

**FAIRBANKS
GEORGE
RAINSFORD**

THE SPANIARDS IN
FLORIDA

George Fairbanks

The Spaniards in Florida

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George R. Fairbanks
The Spaniards in Florida Comprising
the Notable Settlement of the Huguenots
in 1564, and the History and Antiquities
of St. Augustine, Founded A.D. 1565

PREFACE

THIS volume, relating to the history and antiquities of the oldest settlement in the United States, has grown out of a lecture delivered by the author, and which he was desired to embody in a more permanent form.

The large amount of interesting material in my possession, has made my work rather one of laborious condensation than expansion.

I have endeavored to preserve as fully as possible, the style and quaintness of the old writers from whom I have drawn, rather than to transform or embellish the narrative with the supposed graces of modern diction; and, as much of the work consisted in translations from foreign idioms, this peculiarly un-English style, if I may so call it, will be more noticeably observed. I have mainly sought to give it a permanent value, as founded on the most reliable ancient authorities; and thus, to the extent of the ground which it covers, to make it a valuable addition to the history of our country.

In that portion of the work devoted to the destruction of the Huguenot colony and the forces of Ribault, I have in the main followed the Spanish accounts, desiring to divest the narrative of all suspicion of prejudice or unfairness; *Barcia*, the principal authority, as is well known, professing the same faith as Menendez, and studiously endeavoring throughout his work, to exalt the character of the Adelantado.

I am under great obligations to my friend, BUCKINGHAM SMITH, ESQ., for repeated favors in the course of its preparation.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE interest evinced in the publication of the first edition of this volume, in 1858, under the title of History and Antiquities of St. Augustine, has induced the author to prepare a second edition for the press, under the present title, as being more exactly descriptive of that portion of the history of Florida embraced in its pages.

He hopes at no distant day to put to press the History of Florida, in a much more complete form, and embracing the chequered and various pictures of the many expeditions which sought either to found upon its shores a kingdom to satiate their ambition, or to find wealth commensurate with their desires.

A chapter of no mean interest in the history of Florida has been added since the first preface was written. Battles have been fought upon its soil, more considerable as to the numbers engaged and the fierceness of the fray, than any ever before recorded. But as this chapter forms a portion of the general history of the State rather than of the old city which played but an inconsiderable part in the contest, it does not fall within the purview of this work to make more than a brief mention of this period.

G. R. F.

University Place, Tenn., Oct. 1, 1868.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY

The Saint Augustine of the present and the St. Augustine of the past, are in striking contrast.

We see, to-day, a town less in population than hundreds of places of but few months' existence, dilapidated in its appearance, with the stillness of desolation hanging over it, its waters undisturbed except by the passing canoe of the fisherman, its streets unenlivened by busy traffic, and at mid-day it might be supposed to have sunk under the enchanter's wand into an almost eternal sleep.

With no participation in the active schemes of life, and no hopes for the future; with no emulation, and no feverish visions of future greatness; with no corner lots on sale or in demand; with no stocks, save those devoted to disturbers of the public peace; with no excitements and no events; a quiet, undisturbed, dreamy vision of still life surrounds its walls, and creates a sensation of entire repose, pleasant or otherwise, as it falls upon the heart of the weary wanderer sick of life's busy bustle, or upon the restless mind of him who looks to nothing as life except perpetual, unceasing action – the one rejoicing in its rest, the other chafing under its monotony. And yet, about the old city there clings a host of historic associations, that throw around it a charm which few can fail to feel.

Its life is in its past; and when we recall the fact that it was the first permanent settlement of the white man, by more than forty years, in this confederacy; that here for the first time, isolated within the shadows of the primeval forest, the civilization of the Old World made its abiding place, where all was new, and wild, and strange; that this now so insignificant place was the key of an empire; that upon its fate rested the destiny of a nation; that its occupation or retention decided the fate of a people; that it was itself a vice provincial court, boasted of its adelantados, men of the first mark and note, of its Royal Exchequer, its public functionaries, its brave men at arms; that its proud name, conferred by its monarch, "*Le siempre fiel Ciudad de San Augustin*," – The ever faithful City of St. Augustine – stood out upon the face of history; that here the cross was first planted; that from the Papal throne itself rescripts were addressed to its governors; that the first great efforts at Christianizing the fierce tribes of America proceeded from this spot; that the martyr's blood was first here shed; that within these quiet walls the din of arms, the noise of battle, and the fierce cry of assaulting columns, have been heard; – Who will not then feel that we stand on historic ground, and that an interest attaches to the annals of this ancient city far more than is possessed by mere brick and mortar, rapid growth, or unwonted prosperity? Moss-grown and shattered, it appeals to our instinctive feelings of reverence for antiquity; and we feel desirous to know the history of its earlier days.

CHAPTER II. FIRST DISCOVERY, 1512 TO 1565 – JUAN PONCE DE LEON

Among the sturdy adventurers of the sixteenth century who sought both fame and fortune in the path of discovery, was Ponce de Leon, a companion of Columbus on his second voyage, a veteran and bold mariner, who, after a long and adventurous life, feeling the infirmities of age and the shadows of the decline of life hanging over him, willingly credited the tale that in this, the beautiful land of his imagination, there existed a fountain whose waters could restore youth to palsied age, and beauty to efface the marks of time.

The story ran that far to the north there existed a land abounding in gold and all manner of desirable things, but, above all, possessing a river and springs of so remarkable a virtue that their waters would confer immortal youth on whoever bathed in them; that upon a time a considerable expedition of the Indians of Cuba had departed northward in search of this beautiful country and these waters of immortality, who had never returned, and who, it was supposed, were in a renovated state, still enjoying the felicities of the happy land.

