela were frightened throughout various centuries with "Tyrant Aguirre"!

Having become by sheer terror captain and undisputable chief of his "marañones" Aguirre, wherever he went —Cumaná, Margarita, El Collado, Borburata— plundered cities and villages; beheaded governors, mayors, women, children, old men, aldermen and priests, without even sparing his own confessor, of the Dominican Order, for having reproached him his devilish deeds; in one word, he perpetrated the most hairraising outrages "to avenge —as explained in a famous letter of his to the King— the cruelties committed by the Spaniards".

To "avenge" these cruelties he raged ferociously from the Andes down to the Atlantic, navigating the Rio Negro, the Caño Casiquiare and the Orinoco, "*where who does not die goes mad*". That man, undoubtedly, went mad! He was driven crazy perhaps by the river, maybe by the jungle, perhaps by El Dorado. His madness, however, was not the harmless delusions of other captains, but a raving lunacy which still produces horror in this epoch of civilized butcheries, concentration camps and atomic bombs.

CHAPTER II

ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND, GREAT
CHIEFTAINNESS OF THE GUIANA

THE SWEET FOLLY OF CAPTAIN DON
ANTONIO DE BERRIO

THE years have gone by; the first missions have been established; and faced with the threat of the buccaneers Spain was able to consolidate her authority over her dominions. The wild goose chases after El Dorado were to be superseded by the farming of the soil, the methodic exploitation of the mines and the development of cattle breeding. It would seem as if the Spaniards had liberated themselves from the spell cast on them by Manoa, with one or two exceptions. How can we fail to remember the untiring and delightful don Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, who, at the age of seventy still clung to his faith and continued to stir up the imagination of the inhabitants of Santa Fe by his magnetism and his expeditions?

Don Gonzalo finally died in 1579, leaving to his niece, doña María de Oruña, the dream of El Dorado as his only inheritance, since he had lost everything else in the course of his disastrous adventures. On this point Germán Arciniegas, in his "Biography of the Caribbean", says textually:

"When María de Oruña received the news that that fantastic uncle of hers had died in the wilds of America, where

the entrails of the mountains are salt and emeralds, she did not hesitate: "Antonio —she said to her husband, captain Antonio de Berrío— we must go for the inheritance of uncle Gonzalo: claim the governorship of El Dorado". And to the Court go Antonio de Berrío and María de Oruña. They are fashioned of the same clay as Jiménez de Quesada, that is to say as mad as he was. And the King appoints him General of El Dorado and Governor of the Guiana. . ."

"When he crosses to this side of the ocean, he is captivated by the beauties of the Orinoco. . . On the island of Trinidad he finds the city of San José de Oruña. Later, on the banks of the Orinoco, Santo Tomás. . . There are two, three, four years during which the Governor is kept busy fashioning a republic to his taste."

The writer Arciniegas then goes on to relate in what manner the difficulties and failures of Captain Berrío, "who is sustained by his tenacity and illusions", were multiplied. And he assures us that Jiménez de Quesada did not entrust his nephew with any other life mission but that of the conquest of the legendary city of Manoa. "Berrío, on espousing María de Oruña, espoused the Chimera". The aforementioned author then explains how the meeting came about between Berrío and Sir Walter Raleigh, favorite of the Queen, a friend of Shakespeare, historian and poet graduated at Oxford.

* * *

The facts underlying the version written in the fine style of our admired friend Germán Arciniegas, are that our famous Berrío arrived as Governor of the Guiana; not straight from Madrid, however, but from the Viceroyship

of Santa Fe by way of the rivers Casanare, Meta and Orinoco in 1591. It is to be assumed that his path was beset with disappointments since, as we have already seen, the Governorship of New Andalusia, which included the Guiana, had been set up since 1569. Aside from this, the disastrous experiences of our captain, when he brought over from Spain more than two thousand people, many of whom fell sick and died, only took place at a later date.

It is known in any case that, having undoubtedly overcome the difficulties of his first sally, don Antonio organized three years later a second expedition, following the course of the same rivers down to the sea and the island of Trinidad, where he founded the already mentioned city of San José de Oruña. (Alejandro Fuenmayor: "Nociones de Historia Patria", sixth edition, Maracaibo, Venezuela.) He returned to the mainland where he reconstructed Santo Tomás, establishing there the capital of the Guiana, once more and possibly at his initiative under the Government of Santa Fe.