Furthermore, Peter Martyr affirms, in his second decade, addressed to the Pope, "that among the islands on the north side of Hispaniola, there is one about three hundred and twenty-five leagues distant, as they say which have searched the same, in the which is a continual spring of running water, of such marvelous virtue that the water thereof being drunk, perhaps with some diet, maketh old men young again. And here I must make protestation to your Holiness not to think this to be said lightly, or rashly; for they have so spread this rumor for a truth throughout all the court, that not only all the people, but also many of them whom wisdom or fortune have divided from the common sort, think it to be true."¹ Thoroughly believing in the verity of this pleasant account, this gallant cavalier fitted out an expedition from Porto Rico, and in the progress of his search came upon the coast of Florida, on Easter Monday, 1512, supposing then, and for a long period afterwards, that it was an island. Partly in consequence of the bright spring verdure and flowery plains that met his eye, and the magnificence of the magnolia, the bay and the laurel and partly in honor of the day, Pascua Florida, or Palm Sunday, and reminded, probably, of its appropriateness by the profusion of the cabbage palms near the point of his landing, he gave to the country the name of Florida.

On the 3d of April, 1512, three hundred and fifty-five years ago, he landed a few miles north of St. Augustine, and took possession of the country for the Spanish crown. He found the natives fierce and implacable; and after exploring the country for some distance around, and trying the virtue of all the streams, and growing neither younger nor handsomer, he left the country without making a permanent settlement.

The subsequent explorations of Narvaez, in 1526, and of De Soto, in 1539, were made in another portion of our State, and do not bear immediately upon the subject of our investigation, although forming a most interesting portion of our general history.

¹ The fountain of youth is a very ancient fable; and the reader will be reminded of the amusing story of the accomplishment of this miracle, told in Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales, and of the marvelous effects produced by imbibing this celebrated spring water.

CHAPTER III.

RIBAUT, LAUDONNIÈRE, AND MENENDEZ – SETTLEMENTS OF THE HUGUENOTS, AND FOUNDATION OF ST. AUGUSTINE. 1562-1565-1568

The settlement of Florida had its origin in the religious troubles experienced by the Huguenots under Charles IX. in France.

Their distinguished leader, Admiral Coligny, as early as 1555 projected colonies in America, and sent an expedition to Brazil, which proved unsuccessful. Having procured permission from Charles IX. to found a colony in Florida – a designation which embraced in rather an indefinite manner the whole country from the Chesapeake to the Tortugas – he sent an expedition in 1562 from France, under command of Jean Ribault, composed of many young men of good family. They first landed at the St. John's River, where they erected a monument, but finally established a settlement at Port Royal, South Carolina, and erected a fort. After some months, however, in consequence of dissensions among the officers of the garrison, and difficulties with the Indians, this settlement was abandoned.

In 1564 another expedition came out under the command of René de Laudonnière, and made their first landing at the River of Dolphins, being the present harbor of St. Augustine, and so named by them in consequence of the great number of Dolphins (Porpoises) seen by them at its mouth. They afterwards coasted to the north, and entered the River St. Johns, called by them the River May.

Upon an examination of this river, Laudonnière concluded to establish his colony on its banks; and proceeding about two leagues above its mouth, built a fort upon a pleasant hill of "mean height," which, in honor of his sovereign, he named Fort Caroline.

The colonists after a few months were reduced to great distress, and were about taking measures to abandon the country a second time, when Ribault arrived with reinforcements.

It is supposed that intelligence of these expeditions was communicated by the enemies of Coligny to the court of Spain.

Jealousy of the aggrandizement of the French in the New World, mortification for their own unsuccessful efforts in that quarter, and a still stronger motive of hatred to the faith of the Huguenot, induced the bigoted Philip II. of Spain, to dispatch Pedro Menendez de Aviles, a brave, bigoted and remorseless soldier, to drive out the French colony, and take possession of the country for himself.

The compact made between the King and Menendez was, that he should furnish one galleon completely equipped, and provisions for a force of six hundred men; that he should conquer and settle the country. He obligated himself to carry one hundred horses, two hundred horned cattle, four hundred hogs, four hundred sheep and some goats, and five hundred slaves, (for which he had a permission free of duties), the third part of which should be men, for his own service and that of those who went with him, to aid in cultivating the land and building. That he should take twelve priests, and four fathers of the Jesuit order. He was to build two or three towns of one hundred families, and in each town should build a fort according to the nature of the country. He was to have the title of Adelantado of the country, as also to be entitled a Marquis, and his heirs after him, to have a tract of land, receive a salary of 2,000 ducats, a percentage of the royal duties, and have the freedom of all the other ports of New Spain.²

² Barcia Ensayo, Cron. 66.

His force consisted, at starting, of eleven sail of vessels, with two thousand and six hundred men; but, owing to storms and accidents, not more than one half arrived. He came upon the coast on the 28th August, 1565, shortly after the arrival of the fleet of Ribault. On the 7th day of September, Menendez cast anchor in the River of Dolphins, the harbor of St. Augustine. He had previously discovered and given chase to some of the vessels of Ribault, off the mouth of the River May. The Indian village of Selooe then stood upon the site of St. Augustine, and the landing of Menendez was upon the spot where the city of St. Augustine now stands.

Fray Francisco Lopez de Mendoza, the Chaplain of the Expedition, thus chronicles the disembarkation and attendant ceremonies: —

"On Saturday the 8th day of September, the day of the nativity of our Lady, the General disembarked, with numerous banners displayed, trumpets and other martial music resounding, and amid salvos of artillery.

"Carrying a cross, I proceeded at the head, chanting the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. The General marched straight up to the cross, together with all those who accompanied him; and, kneeling, they all kissed the cross. A great number of Indians looked upon these ceremonies, and imitated whatever they saw done. Thereupon the General took possession of the country in the name of his Majesty. All the officers then took an oath of allegiance to him, as their general, and as adelantado of the whole country."

The name of St. Augustine was given, in the usual manner of the early voyagers, because they had arrived upon the coast on the day dedicated in their calendar to that eminent saint of the primitive church, revered alike by the good of all ages for his learning and piety.

The first troops who landed, says Mendoza, were well received by the Indians, who gave them a large mansion belonging to the chief, situated near the banks of the river. The engineer officers immediately erected an entrenchment of earth, and a ditch around this house, with a slope made of earth and fascines, these being the only means of defense which the country presents; for, says the father with surprise, "there is not a stone to be found in the whole country." They landed eighty cannon from the ships, of which the lightest weighed two thousand five hundred pounds.

But in the meantime Menendez had by no means forgotten the errand upon which he principally came; and by inquiries of the Indians he soon learned the position of the French fort and the condition of its defenders. Impelled by necessity, Laudonnière had been forced to seize from the Indians food to supply his famished garrison, and had thus incurred their enmity, which was soon to produce its sad results.

The Spaniards numbered about six hundred combatants, and the French about the same; but arrangements had been made for further accessions to the Spanish force, to be drawn from St. Domingo and Havana, and these were daily expected.

It was the habit of those days to devolve almost every event upon the ordering of a special providence; and each nation had come to look upon itself almost in the light of a peculiar people, led like the Israelites of old by signs and wonders; and as in their own view all their actions were directed by the design of advancing God's glory as well as their own purposes, so the blessing of Heaven would surely accompany them in all their undertakings.

So believed the Crusaders on the plains of Palestine; so believed the conquerors of Mexico and Peru; so believed the Puritan settlers of New England (alike in their Indian wars and their oppressive social polity); and so believed, also, the followers of Menendez and of Ribault; and in this simple and trusting faith, the worthy chaplain gives us the following account of the miraculous escape and deliverance of a portion of the Spanish fleet: —

"God and his Holy Mother have performed another great miracle in our favor. The day following the landing of the General in the fort, he said to us that he was very uneasy because his galley and another vessel were at anchor, isolated and a league at sea, being unable to enter the port on account of the shallowness of the water; and that he feared that the French might come and capture

or maltreat them. As soon as this idea came to him he departed, with fifty men, to go on board of his galleon. He gave orders to three shallows which were moored in the river to go out and take on board the provisions and troops which were on board the galleon. The next day, a shallow having gone out thither, they took on board as much of the provisions as they could, and more than a hundred men who were in the vessel, and returned towards the shore; but half a league before arriving at the bar they were overtaken by so complete a calm that they were unable to proceed further, and thereupon cast anchor and passed the night in that place. The day following at break of day they raised anchor as ordered by the pilot, as the rising of the tide began to be felt. When it was fully light they saw astern of them at the poop of the vessel, two French ships which during the night had been in search of them. The enemy arrived with the intention of making an attack upon us. The French made all haste in their movements, for we had no arms on board, and had only embarked the provisions. When day appeared, and our people discovered the French, they addressed their prayers to our Lady of *Bon Secours d'Utrera*, and supplicated her to grant them a little wind, for the French were already close up to them. They say that *Our Lady* descended, herself, upon the vessel; for the wind freshened and blew fair for the bar, so that the shallow could enter it. The French followed it; but, as the bar has but little depth and their vessels were large, they were not able to go over it, so that our men and the provisions made a safe harbor. When it became still clearer they perceived besides the two vessels of the enemy, four others at a distance, being the same which we had seen in port the evening of our arrival. They were well furnished with both troops and artillery, and had directed themselves for our galleon and the other ship, which were alone at sea. In this circumstance God accorded us two favors. The first was, that the same evening after they had discharged the provisions and the troops I have spoken of, at midnight the galleon and other vessel put to sea without being perceived by the enemy; the one for Spain, and the other for Havana, for the purpose of seeking the fleet which was there; and in this way neither was taken.

"The second favor, by which God rendered us a still greater service, was that on the day following the one I have described there arose a storm, and so great a tempest that certainly the greater part of the French vessels must have been lost at sea; for they were overtaken upon the most dangerous coast I have ever seen, and were very close to the shore; and if our vessels, that is the galleon and its consort, are not shipwrecked, it is because they were already more than twelve leagues off the coast, which gave them the facility of running before the wind, and maneuvering as well as they could, relying upon the aid of God to preserve them."³

Menendez had ascertained from the Indians that a large number of the French troops had embarked on board of the vessels which he had seen off the harbor, and he had good ground for believing that these vessels would either be cast helpless upon the shore, or be driven off by the tempest to such a distance as would render their return for some days impossible. He at once conceived the project of attacking the French fort upon the river May, by land.

A council of war was held, and after some discussion, for the most part adverse to the plan proposed by him, Menendez spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen and Brothers! we have before us now an opportunity which if improved by us will have a happy result. I am satisfied that the French fleet which four days since fled from me, and has now come to seek me, has been reinforced with the larger part of the garrison of their fort, to which, nor to port, will they be able to return for many days according to appearances; and since they are all Lutherans, as we learned before we sailed from Spain, by the edicts which Jean Ribault

³ The galleon spoken of was Menendez's own flag ship, the *El Pelayo*, the largest vessel in his fleet, fitted out at his own expense, and which had brought four hundred men. He had put on board of her a lieutenant and some soldiers, besides fifteen Lutherans as prisoners, whom he was sending home to the Inquisition at Seville. The orders to his officers were to go as speedily as possible to the island of Hispaniola, to bring provisions and additional forces. Upon the passage, the Lutheran prisoners, with some Levantine sailors, rose upon the Spaniards, killed the commander, and carried the vessel into Denmark. Menendez was much chagrined when he ascertained the fate of his favorite galleon, a long period afterwards.

published before embarking, in order that no Catholic at the peril of his life should go in his fleet, nor any Catholic books be taken; and this they themselves declared to us the night they fled from us, and hence our war must be to blood and fire, not only on account of the orders we are under, but because they have sought us in order to destroy us, that we should not plant our holy religion in these regions, and to establish their own abominable and crazy sect among the Indians; so that the more promptly we shall punish them, we shall the more speedily do a service to our God and our king, and comply with our conscience and our duty.

"To accomplish this, we must choose five hundred arquebuse men and pikemen, and carry provisions in our knapsacks for eight days, divided into ten companies, each one with its standard and its captain, and go with this force by land to examine the settlements and fort of our enemies; and as no one knows the road, I will guide you within two points by a mariner's compass; and where we cannot get along, we will open a way with our axes; and moreover, I have with me a Frenchman who has been more than a year at their fort, and who says he knows the ground for two leagues around the fort.

"If we shall arrive without discovery, it may be that falling upon it at daylight we may take it, by planting upon it twenty scaling ladders, at the cost of fifty lives. If we are discovered, we can form in the shelter of the wood, which I am assured is not more than a quarter of a league distant, and planting there ten standards, send forward a trumpeter requiring them to leave the fort and the country, and return to their own country, offering them ships and provisions for the voyage. They will imagine that we have a much greater army with us, and they may surrender; and if they do not, we shall at least accomplish that they will leave us undisturbed in this our own settlement, and we shall know the way, so that we may return to destroy them the succeeding spring."