We thus arrive at the year 1595 and the landing of the expedition of Sir Walter Raleigh, who had sailed from Plymouth in February with five larger vessels and some craft of less draught. This noble and gallant Englishman, endowed with titles and imagination, had also explored and christened what is today Virginia in the United States, the name having been given in honour of his virgin Queen. Moreover, he toyed with the idea of conquering Castilla del Oro and laying at the feet of his sovereign the Isthmus of Panama. And even when he was held prisoner in the Tower of London by his "stony-hearted" Elizabeth, he was ready to proclaim her *Great Chieftainess of Guiana!*

PANORAMA OF THE GOLDEN AGE

WHAT the two explorers, the Englishman and the Spaniard, one as mad as the other, dreamt and said to each other can be deducted from what we shall relate hereunder. Prior thereto, however, it would be advisable to survey the panorama of that epoch. It was the end of the Golden century. The century of which Henry the VIIIth of England, Francis Ist of France and Charles Vth, King of Spain and Emperor of Germany, with their alliances, their kinships, their quarrels, hatreds and vengeance, had filled the first fifty years.

It was also the epoch in which the wars of the old world began to be fought in American waters, by means of the corsairs and pirates of different nationalities, at the service of one or the other of the conflicting monarchies. In this manner the Caribbean sea was to become a European centre of assaults and depredations. It was still the reign of Henry VIIIth, who was succeeded by his and Catherine of Aragon's daughter, "bloody" Mary Tudor. When finally Elizabeth came to the throne (1558-1603), the Western seas had already fallen beneath the mastery of the slavedealer and smuggler John Hawkins, his younger and improved pupil Francis Drake, and all the other followers of master and disciple throughout the protracted Elizabethan era.

Spain's power, increasing from day to day, was a thorn in the flesh of the reigning houses of the old continent; the Dutch, great sailors in those times, would not submit themselves to continue as mere subjects of Charles Vth; the British after the death of the catholic Mary Tudor, raised the banner of protestantism in orden to fight the Government

of Madrid and its ally the Pope; and the French, on their part, before Philipp IInd came to the throne of Spain in 1556 on the abdication of his father Charles Vth, who chose to retire to a monastery, began taking positions on various islands of the Caribbean Sea.

With or without openly declared war, allies today even though adversaries the day before, what mattered was to weaken Spain: and without undergoing the hardships of colonization, to profit of the riches which flowed from the New World to the metropolis, without other risk for the Dutch, British and French, than that of attacking the Spanish power from pirate vessels.

The century under review, to complete the picture, was also a golden one for many other slave traders and smugglers in the Hawkins style, nobles of high rank all of them, who hunted slaves in Africa, branded them like cattle and sold them in Santo Domingo, Cuba, Cartagena, Brazil and other American regions, avid for black flesh. Preponderance in this slave trading—competing with the Spanish monopoly—was soon assumed by the English, who began to organize the first large limited companies of human exploitation, with a goodly number of shares for the Queen and the highest-placed personages of the Court.

* * *

Smugglers, slave traders and pirates in the Golden Century! In the century of Shakespeare and Cervantes; of Rabelais, Ronsard and Montaigne; of Fray Luis de León, the humanist Vives and St. Teresa; of Calvin, Erasmus and Luther; of Titian, Tintoretto and Michelangelo; of the greatest masters of the world in the field of art, literature, science and philosophy.

A century as contradictory and disconcerting as that in which we are living, with so much culture, so many books, so many lectures and universities, that mankind ought to be at peace with itself and not enmeshed in the slaughters and atrocities which we have witnessed!

The English hated the Spanish for being catholic, and robbed them of their pearls and gold, Bible in hand. They hated the Irish for the same reason, and deprived them of their lands and burnt down their cities. The prisoners and young white girls of that rebel country were loaded onto their ships and also sold by them in the West Indies, to provide pleasure and solace to the settlers there!

War without mercy against the Huguenots; and of the Spaniards against the Turks; and of the French against the British; and of the defenders of the Pope against all heretics!

And we thus find, on the one hand, the Inquisition and its victims and, on the other, heads being chopped off by the reformers, not even people of royal blood, such as Mary Stuart, being safe from execution. But in the long run commerce and smuggling flourished alike among believers and unbelievers, who one and all swooped down on brigantines and caravels, on the gold and the slaves whose ebony-coloured flesh could be turned into shining pounds sterling.

Maybe the situation of Europe and, consequently, that of America would have been different if Philipp II.'s dream had come true. When Elizabeth became Queen of England in 1558, the catholic Spanish monarch gave no thought to the protestantism of the sovereign and proposed to her insistently that they should share the same throne. The reply of Elizabeth to the suitor for her hand and bed could

not have been more eloquent: support of the pirates and smugglers; and, in 1588, the sinking of the Invincible Armada, abandoned by God to the furies of the tempest.

RALEIGH AND BERRIO IN UNPARALLELLED COLLOQUY

THUS it came about that in 1595, the year which saw the death both of Sir John Hawkins and the *past master* of pirates Drake, his predecessors, and following in the wake of his scout captain Jacob Whiddon, Sir Walter Raleigh arrived at the island of Trinidad. Shortly before, as if also clearing the way for him, another British expedition headed by Robert Dudley had visited those seas and the mouth of the Orinoco. (Mario Briceño Iragorry: "Tapices de Historia Patria", second edition, Caracas, 1942.)

A brave warrior and inspired writer since his early youth, having shown himself to be as astute and valiant in his armed encounters with the Catholics as brilliant and lucid in his narratives, Sir Walter Raleigh gave proof of his two tendencies when falling upon the small garrison of Berrío. In his capacity of victorious captain who wants to impose his authority, he ordered his men to set fire to and destroy the city of San José de Oruña, demanding high contributions. And as a fluent scholar of languages, since he spoke Castilian as well as if he had studied at Salamanca, he entered upon an unparalleled colloquy with the Governor Berrío, whom he treated as his prisoner with the most exquisite courtesy.

On this episode very interesting pages have been written by Enrique Bernardo Núñez, chronicler of the city of Caracas. In the last part of his book "Cubagua", published

by the Ministry of National Education of Venezuela (third edition, 1947), in a chapter dealing with history connected with the Orinoco, there appear those two knight-errants of El Dorado, Saxon the one and Spanish the other, in an intercourse which must have been of extraordinary picturesqueness.

Don Antonio held forth on "large platters of wrought gold, swords of Guiana inlaid with the same precious metal, and the fabulous riches of the Amapaia river". . . "The inhabitants of this region against whom he had waged war, once peace had been concluded between them, gave him images of fine gold and plates wrought of the same metal, which do not have their like in Italy, in Spain or in the Netherlands".

Raleigh opened his deep blue eyes wide, took notes and pursued his queries for more details. Had anybody ever reached that marvellous city of Manoa, "shrouded in the mists of mountains and rivers"?

Don Antonio thereupon recounted to him that Juan Martínez, armorer of Diego de Ordaz, had entered the city "blindfolded, at the hour of noon", assisted by some Guiana Indians who had picked him up on the verge of exhaustion. He had lived for seven months in Manoa, but without being able to acquire any knowledge of the country. When asked whether he wanted to remain, Martínez had answered in the negative and the Emperor, much to his regret, sent him accompanied by several of his subjects to the Orinoco, "laden with as much gold as they could carry and which they gave to him when they took leave of each other".

This confession had been made by Martínez on the eve of breathing his last in Puerto Rico. He then offered the monks who surrounded him "an exact account of his adventures and some pumpkins of wrought gold". He told the confessor that these two pumpkins were the only thing that he was able to save from the enemies of the monarch of Guiana, who attacked him when he crossed to the other bank of the Orinoco; and that he had saved them by miracle because his captors "assumed that they were filled with food and drink".

Of many other matters and marvels did Berrío speak to Sir Walter Raleigh who, in turn, told Berrío about his prowesses in Europe, about Queen Elizabeth, his rival Essex, about noble English ladies and his imprisonment in the Tower of London. At the end of this remarkable conversation, the Englishman decided to take the Spaniard along to serve him as guide and counselor in the Guiana, in spite of don Antonio's attempts to dissuade him in view of the many and great hardships that they were bound to undergo!

"Winter was approaching. The rivers were beginning to overflow. The native chieftains hated the white men, they would flee on seeing them and burn their cities."