After some discussion it was concluded that after hearing mass they should undertake the expedition on the third day. Considerable opposition was manifested on the part of the officers; but, with a consummate knowledge of human nature, the Adelantado got up the most splendid dinner in his power, and invited his recreant officers to the repast, and dexterously appealed to their fears, as well as their pride, and overcame their reluctance to undertake the unknown dangers of a first march through Florida at a wet season, an actual acquaintance with which would still more have dampened their ardor.

The troops assembled promptly upon the day appointed, at the sound of the trumpet, the fife and the drum, and they all went to hear mass, except Juan de Vicente, who said he had a disorder of the stomach, and in his leg; and when some friends wished to urge his coming, he replied: "I vow to God, that I will wait until the news comes that our force is entirely cut off, when we who remain will embark in our three vessels, and go to the Indies, where there will be no necessity of our all perishing like beasts."

This Juan Vicente seems to have been an apt specimen of a class of croakers not peculiar to any age or country. Of his future history the chronicle gives other instances of a similar spirit; and his sole claim to immortality, like that of many an other, is founded upon his impudence.

CHAPTER IV. THE ATTACK ON FORT CAROLINE – 1565

The troops, having heard mass, marched out in order, preceded by twenty Biscayans and Asturians having as their captain Martin de Ochoa, a leader of great fidelity and bravery, furnished with axes to open a road where they could not get along. At this moment there arrived two Indians, who said that they had been at the fort six days before, and who "seemed like angels" to the soldiers, sent to guide their march. Halting for refreshment and rest wherever suitable places could be found, and the Adelantado always with the vanguard, in four days they reached the vicinity of the fort, and came up within less than a quarter of a league of it, concealed by a grove of pine trees. It rained heavily, and a severe storm prevailed. The place where they had halted was a very bad one, and very marshy; but he decided to stop there, and went back to seek the rearguard, lest they might lose the way.

About ten at night the last of the troops arrived, very wet indeed, for there had been much rain during the four days; they had passed marshes with the water rising to their waists, and every night there was so great a flood that they were in great danger of losing their powder, their match-fire, and their biscuit; and they became desperate, cursing those who had brought them there, and themselves for coming.

Menendez pretended not to hear their complaints, not daring to call a council as to proceeding or returning, for both officers and soldiers went forward very quietly. Remaining firm in his own resolve, two hours before dawn he called together the Master of the Camp and the Captains to whom he said that during the whole night he had sought of God and his most Holy Mother that they would favor him and instruct him what he should do most advantageous for their holy service; and he was persuaded that they had all done the same. "But now, Gentlemen," he proceeded, "we must make some determination, finding ourselves exhausted, lost, without ammunition or provisions, and without the hope of relief."

Some answered very promptly, "Why should they waste their time in giving reasons? for, unless they returned quickly to St. Augustine, they would be reduced to eating palmettos;⁴ and the longer they delayed, the greater trouble they would have."

The Adelantado said to them that what they said seemed very reasonable, but he would ask of them to hear some reasons to the contrary, without being offended. He then proceeded – after having smoothed down their somewhat ruffled dispositions, considerably disturbed by their first experience in encountering the hardships of such a march – to show them that the danger of retreat was then greater than an advance would be, as they would lose alike the respect of their friends and foes. That if, on the contrary, they attacked the fort, whether they succeeded in taking it or not, they would gain honor and reputation.

Stimulated by the speech of their General, they demanded to be led to the attack, and the arrangements for the assault were at once made. Their French prisoner was placed in the advance; but the darkness of the night and the severity of the storm rendered it impossible to proceed, and they halted in a marsh, with the water up to their knees, to await daylight.

At dawn the Frenchman recognized the country, and the place where they were, and where stood the fort; upon which the Adelantado ordered them to march, enjoining upon all, at the peril of their lives, to follow him; and coming to a small hill, the Frenchman said that behind that stood the fort, about three bow-shots distant, but lower down, near the river. The General put the Frenchman into the custody of Castaneda. He went up a little higher, and saw the river and one of the houses, but he was not able to discover the fort, although it was adjoining them; and he returned to Castaneda,

⁴ A low palm, bearing an oily berry.

with whom now stood the Master of the Camp and Ochoa, and said to them that he wished to go lower down, near to the houses which stood behind the hill, to see the fortress and the garrison, for, as the sun was now up, they could not attack the fort without a reconnoissance. This the Master of the Camp would not permit him to do, saying this duty appertained to him; and he went alone with Ochoa near to the houses, from whence they discovered the fort; and returning with their information, they came to two paths, and leaving the one by which they came, took the other. The Master of the Camp discovered his error, coming to a fallen tree, and turned his face to inform Ochoa, who was following him; and as they turned to seek the right path, he stopped in advance, and the sentinel discovered them, who imagined them to be French; but examining them he perceived they were unknown to him. He hailed, "Who goes there?" Ochoa answered, "Frenchmen." The sentinel was confirmed in his supposition that they were his own people, and approached them; Ochoa did the same; but seeing they were not French, the sentinel retreated. Ochoa closed with him, and with his drawn sword gave him a cut over the head, but did not hurt him much, as the sentinel fended off the blow with his sword; and the Master of the Camp coming up at this moment, gave him a thrust, from which he fell backwards, making a loud outcry. The Master of the Camp, putting his sword to his breast, threatened him with instant death unless he kept silence. They tied him thereupon, and took him to the General, who, hearing the noise, thought the Master of the Camp was being killed, and meeting with the Sergeant-major, Francisco de Recalde, Diego de Maya, and Andres Lopez Patino, with their standards and soldiers, without being able to restrain himself, he cried out, "Santiago! Upon them! Help of God, Victory! The French are destroyed. The Master of the Camp is in their fort, and has taken it." Upon which, all rushed forward in the path without order, the General remaining behind, repeating what he had said many times: himself believing it to be certain that the Master of the Camp had taken with him a considerable force, and had captured the fort.