WHAT THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE SAW IN ENCHANTED LANDS

BUT Raleigh who from the tales of old explorers and from all his readings had reached the conviction that El Dorado existed and who, moreover, had offered it to his Queen in exchange for his liberty, could no longer draw back. With sixty of his best men on board the vessel

"Lion's Whelp" which was followed by several barges, he decided to sail up the Orinoco and some of its affluents. Don Antonio de Berrío was apparently left behind in the end, since Raleigh was only accompanied by fair men with names such as: Giddford, Porter, Gaulfied, Greenville, Gilbert, his captain and advance scout Whiddon, Keymis, Hanckork, Farley, Wells, Hughes, etc.

In accordance with the account of his voyage, which Raleigh himself published on his return to London (1596), his expedition traveled over more than four hundred English miles, there lacking hardly two hundred more to reach El Dorado. His success in attaining this ultimate goal was frustrated by the unconquerable currents of the rivers, the attacks of the cannibal Indians and those of enormous saurians who pursued the British craft and almost wrecked them. Neither he nor the Spaniards were able to conquer El Dorado; but on the other hand Raleigh saw many things, to which Enrique Bernardo Núñez refers and which it is worth while to sum up in a few sentences.

"While he was the guest of the chieftain Toparimaca, Sir Walter saw the wife of a strange chieftain, so well-favored and attractive as few women he had seen in his life. Tall, black-eyed, opulent forms and hair as long as that of a certain "lady" in England, whom she so greatly resembled that, if it had not been for her colour, he would have sworn to be the same."

"Orinoco upwards he saw a country where the banks of the river and the rocks were of a metallic blue, and a meadow country of reddish hue. He saw islands larger than the Isle of Wight. He saw cities on hills surrounded by gardens, and lagoons as abounding with fish as that of

Arowacai, and cities inhabited by very old people, so old that their skin was drawn like parchment over their nerves and tendons."

"He saw trees with widespread foliage called samanes. . . He saw a river with red waters which can be drunk at noon: but never in the morning or at night. . . He saw so many rivers that he decided to leave their description until later on, so as not to be wearisome. . . He saw the cascades of the Caroní crash down with such fury that the water, on falling, forms like a column of smoke rising over a city."

"Beyond the Caroní is the river Atoica and then the river Caura. It is here that Raleigh places the people or nations which he calls the Ewaipanoma, with eyes on their shoulders from which long hairs sprout and mouths in the middle of their breasts. These Ewaipanoma are the strongest men of the country. They use bows, arrows and cudgels larger than those of any other kingdom. Formidable people, but without heads. Othello, the Moor of Venice, speaks of these men in Act I, scene III: ". . . And of the Cannibals that each other eat. . . The antropophagi, and the men whose heads. . . Do grow beneath their shoulders. (Arciniegas. Núñez: Books already quoted.)

AS TO HOW SIR WALTER WAS ONLY ABLE TO TAKE
BACK TO LONDON THREE NATIVES, NINE POUNDS OF
TOBACCO, SOME FEATHERS AND SOME POTATOES

ALL this was seen by Sir Walter Raleigh, and many things more, believed or ascertained. The truth, however, is that in 1596 he was already back in London, where he arrived with the son of the chieftain Topiawari

and two other Guiana natives. To these three natives—according to Germán Arciniegas— must be added “some tobacco leaves (nine pounds, approximately), some feathers, various samples of minerals and some potatoes”. A little lower down we are informed by the Colombian writer that:

“The English historians were to split from then onwards into two large schools: that of the historians who assure that it was Drake who introduced the potato, and that of those who tenaciously hold that it was Sir Walter Raleigh.”

In the meantime her gracious Majesty must have thought that the nobleman whom she had set free from prison, because he was going to discover and conquer El Dorado for England, had not been able to present her with anything more than the afore-mentioned tobacco leaves, feathers and potatoes. However, in view of Raleigh's popularity in the community and the brilliant figure he cut in the drawingrooms of the aristocracy, the Queen saw fit to return to him the tobacco, which appeared to her as a repulsive and evil-smelling weed, and to keep the feathers.