So great was the joy of the soldiers, and such their speed, that they soon came up with the Master of the Camp and Ochoa, who was hastening to receive the reward of carrying the good news to the General of the capture of the sentinel. But the Master of the Camp, seeing the spirit which animated the soldiers, killed the sentinel, and cried out with a loud voice to those who were pressing forward, "Comrades! do as I do. God is with us;" and turned, running towards the fort, and meeting two Frenchmen on the way, he killed one of them, and Andres Lopez Patino the other. Those in the environs of the fort, seeing this tragedy enacted, set up loud outcries; and in order to know the cause of the alarm, one of the Frenchmen within opened the postern of the principal gate, which he had no sooner done than it was observed by the Master of the Camp; and throwing himself upon him, he killed him, and entered the gate, followed by the most active of his followers.

The French, awakened by the clamor, some dressed, others in their night-clothes, rushed to the doors of their houses to see what had happened; but they were all killed, except sixty of the more wary, who escaped by leaping the walls.

Immediately the standards of the Sergeant-major and of Diego Mayo were brought in, and set up by Rodrigo Troche and Pedro Valdes Herrera, with two cavaliers, at the same moment. These being hoisted, the trumpets proclaimed the victory, and the bands of soldiers who had entered opened the gates and sought the quarters, leaving no Frenchman alive.

The Adelantado hearing the cries, left Castaneda in his place to collect the people who had not come up, who were at least half the force, and went himself to see if they were in any danger. He arrived at the fort running; and as he perceived that the soldiers gave no quarter to any of the French, he shouted, "That at the penalty of their lives they should neither wound nor kill any woman, cripple, or child under fifteen years of age." By which seventy persons were saved; *the rest were all killed!*

Renato de Laudonnière, the Commander of the fort, escaped with his servant and some twenty or thirty others, to a vessel lying in the river.

Such is the Spanish chronicle, contained in Barcia, of the capture of Fort Caroline. Its details in the main correspond with the account of Laudonnière, and of Nicolas Challeux, the author of the

letter printed at Lyons, in France, under date of August, 1566, by Jean Saugrain. In some important particulars, however, the historians disagree. It has been already seen that Menendez is represented as having given orders to spare all the women, maimed persons, and all children under fifteen years of age. The French relations of the event, on the contrary, allege that an indiscriminate slaughter took place, and that all were massacred without respect to age, sex, or condition; but as this statement is principally made upon the authority of a terrified and flying soldier, it is alike due to the probabilities of the case, and more agreeable to the hopes of humanity, to lessen somewhat the horrors of a scene which has need of all the palliation that can be drawn from the slightest evidences of compassion on the part of that stern and bigoted leader.

The Spanish statement is further confirmed by other writers, who speak of a vessel being dispatched by Menendez subsequently to carry the survivors to Spain.

CHAPTER V. ESCAPE OF LAUDONNIÈRE AND OTHERS FROM FORT CAROLINE. ADVENTURES OF THE FUGITIVES

The narratives of this event are found singularly full, there being no less than three accounts by fugitives from the massacre. The most complete of these is that of Nicolas de Challeux, a native of Dieppe, which was published in the following year. I have largely transcribed from this quaint and curious narrative, not only an account of the fullness of the details, but also for the light it throws upon the habits of thought and modes of expression of that day, when so much was exhibited of an external religious faith, and so many were found who would fight for their faith when they refused to adhere to its requirements. There are apparent, also, a close study of the Scriptures, a great familiarity with its language, a frequent use of its illustrations, and a disposition to attribute all things, with a reverent piety, to the direct personal supervision of the Almighty. By the aid of a map of the St. John's River, it will not be difficult to trace the perilous route of escape pursued by De Challeux and his companions, over obstacles much magnified by the terror of the moment and want of familiarity with the country: —

"The number of persons in the fort was two hundred and forty, partly of those who had not recovered from sea-sickness, partly of artisans and of women and children left to the care and diligence of Captain Laudonnière, who had no expectation that it was possible that any force could approach by land to attack him. On which account the guards had withdrawn for the purpose of refreshing themselves a little before sunrise, on account of the bad weather which had continued during the whole night, most of our people being at the time in their beds sleeping. The wicket gate open, the Spanish force, having traversed forests, swamps, and rivers, arrived at break of day, Friday, the 20th September, the weather very stormy, and entered the fort without any resistance, and made a horrible satisfaction of the rage and hate they had conceived against our nation. It was then who should best kill the most men, sick and well, women and little children, in such a manner that it is impossible to conceive of a massacre which could equal this for its barbarity and cruelty.

"Some of the more active of our people, jumping from their beds, slipped out and escaped to the vessel in the river. I was myself surprised, going to my duty with my clasp-knife in my hand; for upon leaving my cabin, I met the enemy, and saw no other means of escape but turning my back, and making the utmost possible haste to lead over the palisades, for I was closely pursued, step by step, by a pike-man and one with a partisan; and I do not know how it was, unless by the grace of God, that my strength was redoubled, old man as I am and grey-headed, a thing which at any other time I could not have done, for the rampart was raised eight or nine feet; I then hastened to secrete myself in the woods, and when I was sufficiently near the edge of the wood at the distance of a good bow-shot, I turned towards the fort and rested a little time, finding myself not pursued; and as from this place all the fort, even the inner-court was distinctly visible to me, looking there I saw a horrible butchery of our men taking place, and three standards of our enemies planted upon the ramparts. Having then lost all hope of seeing our men rally, I resigned all my senses to the Lord. Recommending myself to his mercy, grace and favor, I threw myself into the wood, for it seemed to me that I could find no greater cruelty among the savage beast, than that of our enemy which I had seen shown towards our people. But the misery and anguish in which I found myself then, straitened and oppressed, seeing no longer any means of safety upon the earth, unless by a special grace of our Lord, transcending any expectation of man, caused me to utter groans and sobs, and with a voice broken by distress to thus cry to the Lord:

"O God of our fathers and Lord of all mercy! who hast commanded us to call upon Thee even from the depths of hell and the shades of death, promising forthwith thy aid and succor! show me,

for the hope which I have in Thee, what course I ought to take to come to the termination of this miserable old age, plunged into the gulf of grief and bitterness; at least, cause that, feeling the effect of Thy mercy, and the confidence which I have conceived in my heart for Thy promises, they may not be snatched from me through fear of savage and furious wild beasts on one hand, and of our and Thy enemies on the other, who desire the more to injure us for the memory of Thy name which is invoked by us than for any other cause; aid me, my God! assist me, for I am so troubled that I can do nothing more.'

"And while I was making this prayer, traversing the wood, which was very thick and matted with briars and thorns, beneath the large trees where there was neither any road nor path, scarcely had I trailed my way half an hour, when I heard a noise like men weeping and groaning near me; and advancing in the name of God, and in the confidence of His succor, I discovered one of our people, named *Sieur de la Blonderie*, and a little behind him another, named *Maitre Robert*, well known to us all, because he had in charge the prayers at the fort.

"Immediately afterwards we found also the servant of *Sieur d'Ully*, the nephew of *M. Lebreau*, Master *Jaques Trusse*, and many others; and we assembled and talked over our troubles, and deliberated as to what course we could take to save our lives. One of our number, much esteemed as being very learned in the lessons of Holy Scripture, proposed after this manner: 'Brethren, we see to what extremity we are brought; in whatever direction we turn our eyes, we see only barbarism. The heavens, the earth, the sea, the forest, and men, – in brief, nothing favors us. How can we know that if we yield to the mercy of the Spaniards, they will spare us? and if they should kill us, it will be the suffering of but a moment; they are men, and it may be that, their fury appeased, they may receive us upon some terms; and, moreover, what can we do? Would it not be better to fall into the hands of men, than into the jaws of wild beasts, or die of hunger in a strange land?'

"After he had thus spoken, the greater part of our number were of his opinion, and praised his counsel. Notwithstanding, I pointed out the cruel animosity still unappeased of our enemies, and that it was not for any human cause of quarrel, that they had carried out with such fury their enterprise, but mainly (as would appear by the notice they had already given us) because we were of those who were reformed by the preaching of the Gospel; that we should be cowards to trust in men, rather than in God, who gives life to his own in the midst of death, and gives ordinarily his assistance when the hopes of men entirely fail.

"I also brought to their minds examples from Scripture, instancing *Joseph*, *Daniel*, *Elias*, and the other prophets, as well also the apostles, as *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, who were all drawn out of much affliction, as would appear by means extraordinary and strange to the reason and judgment of men. His arm, said I, is not shortened, nor in any wise enfeebled; his power is always the same. Do you not recollect, said I the flight of the Israelites before *Pharaoh*? What hope had that people of escaping from the hands of that powerful tyrant? He had them, as it were, under his heel. Before them they had the sea, on either side inaccessible mountains.

"What then? He who opened the sea to make a path for his people, and made it afterwards to swallow up his enemies, can not he conduct us by the forest places of this strange country? While thus discoursing, six of the company followed out the first proposition, and abandoned us to go and yield themselves up to our enemies, hoping to find favor before them. But they learned, immediately and by experience, what folly it is to trust more in men than in the promise of the Lord. For having gone out of the wood, as they descended to the fort they were immediately seized by the Spaniards and treated in the same fashion as the others had been. They were at once killed and massacred, and then drawn to the banks of the river, where the others killed at the fort lay in heaps. We who remained in the wood continued to make our way, and drawing towards the sea, as well as we could judge, and as it pleased God to conduct our paths and to straiten our course, we soon arrived at the brow of a mountain and from there commenced to see the sea, but it was still at a great distance; and what was worse, the road we had to take showed itself wonderfully strange and difficult. In the first place, the

mountain from which it was necessary for us to descend, was of such height and ruggedness, that it was not possible for a person descending to stand upright; and we should never have dared to descend it but for the hope we had of sustaining ourselves by the branches of the bushes, which were frequent upon the side of the mountain, and to save life, not sparing our hands which we had all gashed up and bloody, and even the legs and nearly all the body was torn. But descending from the mountain, we did not lose our view of the sea, on account of a small wood which was upon a little hill opposite to us; and in order to go to the wood it was requisite that we should traverse a large meadow, all mud and quagmire, covered with briars and other kind of strange plants; for the stalk was as hard as wood, and the leaves pricked our feet and our hands until the blood came, and being all the while in water up to the middle, which redoubled our pain and suffering. The rain came down upon us in such manner from heaven, that we were during all that time between two floods; and the further we advanced the deeper we found the water.

"And then thinking that the last period of our lives had come, we all embraced each other, and with a common impulse, we commenced to sigh and cry to the Lord, accusing our sins and recognizing the weight of his judgment upon us. 'Alas! Lord,' said we, 'what are we but poor worms of the earth? Our souls weakened by grief, surrender themselves into thy hands. Oh, Father of Mercy and God of Love, deliver us from this pain of death! or if thou wilt that in this desert we shall draw our last breath, assist us so that death, of all things the most terrible, shall have no advantage over us, but that we may remain firm and stable in the sense of thy favor and good-will, which we have too often experienced in the cause of thy Christ to give way to the spirit of Satan, the spirit of despair and of distrust; for if we die, we will protest now before thy Majesty, that we would die unto thee, and that if we live it may be to recount thy wonders in the midst of the assembly of thy servants.' Our prayers concluded, we marched with great difficulty straight towards the wood, when we came to a great river which ran in the midst of this meadow; the channel was sufficiently narrow but very deep, and ran with great force, as though all the field ran toward the sea. This was another addition to our anguish, for there was not one of our men who would dare to undertake to cross over by swimming. But in this confusion of our thoughts, as to what manner to pass over, I bethought myself of the wood which we had left behind us. After exhorting my comrades to patience and a continued trust in the Lord, I returned to the wood, and cut a long pole, with the good size clasp knife which remained in my hand from the hour the fort was taken; and I returned to the others, who awaited me in great perplexity, 'Now, then, comrades,' said I, 'let us see if God, by means of this stick, will not give us some help to accomplish our path.' Then we laid the pole upon the water, and each one by turn taking hold of the end of the pole, carried it by his side to the midst of the channel, when losing sight of him we pushed him with sufficient force to the other bank, where he drew himself out by the canes and other bushes growing along its borders; and by his example we passed over, one at a time; but it was not without great danger, and not without drinking a great deal of salt water, in such manner that our hearts were all trembling, and we were as much overcome as though we had been half drowned. After we had come to ourselves and had resumed courage, moving on all the time towards the wood, which we had remarked close to sea, the pole was not even needed to pass another creek, which gave us not much less trouble than the first; but by the grace of God, we passed it and entered the wood the same evening, where we passed the night in great fear and trembling, standing about against the trees.