As to what happened with the potatoes, no agreement has been reached by the historians to date. They are still investigating, as already indicated above, as to whether this fortunate discovery should or should not be credited to the glory of Drake. The French erudites, on their part, assert with profound reasonings and aggressive combativity that this sensational discovery corresponds to France, as they attribute this high and nourishing honour to Parmentier.

Be it as it may, the fact is that Sir Walter Raleigh's book on the Guiana and his adventures there was translated into Latin, into French, partly into Spanish, completely into Dutch and three or four other European languages. In this manner the fame and glory of the writer was heightened, and he was even able to imbue Shakespeare with the contagion, as Lope de Vega and Cervantes had likewise taken the contagion from some Spanish chroniclers. As a result the legend of El Dorado was reborn and refurbished with the vivid colours of Raleigh's pen, and one began to speak of following his lead and helping him to organize the definitive expedition.

Until such time as this enterprise could be carried out the gallant and noble Englishman resumed his military career, anxious to expose his life on the battlefield in the service of Elizabeth and his country. Thanks to this and other reasons he continued to enjoy the Royal favour for a few years longer. It must be said that these were only a few, since at that time the Queen was already suffering from gout and other infirmities inherent to the age of 64.

Elizabeth of England finally died in 1603, and her successor to the throne was James I, son of Mary Stuart and mortal enemy of the sacrilegious protestants who had dared to behead his virtuous mother. James was to slake his vengeance on Raleigh, who was judged and condemned to death without much evidence being sought or required, rather as a result of intrigues than because of proved delinquencies. He was fortunate in that the sentence was not executed, but he was to remain imprisoned in the Tower for more than 14 years.

THE SECOND EXPEDITION AND HOW, THIS TIME, THE NOBLE ENGLISHMAN REALLY LOST HIS HEAD

IN prison Raleigh wrote thousands of pages, without ever losing his obsession for El Dorado. That part of the world, to his mind, "was destined to the English nation, whose colonial policy should be inspired in the Guiana".

Raleigh's reasoning, according to various authors, could not be more simple nor more logical: "If Spain—he said—was able to transform itself from an impoverished kingdom into a powerful empire, Great Britain with the resources of Guiana and the enormous treasures which the Inca monarchs had hidden in El Dorado, would have more gold than Spain in the rest of the new world".

On his first voyage, with these ideas of conquest in his head, convinced that all that which lived in his imagination could be for England, he spoke to the Indians about the power and grandeur of Elizabeth, the *Great Chieftainess*, and distributed among them coins of twenty shillings with the effigy of the virgin queen.

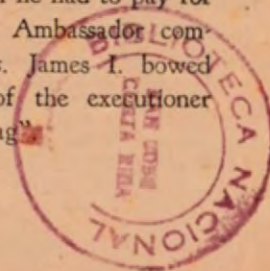
He explained to the chieftains that he had been sent by her to liberate them from the tyranny of the Spaniards. And in his eagerness to amalgamate the Guiana with the British isles, he conceived the plan of taking Indians to London to marry them to Englishwomen, and to bring over lords and marry them to native chieftainesses, since notwithstanding the difference of colour he was enraptured with the beauty, proud bearing and loveliness of the Indian race. He believed, moreover, that the entire Guiana could be colonized in two years, if one organized on the banks of the Thames "a Trading Centre like that of Sevilla".

His plan and the propaganda seemed to be perfect. So perfect and so logical from the English point of view, that even the connivance of James I. was attained. After having paid some sort of ransom to certain influential ladies, Raleigh succeeded in leaving the Tower and obtaining the permission to prepare a new expedition to the Guiana which, in his opinion, was to be the definitive one that everybody expected. At the age of 65 and with 14 years of prison behind him, the fair locks so often caressed by the Queen had turned to silver.

On the 12th of June of 1617, as he had done 22 years earlier, our hero once more set forth from Plymouth, with 14 ships and nearly one thousand men, all of them with a touch of the same malady which imbued their chief with so much spirit. They crossed the Atlantic and soon reached, thanks to favorable winds, the waters of the Caribbean Sea.

The English assaulted, took and set fire to Santo Tomás, but did not succeed in sailing up the Orinoco. The resistance opposed by the Spaniards was so firm that it cost many of the British their lives and their illusions. Fighting until he dropped lifeless, there was Governor Palomeque de Acuña! Fighting likewise, unconquerable and heroic, doña Isabel de Alcalá!

The defeated Sir Walter returned to London, but hardly had he disembarked in 1618 when he had to pay for his failure with his life. The Spanish Ambassador complained vociferously against the pirates. James I. bowed down to Spain and under the axe of the executioner Raleigh's head "rolled into a leather bag".



CHAPTER III

FROM THE XVIIth CENTURY TO THE
DECLINE OF THE CORSAIRS

THE PIRATE MORGAN, HEIR TO SIR JOHN HAWKINS
AND TO ADMIRAL DRAKE

R ALEIGH'S execution might be interpreted as the British recognition of Spanish sovereignty, both in the Guiana and in other regions of America. But the shareholders of what were already flourishing enterprises of smuggling, armed robbery and slave trading in Africa, were not disposed to submit to the weaknesses of their King James, whom the courtiers were accusing under their breaths of certain deviations improper for a real man.

What poor James badly needed were the firmly-tied breeches, the *Lutheran force*, the virile spirit of the deceased and virginal Elizabeth, who chose perpetual spinstership in order to rule unhandicapped and govern as she saw fit!

While it is true that the millionaire slavetrader Hawkins and Admiral Sir Francis Drake—the latter considered a superman—lay with a stone round their necks at the bottom of the Caribbean, vanquished at last by Spain and by malignant fevers, there were others of the same stock who were to follow in their footsteps throughout the new century and part of the XVIIIth.

They were to follow in their footsteps in such a forceful manner as regards destruction, putting to death, burning

and plundering, that if their *master* Drake had returned to life he would have applauded with shouts and hurrahs the courage of his disciples and the indomitable ferocity of Morgan, his heir! So it was along these lines, without paying much attention to Raleigh's dream of El Dorado, that the XVIIth century developed.

What had come down to them from the romantic explorer, writer, inventor of fairy tales and friend of Shakespeare, were things to be left for later on. The teachings of Sir Francis Drake, on the other hand, were the practical ones and the ones to be followed: assault of galleons to rob them of their gold; to swoop down on ports and cities and collect high ransoms, or to set fire to them until they turned to ashes; destruction and terror in Santo Domingo, Cuba, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Ulúa, the region of Belice, Yucatán, Campeche, Trujillo in Honduras, Granada in Nicaragua and other strategic points of Central America; Portobelo, Panamá, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Maracaibo, Coro, Puerto Cabello, Trinidad; Callao, Valparaiso, Buenos Aires, various ports and cities of Brazil: in other words, the devastation spread along all the coasts of South America, both on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. And the islands of the Caribbean, but particularly the minor Antilles.

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The pirates—French and Dutch included—needed to hold these latter undefended islands, in order to establish their lairs and strongholds there against Spain. From Tortuga or Isla de los Puercos, San Cristóbal, Bonaire, Aruba, Martinique, Guadaloupe, which had become the fiefs and dominions of the buccaneers, they launched and carried out

their raiding expeditions to the mainland. And they kept in touch with the large headquarters of corsairs and slave-traders in Jamaica—wholesale black flesh—which France protected from New Orleans and England supported with the consent of Cromwell and of William Penn. It goes without saying that both these personages fervently admired their eminent protégé and compatriot Mr. Morgan.

Thus the century went by, featured by kings and cardinals; by entire cities razed to the earth; old people, women and children taking refuge in the wilds to save their lives; smugglers and organizers of enterprises who continued forming societies like the "Association de Seigneurs des Isles de l'Amérique", supported by Richelieu, or "The Company of the West Indies", or another of the East Indies, or "The Company of Royal Adventurers Trading of Africa", predecessors of the Royal Dutch of our times.

They marauded and traded. Practical methods! To attack the Spanish galleons, for instance, and in passing to make a profitable barter to increase the dividends of the associated magnates! Oil, wine, canvas, drill, sundry articles manufactured in Europe, were exchanged for pearls and doubloons of creoles and mestizos, or against dye-woods, tobacco and hides which they might of might not want to sell.

These dealings, which in modern technique are known as importations and exportations, were carried out in a manner very different from that of our enviable supercivilized times. Quite to the contrary, it might be said! For a ruler of the nobleness and domestic virtues of President Mr. Calvin Coolidge, for example, declared categorically from