"And, as much as we had labored, even had it been more, we felt no desire to sleep; for what repose could there be to spirits in such mortal affright? Near the break of day, we saw a great beast, like a deer, at fifty paces from us, who had a great head, eyes flaming, the ears hanging, and the higher parts elevated. It seemed to us monstrous, because of its gleaming eyes, wondrously large; but it did not come near us to do us any harm.

"The day having appeared, we went out of the wood and returned towards the sea, in which we hoped, after God, as the only means of saving our lives; but we were again cast down and troubled, for we saw before us a country of marsh and muddy quagmires, full of water and covered with briars,

like that we had passed the previous day. We marched across this salt marsh; and, in the direction we had to take, we perceived among the briars a body of men, whom we at first thought to be enemies, who had gone there to cut us off; but upon close observation, they seemed in as sad a plight as ourselves, naked and terrified; and we immediately perceived that they were our own people. It was Captain Laudonnière, his servant-maid, Jacques Morgues of Dieppe (the artist), Francis Duval of Rouen, son of him of the iron crown of Rouen, Niguise de la Cratte, Nicholas the carpenter, the Trumpeter of Sieur Laudonnière, and others, who all together made the number of twenty-six men. Upon deliberating as to what we should do, two of our men mounted to the top of one of the tallest trees and discovered from thence one of our vessels, which was that of Captain Maillard, to whom they gave a signal, that he might know that we were in want of help. Thereupon he came towards us with his small vessel, but in order to reach the banks of the stream, it was necessary for us to traverse the briars and two other rivers similar to those which we passed the previous day; in order to accomplish which, the pole I had cut the day before was both useful and necessary, and two others which Sr. de Laudonnière had provided; and we came pretty near to the vessel, but our hearts failed us from hunger and fatigue, and we should have remained where we were unless the sailors had given us a hand, which aid was very opportune; and they carried us, one after the other, to the vessel, on board of which we were all received well and kindly. They gave us bread and water, and we began afterwards, little by little, to recover our strength and vigor; which was a strong reason that we should recognize the goodness of the Lord, who had saved us against all hope from an infinity of dangers and from death, by which we had been surrounded and assaulted from all quarters, to render him forevermore our thanks and praises. We thus passed the entire night recounting the wonders of the Lord, and consoled each other in the assurances of our safety.

"Daylight having come, Jacques Ribault, Captain of the Pearl, boarded us to confer with us respecting what was to be done by us, and what means we should take for the safety of the rest of our men and the vessels. It was then objected, the small quantity of provisions which we had, our strength broken, our munitions and means of defense taken from us, the uncertainty as to the condition of our Admiral, and not knowing but that he had been shipwrecked on some coast a long distance from us, or driven to a distance by the tempest.

"We thereupon concluded that we could do no better than return to France, and were of the opinion that the company should divide into two parts, the one remaining on board the Pearl, the other under charge of Captain Maillard.

"On Friday, the twenty-fifth day of the month of September, we departed from this coast, favored by a strong northerly wind, having concluded to return to France, and after the first day our two ships were so far separated that we did not again encounter each other.

"We proceeded five hundred leagues prosperously, when, one morning about sunrise, we were attacked by a Spanish vessel, which we met as well as we could, and cannonaded them in such sort that we made them subject to our disposal, and battered them so that the blood was seen to overrun the scuppers. We held them then as surrendered and defeated; but there was no means of grappling her, on account of the roughness of the sea for in grappling her there would be danger of our striking together, which might have sunk us; she also, satisfied with the affair, left us, joyful and thanking God that no one of us was wounded or killed in this skirmish except our cook.

"The rest of our passage was without any rencontre with enemies; but we were much troubled by contrary winds, which often threatened to cast us on the coast of Spain, which would have been the finishing touch to our misfortunes, and the thing of which we had the greatest horror. We also endured at sea many other things, such as cold and hunger; for be it understood that we, who escaped from the land of Florida, had nothing else for vestment or equipment, by day or by night, except our shirts alone, or some other little rag, which was a small matter of defence from the exposure to the weather; and what was more, the bread which we eat, and we eat it very sparingly, was all spoilt and

rotten, as well also the water itself was all noisome, and of which, besides, we could only have for the whole day a single small glass.

"This bad food was the reason, on our landing, that many of us fell into divers maladies, which carried off many of the men of our company; and we arrived at last, after this perilous and lamentable voyage, at Rochelle; where we were received and treated very humanely and kindly by the inhabitants of the country and those of the city, giving us of their means, to the extent our necessities require; and assisted by their kindness we were each enabled to return to his own part of the country."⁵

Laudonnière's⁶ narrative speaks more of his own personal escape; and that of Le Moyne⁷ refers to this description of De Challeux, as containing a full and accurate account of what took place. Barcia mentions De Challeux, very contemptuously as a carpenter, who succeeding badly at his trade, took up that of preaching, but does not deny the truth of his narrative.

Those who separated from their comrades and threw themselves upon the enemies' mercy, are mentioned by the Spanish writers; but they are silent as to the treatment they received.

⁵ Ternaux Compans.

⁶ Hakluyt.

⁷ Brevis Narratio.

CHAPTER VI. SITE OF FORT CAROLINE, AFTERWARDS CALLED SAN MATTEO

It might naturally be supposed that a spot surrounded with so many thrilling and interesting associations, as the scene of the events we have just related, would have been commemorated either by tradition or by ancient remains attesting its situation. But, in truth, no recognized point now bears the appellation of Fort Caroline, and the antiquary can point at this day to no fosse or parapet, no crumbling bastion, no ancient helm or buckler, no shattered and corroded garniture of war mingled with the bones of the dead, as evidencing its position.

A writer who has himself done more to rescue from oblivion the historical romance of the South than any other,⁸ has well said, "It will be an employment of curious interest, whenever the people of Florida shall happen upon the true site of the settlement and structure of Laudonnière, to trace out in detail these several localities, and fix them for the benefit of posterity. The work is scarcely beyond the hammer and chisel of some Old Mortality, who has learned to place his affections and fix his sympathies upon the achievements of the past."

With a consciousness of our unfitnes to establish absolutely a memorial so interesting as the site of Fort Caroline must ever be, I shall endeavor to locate its position, upon the basis of reasons entirely satisfactory to myself, and measurably so, I trust, to others.

The account given by Laudonnière himself, the leader of the Huguenots, by whom Fort Caroline was constructed, is as follows: – After speaking of his arrival at the mouth of the river, which had been named the River May by Ribault, who had entered it on the first day of May, 1562, and had therefore given it that name, he says, "Departing from thence, I had not sailed three leagues up the river, still being followed by the Indians, crying still, 'amy,' 'amy,' that is to say, friend, but I discovered an hill of meane height, neare which I went on land, harde by the fieldes that were sowed with mil, at one corner whereof there was an house, built for their lodgings which keep and garde the mil. * * * * * Now was I determind to searche out the qualities of the hill. Therefore I went right to the toppe thereof; where we found nothing else but cedars, palms, and bay trees of so sovereign odor that Balme smelleth not more sweetly. The trees were environed around about with vines bearing grapes, in such quantities that the number would suffice to make the place habitable. Besides the fertilitie of the soyle for vines, one may see mesquine wreathed about the trees in great quantities. Touching the pleasure of the place, the sea may be seen plain enough from it; and more than six great leagues off, towards the River Belle, a man may behold the meadows, divided asunder into isles and islet, enterlacing one another. Briefly, the place is so pleasent, that those which are melancholicke, would be inforced to change their humour. * *

"Our fort was built in form of a triangle; the side towards the west, which was towards the land, was inclosed with a little trench and raised with turf made in the form of a battlement, nine feet high; the other side, which was towards the river, was enclosed with a palisade of planks of timber, after the manner that Gabions are made; on the south line, there was a kind of bastion, within which I caused an house for the munition to be made. It was all builded with fagots and sand, saving about two or three foote high, with turfes whereof the battlements were made. In the midst, I caused a great court to be made of eighteen paces long, and the same in breadth. In the midst whereof, on the one side, drawing towards the south, I builded a corps de garde and an house on the other side towards the north. * * * * * One of the sides that inclosed my court, which I made very faire and large, reached unto the grange of my munitions; and on the other side, towards the river, was mine own lodgings,

⁸ W. Gilmore Simms, Esq.

round which were galleries all covered. The principal doore of my lodging was in the midst of the great place, and the other was towarde the river. A good distance from the fort I built an oven."

Jacob Le Moyne, or Jacques Morgues, as he is sometimes called, accompanied the expedition; and his *Brevis Narratio* contains two plates, representing the commencement of the construction of Fort Caroline, and its appearance when completed. The latter represents a much more finished fortification than could possibly have been constructed, but may be taken as a correct outline, I presume, of its general appearance.

Barcia, in his account of its capture, describes neither its shape nor appearance, but mentions the parapet nine feet high, and the munition house and store house.

From the account of Laudonnière and Le Moyne, it was situated near the river, on the slope or nearly at the foot of a hill.⁹ Barcia speaks of its being behind a hill, and of descending towards it. The clerical-carpenter, Challeux, speaks of being able, after his escape, to look down from the hill he was on, into the court of the fort itself, and seeing the massacre of the French. As he was flying from the fort towards the sea, and along the river, and as the Spaniards came from a southeast direction, the fort must have been on the westerly side of a hill, near the river.

The distance is spoken of as less than three leagues by Laudonnière. Hawkins and Ribault say, the fort was not visible from the mouth of the river. It is also incidentally spoken of in Barcia as being two leagues from the bar. De Challeux, in the narrative of his escape, speaks of the distance as being about two leagues. In the account given of the expedition of De Gourgues, it is said to be, in general terms, about one or two leagues above the forts afterwards constructed on each side of the mouth of the river; and it is also mentioned in De Gourgues, that the fort was at the foot of a hill, near the water, and could be overlooked from the hill. The distance from the mouth of the river, and the nature of the ground where the fort was built, are thus made sufficiently definite to enable us to seek a location which shall fulfill both these conditions. It is hardly necessary to remark that there can be no question but that the fort was located on the south or easterly side of the river, as the Spaniards marched by land from St. Augustine in a northwesterly direction to Fort Caroline.

The River St. Johns is one of the largest rivers, in point of width, to be found in America, and is more like an arm of the sea than a river; from its mouth for a distance of fifteen miles, it is spread over extensive marshes, and there are few points where the channel touches the banks of the river. At its mouth it is comparatively narrow, but immediately extends itself over wide-spread marshes; and the first headland or shore which is washed by the channel is a place known as St. John's Bluff. Here the river runs closely along the shore, making a bold, deep channel close up to the bank. The land rises abruptly on one side into a hill of moderate height, covered with a dense growth of pine, cedar, &c. This hill gently slopes to the banks of the river, and runs off to the southwest, where, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, a creek discharges itself into the river, at a place called "the Shipyard" from time immemorial.

I am not aware that any remains of Fort Caroline, or any old remains of a fortress, have ever been discovered here; but it must be recollected that this fort was constructed of sand and pine trees, and that three hundred years have passed away, with their storms and tempests, their rains and destructive influences – a period sufficient to have destroyed a work of much more durable character than sandy entrenchments and green pine stakes and timbers. Moreover, it is highly probable, judging from present appearances, that the constant abrasion of the banks still going on has long since worn away the narrow spot where stood Fort Caroline. It is also to be remarked, that as there is no other hill, or high land, or place where a fort could have been built, between St. John's Bluff and the mouth of the river, so it is also the fact that there is no point on the south side of the river where the channel touches high land, for a distance by water of eight or ten miles above St. John's Bluff.

⁹ Laudonnière says, "*joignant la montagne.*"

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